"OUR WAYS" - THE INSERTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPONSOR APPROVED ATTRIBUTES INTO THE WHOLE CURRICULUM OF ACADEMIES.

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Drawing on empirical data from both interviews with Academies' staff and a review of the literature; this paper explores the 'hidden values agenda' of several philanthropic sponsored Academies. Further, it considers the ways in which these 'iconic' institutions impact upon the broader development of the Academies programme. In conclusion, attention is drawn to this agenda, and its suitability, as an aspect of state-funded, universal education, considered.

Academies are intended to significantly improve educational outcomes and the consequent life chances for young people in schools. Initially this programme focused on schools that were deemed to be 'under-performing' (Chapman and Salokangas, 2012). Suitable sponsors were considered to be successful business people, but as the programme developed other institutions such as faith groups or universities were permitted to sponsor Academies.

Sponsors, operating within a liberal legal frameworks, now oversee the management, shape and general steer of the learning experiences of most of the young people in England. These Academies have clear statements of vision and values; some of which are operationalised by the Academy in the form of concrete initiatives which seek to develop particular 'attributes' in young people (Bates, 2013). These are identified by the sponsor as those aspects of their personality that led to the success that now allows them to engage in philanthropy. Thus, the Aldridge foundation (n.d.) states:

'...the expectation is that all lessons in all subjects will identify at least one learning outcome linked to the entrepreneurial qualities and skills. In Year 12, for example, all students are following the Level 3 CoPE award...which focuses on the habits and attributes of entrepreneurship.'

Harris Academies (n.d.) identify similar attributes and link them directly with their founder:

'...Lord Harris’ self-made success as a businessman is an inspiration to our students and his entrepreneurialism is thoroughly reflected in the can-do culture of our Academies.'

This paper explores and questions: this enculturation of the hidden values that are being developed through these attributes, how these attributes are developed, whether these are desirable for a broad and balanced education for all, and their fairness for teachers in the context of a prescriptive inspection regime.


Aldridge Foundation Website (accessed 15/1/14) http://www.aldridgefoundation.com/entrepreneurship_specialism

Harris Academies Website (accessed 15/1/14) http://www.harrisfederation.org.uk/32/our-sponsor