



## **Castle Lower School**

### **Proposal to for change of category to Foundation School, and acquisition of a foundation through membership of the North East Bedford Learning Trust**

#### 1. Summary

1.1 This is a Statutory Proposal in accordance with section 19(3) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 for a change of category of Castle Lower School, Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 8EP from Community School to a Foundation School, and for the acquisition of a foundation (established otherwise than under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998) through membership of the North East Bedford Learning Trust ("the Trust").

1.2 The proposed date of implementation of this change will be 1st April 2009.

1.3 Comments and objections to this Proposal should be submitted by 12th March 2009 in writing to the Governing Body of the school at the above address or by emailing [castle@deal.bedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:castle@deal.bedfordshire.gov.uk).

1.4 Further copies of this proposal are available from the school office at the above address, or at the school's website ([www.castlelowerschool.com](http://www.castlelowerschool.com)).

#### 2. Aims and Objectives of the Trust

2.1 As a non profit making charity, the objects and aims of the Trust will be exclusively charitable. They will be to advance education for the benefit of the public in general, and specifically for the schools who are members of the Trust and other schools that the Trust chooses to work with. In carrying out its work, the Trust will have regard to its obligation to promote community cohesion.

2.2 The principal purpose of the Trust will be to support the continued success and progress of the school in terms of academic achievement and an understanding that this can only be attained if we also cater successfully for the emotional and physical needs of pupils, parents, staff and local community.

2.3 The thematic basis of the Trust around personalising learning to meet the outcomes of 'Every Child Matters' provides a focus for collaboration between schools. The Trust's vision is that through this collaboration, it will harness the energy, experience, skills, expertise and talents from all schools and external partners as a lever to raise standards, and support :-

- passion in the learning process and motivation for each young person to achieve high standards and success, improving the life chances for all;
- the development of confidence in embracing the challenges of an increasingly demanding world;
- high quality provision for all, with high standards of teaching, learning and assessment that is innovative, coherent, relevant and high in expectations;
- a safe, healthy, attractive and stimulating environment for learning and leisure to promote overall well-being for pupils and adults;
- the development of new ways of communicating and sharing knowledge through exploiting new technologies;
- the engagement of all young people, their families and the local community

### 3. Composition and Membership of the Trust

#### 3.1 The membership of the trust will initially comprise:-

- Castle Lower School;
- Goldington Green Lower School;
- Goldington Middle School;
- Hazeldene Lower School,
- Newnham Middle School,
- Mark Rutherford Upper School,
- Putnoe Lower School,
- The Hills Lower School
- University of Bedfordshire
- Bedford College
- Bedfordshire Police
- The Bedford Charity [The Harpur Trust]

3.2 The Trust will be legally established as a Company Limited by Guarantee (“the Trust Company” at Companies House and be subject to regulation by the Charity Commission. The Trust will comply with all necessary requirements as set out in Education Requirement as to Foundations (England) Regulations 2007/1287.

3.3 The Trust Board membership will be made up of the 8 eight schools and the 4 external partners listed above. Each school member will nominate 2 trustees and each external partner will nominate 1 trustee. The Trust will have a total of 20 trustees.

#### 4. Rationale for membership of the Trust

4.1 Castle Lower School has much recent evidence of its outstanding practice and of the improvement of provision for all its students confirmed by Ofsted and through the Local Authority monitoring. It is already playing a role supporting other schools by sharing practice in tracking children's academic progress, in implementing 'Values' education and in its support of children with Special Educational Needs. Recently the school has also been recognised for its work on developing healthy and active children.

4.2 The school, having embedded these improvements, now wishes to continue to improve further through the increased opportunities offered by the Trust, particularly in developing personalised learning for our children. This will enable our children to continue to make outstanding progress both academically and emotionally. As part of a Trust the school will have additional opportunities to:-

- Use the expertise of University staff and students alongside the good practice from other schools in the Trust to develop a high quality curriculum, which is relevant to all children and meets the school's priorities for improvement, for example to use expertise to focus on improving writing, particularly boys' writing
- Work alongside other schools to refine their teaching and learning strategies by sharing good and outstanding practice, particularly on assessing children, to have a positive impact on raising standards of children's achievement
- Further develop systems of transition to ensure greater continuity and progression in learning and general practice between feeder schools
- Work together with the other schools and with local community organisations to increase the support for parents offered by extended schooling, such as providing 'care' during the school holidays, providing a greater range of high quality specialist after school provision to meet the needs and interests of all children
- Provide high quality professional development for all staff closely focussed on the school's priorities
- Provide educational opportunities for parents, for example English as a second language classes
- Work with partners to formalise systems on the delivery of training to ensure children's safety and well being, for example establishing with the police annual road safety training, for all children

#### 5. Constitution of the Governing Body of the School

5.1 For the duration of the School's membership of the Trust, the Trust will appoint two Foundation (Trust) Governors to the School's Governing Board. The structure of the school's Governing Body will be:-

- 6 Parent governors
- 4 Staff governors, including Headteacher
- 3 Local authority appointed governors
- 3 Community governors
- 2 Foundation (Trust) governors, as appointed by trustees of the Trust

## 6. Consultation

6.1 All statutory requirements in relation to consultation have been met. A short consultation document and questionnaire was distributed to all parents of children at the school and the nursery in November. Other stakeholders including teachers and other staff, unions, local playgroups, the local authority, community bodies including local churches, and our MP, Patrick Hall were also consulted. An information evening at Mark Rutherford was organised with the other schools, and the views of children at the school were also considered. The consultation period closed on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2009.

6.2 The response to the proposal was overwhelmingly positive. Of 360 consultation papers issued, 23 responses were received. 19 of these supported the proposal and 3 were against the proposal, with 2 requesting further information. Copies of all written consultation responses and notes of meetings are available on request from the school office.

6.3 The Governing Body met on 13<sup>th</sup> January to consider the views of those consulted. The Governing Body's response to the questions raised as part of the consultation was distributed to parents on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2009, and is also available on the school's website.

6.4 In response to the consultation, further information has been provided to stakeholders on the objectives, operation, and anticipated benefits of the Trust. A number of practical issues were also raised and are being addressed as part of the implementation process. It was not considered that these responses alter the rationale or content of the proposals and it was decided that no further consultation was required.

6.5 At its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January, the Governing Body decided to proceed with the publication of this formal proposal.