

Kent SEN Trust

Trust School Proposal - Statutory Proposals

1 Introductory Information

a) School Details

This is a proposal to form a partnership of ten special schools by acquiring a charitable trust, named Kent SEN Trust, and for seven of the partner schools to change category from Community to Foundation. The schools in the partnership are:

Bower Grove School

Fant Lane,
Maidstone,
Kent ME16 8NL

Foxwood School**

Seabrook Road,
Hythe,
Folkestone,
Kent CT21 5QJ

Goldwyn School*

Godinton Lane,
Great Chart,
Ashford,
Kent TN23 3BT

Grange Park School

Borough Green Road,
Wrotham
Kent, TN15 7RD

Highview School**

Moat Farm Road,
Folkestone,
Kent CT19 5DJ

Ifield School*

Cedar Avenue,
Gravesend,
Kent DA12 5JT

Meadowfield School

Swanstree Avenue,
Sittingbourne,
Kent ME10 4NL

Ridge View School

Cage Green Road,
Tonbridge,
Kent TN10 4PT

Rowhill Special School

Main Road,
Longfield,
Kent DA3 7PW

Valence School*

Westerham Road,
Westerham,
Kent TN16 1QN

* These schools are already foundation schools and are consulting only to acquire the new charitable trust.

** These schools have a federated governing body.

b) Dates

The proposed implementation date is 1st January 2015.

c) Objections or comments

Within four weeks from the date of publication of these proposals, **by noon on 10th November 2014**, any person may object to or make comments on the proposals by writing to any of the schools (addresses above).

d) Consultation

A great deal of consultation is taking place with regard to these proposals.

- i) Our consultation documents (contained within Appendix 1) were issued on 29th September 2014 to all consultees listed in section 9 of the consultation document and published through the school websites. Additional copies of the consultation documents were available through the school websites and in each school, for collection.
- ii) The results of this extensive consultation exercise will be summarised in a report for each Governing Body.
- iii) In total approximately 2,500 consultation documents were distributed to parents, staff, students, governors, and all other stakeholders required by statute.
- iv) There are separate staff, parent and community meetings being held to discuss the proposed alterations and a meeting was also arranged with the unions.
- v) Simultaneously with the public consultation, learners in each of the schools are being consulted through a combination of assemblies, surveys and school councils.
- vi) All statutory requirements about consulting on these proposals are being met and the Governing Bodies of the ten schools will be meeting separately to consider the consultation responses and the issues raised by them on 27th November 2014.

e) Changes made in response to consultation responses

Following careful consideration of the responses to the consultation, the Governing Bodies of each of the nine consulting schools will decide whether any alterations to the proposals are necessary.

f) Alteration Description

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that:

the Governing Body of Bower Grove School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Bower Grove School which is a community special school located at Fant Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8NL

the Governing Body of Foxwood School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Foxwood School which is a community special school located at Seabrook Road, Hythe, Folkestone, Kent CT21 5QJ

the Governing Body of Grange Park School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Grange Park School which is a community special school located at Borough Green Road, Wrotham Kent, TN15 7RD

the Governing Body of Highview School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Highview School which is a community special school located at Moat Farm Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 5DJ

the Governing Body of Meadowfield School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Meadowfield School which is a community special school located at Swanstree Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 4NL

the Governing Body of Ridge View School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Ridge View School which is a community special school located at Cage Green Road, Tonbridge, Kent TN10 4PT

the Governing Body of Rowhill Special School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Rowhill Special School which is a community special school located at Main Road, Longfield, Kent DA3 7PW

The proposed alteration in each case is to change school category from Community Special School to Foundation Special School and, together with one or more of the proposed partners, to acquire a trust established otherwise than under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Notice is also given in accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that:

the Governing Body of Goldwyn School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Goldwyn School which is a foundation special school located at Godinton Lane, Great Chart, Ashford TN23 3BT

the Governing Body of Ifield School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Ifield School which is a foundation special school located at Cedar Avenue, Gravesend Kent DA12 5JT

the Governing Body of Valence School intends to make a prescribed alteration to Valence School which is a foundation special school located at Westerham Road, Westerham, Kent TN16 1QN

The proposed alteration in each case, together with one or more of the proposed partners, is to acquire a trust established otherwise than under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

2. Changing Category

- a) The Governing Body of each school believes that forming a trust will provide opportunities to improve learning in their communities. The trust will enhance this model of lifelong learning and offer additional contacts, ideas, research possibilities, and professional consultancy, to improve educational provision across all ages within these communities.
- b) Each school will have a foundation established otherwise than under the SSFA 1998.
- c) No school is proposing a change of category to foundation from a voluntary aided school so no consent is required.
- d) The Trust does not already act as a foundation for any foundation or voluntary school.

3. Acquiring a Trust

- a) The name of the trust that Governors intend to acquire from the 1st January 2015 is "Kent SEN Trust".
- b) The "Kent SEN Trust" partner organisations plan to work in partnership and collaboration with these schools. Forming the Trust body formalises that working relationship and ensures that relationships survive changes of personnel for the benefit of all schools in the wider area acquiring the same Trust.

As an inclusive partnership we celebrate all that makes each partner unique and share a vision and a common set of values. The Trust will seek to build on and strengthen, by formalising and further developing it, the joint working already well-established.

