Co-operative Schools
Co-operative College
Co-operative College

- Established 1919
- Training members and managers
- Looking after our heritage

- International work
- Research
- Schools and young people
Co-operatives and schools

- What’s happening in education
- Why a co-operative alternative?
- What are co-operative schools?
- What are the co-operative models?
- What is driving the growth of co-operative schools
Robert Owen and education

The Institute for the formation of character
Co-operative schools – International experience

- Over 600 Co-operative schools in Spain
- Over 80% of Primary schools in France teach co-operation
- Over 120 Co-operative schools in Portugal
- Over 100 co-operative schools in Sweden
- Over 1,900 school co-operatives in Malaysia
- Co-operative schools in Africa and South America
- Schools co-operatives in Poland celebrated their centenary in 2011
What’s happening in education?

• Removal of the central role of the LA in providing education (schools)
• Financial pressures on schools
• Rapid growth of academy chains
• Marketisation – Free schools, UTCs Studio Schools as well as academies
• New entrants – competing for learners
Who should own schools

“How dare anyone give our schools away to a small group of unelected self appointed individuals?

I am concerned about apparent attempts to privatise or marketise education”

Secondary Head - Cornwall
A co-operative alternative

- Governance rooted in local communities
- Safeguarding community assets and infrastructure
- Building from collaboration – working with rather than run by
- Encouraging and welcoming diversity
- A template for local adaption not a “one cap fits all” model
Key characteristics

- An ethos based on globally shared values
- Inclusive – values driven and faith neutral
- Democratic engagement of key stakeholders – parents/carers, staff, learners and the local community in governance
- A bridge to the global co-operative movement

- Self help
- Self responsibility
- Democracy
- Equality
- Equity
- Solidarity
- Honesty
- Openness
- Social responsibility
- Caring for others
‘We could all see the direction of travel of Government policy and the rapidly changing roles of the Local Authority. To us self-help was a natural solution. We are now working as a co-operative to support school improvement and a wider range of opportunities across our partnership for the benefit of all the young people in the communities we serve’.
Co-operative schools

- **594 Co-operative trust schools** May 2014 plus **100** associate/partner schools – over **130** consulting

- **6 Co-operative sponsor academies** sponsored by the Co-operative Group – in Manchester, Stoke on Trent and Leeds plus

- **1 SCS sponsor academy** - in Gloucestershire

- **36 Co-operative converter academies** May 2014
The Schools Co-operative Society

- National network
- Services to co-operative schools
- Joint procurement
- A voice in the policy debate
Effective support for conversion

- Team of Regional Managers and Associates support schools through the conversion process – all with a very strong education background
- Legal support – with in depth expertise in education law
- Initial implementation support

But no funding from the DfE for trust conversion or implementation – lip service from Ministers but not a penny in resources
Making them work

- A series of programmes and resources to help you get the trust up and running in the first 18 months after implementation – but note the challenge as there is no funding for such work.
“I am delighted that these five schools which are each so important in their village communities have been able to come together in the Willow Schools Co-operative Trust. I am sure that this venture will further enhance the high standards of learning which children in these schools already experience. I believe that this will be of enormous benefit not only for our children in the longer term but also for the whole community. I look forward to the schools’ future development together and to seeing this in action as this excellent initiative progresses.”

Rt Hon David Laws MP (Minister of State for the Department for Education & Cabinet Office)
We believe that equality, solidarity, democracy and social responsibility are the principles that should underpin our education system and that schools should serve the best interests of children and young people, parents and carers, the workforce and the wider community.
What next

• Schools improvement co-operatives
• Early Years/nursery schools
• FE and HE sectors?
• Support services mutuals – school meals?
Further information:

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