

EDUCATION CHARTER

INTRODUCTION

Oasis Community Learning is one of the Oasis family of charities that is now established on five continents, providing education, health, housing and youth and community services. Oasis Community Learning is responsible for the **Oasis Academies**.

Through its wider work, Oasis wants to contribute to building communities where children, young people and adults:

- Are supported as individuals
- Are empowered to take responsibility for themselves and others
- Have a commitment to learning
- Have positive values
- Are socially competent
- Have a positive identity
- Know their boundaries and expectations
- Are able to make constructive use of time

These are the overall aims of the **Oasis community hubs**.

The Education Charter is the foundation document for Oasis Community Learning and the Oasis Academies. It is an expression of:

- Our inspiration
- Our guiding principles
- The framework for what we seek to do with the children, young people and families that we serve.

The Education Charter was developed during 2009 with contributions from:

- Students, staff, parents/carers, businesses and other members of the Academy communities
- Principals and Executive officers of Oasis Community Learning
- Other parts of the Oasis family in the UK and abroad.

It has drawn from and complements the guidance for maintained schools about the new framework for Ofsted inspection introduced in September 2009.

The Education Charter was confirmed by the Board of Trustees of Oasis Community Learning on 14th December 2009. It will be reviewed regularly.

Our fundamental aim is to create and maintain an **ethos** in the community hubs and Academies that reflects our core beliefs, values and behaviours.

Annex 1 provides further information about the **Oasis ethos**.

Annex 2 summarises the main ideas, words and phrases that our **students** used when talking about the Education Charter.

Annex 3 provides information about work in progress to develop **qualitative measures** of the educational outcomes of Oasis Academies. These will be used to balance quantitative data like attendance and exclusion rates and exam results.

SUMMARY

Our Purposes

We shall establish and sustain:

- a network of high-achieving learning communities that:
 - enables everyone to realise their full, God-given potential
 - refuses to put limits on achievement

(Target date: **2014**)

We shall ensure that:

- All Oasis Academies are among the most valued* schools in England, providing:
 - excellent opportunities for everyone to learn
 - enjoyment in learning and an education for the whole person
 - service to the whole community
 - state-of-the-art facilities

(Target date: **2014**)

- All Oasis Academies are showing substantial improvements against challenging targets to raise standards across all aspects of their work

(Target date: **2011**)

*Note: we understand 'most valued' in terms of the outcomes of this Charter – see page 6

Our Values

- We are motivated by the life, message and example of Jesus Christ
- Learning, achievement, personal fulfilment and good citizenship are at the heart of all that we do
- We want to serve our children, young people, families and local communities with love, optimism, enthusiasm and integrity
- We aspire to the following in all our educational work:

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Every person matters and we value everyone in the Oasis Academies

TRANSFORMING LEARNING

We have a passion for learning and we want everyone to achieve their full, God-given potential

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

We are committed to community development and will help to increase community cohesion, locally, nationally and globally

BEHAVIOURS THAT WE BELIEVE ARE ESSENTIAL FOR CREATING GREAT PLACES TO LEARN

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Every person matters and we value everyone in the Oasis Academies

- Creating strong relationships based on trust, as the heart of our understanding of inclusion*
- Valuing and celebrating equality and diversity as the heart of the Oasis ethos
- Valuing the uniqueness of each person; recognising different talents or gifts that relate to the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual aspects of what it means to be 'human'
- Nurturing values like consideration for others, compassion, truthfulness, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice and a commitment to healthy and sustainable lifestyles
- Having the highest expectations of ourselves and others by: helping to create a 'can do' culture, wanting to do our very best and making a positive contribution to the community
- Providing inspirational leadership at all levels that models the Oasis ethos and is focused on relationships, creativity and life-long learning
- Developing full participation, strong team work and shared leadership among staff
- Developing student leadership and valuing all student contributions to improve learning, teaching and the overall quality of life in the Academy
- Listening to our stakeholders and partners and using their views to inform future developments

*Note: being motivated by our Christian beliefs means that we are inclusive, amongst other things. For Oasis Community Learning, inclusion is about accepting the person but being prepared to confront and challenge unacceptable behaviour. It is about being intentionally committed to:

1. Serving and respecting everyone regardless of their gender, marital status, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation or physical and mental capability.
2. Acknowledging the freedom of people of all beliefs or none both to hold and to express their beliefs and convictions respectfully and freely, within the framework of the law.
3. Never imposing our Christian beliefs on others but seeking to behave in a Christ-like way with everyone.