We will do this by:

- providing the best possible education for all children.
- celebrating the distinctiveness and diversity of the community our schools serve and promoting inclusion and mutual understanding.
- developing and embracing the values and principles of the Co-operative Movement and embedding a 'values driven ethos' across our schools and their curriculum
- working in partnership for the benefit of all.
- sharing expertise, knowledge, understanding, skills and resources.
- raising aspirations and levels of achievement.
- taking collegiate responsibility for the education of all children and driving sustained school improvement.

A particular focus will be to increase the enjoyment and achievement of all stakeholders by working with a variety of innovative educational partners from the community and beyond. We want to build upon our successes and sustain continuing improvement. It is therefore the key role of the proposed Trust to assist in further raising achievement and outcomes by meeting the following objectives:

- maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and learning
- harnessing resources efficiently to enhance learning
- engaging the expertise, views and commitment of stakeholders
- creating the right conditions for effective learning
- promoting high aspirations amongst children, parents, carers and all those working with young people

c) The proposed members of the Trust are:

- Kent Association of Special Schools (1 Trustee)
- The Co-operative Movement (initially represented by the Co-operative College) (1 Trustee)
- Broomhill Bank School (2 Trustees)
- Bower Grove School (2 Trustees)
- Foxwood School (1 Trustee)
- Goldwyn School (2 Trustees)
- Grange Park School (2 Trustees)
- Highview School (1 Trustee)
- Ifield School (2 Trustees)
- Meadowfield School (2 Trustees)
- Ridge View School (2 Trustees)
- Rowhill Special School (2 Trustees)
- Valence School (2 Trustees)

(In the case of the two trustees which each consulting school shall appoint to the Trust Board, these shall be the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors – or the Chair's nominee.)

It is proposed that the Trust would perform in the most effective and democratic manner if it were to be established and operate in accordance with the co-operative values of self help, self responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. The co-operative model provides a level of community engagement and participation that is essential if the adoption of trust school status is going to achieve the schools' vision for education in the community and it will assist in the promotion of community cohesion.

Accordingly, membership of the Trust would be open to anyone approved by the Trustees, who is willing to be bound by the provisions of the Trust's constitution and who is eligible for membership of any one of the following five membership constituencies:

- learners attending any of the partner schools
- parents and carers of those attending one of the partner schools
- staff working at any of the partner schools
- members of the local community for each partner school
- local community organisations, as appropriate to each partner school.*

The Trust will have a Stakeholder Forum, composed of members, which will be able to appoint Trustees. The Stakeholder Forum will discuss issues affecting the Trust, make recommendations to the Trust Board, and appoint Trustees. As the Trust develops, it will welcome other schools joining the Trust.

The first members of the Stakeholder Forum will be appointed by the Trustees. This is because it is very difficult to get the Stakeholder Forum into place until after the Trust is up and running. At the Trust's first AGM, the Trustee-appointed members of the Stakeholder Forum step down, and are replaced with representatives elected by the Trust's members.

The involvement of each of the partners in this project in no way prejudices their relationships with other education providers.

d) The Trust will appoint a minority of governors (namely two) to the Governing Body of each school as defined in Appendix 1.

e) Each partner will appoint trustees as shown in 3c (above). The Stakeholder Forum will appoint two Trustees.

f) The proposed constitution of each Governing Body is shown in Appendix 2.

g) The Trust's charitable objectives will be to advance the education of the learners in Kent SEN Trust, with a remit to advance the education of other members of the community, and otherwise

to benefit the community; it being acknowledged that in carrying out its objects the Trust must (where applicable) have regard to its obligation to promote community cohesion under the Education Acts.

h) The proposed Trust does not act as a Foundation for any other school at present.

i) The Trust will meet the requirements on Trusts as detailed in the School Organisation (Requirements as to Foundations) (England) Regulations 2007.

j) The Trust will influence the future of the schools by developing membership of the Trust, which will make a difference to learners, staff, the schools themselves and to the local community. It is expected that Trust membership will increase in future years and that the benefits will become available to a larger number of participants.

By developing an ethos of co-operation and local democracy, the proposed Trust is inclusive, community focused and centred on working with its partners and other organisations to raise levels of achievement and aspiration for all learners and their families.

The Trust will promote the well-being, care and education of the Trust's learners by developing sustainable, successful partnerships throughout the Trust in a wide range of activities designed and tailored to raise aspirations and make meaningful contributions to every learner's development, including the school improvement process.

The Trust will raise achievement and aspirations by developing, throughout the Trust, a strong, collaborative approach including opportunities for joint training, CPD, cross curriculum projects, shared resources, shared coaching, mentoring and evaluation.

The Trust will promote high quality learning for all by working with Trust partners and with all in the Trust to enhance and secure a wide range of opportunities for children, young people and their families both in and out of school hours. Our Trust partners will work with us to provide enhanced family learning and enable us to access resources and expertise which can make these activities sustainable.

The Trust will enable everyone to work together to best provide an improved level of support for families and to enable all our children and young people to play a full part in developing activities within the community. By drawing together planned, coherent and sustainable, and equitably shared development, it will utilise all of the many elements of the community to the advantage of all.

The Trust will promote innovation and improvement by collaborating with others to commission services for the benefit of Trust members, and by being commissioned to deliver programmes and promote new approaches to improving school performance.

