

The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust

(A mutual schools co-operative membership trust)

Information Booklet

‘Becoming a Member of the Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust’

The Governing Boards of two local primary schools, namely **Sharrow School** and **Broomhill Infant School**, recently formed a shared co-operative Trust known as **The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust**. The Governing Body of Netherthorpe Primary School have recently decided that it would be in the best interests of Netherthorpe Primary School to now become a member of The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust and would like to share some information about the proposal.

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Section 1 - Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Governing Body of Netherthorpe Primary School is proposing that Netherthorpe Primary School should become a member of The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust with effect from 1 September 2016.
- 1.2 Netherthorpe Primary School has collaborated with Broomhill and Sharrow (the founder members of The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust) for some time and shares a similar ethos and commitment to providing the best possible education and learning for children, whilst being at the heart of the local community. Formalising this collaborative work within the Co-operative Trust is intended to strengthen it and also reduce duplication of effort by member schools. It is also hoped that over time the co-operative membership dimension of the Trust will strengthen Netherthorpe Primary school's relationship with the local community, whilst improving levels of stakeholder involvement and levels of aspiration.
- 1.3 The partnership of schools supported by the Trust will work together to further improve standards, outcomes and services for children, young people and their families within our local school communities. The Headteachers of all schools within the Trust 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 the schools by forming a strongly mutual Co-operative Trust to support and secure their partnership work.
- 1.4 As a member of a shared Trust, our school will continue to be part of the Sheffield Local Education Authority family of maintained schools and to be members of Learn Sheffield (the City's Schools' Company). A number of other local schools have expressed an interest in becoming members of the Trust and are currently exploring this with their governing boards and it is hoped that more schools do join. If they do, they will be full contributors to and beneficiaries of the work of the Trust.

Section 2 - Vision and Values

- 2.1 Our vision is to use the strength of the Trust to build on and strengthen what the school has already achieved: to create a learning community which seeks to further improve teaching and learning; to raise the enjoyment, achievement and aspirations for all; and to ensure children and their families are supported. The values of the Trust are underpinned by the principles of equality, inclusion and commitment to support the well-being of every child and their families in member schools.
- 2.2 Netherthorpe Primary School and the two schools that are already members of the Trust (Broomhill and Sharrow) already work closely together. The Headteachers meet together regularly to share ideas, identify similar areas of school improvement,

and to plan and share provision for training and the professional development of staff. They also help each other identify areas for development in member schools and increasingly our teachers are starting to work more closely together.

2.3 Becoming a member of the Trust will help us to clarify our vision and aims, continue to raise expectations and standards across our 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. We believe that we can achieve more by working together than we can by working alone. A shared Trust would help to make that belief a reality. Both founding schools have had a track record of providing 'Good' and 'Outstanding' (Ofsted grade) education for their children and with Netherthorpe Primary School being rated as 'Good', formalising this collaboration can only strengthen those achievements.

2.4 Key aims for the Trust are to:

- Further improve outcomes for all our learners in all our schools with strengthened focus on school to school support for 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;
- Develop further the skills and expertise of staff across member schools;
- Further share resources and skills across member schools;
- Further increase levels of aspiration across our school communities and so have a positive impact on standards.

2.5 As a Co-operative Trust, the Trust will adopt the values and principles of the co-operative movement (see Appendix A).

2.6 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 values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

2.7 We have chosen to become a member of The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust because these are the values and principles, which we feel should underpin our work with each other and with our young people.

Section 3 - What will the Trust do?

3.1 What will be the Trust's particular focus?

It is the key role of the Trust to raise attainment in all our schools 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 effective learning.

Our focus is to increase the enjoyment, opportunities and achievement of all stakeholders by working with a variety of innovative educational partners from the community and beyond, in order to impact positively on learner outcomes.

3.1.1 Further Improve the Quality and Consistency of Teaching

As a member of the Trust we will:

- Support member schools in recruiting committed, enthusiastic and high quality staff to work in our schools;
- Develop the skills and talents of all who work in our schools;
- Continue to encourage staff and school leaders to share their expertise for the benefit of all members of our Learning Trust;
- Provide staff working in our schools with the best in terms of training, facilities, resources and support.

