

Aylsham High School (A Specialist Business & Enterprise College)

Formal Proposal to become a Foundation School supported by a Charitable Trust

1. Introductory Information

(a) School details:

Aylsham High School, Sir Williams Lane, Aylsham, Norfolk, NR116AN

Headteacher – Mr D Spalding

Tel: 01263 733 270; enquiries to office@aylshamhigh.norfolk.sch.uk

Category of school: Community School

(b) Dates: the planned implementation date for this proposal is 3rd May 2011

(c) Objections or Comments

Further information is available on the Cluster website at <http://www.aylshamcluster.co.uk/>

Any objections and/or comments need to be forwarded to the Governing Body by 28th March 2011 (28 days after this publication) and addressed to Mrs S Platt, Chair of the Governors, Aylsham High School, Sir Williams Lane, Aylsham, Norfolk, NR116AN

2. Public Consultation

(a) Consultation took place between 19th June 2010 and 16th July 2010 (5 working weeks during term time) and the following groups were sent details of the proposals:

- a) Young people currently on roll at the school;
- b) Parents/carers of pupils currently on roll at the school;
- c) Staff currently employed at the school, both teaching and non teaching;
- d) The governing body, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected by the proposals;
- e) Families of pupils at any other school that may be affected by the proposals;
- f) Any trade unions who represent staff at the school and representatives of any trade union of any other staff at schools that may be affected by the proposals;
- g) The Norwich Diocesan Board of Education for the Church of England;
- h) The Young People's Learning Agency;
- i) Local Members of Parliament whose constituencies include the school (including MEPs)
- j) Local Borough, District or Parish councils where the school is situated;
- k) The Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership, or those who benefit from a contractual arrangement giving them the use of the premises;

(b) Meetings

- 14.06.10 Public Consultation packs distributed / details 'live' on the website
- 19.07.10 School Council meeting
- 06.07.10 Open Staff meeting
- 06.07.10 Open Parents & Stakeholders meeting.

Those consulted were invited to look at the Cluster website which provided details of:

- Consultation letters to stakeholders
- Stakeholder Questionnaire
- Changing status (Booklet 1)
- Trust schools - Frequently Asked Questions (Booklet 2)

(c) Responses:

During the consultation period, 22 staff and 6 parents/ stakeholders attended the Open Meetings which were managed by the Chair of Governors and the Headteacher. Any concerns raised were answered to the questioner's satisfaction. Key questions raised at the Public Consultation Meetings are available on the website.

Staff responses were also represented through their professional associations in meetings with the Headteacher. Once issues had been clarified, the overall response was in favour of Trust Status.

The Student Council's feedback on behalf of all pupils and students was very positive. Students were very interested in the idea of a range of partners working with the school. They hoped that the Trust would help to support the school and add an extra dimension to the work of the school. Details are available on the website.

There were 3 written responses – issues raised were addressed in the feedback document

Questionnaire responses/comments received: 46 Replies

Question 1: How do you feel about AHS changing its status to become a Foundation School?

Yes – 30 (65%); No - 11 (24%); I don't know – 4 (9%); No response – 1 (2%)

Question 2: How do you feel about AHS acquiring a Trust?

Yes – 31 (67%); No – 11 (24%); I don't know – 3 (7%); No response – 1 (2%)

Question 3: Do you think that AHS should develop long-term partnerships and work with the following organisations to achieve its educational aims?

Overall, there was a positive response to our proposed partners, with a mean approval rating of 72%.

Yes – 87% to 65% / No – 20% to 4%.

A significant number of ‘Don’t knows’ with regard to our proposed business and community partners, indicates that we need to provide more information for stakeholders.

Question 4: Do you think this new Governing Body model is right for the school?

Yes – 76.5% (with 11% having concerns and 6.5% wanting more Trust Governors).

No – 19.5% / Don’t Know – 4%

Question 5. Do you agree with the proposal to establish a Stakeholder Council?