The Trust will contribute to the advancement of education and will raise standards through the creation of a platform for on-going improvement. The resources and expertise brought to the Trust by the partners will strengthen strategic leadership, increase support, and challenge and consolidate effective monitoring, thereby bringing about rapid improvement in outcomes for students.

k) The schools acquiring the Trust already work with other schools. This work will continue so that the entire Trust area, and not just the schools acquiring the Trust, will offer community cohesion and development for our local communities and will contribute to the overall diversity of educational provision in the area.

l) After considering responses to these proposals, the Governing Body of each of the schools will decide whether it wishes to acquire the Trust. If the Governing Body of an individual school decides that it does not wish to acquire the Trust, that decision will not preclude the other schools from acquiring the Trust.

Dated 13th October 2014

Signed:



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mrs Alison White
Bower Grove School



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mr T O'Connor
Goldwyn School



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mr M Balfour
Grange Park School



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mr R Hewson
Highview & Foxwood Schools



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mrs J Brotherston
Ifield School



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mr R Hollis
Meadowfield School



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Ms A Pritchard
Ridge View School



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mr C Sizmur
Rowhill Special School



Headteacher
Chair of Governors: Mr B Davies
Valence School



Kent SEN Trust

(A mutual special schools co-operative membership trust)

Initial Consultation: Booklet One

**Changing from Community School to Foundation School Category
and Acquiring a Charitable Trust**

The reason for the consultation

The Governing Bodies of the following special schools, namely Bower Grove School, Foxwood School, Grange Park School, Highview School (which is federated with Foxwood School), Meadowfield School, Ridge View School and Rowhill Special School, are jointly proposing to change their legal school category from community to foundation and, at the same time, to acquire a charitable trust.

In addition, Valence School, Goldwyn School and Ifield school which are already foundation schools are proposing to acquire the same charitable trust.

This trust, which will be a co-operative membership trust, will hold each consulting school's land and assets in trust, in this case with a strong mutual element. The Trust will be known as Kent SEN Trust

Broomhill Bank School, which are already a foundation school intending to join the trust as a partner school but not to adopt the new trust as their legal foundation.

What we would like you to do

We would like to know what you think of our proposals, so we invite you to take part in our public consultation.

You can do this by:

- a) Reading the Kent SEN Trust information leaflet and this Booklet (you may also wish to read Booklet Two, which provides answers to a number of commonly asked questions). Copies of both this Booklet and Booklet Two can be obtained from each school, as well as electronically through our websites.
- b) Completing the Questionnaire Response Form you have been sent and returning this to your school.
- c) Attending one of the consultation meetings being held over the consultation period – see section 7.3 for details, times and venues of the various meetings.

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Our Proposal

The Governing Bodies of the consulting schools named below are jointly proposing a change of school category - from community to foundation - and, at the same time, to acquire (establish) a charitable trust to be called Kent SEN Trust. The proposed date of implementation is 1st January 2015. The Trust will be a mutual Co-operative Membership Trust.

Bower Grove School
Foxwood School
Grange Park School
Highview School
Meadowfield School
Ridge View School
Rowhill Special School

In addition, the following foundation school is also proposing to acquire to acquire the same trust, without requiring a change of school category:
Valence School, Goldwyn School and Ifield School.

Broomhill Bank School which are already a foundation school, are intending to join the trust as a founding partner school but not to adopt the new trust as their legal foundation.

1.2 What is a Trust School?

This is a type of school that, while still being part of the local authority, has the opportunity to be supported by a charitable trust set up to help the drive for improved standards, in particular through engaging with the wider community. The Trust will act as the legal foundation for the consulting schools if all or some decide to become foundation schools. The Trust will not act as the legal foundation for any of its partner learning providers.

1.3 What is a Co-operative Trust School?

The Co-operative School Trust model enables schools to set themselves up as co-operatives, following cooperative values and principles. This model enables those who are directly involved in a school - parents/carers, staff and learners - to become engaged in its long-term strategic direction through membership of the Trust.

1.4 Why are we considering it?

The partnership of schools supported by the Trust would work together to further improve standards, outcomes and services for children, young people and their families within our local school communities. Our Headteachers believe strongly that by working together they can achieve significantly more for their schools than they can by working alone. They would therefore like to build on the work already being undertaken by these schools by forming a strongly mutual co-operative Trust to support and secure their work.

1.5 Trust Partnerships

The Governing Bodies of the consulting schools are jointly proposing to build on, through a Trust, our existing and strong partnership links. We also aim to bring the Co-operative Movement, and other organisations into this partnership. In the early stages, in addition to the Co-operative Movement, we are currently in discussion with Kent Local Authority and a number of universities, as well as other potential future partners. We expect to include further partners as the Trust develops and we believe that

collaborating more closely with mainstream schools and Colleges will help to build on the good relationships which already exist and bring a variety of support to our work.

1.6 New Powers and Responsibilities

As a result of the change, the Governing Body of each consulting school (except Valence School, which is already a foundation school) will gain new powers and responsibilities. It will become the employer of all staff, although existing pay and condition arrangements will be unchanged as the schools will remain in the maintained sector and still be subject to national and local pay and condition agreements.

