
**Realise potential
Achieve excellence
Broaden opportunity**

Join the RSA Family of Academies

RSA
Academies





Who is the RSA?

The Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (the RSA) is an influential charity committed to enriching society through ideas and action for over 250 years.



Students at Ipsley CE RSA Academy

The RSA's mission is to find innovative practical solutions to social problems. We do this through hands-on projects, research and our 27,000 Fellows around the world.

We draw on the knowledge and experience of the RSA Fellowship and have a unique programme of work across many areas including design, enterprise, public services, community development and behavioural insight – as well as education.

Based in London, the RSA is globally renowned for creating a platform for debate both online and face to face, creating opportunities for influence with policy makers, opinion formers, the public and the media to benefit society.

The RSA aims to design education initiatives that seek to realise the potential of every learner. The RSA established RSA Academies to create a unique relationship between the RSA and a number of schools and contribute to the RSA's social mission and the success of RSA's wider education programme.

Working directly with schools gives the RSA insight into which areas of policy need exploring, and provides us with both inspiration for and reality checks on ideas for practical innovations. Working with the RSA gives schools a chance to participate in research, projects and networks that will bring benefits to pupils and staff and influence education beyond their own school.

“Being part of the RSA Family has given our staff and students life changing experiences. It has provided opportunities for our pupils to work with Fellows and to be part of projects which are enriching and broaden the scope of aspiration for those students”

REBECCA HILDITCH, Events Coordinator at Whitley Academy

RSA Family of Academies

We are built around principles of democracy and collaboration and together with our schools see ourselves as a Family. We aim to give learners the broad range of skills, qualifications and experiences they need to thrive in their continuing education and the world of work through a jointly designed programme of support and intervention that reflects a school's needs and priorities.

We focus on **four priority areas**:

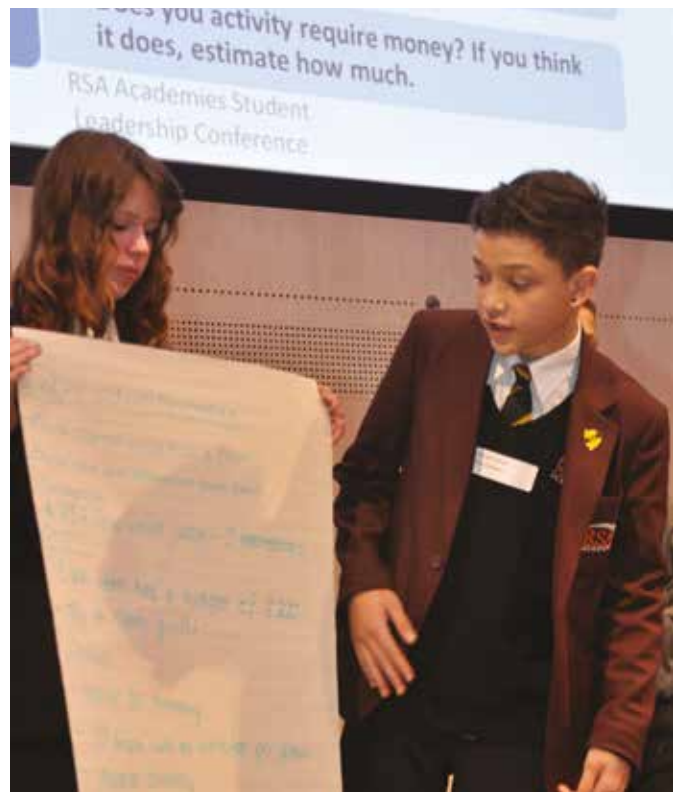
- Improving teaching and learning through purposeful partnerships
- Enabling learners to achieve a broad range of qualifications, skills and competences
- Supporting innovation in teaching and learning and a spirit of open-minded enquiry
- Connecting teachers and learners to people, places and issues beyond the school gate

We promote learners' academic achievements alongside a wider set of outcomes that are important to young people themselves, their parents and future employers. We empower and involve young people through student voice, leadership projects and networking opportunities. Learners experience a broad curriculum which includes high quality arts provision, opportunities for practical learning, and experience of social and commercial enterprise, which builds on the RSA's historic focus on arts, manufacturing and commerce.

