

South West Ipswich and South Suffolk (SWISS)

Foundation School/ Trust Status: Consultation Outcomes

A Report for SWISS School Governing Bodies: January 2010

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the governing bodies of SWISS partnership schools with the information and the outcomes of the SWISS Trust consultation exercise held during the period 1 October to 13 November 2009. Based on these outcomes, the Governing Body of each school will decide if it wishes to proceed to the next stage of becoming a Foundation school and acquiring a Charitable Trust.

The next stage of this development will involve publishing statutory notices and proposals which set out the schools intention to change category to a Foundation School and acquire a Charitable Trust. The implementation date is planned for September 2010. For Suffolk One, which will open as a Foundation school in September 2010, the decision for Governors is about acquiring a Charitable Trust.

This report will be available on each school website, the SWISS Partnership website and circulated to all potential partners and associate members. Schools are asked to make pupils, staff, parents/ carers and the wider community aware of the availability of this report. Each school will also hold hard copies of the report which will be made available on request.

2. Introduction

To set this in a national context, the Trust programme has been running for over two years. Already there are well over 450 schools and in excess of 1000 partners working together in over 200 Trusts across the country. Each Trust is different in its composition and way of working.

The SWISS partnership has been together for over 5 years during which time it has been involved in many exciting and innovative collaborative developments. By working together the partnership adds considerable value to that which can be achieved by individual institutions. The membership of the partnership is set out in Appendix A. By developing a SWISS Trust the partnership intends to build on these developments.

The Trust will introduce a legal and sustainable framework where all schools and partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities. It will provide a new dimension to educational thinking, strong leadership and a real understanding of the needs of young people, business and industry and the wider community. Without strong and sustainable partnerships we really cannot exploit the opportunities of the new curriculum and qualifications being introduced by Government. Overall, the aim of the partnership is to introduce a new Trust which will create an environment where all young people will have access to a diverse range of learning and development opportunities.

To become a full member of a Trust a school must first become a Foundation school. Day to day control, leadership and financial management of individual schools will remain the responsibility of each school Governing Body.

This SWISS development is essentially about building on good practice, formalising relationships and extending partnerships to help raise standards and make a direct contribution to raising aspirations, participation and achievement.

3. The Consultation Process

The consultation process spanned a six week period from 1 October to 13 November 2009. It involved an extensive distribution of letters to parents/ carers and a wider distribution of summary leaflets, consultation documents and questionnaires. This was supported by 10 Consultation events at which there were separate sessions for staff, students and the wider community. Governors were invited to attend these sessions and in some instances separate meetings for governors were also held. A SWISS partnership website was established and included in its content comprehensive information about the Trust proposal, an online questionnaire and an extensive "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)" publication which addressed many of the issues and questions raised by individuals. This information was also available on school websites.

4. Outcomes

4.1 Generic

All publications were distributed in advance of the consultation events with signposting to the SWISS Partnership website which sought, through the FAQ document, to anticipate and address some of the questions and issues that might be raised by pupils, parents/ carers, staff and the wider community.

The sessions held for pupils and staff were generally well attended producing a wide range of questions and comments and generating healthy debate and discussion. For pupils, schools generally used the School Council as the consultative body and pupils were asked to disseminate the information to other pupils and encourage them to respond to the questionnaire. The staff meetings were, in most cases, also well attended and given the low formal response rate it is assumed the vast majority of questions and issues raised by staff were satisfactorily addressed at the meetings. Attendance at the drop in sessions for the wider community was low and, as a percentage of the SWISS schools pupil population, the attendance rate was 0.61%.

In general, the consultation sessions at each school followed a similar pattern with similar issues and questions being raised at each event. The document attached as Appendix B sets out the main points of discussion and questions and the responses provided. The questions and issues raised were answered and in the vast majority of cases these responses provided the further information and detail required by individuals. Through the Consultation document, the FAQ on the websites and Appendix B it is considered that the issues raised during the process were addressed. However, in a very small minority of instances the concerns of some individuals remained.

It should also be acknowledged that, at this time, institutions through its governors, senior leaders and staff are responding to significant change and challenge including School Organisation Review, Building Schools for the Future, National Challenge, leadership changes within a number of SWISS schools and the significant changes planned for the 14 to 19 curriculum. Alongside this, the role of the Local Authority is evolving to a model that involves the commissioning of services rather than that of a provider.