Each Governing Body will also become responsible for student admissions but will work jointly with the Local Authority's Special Education Team to continue to administer the provision of student places within the requirements of the National Schools Admissions Code and other relevant SEN guidance and policy. All schools within the trust will continue to work closely and collaboratively with the Local Authority.

The Trust will hold the land and capital assets in trust for each consulting school although each Governing Body will retain day-to-day responsibility for managing these assets in the same way as it does now.

Since it is already a foundation school, the governing body of Valence School already has these powers and responsibilities.

1.7 Consultation Process

You will have the opportunity to comment on these proposals through our consultation process that runs from noon on Monday 29th September to noon on Monday 20th October 2014. We would emphasise that no decision has been made yet and we would welcome suggestions that might improve our proposals, as well as challenge them. In parallel with this consultation, each consulting Governing Body will publish Statutory Proposals on changing category and acquiring a charitable trust and when both this Statutory Notice and the consultation period is over, each Governing Body will consider the outcome of consultation independently and decide on whether it wishes to proceed to implementation of the Trust.

Any school may decide not to proceed to implementation. However this does not prevent any of the other schools from continuing to change category and establish the Trust if their Governing Bodies wish to proceed.

1.8 Change of category

In order to make these changes, the Governing Bodies of those schools currently classified as Community Special Schools are legally proposing to change category to become Foundation Schools and, at the same time, all the consulting schools are proposing to formally acquire a Trust – Kent SEN Trust.

2. Vision and Values of Kent SEN Trust

2.1 Our vision is to use the strength of the Trust to build on and strengthen what our schools have already achieved, and to create a learning community which seeks to further improve teaching and learning; to raise levels of enjoyment, achievement and aspiration for all; and to ensure children and their families are supported. The values of the Trust are underpinned by the principles of equality and inclusion and a commitment to support the well-being of every child and family connected with our schools. We have considered a variety of school structures, including academies, but feel that this model best meets our context, needs and values.

2.2 The consulting schools already work closely together alongside the other schools who will be joining the Trust as founding partners. Our Headteachers meet together regularly to share ideas, identify common areas for school improvement, and to plan and share provision for training and the professional development of staff. They also help each other to identify and moderate areas for development in our schools and increasingly teachers across our schools are starting to work more closely together.

2.3 Becoming legally a shared Trust will help us to clarify our vision and aims, continue to raise expectations and standards across the partnership, and make our existing collaboration and associated school improvement strategies more sustainable. We believe that to meet the needs of our communities we need to work together as a community of schools. We know that we can achieve more by working together than we can by working alone. A shared Trust will help to make that vision a reality.

2.4 Our Values

Every child with SEN deserves to thrive and succeed and, in our view, students have the best chance of success when they:

- have their personalised needs fully and consistently met
- learn things which interest them and are useful to them
- have high quality learning experiences personalised to their individual needs
- have a sense of belonging to their community and an ability to become active citizens who can successfully contribute to society in the way each chooses
- have high expectations of themselves and their community and aspire to challenging goals
- feel safe and secure and enjoy their school experience
- feel cared for and understood and valued and respected as individuals
- attend regularly
- are inspired by their environment
- are enabled to achieve meaningful independence, with appropriate choices and opportunities within their home and school communities
- are encouraged to achieve to the maximum extent of their abilities.

The Kent SEN Trust will work to ensure a high quality learning experience for children and young people with special needs throughout the Kent-wide community.

The creation of the Trust will provide a strong and well-tested legal entity through which to collaborate with our partners for the benefit of our students.

Key aims for our Trust will be to:

- Further improve outcomes for all our learners in all our schools, with a strengthened focus on school-to-school self improvement.
- Support each school to become - and then stay - 'Outstanding'.

- Strengthen our ability to work collaboratively and co-operatively to enable our schools to grow, develop and improve together.
- Formalise and further develop arrangements already in place for joint working, including support for innovation and research in teaching and learning by our colleagues.
- Develop further the skills and expertise of staff across the schools to secure high quality teaching and learning for all
- Further share resources and skills across the schools and investing in our staff and our organisational systems to increase our skills, experience and efficiencies
- Further increase levels of aspiration across our school communities thereby impacting positively upon standards.

We believe the proposed changes will improve the life chances of our vulnerable children and young people in Kent, by:

- ensuring that all have full and fair access to specialist resources according to their identified individual needs
- ensuring that all have equality of opportunities in each and every aspect of their education and beyond into adulthood
- strengthening each special school's unique identity and recognising areas of expertise
- ensuring that all students have a voice that is at least as high profile as their mainstream peers
- building a coherent and inspiring learning journey for all
- increasing engagement and ownership of the schools within their respective communities (local, regional and specialist communities)
- working in partnership with other organisations, schools and colleges to maximise opportunities and promote the best possible outcomes
- increasing our commissioning and buying power to improve best value for all students
- supporting each and every school within the Trust to raise standards
- supporting parents and carers, particularly in response to emerging changes in funding/SEN legislation.

2.5 Co-operative Values and Principles

The ethos of the schools within the Kent SEN Trust aligns very well with co-operative values and the principles of the co-operative movement (see Appendix B). Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility, and caring for others.

The principles of the co-operative movement are: voluntary and open membership; democratic member-control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; co-operation among co-operatives; concern for community.