3.1.2 Raise Aspirations Further

As a member of the Trust we will work in partnership to:

- Encourage everyone involved with our young people to have high expectations of them - and our young people to have high expectations of themselves;
- Enable those attending our schools to acquire the skills and attitudes needed to go through life as 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 possibilities afforded by the wider world;
- Develop the capacity of the local communities to aspire and achieve;
- Provide opportunities for our young people to broaden their experience of local communities and the wider world.

3.1.3 Harness Partnership Resources and Beyond

As a member of the 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 and businesses to extend what schools can offer;
- With external partners to support our efforts in a variety of ways.

3.1.4 Improving Conditions for Learning

As a member of the Trust we will work:

- To provide an enjoyable, safe, and stimulating educational environment in which both learners and staff can flourish;
- To ensure that young people arrive at school ready and willing to learn;
- To improve and maintain attendance, so that all our young people are in a position to learn;
- To continue to promote good behaviour through clear and consistent expectations and a curriculum that encourages young people to learn;
- To ensure good transition arrangements are in place to provide continuity in learning as young people between classes or to new schools;
- With partners to improve the health and well-being of our learners;
- With parents/carers to increase their capacity for lifelong learning to impact on themselves and their children.

3.2 What will Netherthorpe Primary School bring to the Trust?

Netherthorpe Primary School is a local authority maintained primary school with approximately 250 pupils on roll. Virtually all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost all children speak English as an additional language. We seek to create a learning environment where everyone is able to shine and reach their full potential. At its most recent OFSTED inspection, Netherthorpe Primary School was judged 'Good'.

Netherthorpe Primary School will bring skills, expertise and commitment to the Trust looking to engage and share best practice in relation to all aspects of 'school life' for the benefit of all member schools.

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 education arm of the 6,000 strong Co-operative Movement in this country. We will work with the College to identify a suitable long term co-operative partner for the trust from the Co-operative Movement in the Sheffield 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 co-operative schools organisation will be of great assistance as we try to navigate our schools through the rapidly changing educational landscape facing all maintained schools. We will also be able to work with a significant and growing number of co-operative schools within Sheffield; as well as participate in a strong regional, national and international network of co-operative schools.

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. It is hoped that the Local Authority will also become a partner in the proposed Trust. Charitable status and existing partnerships will help significantly in identifying suitable partners.

3.3 How will the Trust make a difference?

3.3.1 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 for enjoyment and achievement across The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust community.

3.3.2 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 provides 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.

3.3.3 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.

3.3.4 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.

Section 4 - How will the Trust work?

4.1 The Trust is a charitable, not for profit organisation, meeting the legal and other requirements of the Department for Education (DfE). The Trust is also regulated (as with all charities) by the Charities Commission and is registered as a company limited by guarantee with Companies House.

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

4.3 The Trustees will meet a minimum of 3 times a year (co-ordinated with existing school governance arrangements as required).

4.4 The Trust will work with other people and organisations, as appropriate, to carry out its work. As the Trust develops, it may be appropriate to consider additional partners. There will be a clear process involving existing Trustees to ensure that any future partner will comply fully with the vision, values and aims of the Trust.

4.5 The Trust will be made up of representatives from schools, partner institutions and the membership - via a representative Forum that will be established, generally known as the Stakeholder Forum. For details of the proposed structure of the Trust see Appendix B.

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 community and help young people prepare for the challenges facing them as global citizens.

Membership of the Trust

4.7 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.

4.8 The Trust has plans to establish a 'Trust Forum' whose members, including parents, staff, learners and representatives of community - both organisations and individuals, are elected from the 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 (normally two or three).

4.9 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.

Section 5 - Appendices

Appendix A - 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 19th centuries. They are embodied in the statement of Co-operative Identity published by the [International Co-operative Alliance](http://www.ica.coop/al-ica) (<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

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.