Formal responses received both online and in hard copy totaled 47, as a percentage of the pupil population again this was low and amounted to a 0.68% response rate. Of the formal responses, the replies came from the following institutions: -

School	Response rate
Beacon Hill	2.1%
Belstead	2.1%
Chantry High School	8.5%
Claydon High School	6.4%
East Bergholt High School	10.6%
Hadleigh High School	8.5%
Heathside School	6.4%
Holbrook High School	19.1%
Otley College*	0.0%
Stoke High School	25.5%
Suffolk New College*	2.1%
Suffolk One	0.0%
Thomas Wolsey School*	0.0%
Thurleston High School*	0.0%
Westbourne Sports College	8.5%
Westbridge Pupil Referral Unit*	0%

This level of response is not untypical nationally.

* Consultation events were not held at these institutions as, for reasons set out in the consultation document, the intention is that they will be either associate members or partners in the Trust. However all the documentation was made available to the institutions and they have been involved in the development phase of the Trust as members of the SWISS partnership.

These formal responses drew the following answers: -

Question	Yes	Do not know	No
How do you feel about your school changing its status and becoming a Foundation School?	51.1%	14.9%	34.0%
How do you feel about your school becoming a Trust?	53.2%	10.6%	36.2%
Do you feel that your school should develop long-term partnerships and work with the named organisations?			
East of England Co-operative	71.7%	4.3%	23.9%
Ipswich Town Football Club	67.4%	10.9%	21.7%
ISG Jackson	53.2%	19.1%	27.7%
SNOASIS	39.1%	13.0%	47.8%
Willis	69.6%	4.3%	26.1%
Suffolk Primary Care Trust	68.9%	8.9%	22.2%
University Campus Suffolk	89.1%	0.0%	10.9%
Suffolk County Council	87.2%	2.1%	10.6%
Do you think there are other organisations we should consider?	The top suggestions included: BT (who nationally do not wish to be part of a Trust, but continue to provide good links with schools); Children's Charity/ Organisation which works with young people with special needs; Performing Arts; Fast food chain.		
Do you agree with the vision and objectives?	80.9%	4.3%	14.9%
Do you think the new Governing Body model is right for your school?	59.6%	8.5%	29.8%

Again it must be emphasised that this represents a very small percentage of the SWISS community. Nonetheless it does still demonstrate a majority of individuals in favour of the proposals and in all cases a minority against the proposals.

Suffolk New College, a valued and active member of the SWISS Partnership, provided a detailed response to the consultation which was supportive of the development and offered its full commitment to the aims and aspirations and its wish to be a partner in the SWISS Trust. However, it would want to see the involvement of associate members clarified, particularly in terms of roles and responsibilities. It also suggested early involvement of the partners and associate members in developing the working arrangements of the Trust. Finally, the college emphasised the need for impartial Information, Advice and Guidance throughout and beyond the partnership and the need to recognise all the post 16 providers in the area. These points are fully acknowledged and will be included as part of the development plan for the Trust.

In terms of the consultation exercise, of those who responded, the majority commented in positive terms about the clarity and accessibility of the whole consultation process.

4.2 Specific- Suffolk One

As the centre of learning is still under construction a "drop in" information session was not arranged for Suffolk One. However, the potential students, parents/carers and the wider community have been consulted through the wider consultation process.

Governors have previously discussed One's involvement in the SWISS Trust and subject to the outcomes of the Consultation exercise have been very supportive and positive about its inclusion in this development.

5. Recommendation

The Governing Body of Suffolk One is asked;

To consider the outcomes of this consultation and decide if it wishes to proceed and, as a Foundation school, publish a Statutory Notice and proposals setting out its intention to;

- (i) Acquire a Charitable Trust with effect from 1 September 2010.**

SWISS Partnership: -

Beacon Hill School (Special School, 5- 16 years)

Belstead School (Special School, 11- 16 years) **

Chantry High School (11- 18 years) *

Claydon High School (11-18 years) *

East Bergholt High School (11- 16 years)

Heathside Special School (2- 11 years) **

Hadleigh High School (11- 16 years)

Holbrook High School (11- 16 years)

Otley College (FE College) ***

Stoke High School (11- 16 years)

Suffolk New College (FE College) ***

Suffolk One (16- 19 years)

Thomas Wolsey School (Special School, 5- 16 years) ***

Thurleston High School (11- 16 years) ***

Westbourne Sports College (11- 18 years) *

Westbridge Pupil Referral Unit ***

Those schools listed above in bold intend to become “Founder members” of the SWISS Trust. This is subject to the approval by each school governing body following this consultation exercise.