Each school within the Trust will retain its own individual identity, specialisms, values and ethos, but its work will be underpinned by these co-operative values and principles and we believe these will contribute to strengthening the schools and their links with their communities.

3. What will the Trust do?

3.1 What will be the Trust's particular focus?

It will be the key role of the Trust to raise attainment by:

- Improving the quality and consistency of teaching.
- Increasing aspirations among learners, parents and all those who work with our children.
- Harnessing resources efficiently in the interests of learning.
- Creating the right conditions for enjoyable and effective learning.

3.2 Further Improving the Quality and Consistency of Teaching

As a Trust we will:

- Look to recruit the brightest and the best to work in our schools.
- Develop talented professionals within our schools.
- Encourage teachers and school leaders to share their expertise for the benefit of all members of our Trust.
- Provide professionals working in our schools with the best in terms of training, facilities, resources and support.

3.3 Raising Aspirations Further

As a Trust we will work in partnership to:

- Encourage parents and professionals to have high expectations of our young people and our young people to have high expectations of themselves.
- Enable those attending our schools to acquire the skills and attitudes needed to become life-long learners.
- Foster creativity and innovation in our young people through an exciting and challenging curriculum.
- Create amongst learners a sense of local pride and of the possibilities afforded by the wider world.
- Further enable our local communities to aspire and achieve.

3.4 Harnessing Partnership Resources and Beyond

As a Trust we will work:

- To develop and share resources to continue to improve outcomes for our learners.
- With our parents/carers to help them to make their contribution to learning.
- With local community organisations to extend what schools can offer.
- With external partners to support our efforts in a variety of ways

3.5 Improving Conditions for Learning

As a Trust we will work:

- To provide an enjoyable, stimulating educational environment in which both learners and teachers can flourish.
- To ensure that children arrive at school ready and willing to learn.
- To improve attendance, so that all our children are in a position to learn.
- To continue to promote good behaviour through clear and consistent expectations and a curriculum which encourages children to learn.
- To ensure that good transition arrangements are in place to provide continuity in learning as pupils move from classes or to new schools.
- With partners, to improve the health and well-being of our learners.

3.6 How will we benefit from Trust Partners?

Trust status, crucially, will widen for all member schools, the range and quality of active partner groups who will be able to add to both the corporate strength of the Trust, and to the individual strengths of our schools and the communities they serve. Working with a variety of innovative educational partners from our local communities and beyond, will enable us to impact positively on learner outcomes.

Our schools will thus be enabled to build on their strengths and track records to further enhance current high standards and outstanding partnership/collaborative working within their communities. The Trust will enable and strengthen a coherent vision in order to improve outcomes for our children, through shared support and appropriate challenge. The Trust partnership will provide a framework to support autonomy whilst retaining strong accountabilities and roots within local communities. This is at the heart of localism.

Our partnerships have been secured to ensure the values that underpin the essence of our work will be embedded for the long term (written into the fabric).

3.7 What will each Partner bring to the trust?

The Co-operative Movement - has extensive experience in supporting educational establishments to develop and embed a co-operative, values-driven ethos, both within and across schools, and across the whole curriculum. It also helps to bring a global dimension to school and community perceptions, through national and international links with other co-operative educational institutions and organisations. Initially, it will be represented by The Co-operative College, which is the educational arm of the 6,000 strong Co-operative Movement in this country. The College will work with the Trust to identify a suitable long-term co-operative partner for the Trust in the Kent area. Being co-operative trust schools will also allow us to become members of the Schools Co-operative Society (SCS). SCS is the fastest growing network of schools across England and is itself a co-operative of co-operative schools. Being part of a national cooperative schools organisation will be of great assistance as we try to navigate our schools through the rapidly changing educational landscape facing all mainstream schools. We will also be able to participate in a strong international network of co-operative schools and colleges.

Kent Association of Special Schools (KASS) - Kent Association of Special Schools has developed an increasingly strong collaboration over the past three years and is now leading initiatives within school improvement, leadership development and mainstream outreach and support. A key aim of the Trust, to provide collaborative partnership to support effective school improvement in all respects, is in line with these developments

across Kent's wider Special needs school community, and therefore KASS will work as a partner to the Trust and have a place on the Trust Board. This will ensure that this exciting initiative develops and grows in partnership with county-wide initiatives.

Other Partners - The Trust is keen to explore links with other partners from the public, voluntary and commercial sectors that can help to further its aims, including universities and colleges. Charitable status and existing partnerships will help significantly in identifying suitable partners.

The Governing Body of each consulting school - will also itself be represented on the Trust with two trustees, including the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors (or nominee). Each partner school and organisation will appoint one trustee.

3.8 How will the Trust make a difference?

By focussing collective attention and resources on enjoyment and achievement. The formation of the Trust will focus the minds and energies of all partners on the task of raising attainment and increasing opportunities across all our communities.

By bringing coherence and continuity to lifelong learning at a time when Local Authority services are diminishing and schools increasingly find themselves working alone, the Trust will provide the means of bringing local schools together to serve a common purpose and to provide continuous pathways to enjoyment, learning and achievement from early years to adulthood and beyond.

By making efficient and effective use of resources, the Trust will provide schools with significant collective bargaining power in their negotiations with suppliers of goods and services. This will enable them to secure best value and prioritise funding for teaching and learning. It will also encourage schools to pool expertise and resources to enable them to maximise the benefits for staff and learners.