We encourage teachers and learners to investigate ways to improve practice and school life, to work with colleagues across the RSA Family and participate in the wider work of the RSA to develop new ideas and share best practice.



Students from Whitley Academy wearing hats they designed



Students taking part in the Student Leadership Conference

■ CASE STUDY Student leadership

Schools within the RSA Family give students lots of opportunities to develop their leadership skills, take decisions and action to improve the school, and to work with students in other schools in the Family. Over the last year students have worked together on a series of podcasts called Frontline Voices, a Student Leadership Conference held at the RSA and a peer review to learn from other schools in the Family.

“The whole experience of the Peer Review Process has helped our development as individuals, building confidence and developing skills relevant to us both as student leaders and in our future careers. It will also have had a huge effect on the RSA Academy student experience, and the positive experience does not reside solely with the RSA Academy but each of the Academies involved”

ANDREW WATTS, Head Boy at RSA Academy in Tipton



What we offer

Enrichment guarantee

Signed up to by all the schools this sets out the experiences and activities that the pupils in RSA Academies can expect over the course of their school career.

This includes opportunities to participate in visits to theatres, galleries and cultural events; work directly with arts practitioners and designers; experience a residential stay; participate in projects for the local and wider community; and have access to a variety of careers talks, workplace and university visits, and work experience.

Innovation programmes

Our schools are passionate about innovation – “the successful exploitation of new ideas”. We aim to develop new approaches to education that have potential to influence the practices of many other schools. We determine our research priorities and design classroom-based projects together. Current priorities include design and technology, parental engagement, and the development of learner competencies. We aim to build each school’s collective capacity for innovation, and build a culture of evidence-use and evidence-creation amongst all staff members.

Leadership development and support for staff

One of the best ways for aspiring, middle and senior leaders to develop their skills is to have the opportunity to take on leadership roles and assignments outside of their home school. The RSA Family provides opportunities for staff at different levels to work outside their own schools from periods of a day to a lengthy secondment.

“The opportunity to gain experience on a leadership team at a different school in a different context has been invaluable. I have been able to share and adapt strategies that have proven to be successful in improving student outcomes, while at the same time I have developed my skills as a leader”

MARK HEALY, Vice Principal at Whitley Academy seconded to Arrow Vale RSA Academy

Collaborative approach to school improvement

Our approach to school improvement is based on school to school support. The Principals and senior staff at schools within the RSA Family take responsibility for leading school improvement within their own school and also across the Family as a whole. Our model recognises that all schools, irrespective of Ofsted category, have both strengths and areas for development and will therefore be both offering and receiving support and challenge from other schools, with schools that are less than securely ‘good’ receiving structured support.

Platform to have a broader impact on education policy and practice

The RSA holds seminars, events and conferences and is connected to policy makers, opinion formers and the media. Being part of the RSA Family will provide access for schools to this influential network and demonstrate its ideas on a wider stage. The Family has the potential to be a powerful voice in the on-going debate about the future of the curriculum in schools.

Access to skills and networks of RSA Fellows

The RSA has 27,000 Fellows in more than 100 countries, working together for the benefit of their communities. As well as being well connected RSA Fellows have a wide range of skills and talents that they can bring to schools and have helped us foster new partnerships, for example with Warwick University. We have also appointed local RSA Fellows to the governing bodies of schools within the RSA Family, bringing new skills, experiences and constructive challenge.

■ CASE STUDY

Warwick University and RSA partnership

Warwick University and RSA Academies are bringing students and teachers together with higher education. Forming part of Warwick’s Widening Participation strategy we will connect students from Year 7 upwards to continuing education and the world of work. There will be stimulating projects across the schools, taster days at the University, and support for pupils, teachers and parents about the University application process.