* These schools currently provide sixth form education up to 19 years. However, it has already been agreed that they will be redesignated as schools providing education up to 16 years when Suffolk One opens in September 2010 as the centre of learning for 16 to 19 years olds from the SouthWest Ipswich and South Suffolk community.

**As part of the review of special education in Suffolk, Belstead School will close in August 2010 and from September 2010 a single school will operate across the two existing sites of Belstead and Heathside school (2- 16 years). The Governing Body of Belstead School is fully supportive of the development of a SWISS Trust. The Governors of Heathside School intend that it becomes part of the SWISS partnership and be included in the proposals to change status from a Community to a Foundation school and form a charitable trust. The Governing Body of Heathside School will therefore also use this process to consult its stakeholders and community through this consultation.

*** These institutions intend to become associate members of the SWISS Trust.

Appendix B

Question/ Issue	Response
<p>Why are we changing?</p>	<p>The SWISS partnership has worked together for nearly five years. The relationship works well at all levels including governors, headteachers, staff and pupils.</p> <p>The governing bodies of the individual institutions consider that the plans to develop the SWISS partnership into a SWISS Trust represent a natural progression to the collaborative work that has already taken place. The Trust will enable the development of a more formal, sustainable and legal partnership between the schools and introduce an exciting range of external partners.</p> <p>We are intending to improve the outcomes for young people by improving opportunity, raising aspirations and achievement.</p>
<p>Local authority support and protection is removed when a school becomes a trust. What is going to be done to ensure that there is adequate support and protection for all staff and pupils?</p>	<p>This is not the case. The school will remain part of the family of local authority maintained schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will still be funded by the local authority on the same basis as other schools. • It will have to act in accordance with the Admissions Code, will be entitled to be represented on the local admissions forum and will take part in co-ordinated admissions arrangements. • The local authority will be able to intervene in a Trust school as in any other school if it is failing or underperforming. • The local authority will be able to publish proposals to close the school and to make certain changes to the school.
<p>Precisely how will trust status benefit students, staff, parents, and the community?</p>	<p>The Trust will formalise and extend the existing relationships in the Partnership.</p> <p>The opportunity will be there to draw on external expertise.</p> <p>We will have a diverse range of expertise that will be able to challenge old approaches.</p> <p>We will gain commitment and engagement from local employers/institutions</p> <p>The organisations we have approached are attracted to the idea of a ‘one-stop-shop’ to work with schools.</p> <p>The Trust will formalise collaborative working.</p> <p>The Trust will present the ability to bid for additional funding in a more coherent and coordinated way. Some of these additional funds are only available to schools in partnership with other organisations</p> <p>The commissioning power of a large group of schools and partners could open up possibilities for the purchase of services tailored to the needs of the institutions within the Trust.</p> <p>The Trust will give relatively small institutions the opportunity to influence the future direction and development of the Trust as an equal partner, ensuring its voice is heard at local, regional and national level.</p> <p>The majority of Governors at Suffolk One being appointed by the Trust will provide the SWISS community with an ongoing role in developing the strategic direction of One.</p> <p>Overall, the Trust through the delivery of its charitable objectives will create an environment where all pupils will have access to a diverse range of learning and development opportunities. It will help to raise standards and make a direct contribution to raising</p>