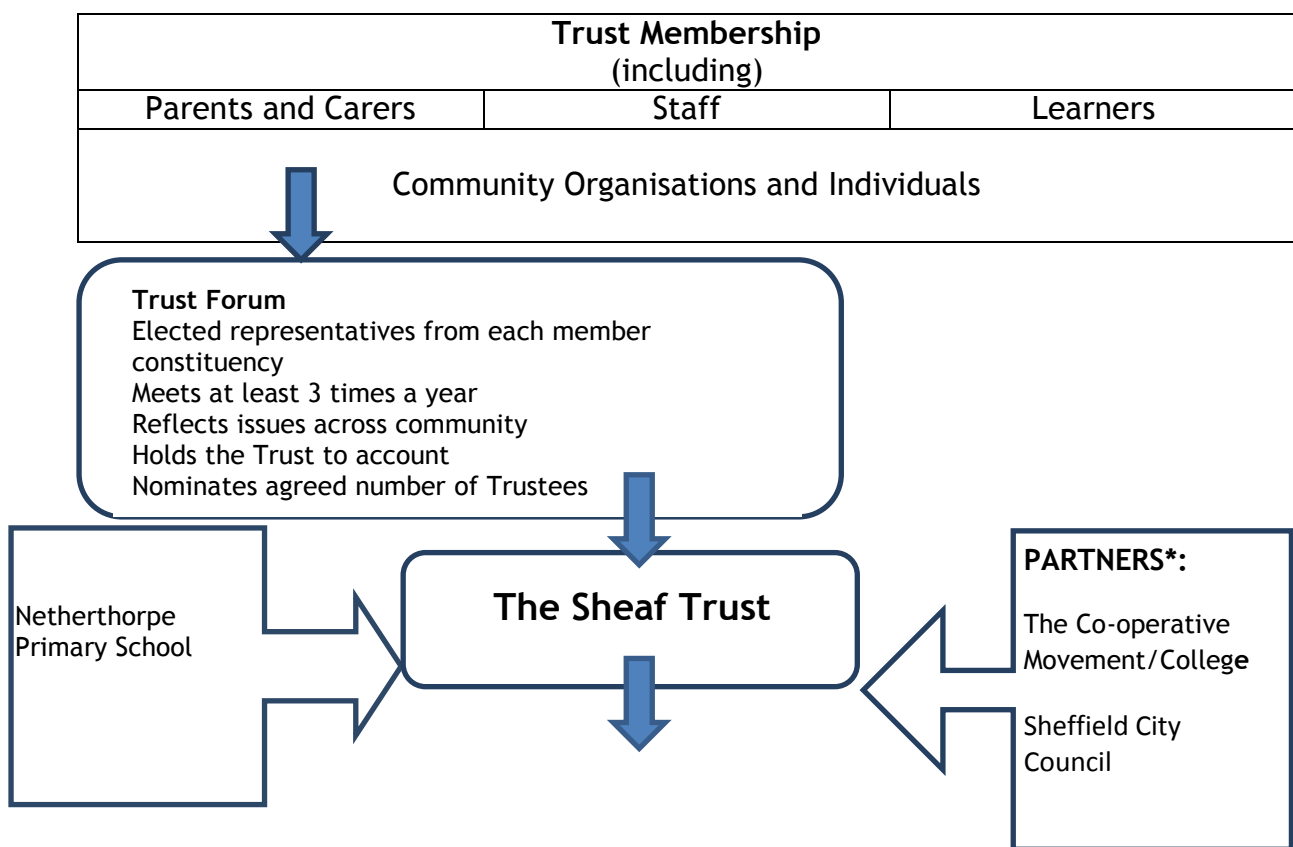
<p>1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership</p>	<p>Co-operatives are voluntary organisations; open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.</p>
<p>2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control</p>	<p>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 co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.</p>
<p>3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>5th Principle: Education, Training and Information</p>	<p>Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national, region and international structures.</p>
<p>6th Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives</p>	<p>Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the Co-operative Movement by working together through local, national and international structures.</p>
<p>7th Principle: Concern for Community</p>	<p>Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.</p>

Appendix B - The Trust Structure

As part of the consultation process, we are keen to share the Trust structure which is properly representative of all members and stakeholders.

In putting this together the founding members have built on existing governance arrangements whilst creating a structure which is realistic and suitable. There is no wish to create an unwieldy and bureaucratic structure which is not fit for purpose.

The diagram below is an attempt to show the relationship between wider membership, schools and their Governing Boards and proposed external partners.



***Each partner will appoint one trustee to the Board**

****Each school will appoint two trustees to the Board, (being the Headteacher and Chair of Governors) under this structure. The Trustees would meet as The Sheaf Co-operative Learning Trust at least three times a year.**