Yes – 31 (67.5%); No – 9 (19.5%); I don’t know – 5 (11%); No response – 1 (2%)

Question 6. Do you have any other comments, concerns or suggestions that we should consider?

A wide range of issues were raised which have been addressed in the Governors’ feedback document, which is attached.

The consultation documents are available on the Cluster website at #

<http://www.aylshamcluster.co.uk/>; or from the school office.

The public consultation feedback was issued to stakeholders listed above and placed upon the Cluster website.

All applicable statutory requirements about consulting on proposals have been met.

Copies of the consultation documents and responses are available on the Cluster website.

The prescribed alteration is:

(i) A change of category to Foundation status

(ii) The acquisition of a Trust

3. Current Education Standards

External examination results 2010:

KS4 5 GCSE A* - C grades 84%

KS4 5 GCSE A* - C grades inc. English and Maths 73%

KS4 average total point score (capped) 348.5

CVA KS2 – KS4 =1016.1

Ofsted Report - June 2008 – Grade 2 overall (Good with Outstanding features)

Impact on results if Trust status is not acquired

The schools in the Cluster have worked together for the benefit of pupils and families and will continue to do so. However, without Trust Status, the capacity for further growth and sustained strategic partnerships to support children and families will always be limited. Opportunities within the confines of an ever fragmenting local authority will be fewer and there will be a stronger sense of losing the ability to be in control of the strategic direction we need for our pupils to maintain and improve on these results. A collaborative strategic approach with external partners, offering local solutions to local needs is vital to our future success.

Impact on results if Trust status is acquired:

The holistic development of our pupils from birth to 16, alongside the excellent academic standards that we strive to improve on each year, underpins the professional relationship we currently enjoy as a Cluster. The acquisition of the Trust will give us the strategic capacity we need to deliver our aims as documented in our Cluster Development Plan. The Plan is divided into 4 Key sections, all of which have a sharp focus on the improvement and support of teaching and learning in the classroom:

Teaching and Learning and Standards - we aim to identify where impact on pupil success is high and analyse and share strategies to raise standards even higher for all groups of children.

As a high performing school with excellent GCSE examination results and with the launch of an even more exciting curriculum offer we must continue to strive for excellence. We believe that this can best be achieved through an outward facing approach, working with parents, families, the wider community and external partners. Trust status cements these crucial relationships as a legacy for learners in the future and recognises that Cluster collaboration is crucial to success in GCSE and other examinations. The learning journey starts from birth and takes in our whole community.

Our Cluster boasts almost universally 'Good' Ofsted rated schools, which is a significant improvement. This is arguably attributable to the enhanced leadership that has developed through strong professional partnerships that Cluster headteachers have developed. Through a formalised partnership, the many networks and projects that have been initiated can continue to grow. This will help to improve progression and lead schools to continue developing from 'Good' to 'Outstanding.'

Provision - Working collaboratively will help us to develop our understanding of learners at all stages of their learning development. We will be able therefore to share strategies and information to help ensure that the curriculum is both responsive and engaging to the needs of all our learners. The development of cross phase strategies linked to the key skills of literacy and numeracy will help to ensure that all learners receive the support and intervention they need to help them to make or even exceed expected progress. Pooling and sharing resources and expertise in this way can only help maximise the effectiveness of Cluster funding and raise standards for all. At a time when resources are scarce the Cluster Trust will ensure that resources are deployed strategically for the benefit of all learners.

Guidance, advice and support – in seeking to ensure that the welfare, safety and development of the whole child are given priority across the Cluster, we have already recruited Parent Support Advisors and Family Learning Coordinators. The impact of these on families has been evidenced via improved attendance and exceptionally high parent take up of places for sessions which aim to help parents to understand and support their child's learning. With a significant reduction of support and guidance offered

through the local authority, we will need increasingly to look for local and sustainable solutions that can only be achieved through a strategic approach with external partners. Success depends on our ability to include all of the communities, individuals and groups within our catchment in the Trust. We need to harness this potential of social capital through our cooperative partnership and membership model in order to grow our schools and communities.