	<p>aspirations, participation and achievement.</p> <p>Sixth form student places will be available at Suffolk One for all pupils who are serious and committed about their studies and fulfill the entry qualifications for specific courses. The partnership schools will continue to welcome applications from students from other schools.</p> <p>It is envisaged that the new partnership arrangements will contribute significantly to further improvement in school performance and better educational experience and outcomes for every young person and their family.</p> <p>It is important to emphasise that the Governing Body, not the Trust, will continue to run the school and be responsible and accountable for its performance.</p>
Who or how many people will make up the Trust, who will control and select the Trust?	<p>The Trustees will be selected by the “founder schools” i.e. those schools who decide to progress with this proposal. It is suggested that the Trust will comprise;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Founder schools • 5 Business Partners • 3 Public Organisations <p>It is also likely to include associate members e.g. the local colleges and Westbridge PRU, Thomas Wolsey and Thurleston schools. The founder schools are in the majority in this model.</p>
Has the Governing Body considered federation as an alternative to trust school status and if so why was it rejected?	<p>A Trust offers the opportunity to introduce a wide range of business partners, provides a legal framework whilst enabling an individual schools to retain its distinct identity alongside separate governance and management arrangements.</p> <p>As part of the process federation has been considered. However, Trust status provides the opportunity to include wider membership, enables the school to retain its autonomy (which would not be possible through a hard federation) and provides a legal framework not offered by a soft federation, this is considered the best way forward.</p>
Which aspects of an informal partnership or collaborative approach with other partners cannot be achieved unless the school becomes a trust?	<p>As a Trust we can bid for additional funding to support our work with pupils which would not be available to a school or an informal partnership relationship.</p> <p>Long term commitment to joint activities could be compromised by changes to personnel thus making them unsuitable and therefore less likely to be established.</p>
What about our school as a Community school and our established status in that role?	<p>To facilitate the organisation of the Trust, the partner schools are required to alter their current status to become Foundation schools.</p> <p>This change in status from Community school leads to a change in governance of the school such that each Governing body will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become the employer of its school staff

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become the admissions authority for the school within the requirements of the school admissions code • Take on ownership of the school's land and assets <p>However, the change in status will not lead to reduction in community activity. Indeed, as Foundation schools the expectation will be to widen and deepen community links and relationships.</p>
<p>Is there any evidence that Trust status improves standards?</p>	<p>Trust schools are a relatively new development. Nonetheless, there are case studies, reports and documents from school staff, governors and partners on :- www.trustandfoundationschools.gov.uk which demonstrate how Trusts have improved outcomes for pupils.</p>
<p>What influence, positive and negative, do the governing body anticipate from external sponsor trustees?</p>	<p>The partners are not sponsors. These partners have been carefully selected to ensure we are able to cover a wide range of vocational areas and bring in a unique blend of skills and experience from all levels of each organisation. This will form the SWISS Trust giving it a credible and dynamic base and a broad range of skills and experience. This exciting collaboration across a broad range of institutions and businesses will bring a new dimension and clear focus to 14 to 19 learning in this part of Suffolk. It will bring a clear perspective, challenge assumptions and help to shape the Trust in a way which ensures we deliver clear and positive outcomes in line with our objectives. Currently these are based on the need to improve 14 to 19 learning and development opportunities for the SWISS community.</p> <p>Specifically to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote inclusive and inspirational learning • Raise aspirations and improve opportunity • Increase participation and raise achievement <p>By:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackling barriers to learning • Developing breadth of choice, diversity, parity of esteem and value for money • Promoting continuity through transitions and clear progression routes at all levels of achievement <p>Trust partners will provide a new dimension to educational thinking, strong leadership and a real understanding of the current and future needs of young people, business and industry and the wider community.</p>
<p>Will we become a business?</p>	<p>No, this is about improving outcomes for young people. Each school will continue to deliver its vision and priorities for learning.</p>