TRANSFORMING LEARNING

We have a passion for learning and we want everyone to achieve their full, God-given potential

- Creating environments in all our Academies where learning is fun
- Providing all our students with excellent opportunities for learning and assessment to support learning
- Ensuring that students maintain good progress between the primary and secondary phases and other key transitions
- Aiming for 'good' to 'outstanding' standards of learning and teaching in all our Academies and, where necessary, getting the basics right to raise standards of attainment quickly
- Understanding and thinking critically about different worldviews as frameworks for learning
- Providing a forward-looking, broad and balanced curriculum which develops the gifts and talents of all students and those that teach and lead them
- Ensuring that Oasis Academies become centres of excellence for their specialisms
- Ensuring that students are accessing a wide range of extended opportunities for learning within and beyond the Academy
- Ensuring that learning balances knowledge and understanding with skills for life and caters for the whole person: academically, vocationally, socially, morally, spiritually, physically, emotionally and environmentally
- Providing progression routes for all students in the secondary phase that are attractive and accessible, helping them to meet challenging personal targets and achieve excellent results
- Enabling students to make a successful transition to interdependent living through employment, further/higher education or other beneficial activities; becoming confident, competent and fulfilled adults
- Providing learning and teaching in an environment that is healthy and safe and where there are excellent services for care, guidance and support, particularly for the most vulnerable students
- Developing a culture of mutual accountability and rigorous evaluation; being well prepared for external review and inspection
- Managing the resources that we are given in a responsible way to ensure maximum impact on the quality of education provided
- Developing our staff and sharing our successes between the Oasis Academies and more widely
- Measuring performance based on the aspirations and outcomes of the *Education Charter*, committing to continuous improvement
- Celebrating success widely and regularly; supporting others with their learning and being pleased when others do well

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

We are committed to community development and will help to increase community cohesion, locally, nationally and globally

- Demonstrating our Christian values through a love for and commitment to others which is self-giving and offered with compassion but also holds people to account; promoting responsibilities as well as rights
- Believing and demonstrating that any situation can be transformed
- Valuing and engaging with the religious, ethnic and social diversity of our communities and using this diversity as a resource for learning and a means to improve community cohesion
- Working effectively with others to reduce poverty and social injustice, in all their forms
- Helping to transform lives and communities through the overall work of the hub and, for Academies, through the contributions of students and staff to local, national and global needs
- Reducing consumption of the Earth's resources and increasing sustainable lifestyles
- Showing resilience and not giving up when faced with difficulties
- Seeing the wider community committed to, engaged with and proud of their Academy

THE OUTCOMES FOR OUR STUDENTS

Oasis Community Learning is committed to measuring and evaluating the impact of the Education Charter and, in particular, the **outcomes for our students**. This can be done using quantitative evidence like exam results and also by gathering qualitative evidence about the experiences of students, parents & carers, staff and the wider community at an Oasis Academy (see Annex 3).

Outcomes for our students and other members of Oasis Academy communities:

- Students and staff express a high appreciation for being included, challenged, supported and safe
- Students, parents/carers, staff, key partners and members of the wider community express a high level of satisfaction, that places Oasis Academies among the most valued schools in England; for example, as measured by the range of opportunities for learning, the level of enjoyment in learning, the range of successes and the quality of facilities
- Students and staff of the Academies are actively engaged in learning opportunities beyond the formal curriculum; there are increasing opportunities for adult learning
- Students, parents/carers and staff report that the Academies provide care, guidance and support that enable them to achieve their personal best
- Academies provide evidence of improvements against challenging goals that exceed national minimum targets for examination success* and other key performance indicators, for example, attendance, exclusions and the quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
[*For example, all Oasis Academies will have reached or exceeded the current national target of at least 30% of Year 11 students gaining 5+ GCSEs at A* - C, incl. English and Maths, by 2011]
- Students make successful transitions during their progress through the Academies and from the Academies to employment, further and higher education or other beneficial activities and on to adult life; the achievements of students and staff are celebrated
- Community members express a high appreciation for the opportunities to get involved with the life of the Academy and the hub, the variety of services for the whole community and the contribution Academies make towards community development and cohesion, locally, nationally and globally
- Financial and resource management, including energy consumption, provides evidence of sustainable practices across the network of Academies
- Oasis Community Learning and the Oasis Academies are recognized nationally for educational excellence, strong governance and rigorous accountability

Annex 1

THE OASIS ETHOS

Oasis Community Learning is a Christian sponsor of Academies and this raises questions for some people. Therefore we want to explain a little more about what being 'Christian' means to us.

If organisational purpose sets out *why* an organisation does what it does, and mission describes *what* an organisation does in order to achieve the purpose, then ethos is about *who* an organisation is and the *way* it achieves its purpose and delivers the mission.