By providing the motivation of membership, a number of partnerships have demonstrated the value of treating stakeholders as members. The Trust will extend the offer of membership to parents/carers, learners, employees and local community groups and individuals. This will have the value not only of identifying specific benefits for each of these groups, but also enlisting their support in achieving the aims of the Trust.

4. How will the Trust work?

4.1 The Trust will be a charitable, not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, and 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 school as set out by the DfE, specifically by appointing a minority (probably two) governors to the Governing Body of any supported school and by holding the land and assets mutually in trust for its school communities.

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

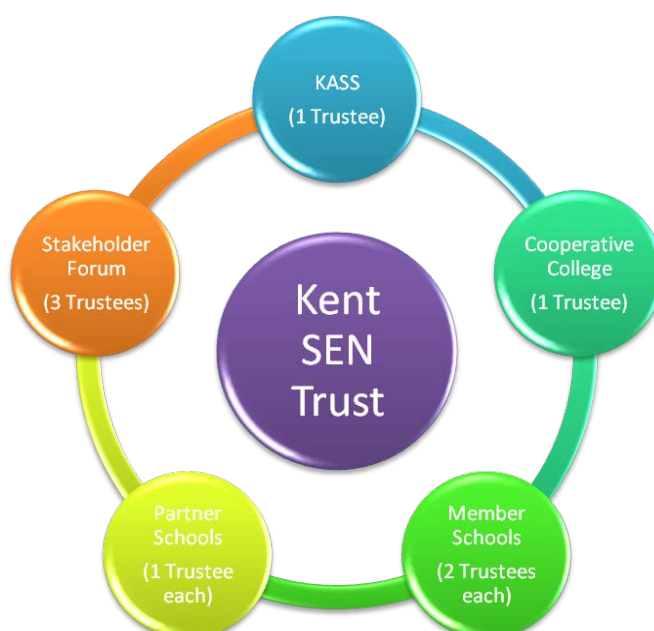
4.3 Trustees will not be able to derive an income from the Trust, but the Trust may become an employer as it develops its work and activities. Any income generated by the Trust must only be used to support its charitable aims. The Trust will not seek to alter the individual characteristics of the member schools and it will not seek to change the character (religious or otherwise) of a partner school.

4.4 The Trust will meet a minimum of three times per year (co-ordinated with existing school governance arrangements, as required) and will be made up of representatives from schools, partner institutions and its membership – via a representative Stakeholder Forum that will be established once the Trust is up and running.

4.5 The Trust will work with other people and organisations, as appropriate, in order to carry out its work. As the Trust develops its work in the future, it may become appropriate to consider additional partners. 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.

4.6 The Trust will have an ethos of co-operation and democracy consistent with co-operative values. It will seek to empower learners and their communities. The Trust will help young people prepare for the challenges facing them as global citizens.

4.7 The Trust will be made up of the school, partners, and members as shown in the diagram below.



5. Foundation Status

5.1 To facilitate the organisation of a trust, Community Schools are required to change their category to become Foundation Schools. In acquiring Foundation category, each Governing Body - and not the Trust - will take on new responsibilities, including responsibility for the employment of staff and admission of students to its school.

5.2 The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 - known as the SOPAM regulations - provide for all the rights, powers, duties and liabilities to transfer existing staff from the Local Authority to the Governing Bodies.

5.3 Existing and new teaching staff will continue to work under the terms of the 'School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document' (STPCD). Each school's Governing Body will set out the terms and conditions for new support staff, which will be no less favourable than those applying to existing staff. All staff will, therefore, always enjoy, as a minimum, the same terms and conditions of employment as in any maintained state school.

5.4 Each school will continue to teach the National Curriculum and will be inspected by Ofsted at appropriate times.

5.5 Each Governing Body will continue to have day-to-day control and management of its school's land and assets (which the Trust will hold 'in trust' for the school) as is the case at present.

5.6 The Trust will work in collaboration with the Local Authority in ensuring strict adherence to the Schools' Admissions Code, whilst reserving the legal right to review admission arrangements if deemed appropriate.

5.7 Valence School Goldwyn School and Ifeild School are already foundation schools and their Governing Body already has the powers and responsibilities outlined above.

6. What Trust and Foundation status will mean for parents and carers, learners, employees and the wider community

6.1 Admissions

The schools will remain part of the Local Authority's family of schools. We will continue to have a fair admissions policy and parents will apply for places at a Trust school as part of the Local Authority process. The schools will continue to work in partnership with the Local Authority to ensure that student places are given fairly and in line with the published admissions criteria that conform to the School Admissions Code. However all Trust school Governing Bodies reserve the right to review admissions arrangements as deemed appropriate.

6.2 Composition of Governing Bodies

From September 2012 the Government has changed somewhat the arrangements for appointing Parent, Community, Local Authority and Staff Governors. Community governors have now become known as 'co-opted' governors.

We are proposing - see below - that changes should be as minimal as possible when compared with the current composition of each governing body. However each consulting governing body will now have a minority of governors (probably the legal minimum of two) appointed by the Trust. This will help to ensure that there is a good link between the Trust and each Governing Body.