<p>Obviously, a charitable trust will make money. Who will make investments, who will profit, who controls the charitable trust finances?</p>	<p>Governors will continue to be responsible for all major decisions about the school and its future. Trusts simply present a different way and opportunity of using partnerships.</p> <p>The Trust will be a charitable, not for profit Trust, meeting the legal and other requirements as set out by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). It will carry out its duties in relation to the schools as set out by the DCSF, specifically by appointing some members of the Governing Body of each school and by holding the land and assets of each school on Trust.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>The Trustees, who govern the Trust, will be drawn from the “founder schools” and the external and business partners.</p>
<p>Does the school as a company have to make a profit?</p>	<p>The school will not become a company it will be run in the same way as it does at present with the Governing Body being responsible for all decisions about the school and its future.</p> <p>The school will not be responsible for any liabilities resulting from the Trust.</p> <p>The school budget will continue to go directly to the Governing Body, not to the Trust.</p> <p>Trusts must be constituted as not-for-profit charities – any income must be used to support their charitable aims, which must focus on the advancement of education and community cohesion</p>
<p>Admissions Policy.</p> <p>If the school became a Trust how would admission arrangements change?</p> <p>What about the intake?</p> <p>Local parents at the moment</p>	<p>The school will remain part of the Local Authority’s family of maintained schools. It will continue to have fair admissions and will not introduce selection by ability. Parents will apply to their home school for places as part of the Local Authority process. Each school will work in partnership with Suffolk Local Authority to ensure pupil places are given fairly in line with the published admissions criteria which will conform to the National Code of Practice on Admissions.</p> <p>The school will set its own admissions arrangements. It will operate within the same legal framework as all other maintained schools, which means it will act in accordance with the National Code of Practice and will not be allowed to introduce selection by ability.</p> <p>Trust schools will be required to play their full part in taking hard to place pupils, having fair admissions and working with other schools in admissions forums and co-ordinated admissions arrangements.</p> <p>For Foundation schools and voluntary aided schools the governing body is the admissions authority and may determine the admission arrangements for the school. This function cannot be delegated to the head teacher in terms of determining policy or deciding on the admission of particular pupils. The governing body is also responsible for managing the admissions appeal process.</p> <p>Through the admission procedures set out above. All admission authorities must have regard to the statutory guidance within the</p>

<p>have a choice about which local authority school they send their child to. How will the creation of a trust improve choice for pupils and parents?</p>	<p>Code of Practice and the School Admission Appeal Code of Practice.</p> <p>Local authorities must establish Admissions Forums to enable all local admissions authorities to discuss existing and proposed admission arrangements and to promote agreement on any difficult admissions issues in the area. School Adjudicators, appointed by the Secretary of State, determine school organisation and admissions issues where local agreement has not been possible.</p>
<p>Governance and Leadership</p> <p>Would the composition of the governing body change and if so, how – would it still contain staff, parents and local authority representatives?</p> <p>If a school gains trust school status is it the intention to have a parent council as well as a governing body?</p> <p>What is the anticipated representation for each group on the trust school governing body and how is this different from the present situation?</p> <p>How will the school ensure that it is democratically accountable to the local electorate and its community?</p> <p>What guarantees can be given that the sponsors of the proposed trust school will not gain control of school land, premises, shape the curriculum in a negative way and dominate the governance of the school?</p>	<p>The current situation of appointing Parent Governors, Community Governors, Local Authority Governors and Staff Governors will be maintained at the school. The Governing Body will be enhanced by the introduction of 2 additional governors appointed by the Trust. The exception will be at Suffolk One where the majority of Governors will come from the Trust. In this instance there will be a Parent Council.</p> <p>No, but there will remain parent representation on school governing bodies. The exception will be at Suffolk One where the majority of Governors will come from the Trust. In this instance there will be a Parent Council.</p> <p>As above.</p> <p>By the membership of its Governing Body which is set out above.</p> <p>By the membership of its Governing Body which is set out above. As explained earlier, the establishment of a Trust does not involve sponsorship agreements. The sole purpose of the Trust is to promote the Charitable Objectives and the Trust Board does not have any influence in the running of individual schools. Although the Trust representatives contribute to the work of individual governing bodies, with the exception of Suffolk One, they constitute a very small minority. The Instruments and Articles of Government for the Trust will also protect the interests of individual schools in the management of their assets.</p>