Leadership and Management – aims to promote quality leadership at all levels across the Cluster.- Headteachers have enjoyed ever closer professional partnerships with their fellow Heads in the Cluster and the capacity to share successful strategies, strengths and ideas is significant. We aim to encourage colleagues to enjoy and aspire to leadership and to strengthen leadership throughout the school which will also serve to support continuity in challenging times, for example when a Head retires or is promoted to another school. We also aim to promote the Aylsham Cluster as a dynamic and supported group of schools which will potentially attract good candidates to headship, teaching and support staff vacancies. This is particularly important as currently over 60% of Norfolk headships are re-advertised, some several times.

More recently the focus has been on the development of literacy and numeracy leaders to nurture excellence. The early focus is on developing shared spelling and handwriting policies to further enhance the transition between Year 6 and Year 7 and to apply jointly for additional funding to support children who are struggling with one to one support. Children starting at secondary school need to have a good level of literacy to be able to access the curriculum and a sustained approach to develop skills will provide children and young people in the Aylsham Cluster with the opportunity to achieve to their potential.

We were the first Cluster in Norfolk to establish a locally delivered bespoke Continuing Professional Development programme, which, in the first stage, has focussed on the training needs of the increasing numbers of support staff in the Cluster. This provision has been affordable and relevant to the needs of the schools and will be increasingly important as funding is reduced and the role of support staff in schools continues to develop to provide the best possible support in and beyond the classroom.

There is no doubt that the foundations of collaboration are set and the benefits visible. More and more, we believe this way of working will offset the vulnerability of the services provided by the LA. The ability to open our minds to wider possibilities and rethink our ambitions is a real potential benefit. Yet change is most powerful when we have a say in it. It energises us. The model for Trust status we are looking to acquire is a cooperative trust which has wider stakeholder involvement. Partnerships at all levels therefore will have a key role in allowing us to live dreams or have dreams not yet dreamt.

4. Changing Category to Foundation

Rationale:

To facilitate the organisation of the Trust, the school is required to alter its current status to become a foundation school and acquire a Foundation. In acquiring Foundation Status, the Governing Body and not the Trust, will assume new responsibilities including the employment of staff and the admission of students to the school. In addition, the Trust will hold the land and assets in trust for the school. The Governing Body will have day to day responsibility for managing the assets, as is the case now.

The governing body will largely retain its present composition save for the impact of the school becoming a Foundation school and acquiring a Trust (which will appoint a minority of governors.)

All current staff will transfer across to the employ of the governing body under the appropriate regulations. Existing and new teaching staff will continue to work under the terms of the 'School Teacher's Pay and Conditions Document' (STPCD). The Governing Body will set out the terms and conditions for new support staff which will be in accordance with nationally and locally agreed pay and condition negotiations. All staff will therefore always enjoy the same or better terms and conditions of employment as in any maintained state school.

The School will continue to teach the national curriculum and will be inspected by OFSTED at appropriate times. It will retain its Specialist Business & Enterprise status.

The Governing Body will also become responsible for pupil admissions, but will work jointly with the Local Authority to administer the provision of pupil places within the requirements of the National Schools Admissions Code. Whilst not intending to alter admissions arrangements, the School has the right, as a Foundation school, to alter its admissions arrangements to ensure they support the agreed educational objectives which it shares with its partner associated schools.

5. Acquiring a Trust

(a) Name of the Trust: The Aylsham Cluster Trust

(b) Rationale:

The school's Vision and Values and its expectations of students will form the basis for the work of the Trust and will be unaffected by the change in school status. It is envisaged that the new partnership arrangements will contribute significantly to a further improvement in Aylsham High School's performance and see better educational experiences and outcomes for every young person and their family because we will be working with our learners for longer.

The principal aim of The Aylsham Cluster Trust is to provide an inspiring range of experiences to raise standards and aspirations and improve opportunities for all.

