



## Consultation on proposal for:

**Greenfield School Community and Arts College**

**Sunnydale Community College for Maths and Computing**

**Woodham Community Technology College**

to acquire a Joint Trust

**'Aycliffe and Shildon Schools Education Trust'**



Greenfield School Community and Arts College, Sunnydale Community College for Maths and Computing and Woodham Community Technology College are considering forming a joint trust and this leaflet explains the thinking behind this proposal. The proposed name of the trust is Aycliffe and Shildon Schools Excellence in Education Trust (ASSET).

Trust status for schools and groups of schools is a relatively new government educational initiative first outlined in the 2005 White Paper. 'High Standards Better Schools for All' and there are now many school trusts across the country. In forming this trust, the three schools together with trust partners will establish a formal partnership to work more closely together to raise standards and to increase the learning opportunities for our all students. We intend to provide a first class, community based education for all learners.

We believe that the trust will be in a strong position to influence the future education planning for the two towns. We wish to ensure that the schools are best able to continue to serve their local communities and will also have the capacity to provide the breadth of curriculum and progression pathways that are essential for 14-19 year old students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This document explains the changes that will take place if we proceed with trust status and will hopefully answer some of the questions you may have.

### **What is a trust school?**

A trust school is still part of the local authority system but it changes category from community school to foundation school. Trust schools differ from community schools because their status provides a long term sustainable partnership with the other schools and partners in the trust. The governing body of each school will continue to run the school and will still be responsible for its performance as it does at present. Trust schools operate within the same framework as other local authority schools. The schools will still serve the local communities and will still be part of the local authority family of schools.

### **What are the benefits for the schools and the students?**

The Headteachers and staff of the three schools have worked together for a number of years in an informal way but forming a trust would establish a formal long term sustainable partnership to the benefit of the three schools and their students.

In forming the trust we will be able to draw on the resources, facilities and expertise of the three schools and our partners to improve levels of attainment and to provide better opportunities for all our pupils. We will also be well placed to harness the funding from government initiatives such as the Building Schools for the Future programme which could have a major impact on the organisation of secondary education in the area.

**The aims of the trust are to:**

1. Raise learner's aspiration and achievement by building on existing collaborative arrangements such as Young Apprentices, BTEC Engineering, Business Education, Modern Foreign Languages, History and Extended Schools, thereby allowing greater access and opportunity to a variety of different learning experiences for young people in the Newton Aycliffe and Shildon communities.
2. Provide a cohesive and comprehensive 14 to 19 curriculum which will raise aspiration and achievements in an area of high social deprivation and below average levels of further and higher education participation.
3. Further develop our existing specialisms, Arts, Maths and Computing and Technology with specific reference to 14 to 19 agenda.
4. Use our specialisms to drive learner achievement and the direction of the Trust.
5. Provide a more diverse, varied and relevant learning experience with the specialisms of each school at the hub. Personalised learning will be at the centre of this learning experience ensuring that the needs of all learners can be met

**Who will be the external partners?**

The following organisations will be our proposed partners. We have chosen these partners because we feel they have the experience and expertise to contribute to the development of a broad 14-19 curriculum for our students and will increase the progression opportunities at the end of Year 11.

**Durham County Council's Achievement Services (DCC)** has expertise and responsibilities across all children's services functions and provides extensive support for local partnerships. Achievement Services supports the formation of this Trust and will provide guidance and support in planning the educational provision in the two towns.

**Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Darlington (QE)** is one of the top sixth form colleges in the country and many of our Year 11 students' progress to QE each year and are very successful. All three schools have strong links with QE which provides gifted and talented activities and subject workshops to Year 10 and 11.

**South West Durham Training Ltd (SWDT)** is a leading vocational training organisation established in 1967 with links to industry and commerce throughout the region. SWDT currently works with the three schools to deliver collaborative vocational courses for Year 10 and Year 11 students. A number of our students also take up training with SWDT at the end of Year 11.

We are in discussion with other potential partners who may be trust members at a later stage.

### **What are the governing body implications of a Joint Trust?**

Each school will continue to be funded by the Local Authority on the same basis as other schools. The governing body of each school will continue to run the school and will still be responsible for its performance as it does at present.