“We are proud to be the newest member of the RSA Family of Academies and I am delighted that since academy conversion the school has achieved excellent year 6 outcomes, reaching national standards, an example of how combined knowledge and expertise drawn from the Family of Academies can impact swiftly on the educational outcomes of our pupils”

PATRICIA HAMMOND, Principal at Ipsley CE RSA Academy

Opportunities to maximise resources

Becoming an academy involves taking on additional responsibilities in areas including finance, HR, ICT and commissioning. The RSA Family provides support and advice in these key areas, and helps schools secure better value for money by helping identify alternative suppliers and through joint commissioning of services.

■ CASE STUDY

Ben Kelly, RDI at Arrow Vale RSA Academy

Ben Kelly of BKD Design, Royal Designer for Industry, spent the day with Year 9 and 12 students at Arrow Vale. Ben launched an exciting project to re-design the school reception area with Year 12 A-Level Product Design students. Ben spoke to a packed audience about how he became passionate about design and in particular interior design.

“Mr Kelly gave a fascinating insight into the thought processes, influence and inspiration he uses when he is designing a thought provoking piece. This talk really inspired us to think about what we could do with our reception area. We can’t wait for another opportunity to meet and work with Mr Kelly”

BREN HEALD, Sixth Form student at Arrow Vale RSA Academy



Ben Kelly with students from Arrow Vale RSA Academy

Who is part of the RSA Family of Academies?



RSA Academy, Tipton, Sandwell

RSA Academy, Tipton is a secondary school for pupils aged 11–18 (Years 7–13) which opened to students in September 2008.



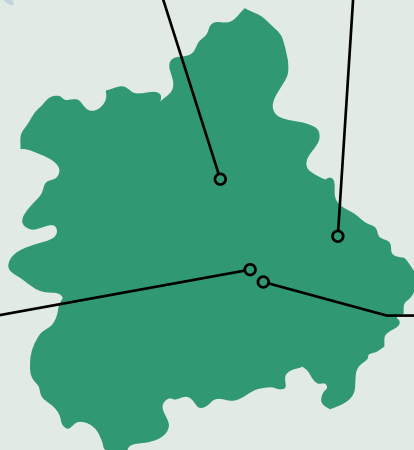
Whitley Academy, Coventry

Whitley Academy is a secondary school for pupils aged 11–18 (Years 7–13) and joined the RSA Family in July 2011.



Ipsley CE RSA Academy, Redditch, Worcestershire

Ipsley is the most recent school to join the Family, opening as an RSA Academy in January 2013. Ipsley is a middle school for pupils aged 9–13 (Years 5–8).



Arrow Vale RSA Academy, Redditch, Worcestershire

Arrow Vale RSA Academy opened its doors in September 2012. The school is a high school for pupils aged 13–18 (Years 9–13).

JOIN US

RSA Academies is a charitable company established in September 2011 operating as an umbrella trust. We are governed by a Trustee Board with equal numbers of RSA appointed and schools appointed Trustees. Our core funding comes from membership contributions from the schools and a contribution from the RSA. Schools and the RSA also work together to secure external funding.

We are now looking to build on our strong foundation and grow the RSA Family of Academies to 12–15 schools by 2016. We believe that a Family of this size will inspire greater collaboration and innovation and be better able to influence broader education policy and practice.

The four schools currently in the RSA Family of Academies are all in the West Midlands, and this next phase of expansion will be focused in this area, with a view to working in another area in the future. We would welcome expressions of interest from sponsored and convertor Academies (or those planning Academy conversion) who have the capacity and enthusiasm for providing support to other schools, and from schools seeking an Academy sponsor. We welcome both primary and secondary schools.

Schools joining the RSA Family of Academies will be committed to the vision of the RSA, to innovation and to working together to excel in our key priority areas. These schools are likely to be serving a local community with relatively high levels of deprivation.

“Our Family of Academies is now established and the schools are working together very effectively. We aim for our students to become successful learners and confident and creative individuals. We look forward to expanding the group and extending RSA’s contribution to new thinking about how to make schools the best for students”

SUE HORNER MBE, Chair of RSA Academies Board

WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?

If you know about a school that may wish to join the RSA Family of Academies or would like further information please contact Alison Critchley, Executive Director, RSA Academies.

alison.critchley@rsa.org.uk