Essential features of the proposed Trust will be to: -

1. Raise Aspirations, by

- Raising standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT
- Embedding learning & Increasing opportunities for all;

2. Work with Families, to create

- Healthy and Safe Communities
- Community Cohesion;

3. Ensure Professional development for all, to

- Increase leadership capacity
- Continue workforce development;

4. Develop Sustainable Schools, by

- Working co-operatively to prepare for the challenges / opportunities for schools in a rural context
- Ensuring effective procurement, commissioning and Value for Money.

Our Trust will be a 'Community Development and Co-operative Model.' We have decided to use this model as it enables those who are directly involved in the school, parents/carers, staff and learners, to become engaged in its long-term strategic direction through membership of the Trust. It will also allow those more indirectly involved, such as other members of learners' families, to become involved. We believe that engaging members alongside the organisational partners detailed is essential if we are to achieve our vision of transforming educational opportunities for all in the community we serve.

The Co-operative values of self help, self responsibility, democracy, equality and solidarity and the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others give the Trust a firm foundation on which to improve standards of education.

The Trust gives a local platform to develop and enhance opportunities for young people and it creates a new way in which partners can work together under the themes of education and training, community cohesion and sustainability. .

The work of the Trust will enhance the work already undertaken and offer a longer term opportunity for the closer development and collaboration between the cluster schools and the Trust.

It is intended for it to be possible for all parents/carers, pupils and their extended families to join the Trust membership (subject to legal constraints) and gain benefits from doing so.

The Trust will have an ethos of co-operation and democracy consistent with the globally shared co-operative values. It will seek to empower learners and the community to achieve its aim of raising achievement and expectation of learning recognising that tomorrow's learners will live in an increasingly global economy, facing the challenges posed by rapid environmental and economic change. Fostering the values of self-help and self-responsibility it will help young people prepare for these challenges and their future as global citizens. It should also help to ensure that for our stakeholders we are increasingly seen as 'our' school, within 'our' community.

We wish to work towards structures for strategic partners to contribute to planning and delivering sustainable community development projects, which will raise aspirations, raise attainment and ensure that parents and families are well supported, through prevention and early intervention.

(c) Membership of the Trust

Each school member, listed below, will nominate 2 voting trustees to sit on the Trust Board: -

Aldborough Primary School

Aylsham High School

Buxton Primary School

Bure Valley School

John of Gaunt Primary School & Nursery

Erpingham VC Primary School (as External Partners)

St Michael's CE VC Nursery & Infant School (as External Partners)

Contributions from our external trust members: -

<p>The Benjamin Foundation</p> <p>(will nominate 1 voting trustee to sit on the Trust Board)</p>	<p>Our aim is to provide high quality services and opportunities that significantly improve the lives of children and young people and which may not be available to them if we were not in operation.</p> <p>The Benjamin Foundation was founded more than 15 years ago and exists to help people in Norfolk deal with many of the challenges that life throws at them; whether 'everyday' issues such as childcare or heartbreaking problems like abuse and homelessness.</p> <p>The charity provides a range of practical services, support and counselling which all aim to empower people and give them back a sense of hope and control. For example:</p> <p>Parent Support Advisers are there to help parent and families deal with any worries or concerns they have about their child, including issues in their own lives that impact upon their child/ren.</p> <p>Time For You (T4U) is a high quality service offering support, advice and guidance for children and young people aged 4-19 facing issues impacting on their emotional well-being.</p>
---	--