Some of the responsibilities currently dealt with by the local authority will be transferred to the governing body of an individual school.

1. Each school governing body will now employ the staff (but must follow national pay and conditions of service which apply to all local authority schools).
2. The land, buildings and assets will transfer and be held by the Trust for the benefit of education and the schools.
3. Each school will set its own admissions arrangements but must follow the local authority's admissions code. (There will be no selection on ability or any other related criteria).
4. The Trust will appoint two governors, a minority, to each school governing body. There will be some small changes to the composition each governing body to accommodate the two foundation governors.

### **What does this mean for parents?**

We believe there will be numerous benefits for the children that have been outlined above.

The schools will set their own admissions arrangements. However, they will continue to be bound by Durham's School Admissions Code (like all other schools). This means that they will continue to have fair admissions and that they will not introduce any selection by ability. We expect to keep very similar arrangements and criteria to what we have now.

Parents can be reassured that they will continue to have a direct relationship with their school and be partners in their child's education.

Parents will continue to have representation in their school's governing body through the role of parent governor.

### **What will the Trust mean for staff?**

Staff will continue to work in their current schools. Under trust (foundation) status, staff will now be employed by their school and not the local authority (Durham). The contractual arrangements will change in line with TUPE regulations, which will ensure that staff will be protected at the point of transfer as a result of these changes. Teaching staff will continue to be employed under the national pay and conditions of service that apply to all maintained schools.

(The point of transfer would be the date the Foundation commences).

### **How can I find out more about this proposal and trust status?**

If you are a student, parent / carer or member of staff, please attend one of the meetings in early May (details below).

There are useful websites that give further general information about trust schools.

Foundation and Aided Schools National Association      [www.fasna.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.fasna.org.uk/index.htm)  
Specialist Schools and Academies Trust                      [www.ssatrust.org.uk/trustschools](http://www.ssatrust.org.uk/trustschools)

We will also put some further information on the schools' websites  
[www.greenfieldschool.net](http://www.greenfieldschool.net)  
[www.sunnydale.co.uk](http://www.sunnydale.co.uk)  
[www.woodham.org.uk](http://www.woodham.org.uk)

### **What happens during the consultation period?**

The consultation period is between April 20<sup>th</sup> and May 25<sup>th</sup>. The governing body will then review the responses and will decide whether to go ahead.

Please let us know what you think about the proposal by May 25<sup>th</sup>.

There are a number of ways in which you can do this.

1. Post the completed consultation questionnaire to the school office to one of the following addresses:
  - a. S Mouyiassi, Greenfield School Community and Arts College, Greenfield Way, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham DL5 7LF
  - b. L Woodward, Woodham Community Technology College, Washington Crescent, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham DL5 4AX
  - c. S. Hayes, Sunnydale Community College Middridge Lane Shildon Durham DL4 2EP
2. Post your comments to the school. Please mark the envelope 'Trust Consultation'.

Alternatively you may e mail your views to the school office.

Greenfield	<a href="mailto:greenfield@greenfieldschool.net">greenfield@greenfieldschool.net</a>
Sunnydale	<a href="mailto:general@sunnydaleschool.co.uk">general@sunnydaleschool.co.uk</a>
Woodham	<a href="mailto:info@woodham.org.uk">info@woodham.org.uk</a>

3. If you are a parent / carer of a student at one of the schools, there will be a parents' meeting at the school in the first week in May. These meetings are for parents (and students) only.

**Greenfield Parents' Meeting takes place on: May 6<sup>th</sup> at 6.30 pm**

**Sunnydale Parents' Meeting takes place on: May 5<sup>th</sup> at 6.30pm**

**Woodham Parents' Meeting takes place on: May 7<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm**

4. If you are a member of staff at one of the schools, there will be a staff meeting arranged to discuss the proposals and you will be informed of the date and the time.

**What happens next after the consultation period?**

The governing bodies will meet at the end of the consultation period to consider the comments and will decide whether to go ahead with the proposal or to make amendments. The feedback will be made available on the schools' websites.

If the governors decide to proceed then the next step will be to publish statutory proposals to form the Trust. There will be a four week period when there will be an opportunity to make representations before a final decision is made. If at the end of this four week period the governors decide to proceed, then the Trust would be implemented on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2009.