The governing body of a foundation school with a 'minority' Trust as its foundation, which is what we are proposing, has to be composed as follows;

- The Headteacher;
- One staff governor;
- At least two parent governors;
- One Local Authority governor;
- At least two, but no more than 45% of the total – foundation governors appointed by the named Trust; in our case we are proposing the legal minimum of two;
- As many co-opted governors as the governing body considers necessary. However, the total number of co-opted governors who are also eligible to be elected as staff governors must not exceed one-third of the total membership of the governing body - you must also count the Headteacher in this figure.

6.3 Membership of the Trust

All parents/carers and learners attending a Trust school are eligible to become members of the Trust. This is also true of all members of staff employed by Trust schools and members of a range of community organisations supporting the work of the Trust – as well as individuals living or working locally who identify with what the trust is seeking to achieve.

We are planning to establish a Trust Forum whose members, including parents, staff, learners and representatives of community – both organisations and individuals, are elected from their respective membership constituency. The purpose of the Trust Forum will be to hold the Trust to account, to help shape policies and to appoint a minority of trustees (in this case three).

In keeping with the co-operative tradition, we will be looking to identify a range of benefits to members which would be consistent with the aims of the Trust.

6.4 Employee Terms and Conditions

The SOPAM Regulations 2013 provide for all rights, powers, duties and liabilities to transfer existing staff from the Local Authority to the Governing Body of each school and employees will, in future, be employed by their school's Governing Body instead of the Local Authority.

Co-operative Trust schools will continue to recognise the same unions and professional associations as are currently recognised and the existing rights of teachers will be fully protected if schools acquire a Trust. The schools will continue to be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document.

Each governing body will set terms and conditions for its own support staff. However, these will be safeguarded as per the prescribed regulations and the same employment rights they currently have as Local Authority employees, will be maintained.

Employees will still be represented on all the governing bodies, but in two categories going forward. Some will continue to be elected by their colleagues, others can also be co-opted onto a governing body. There will still be representatives from parents, the community and the Local Authority, as is currently the case, together with the additional two foundation governors nominated by the Trust.

Under the terms of the 2013 regulations referred to above, all staff will continue to enjoy, as a minimum entitlement, the same terms and conditions of employment as staff in any maintained school.

7. The Consultation Process

7.1 We would like to consider your response to the proposals contained in this booklet, so please let us know what you think about our plans by using one or more of the following means:

- a) Complete and return the Questionnaire Response Form
- b) Send in your comments to your school
- c) Attend a consultation meeting at one of the consulting schools

7.2 The views of learners will be gathered by a variety of appropriate methods including formal consultation meetings with our Student Councils as well as through assemblies and newsletters.

7.3 Consultation meeting details are listed below. You are welcome to attend any consultation meeting convenient to yourself

Foxwood and Highview School

Staff Consultation	Thursday 02 nd October at 4PM
Parent/Community	Thursday 02 nd October at 6PM

Bower Grove

Staff	Wednesday 01 st October at 2.15 PM
Parent/Community	Wednesday 01 st October at 6.00PM

Grange park

Staff	Thursday 16 th October at 3.30PM
Parent/Community	Thursday 16 th October at 5.30PM

Goldwyn

Staff	Thursday 09 th October at 4.30PM
Parent/Community	Thursday 09 th October at 4.30PM

Meadowfield

Staff	Thursday 02 nd October at 3.30PM
Parent/Community	Thursday 02 nd October at 6.00PM

Ridge View

Staff	Thursday 09 th October between 4PM & 7PM
Parent/Community	Thursday 09 th October between 4PM & 7PM

Rowhill

Staff	Thursday 09 th October at 3.30PM
Parent/Community	Thursday 09 th October at 6.00PM

Valance

Staff	Tuesday 14 th October at 7.30PM
Parent/Community	Tuesday 14 th October at 7.30PM

Ifield

Staff	Monday 06 th October at 3.00PM
Parent/Community	Thursday 02 nd October at 6.00PM

7.4 You can comment at any time from noon on 29th September to noon on 20th October 2014.

7.5 After the consultation is closed, all comments will be considered and a report will be prepared for the Governing Bodies. These reports will be made available on each school's website. Individual responses will not be published but will be made available to the respective Governing Bodies and will be available for inspection by the public on request. The Governing Bodies will then hold meetings to review the report and all the comments made before individually reaching informed decisions.

7.6 Each Governing Body may decide to:

- a) Agree a change to Foundation Category (if currently in Community Category) and to adopt the Trust (schools which are already Foundation Category will decide only whether to adopt the Trust)
- b) Modify the proposal in the light of suggestions made during consultation and, if the changes are significant, re-consult on the changes
- c) Decide to remain as a Community Special School without changes (unless already in Foundation Category)
- d) Pause the process to allow further time for debate and consideration

7.7 If one Governing Body decides not to proceed, it does not prevent the others from proceeding. The outcome of consultation for each school is mutually exclusive.

7.8 The proposed implementation date for the Trust is 1st January 2015.

7.9 Copies of all of the consultation documents can be obtained from the individual consulting schools as well as downloaded from the appropriate school website. If you have any queries about anything you have read here and would like further clarification, please contact your school (full address below).