As with food, ethos is like a flavour or a taste that permeates a whole dish. It is in everything and flows through everything.

Ethos is the very essence of Oasis, our organisational DNA. In short, our ethos is our identity or personality.

A person's identity or personality can best be understood by observing or experiencing the way in which he/she behaves. It is the same for an organisation.

Many words can be used to describe Oasis' identity or its organisational behaviours but central to any such description are the following statements. Oasis has:

- A passion to include everyone
- A desire to treat everyone equally, respecting differences
- A commitment to healthy and open relationships
- A deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed
- A sense of perseverance to keep going for the long haul

It is true to say a person's behaviours reflect what a person believes. In other words, what we believe about life determines how we behave and the things that we value.

Oasis' identity or organisational behaviours are rooted in, and flow from the Christian faith. Oasis' work is motivated by the life, message and example of Jesus Christ. How Oasis as an organisation behaves has a direct relationship to what Oasis as an organisation believes. Oasis' beliefs direct and shape the organisation's behaviours.

The following statements represent a few examples of Oasis' core beliefs:

- Each individual is made in the image of the God who created all of us, making us all equal and different.
- God is love. Love is not simply one of God's attributes, but rather the very essence of his nature. This love pervades the universe and is unconditional rather than earned.
- God became human in the person of Jesus Christ. He came to where we are. He shared our experience of life. He felt joy and pain. He engages with us and understands us.
- Jesus served others rather than expecting to be served and willingly sacrificed his life through the cross.
- Jesus rose from the dead. Death is not the end. There is resurrection and hope.

Therefore, it follows that Oasis will behave by:

- Seeking to serve all people equally, respecting their differences and aspiring to meet the needs of the whole person and the whole community because each person is valuable to God.
- Accepting others for who they are because they are accepted and loved by God.
- Engaging in the whole life of the communities we work in.
- Sacrificially serving both the individuals and the communities with whom we work.
- Living with the hope that transformation is always possible because the resurrection of Christ shows that even the darkest situation can be overcome.

Oasis behaviours cannot be separated from its beliefs; they are integral to one another. Oasis believes that its beliefs cannot have their full validity if they are not lived out. Equally, the behaviours cannot fully represent Oasis without an understanding that they demonstrate the Christian faith. The beliefs and behaviours together constitute Oasis' ethos.

However, Oasis never seeks to impose its beliefs on anyone. Oasis is always clear with staff, students, parents/carers, volunteers and any other parties about the fact that its behaviours and the things that it values flow directly from its Christian beliefs. But to be part of Oasis does not require anyone to own or accept these beliefs.

Note: Oasis Community Learning will also be producing

- statements that explain our understanding of key concepts like 'knowledge', 'truth' and 'transformation'
- 'think pieces' for staff development, and other interested individuals, that will explore issues like the relationship between Christian distinctiveness and an inclusive approach to the whole community; the implications of a Christian world view for curriculum design; the science v. faith debate
- Resources to develop the Oasis ethos in our Academies based on the behaviours identified in Steve Chalke's *Apprentice: walking the way of Christ* - journeying; longing; believing; questioning; belonging; serving; persevering; forgiving; listening; engaging

Annex 2

STUDENTS' VIEWS

We invited groups of students from all the Oasis Academies to tell us what they wanted from their education, based on the key phrases in the Education Charter, and this is what they told us.

What should 'we value everyone' mean?

- Less able people have more opportunities to shine
- Allowing everyone a chance to express their opinion and really listening
- Motivating for success
- Treat everyone equally; accepting people for who they are
- No discrimination; no prejudice; don't judge
- Teamwork
- Inclusion
- Respect for others
- Supportive
- Helping others
- Be grateful
- Have a love of life
- Respect – for teachers and by teachers
- Not allowing ability to get in the way
- Diversity
- Fairness
- More praise than negativity; emphasise achievements not failures
- Everyone is special
- Same opportunities for everyone
- Nobody gets left behind
- Seek their talents
- Treat others as you'd like to be treated
- Care
- Anti-bullying projects
- Wear a smile, it's always in style

What should 'learning and achieving' mean?