<p>What impact would a change of Head Teacher have?</p>	<p>The arrangement of the Trust goes beyond individual personalities. The development of a Trust with its agreed objectives will give us a strong foundation and a sustainable relationship.</p> <p>The Trust will formalise and extend the existing relationships in the Partnership. The current partnership is held together through personal commitment. To ensure sustained commitment there needs to be a legal framework that binds the institutions together, beyond individual personalities.</p>
<p>Staff- Terms and Conditions of Employment.</p> <p>Will we have to be re-employed?</p> <p>Governors become the employer of staff, what changes will this bring to contracts. If staff disagree with Governors, who do they approach?</p> <p>What guarantees can the school give that teachers' national pay and conditions will not be affected by the school gaining trust status?</p> <p>Can staff doing the same job be paid at different rates?</p>	<p>The school will become the employer and staff will be employed by the Governing Body. The existing terms and conditions of teachers will be fully protected. Schools will still be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document but employees will be employed by the school Governing Body instead of the LA. All staff will be safeguarded under their current terms and conditions and the same unions will continue to be recognised – all in exactly the same way as we do at the moment. All existing staff will transfer under similar arrangements to TUPE which will protect their existing conditions of service.</p> <p>The Governing Body is the employer. As such, the governing body has the full range of employer responsibilities under employment law. The governing body will, however, usually delegate responsibility for day-to-day staffing matters to the head teacher.</p> <p>The existing terms and conditions of teachers will be fully protected. Schools will still be bound by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document but employees will be employed by the school Governing Body instead of the LA. All staff will be safeguarded under their current terms and conditions and we will continue to recognise the same unions – all in exactly the same way as we do at the moment.</p> <p>Governors have no intention to alter any Conditions of Service (including membership of the Pension Scheme) which would disadvantage any existing and new support staff against those of the Local Authority.</p>

<p>Would any agreed terms and conditions be variable in future?</p> <p>What are the implications for pensions?</p> <p>Is it the intention for the trust to employ support staff or will they be employed by the LA?</p> <p>What guarantees will be given that all agreements negotiated by teacher organisations with the local authority will be adhered to by the new trust?</p> <p>How could teachers be protected from an expectation or requirement to teach at Suffolk One or another Trust schools?</p>	<p>Teaching staff would stay in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and would not be subject to any change. The Local Authority would continue to be responsible for completing and signing off all the relevant documentation in relation to individual staff's pensions. Non-teaching staff at foundation schools are allowed to continue to be in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) if the local authority, with the consent of the school governing body, has by a statutory resolution specified them to be eligible to belong to the scheme. Suffolk CC will undertake this requirement.</p> <p>All school based staff will, if the proposal moves forward, be appointed by each school. The Trust, not the LA, may appoint staff to work across the partnership in a similar way to current arrangements. In addition, schools will of course continue to be able to access LA advisory and support staff.</p> <p>The responsibilities rest with individual school governing bodies not the Trust. The role of the Governing Body is set out above.</p> <p>There are no plans to force staff into teaching at Suffolk One or other schools. The needs of individual schools will come first. Nonetheless there may be advantages to be gained by joint approaches including sharing expertise and undertaking joint professional development opportunities. Whilst, in the future, staff may be appointed to new roles which straddle more than one institution, this will be made clear in the recruitment, selection and appointment processes.</p>
<p>Land and Assets.</p>	<p>Each school governing bodies will continue to have day-to-day control of its school's land and assets (which the Trust will hold in trust for the school). The Trust will not be able to dispose or change the use of land/ facilities without the specific agreement of the school governing body concerned. This will be written into the Articles of Government.</p> <p>Local authorities will also be able to object to reinvestment proposals. Where local agreement cannot be reached, the matter will be referred to the schools' adjudicator for resolution. Local authorities will not be able to force a Trust to sell any surplus land to raise money.</p> <p>A Trust has the legal title to the land, but it holds it on trust for the purpose or benefit of the school and subject to the provisions of the Trust's governing documents i.e. the best interests of the school. If its role ends then publicly funded land will normally revert to the governing body or the local authority.</p> <p>The Trust will not be able to dispose or change the use of land/ facilities without the specific agreement of the school governing</p>