	<p>This service is now delivered in over 40 schools across the county.</p> <p>We provide a broad range of youth work from centre based work, to outreach work to specialist provision for those with disabilities.</p>
<p>The National Trust (will nominate 1 voting trustee to sit on the Trust Board)</p>	<p>As a national charity, we have over 3.6 million members and 55,000 volunteers. More than 14 million people visit our pay for entry properties, while an estimated 50 million visit our open air properties. NT invests over £160 million a year in the nation’s environmental infrastructure and works with over 40,000 companies, including 2,000 specialist conservation businesses.</p> <p>We are committed to working in partnership to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating opportunities for life-changing experiences • Providing places where people can be inspired and experience relaxation, enjoyment and enrichment • Inviting people on a journey of discovery by engaging in learning • Valuing learning for its own sake and for the equality of opportunity it brings <p>We will use our diverse properties as venues and catalysts for learning, enabling us to develop mutually beneficial relationships with local people by enabling inclusive and participatory access to our properties</p> <p>We are able to provide first-hand experiences that cannot be recreated in the classroom; experiences in the ‘real’ environment where young people can feast their senses, practise new skills and develop their creativity and love of learning.</p> <p>We want to put all our properties – built or natural – back at the centre of life in today’s communities, to help grow a sense of belonging, and encourage local pride and identity.</p>
<p>The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts (will nominate 1 voting trustee to sit on the Trust Board)</p>	<p>SCVA is an awe inspiring modern building which houses the Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection. The collection combines modern western art with fine and applied arts from Africa, Pacific, the Americas, Asia, Egypt, the Ancient Mediterranean and Medieval Europe, spanning 5,000 years of human creativity.</p> <p>We would like to use our facilities, resources and expertise open to show your students how art can reflect a whole world and widen cultural horizons. For example how looking at art can both reflect the world and lead us to enjoy perceptions of a wider world; how art objects are a powerful starting point for thinking about wider aspects of peoples, cultures and histories;</p>

	<p>How encounters with objects can be enlightening or baffling, clear or mysterious and how, in the course of new encounters, we can look, discuss, speculate, share views, make links, research and learn. New things and new skills will emerge during these processes which may never previously have considered. Art really can provide a 'window on the world'.</p>
<p>City College Norwich</p> <p>(will nominate 1 voting trustee to sit on the Trust Board)</p>	<p>Building upon the existing strong relationships to demonstrate the value of further and higher education in enhancing life chances and embedding life-long learning, CCN can provide expertise in the development and collaborative provision of new learning pathways up to and including the 14 -19 age group and beyond; support of vocational excellence through its position as a provider of six National Skills Academies – in Financial Services, Manufacturing, Creative and Cultural Industries, Hospitality, Retail and Enterprise - as well as support for leadership & management and shared services (eg HR, Finance, Estates, H&S, CPD, Data Analysis)</p>
<p>Norfolk County Council Children's Services</p> <p>(will nominate 1 voting trustee to sit on the Trust Board)</p>	<p>The Local Authority appointed trustee will be able to bring a wide range of knowledge and experience of schools and education service provision to enable the Trust to realise its vision and fulfil the objectives of raising standards and aspirations for all. They will be able to draw on the resources of Children's Services as a whole in relation to successful and innovative practice in Norfolk and elsewhere. They will also help, with other partners, to ensure that the cluster can continue to make a significant contribution to the development of the Norfolk family of schools.</p>
<p>The Trust will continue to work with the Co-operative College to identify a suitable partner from the co-operative sector.</p>	<p>By becoming a co-operative trust – we will become part of the global co-operative family. We will become members of the Schools Co-operative Society, the national network of co-operative trusts, and work with the Co-operative College to identify a suitable long term co-operative partner for the trust.</p> <p>The Co-operative College has extensive experience in both the general school sector and the co-operative trust sector. They organise the network of co-operative schools, of which The Aylsham Cluster Trust will be part. They will also help bring a global dimension to the school and assist in establishing national and international links with other co-operative organisations.</p>

(d) Trustees will be appointed by the organisations represented. They will have the opportunity to nominate an agreed number of Trustees from their organisation.

(e) As the school is changing to Foundation status, the constitution of the Governing Body will also change. The Trust will appoint a minority of governors. The Governing Body will be further comprised of a balance of elected Parent Governors; appointed Community Governors; elected staff Governors; nominated Authority Governors, the Headteacher, and 2 Trust Governors, in proportions which are laid down by the Department for Education. It is anticipated that the Education Bill currently going through parliament will stipulate amendments to governing body constitution, but until further notice, parents will continue to make up at least one-third of the membership.