- We want the best; always try your best
- Having the right atmosphere; encouraging environment
- Children get a choice of what they would like to be taught
- Goals to reach
- Rewards for achievement
- Learn to be disciplined
- Better technology for learning and achieving
- If we push ourselves enough we'll do it
- Great rewards, outstanding facilities; rewarding students for hard work
- Learning to help other people who aren't as well off as we are
- Not everyone has to be at the top of the class, as long as they are doing the best they can
- Keep focused on personal learning for students

- Not everyone is good at Maths but they might be brilliant at Art, or something different
- Recognise different abilities
- Help everyone discover their talents
- If teachers try, we try; excellent teachers make for excellent students
- See it as an adventure
- Stick together and inspire each other
- Greater opportunities
- Support those who need it
- Constructive criticism; teachers advise very keenly and vigorously; challenge everybody
- No matter your ability, we'll help
- Get the best qualifications possible
- Skills for life; learning communication skills
- Ensuring equal opportunities for everyone
- High standards
- Same effort at all levels
- Teachers understanding us

What should 'your Academy and the community' mean?

- Letting the community know what is going on in the Academy; let the community know what progress we are making
- Academy and community representatives meeting regularly; listen to the community's views; let the community know that their thoughts matter
- To work together to make it a better place; work together like a family
- Our Academy is the hub of the community; sharing our facilities
- Be considerate; respect for the local community; show care for the community
- Let the community know we are a caring Oasis family
- There is always a smile at the end of the rainbow
- Participating in community activities; organising events with the community
- Give the community a good name
- Fundraising for community needs; raising money for charities
- We should have people to boost our community
- Help partner primary schools to form a relationship with us
- Our Academy is the community, for the community
- The world is the oyster and we are the pearl

What would you (as students) want to see as outcomes of the Education Charter?

- Quality of opportunity
- Be a valued member of Oasis
- Student leadership
- Working as a family
- Social justice
- Celebrating achievements; encouragement
- Inspiration
- Be given a chance to be heard; be included; be kept informed
- Learn in a better environment
- Have a chance to choose what we want to do

- Get qualifications
- Be seen as equals; students coming first; inclusive learning
- Feel safe; learn a healthy way of life
- Access to counselling if we need it
- Have prospects for the future and achieve them
- Forgive the past and create a positive future
- Support the whole person not just the academic side
- Leave school with good memories; friendships for life

What would your parents/carers* want to see as outcomes of the Education Charter?

- Ensured safety
- Integrity
- Good teaching; children enjoy learning
- Good results
- Involvement; be kept informed
- Learn manners
- Children to be taught skills for life
- Children to be taught discipline
- Make students employable

*Oasis Academies regularly seek the views of parents/carers about the progress of each Academy. This feedback was based on what students thought their parents/carers wanted for them.

What would the local community want to see as outcomes of the Education Charter?

- Well behaved students
- No vandalism
- Let them know we are here to support them and be supported in return
- Improve the local economy
- Effectively contribute to the community
- Good relationships built on firm foundations; unity
- The community is welcome at our Academy
- Support to everyone, not just local but national and international

Note: We shall be producing shorter, visually attractive versions of the Education Charter for students, parents/carers and more general use. No doubt, we shall use some of the great words and phrases used by the students.

Annex 3

DEVELOPING QUALITATIVE MEASURES OF STUDENT OUTCOMES

Oasis Community Learning will gather, analyse and learn the lessons from both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the performance of Oasis Academies in order to celebrate success, share what is working well and develop a culture of continuous improvement. We believe that both sources of evidence are closely interrelated. For example, unless students are cared for and feel safe, they will not make progress and attain the best possible exam results. If the whole community does not support the life of the Academy, the range of educational opportunities for students is likely to be reduced. To support the evidence-gathering process, we are planning a regular 'Oasis Community Learning review' of the impact of the Education Charter on each Oasis Academy.

In order to create **qualitative measures of the outcomes** of the Oasis Academies (see page 6), we shall be considering tools and processes that might include some or all of the following:

- Student, staff and parents'/carers' views about the quality of the Academy as a safe and engaging place to learn.
- Student involvement with opportunities for extended learning and their contributions to the Academy and the wider community.
- How successfully the rhetoric of the Education Charter is experienced in the day-to-day reality of life in the Academy.
- The sort of people that Oasis Academy students turn out to be, what they move on to and get involved with and their ability to make the best of life. We plan to do this through longitudinal studies of our former students, working with research students in universities.
- The impact of extended services and the overall work of the hub on the development of students and their families.
- High percentages of students and parents/carers believing that the purposes and values of the Education Charter have been fulfilled.
- Relevant indicators from the Ofsted Self Evaluation Form (SEF).
- Ofsted reports with 'good' or 'outstanding' grades across key areas like the quality of students' learning and progress, behaviour, student care and welfare, students' contribution to the school and the wider community, promoting community cohesion and the quality of leadership and management, plus the best possible grade for attainment.
- Quality kitemarks like Investors in People, SportsMark, ArtsMark and the International Schools Award.