<p>What proposals have the governing body had about the sale of land in the event that the school closes in the future?</p> <p>What about areas such as joint use libraries and Sports Centre?</p> <p>Will joint use agreements need to be re-negotiated?</p>	<p>body concerned.</p> <p>As part of the Trust development, there are no plans to close any of the schools involved. In terms of land sales generally, the governing bodies would not wish to enter into any arrangements which were detrimental to the future of the school and the achievement of its pupils.</p> <p>Although land/assets will transfer from the Local Authority to the school, joint use agreements will still apply. The schools will wish to maintain and develop community engagement.</p> <p>Agreements will be reviewed given the school's new responsibilities. However the transfer arrangements from the LA will need to recognise and maintain existing agreements.</p>
<p>What about support services such as Human Resources and Advisory services?</p>	<p>As we do now, schools will look to continue to engage quality support services. We remain part of the local authority family of schools and will continue to be able to buy into the services available from the Local Authority.</p>
<p>Consultation</p> <p>How will staff be involved in the consultation process?</p> <p>Will the governing body allow eight weeks consultation with parents and staff, excluding holidays?</p> <p>Will the parents be balloted on trust school status?</p> <p>Will staff be balloted on trust school status?</p>	<p>The consultation process runs from 1 October to 13 November 2009. We really want to know what you think about the proposal. The Governors of each school will review the comments and will decide whether or not to go ahead and/or whether to amend the proposals to reflect your suggestions and concerns. Your views are a crucial part of this process.</p> <p>The consultation period is set out earlier. This will be followed by a report to the Governing Body which will make a final decision. Following this, if appropriate, statutory notices will be published setting out the proposal and further comment/objections to the proposal can be registered at this stage. In total this will provide a 10 week period.</p> <p>No, however individual views, comments and suggestions are important and will be taken into account.</p> <p>No, however all views, comments and suggestions are important and will be taken into account.</p>

<p>What notice will be taken of parents' and staff view before a decision is taken about trust school status?</p> <p>If parents and staff were against trust school status would the governing body still pursue it?</p> <p>As part of the consultation process will opposing views be available to both staff and parents in the form of material being sent to all parties?</p>	<p>We cannot emphasise enough the importance of registering your views which are vital to the whole process and will help shape the way in which we move forward. The report to Governors will make clear the number of responses and the views of those who have responded.</p> <p>The Governing body will reach a decision which reflects the best way forward for the school. In making this decision it will take account of the views of the staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. If there is an overwhelming argument against becoming a Trust school and it is clearly demonstrated that it would not be in the best interests of the pupils of a particular school to go forward with these proposals then the GB would not progress this development.</p> <p>The Governors will review the comments and will decide whether or not to go ahead and/or whether to amend the proposals to reflect your suggestions and concerns. The report to Governors will be a public document.</p> <p>We will be making available the feedback on the school web sites. If you wish to receive a written copy of the feedback, please let us know.</p>
<p>Will students with statements for special needs have their support guaranteed?</p>	<p>There will be no changes to existing arrangements.</p>
<p>Are we working in tandem with other schools as part of a deliberate strategy to co-ordinate the work of schools?</p>	<p>The distinct identity of all schools remains important and will be maintained. However, there are real benefits in working collaboratively with the range of schools and partners to develop 14 to 19 learning. The SWISS partnership will continue to play its part in the wider partnerships and associations that exist within and beyond Suffolk.</p>
<p>Is it the intention to follow the National Curriculum or will the governing body apply to have the power to innovate a variation in the curriculum?</p>	<p>Schools will continue to teach the national curriculum and will be inspected by Ofsted at appropriate times. Indeed, as part of the new Ofsted inspection framework arrangements, schools will be assessed on how effectively they work in partnership with other providers to promote better outcomes for pupils. As the Trust does not have strategic responsibility for the leadership and management of individual schools, it is not in a position to apply for powers to innovate.</p>
<p>Will conditions for our specialist status change?</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>How can a school stop being a member of a Trust and is there a charge to do this?</p>	<p>Removing a Trust because of dissatisfaction (or changing from a majority to a minority of Trust Governors) will broadly follow the same process as acquiring a Trust: initial decision, consultation, publish proposals, representation and final decision. A majority of the governing body will be able to publish proposals at any time to remove the school's Trust or to move from a Trust appointing a majority of the governors to a Trust appointing a minority. There is no charge</p>
<p>The investors in the Trust- where does the money come from, what do they hope to get from the Trust?</p>	<p>Working with a Trust is not about generating income for the school – there is no requirement or expectation that the Trust will contribute financially. The Trust's value is in how it strengthens the school's leadership and governance. The Trust could of course contribute financially to the school if it chose to do so.</p>
<p>How much will it cost to set up and join the Trust (usually its more than the Government Grant allows?</p>	<p>The DCSF have provided research and set up funds. These will be sufficient to undertake the consultation, set up and organisational requirements.</p>
<p>Is this change 'fait accompli' or are we to have any say?</p>	<p>No, the consultation process is extensive and your views are important in both the decision to move forward and how you contribute to and focus the work of the Trust in the future.</p>