

More Schools Adopt Co-Operative Trust Model

The **co-operative**

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The growing acceptance that the co-operative model offers schools a compelling structure was further underlined when the latest tranche of co-operative trust schools was announced.

Fifteen new co-operative trust schools, which offer all stakeholders an opportunity to be involved in the running of their school, become legal entities today (1 April) bringing the total throughout the country to more than 50.

The new co-operative schools include a Leeds based federation of eight schools with another cluster in South Bristol. Individual school trusts are also being established in Stoke-on-Trent, Oldham, Bradford, High Wycombe and Peterborough.

Anyone with an interest in the school including students, teachers, parents, employers and the local community will be encouraged to become members of the Trust, making the trust a community based mutual.

The members will elect representatives to a school stakeholder forum, which will meet on a regular basis, in order to ensure that those in positions of responsibility remain sensitive to the needs, views and aspirations of the different groups.

This co-operative mutual model is based on open membership, equal democratic participation (one member, one vote) and clear accountability of those in charge to those for whom services are provided is very much in fashion at the present time.

Russell Gill, Head of Membership at [The Co-operative](#) Group, said: "The co-operative model, which is very much in vogue with the mainstream political parties, allows all stakeholders greater participation in the running of the school and our values, that date back more than 150 years, offer schools an ethos which we believe can lead to higher standards, aspirations and achievements."

Co-operative College Principal Mervyn Wilson, who has been working with the local authorities and individual schools, said: "It is clear from the response we are getting from both education authorities and schools up and down the country that they appreciate the advantages the co-operative model can offer and that is why so many schools have adopted the model since the first one was established in Stockport just two years ago. The model is establishing itself as the fastest growing type of trust school across the country."

More than one school a week is currently embarking on the process to become a co-operative trust school and the Government has set a target of establishing 100 by the end of the year. On current projections this will be met by the end of this academic year with the total likely to double by early in 2011.

Additionally the growing network of co-operative schools recently agreed to establish itself as a national network, seeking to develop a strong local, regional and national voice, as well as range of services meeting the needs of 21st Century co-operative schools.

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1. The Co-operative Group includes a wide range of resources and group companies including Insurance, Food, Clothing, Travel and Legal Services all of which have helped them recently win the Responsible Retailer of the Year award for the past three years.

2. The Co-operative Group are also involved in a number of worthy causes under their "Ethics in Action" campaign which includes Plan Bee – A campaign to [save the bees](#) whose numbers in the UK have been on a decline as well as bringing [Climate Change Facts](#) to the attention of the UK too.

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