(f) Charitable objectives: As a non-profit making body, the Trust will use its resources to support and promote its charitable aims. The aims of the Trust are to promote education and community cohesion in the Aylsham area.

All parties in the partnership have a shared interest in developing a range of services and activities to support The Aylsham Cluster Trust. The Trust may support and commission services and provide a strategic direction to deliver the enhanced provision of:

- School and Professional Services
- Support services
- Curriculum, Personalisation and Inclusion
- Transition and Progression
- Extended School, Community and Family Learning
- Capital Programmes

(g) The Trust will meet the requirements on Trusts as set out in the School Organisation (Requirements as to Foundations) (England) Regulations 2007/1287

(h) The Trust will contribute to the advancement of education and help raise standard in the following ways:

Greater participation through increased opportunity to foster social cohesion and responsibility to promote a safer community.

Promotion of a healthy lifestyle through participation in sport, healthy eating and positive lifestyle choices

Enhanced learning pathways with greater learner engagement will raise attendance and achievement levels. This will also increase the retention levels at post 16 and 18 and reduce the number of those not engaged in education or training.

Through more focused curriculum entitlement, learners will have opportunities to experience learning in context through business, commerce and leisure partnerships.

Improvements in learning resources on site for use by the whole community

6. How the Trust will work

The Aylsham Cluster Trust will be a charitable, not for profit Trust, meeting the legal and other requirements as set out by the Department for Education (DfE). It will carry out its duties in relation to the schools as set out by the DfE, specifically by appointing a minority of the members of the Governing Body of the school and by holding the land and assets of each school on trust.

As a Co-operative Trust and in keeping with the principles of democratic member involvement, there will also be a Trust Stakeholder Council. This Stakeholder Council will elect a number of trustees directly from its constituent parts. This number will always be a minority of trustees.

As the Trust develops its work in the long term, it may be appropriate to consider additional partnerships. If this is the case there will be a process involving existing Trustees to ensure that any future partner will comply fully with the vision, values and aims of the Trust.

The Trust will be legally established with the Charities Commission and registered as a company limited by guarantee with Companies House. The Charities Commission will regulate its activities (as with all charities).

(a) Trustees will not be able to derive an income from the Trust, but the Trust may become an employer as it may wish to provide services and or commissioning services to the schools within the Trust. Any income generated by the Trust must only be used to support its charitable aims.

The Trust will not seek to alter the individual characteristics of the partner schools and will not seek to change the character (religious or otherwise) of a partner school.

(b) The Trust will meet three times a year (co-ordinated with school governance as required). The voting Trustees will be selected by the Trust member organisations and checked by the governing bodies to ensure that they comply with DfE legislation. This screening process will include a CRB check. The Chair of the Trust will be elected from the Trustees. A Trust officer and support staff will be allocated to work on behalf of the Trust and take day to day control in managing Trust business.

(c) The principle objectives of the Trust will build on what Aylsham High School does well already in working with other people. The Trust will help us raise standards further by bringing together community aspirations and expectations for children and young people through valuing education and training, embedding a life-long learning ethos and actively promoting involvement in the community of the Aylsham Cluster. Acting as an enabler; it will make a direct contribution to raising attainment, securing economic and physical well being and improving the aspirations of the school's pupils. It is intended to provide opportunities for members of the community to acquire individual skills, knowledge and experience to enhance their qualifications, employability and social capital.

***How well did we do?**

We aimed to meet the following criteria in the formal proposal process; -

- Consult widely
- Make all aspects of the proposals clear
- Ensure that the documents are concise and accessible
- Give feedback on responses and show how the consultation influenced the outcome.

As part of your response, please feel free to comment on how well we have met these criteria, and to suggest ways of further improving the process.