Foxwood School

Headteacher: Mr Neil Birch

Email: Headteacher@foxwood.kent.sch.uk

Add: Seabrook Road, Hythe, Folkestone Kent CT21 5QJ

Tel: 01303 26155

Chair of Governors: Mr Richard Hewson

Highview School

Headteacher: Mr Neil Birch

Email: Headteacher@highview.kent.sch.uk

Add: Moat Farm Road, Folkestone Kent CT19 5DJ

Tel: 01303 258755

Chair of Governors: Mr Richard Hewson

Bower Grove School

Headteacher: Mr Trevor Phipps

Email: office@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk

Add: Fant Lane, Maidstone Kent ME16 8NL

Tel: 01622 726773

Chair of Governors: Mrs Alison White

Goldwyn School

Headteacher: Mr Bob Law

Email: headteacher@goldwyn.kent.sch.uk

Add: Godinton Lane Great Chart Ashford TN23 3BT

Tel: 01233 622958

Chair of Governors:

Grange Park School

Headteacher: Mr Robert Wyatt

Email: Office@grangepark.kent.sch.uk

Add: Borough Green Road, Wrotham Kent TN15 7RD

Tel: 01732 882111

Chair of Governors: Mr Matthew Balfour

Meadowfield School

Headteacher: Ms Jill Palmer

Email: Office@meadowfield.kent.sch.uk

Add: Swanstree Avenue, Sittingbourne Kent ME10 4NL

Tel: 01795 477788

Chair of Governors: Mr Ray Hollis

Ridge View School

Headteacher: Mrs Jacqui Tovey

Email: Jacqui.tovey@ridge-view.kent.sch.uk

Add: Cage Green Road, Tonbridge Kent TN10 4PT

Tel: 01732 771384

Chair of Governors: Ms Anna Pritchard

Rowhill Special School

Headteacher: Mr Timothy South

Email: Headteacher@rowhill.kent.sch.uk

Add: Main Road, Longfield Kent DA3 7PW

Tel: 01474 705377

Chair of Governors: Mr Carl Sizmur

Valence School

Headteacher: Mr Roland Gooding

Email: RGOODING@valance.kent.sch.uk

Add: Westerham Road, Westerham Kent TN16 1QN

Tel: 01959 567841

Chair of Governors:

Ifield School

Headteacher: Ms Pam Jones

Email: Pamjones@ifield.kent.sch.uk

Add: Cedar Avenue, Gravesend Kent DA12 5JT

Tel: 01474 365485

Chair of Governors:

8. Appendices

Appendix A: List of Consultees

As part of the consultation process, the following will all be consulted:

Students currently at each school

Their parents/carers

Staff currently employed at each school, both teaching and support staff

Other personnel who work at the school

Governors

Local MPs and serving local Councillors

All Kent Schools and Settings

Relevant Local Authorities

Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

The Clinical Commissioning Groups in Kent (CCG)

Kent Parent and Carer Forum

Voluntary Groups

Kent Community Health

The local Teacher Associations and Trade Unions representing our support staff - Via a rep in each school

EP Service

Social Services

KAH

Appendix B – Co-operative Values and Principles

The Values and Principles embraced by today's worldwide Co-operative Movement have evolved from the ideas of the early co-operators of the 18th and 19 centuries. They are embodied in the statement of Cooperative Identity published by the International Co-operative Alliance (<http://www.ica.coop/al-ica>)

Self-responsibility - Individuals within co-operatives act responsibly and play a full part in the organisation.

Self-help - In co-operatives, people help each other whilst helping themselves by working together for mutual benefit.

Equality - Each member will have equal rights and benefits (according to their contribution).

Co-operative Values - Co-operatives throughout the world share a set of values that give them their distinctive character.

Solidarity - Members will support each other and other co-operatives.

Democracy - A Co-operative will be structured so that members have control over the organisation – one member, one vote.

Ethical Values - In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of: Honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Equity - Members will be treated justly and fairly

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations; open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any of the following purposes: Developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisation controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national, region and international structures.

6th Principle: Co operation among Co operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

APPENDIX 2

Proposed Governing Body Composition

Governor type	Bower Grove		Foxwood/Highview	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Local Authority	1	1	1	1
Parent	2	2	2	2
Staff (inc HT)	2	2	1	1
Community/Co-opted	9	7	12	12
Trust/Foundation	0	2	0	2
Total	14	14	16	18
Governor type	Goldwyn		Grange Park	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Local Authority	1	1	1	1
Parent	2	2	2	2
Staff (inc HT)	2	2	2	2
Community/Co-opted	11	9	5	5
Trust/Foundation	0	2	0	2
Total	16	16	10	12
Governor type	Ifield		Meadowfield	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Local Authority	1	1	3	1
Parent	6	2	6	2
Staff (inc HT)	4	2	4	2
Community/Co-opted	4	7	4	10
Trust/Foundation	2	2	0	2
Total	17	14	17	17
Governor type	Ridge View		Rowhill	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Local Authority	1	1	1	1
Parent	2	2	3	3
Staff (inc HT)	2	2	2	2
Community/Co-opted	9	7	6	6
Trust/Foundation	0	2	0	2
Total	14	14	12	14
Governor type	Valence			
	Current	Proposed		
Local Authority	1	1		
Parent	3	3		
Staff (inc HT)	2	2		
Community/Co-opted	8	8		
Trust/Foundation	2	2		
Total	16	16		