



### **Press Release from Lipson Community College on Secretary of State's Visit**

Lipson Community College is aiming to be the first school in southern England to set up a Co-operative Trust. Principal Steve Baker welcoming Ed Balls's visit said: "Current events suggest the need to work with ethical partners is crucial for schools. Working with a Co-operative Society as opposed to a plc means people not profit are the bottom line. It is about aspiring not to have more, but to be more."

Last year the Co-operative group were voted the most ethical UK company and won the Queen's Award for sustainability.

Steve argues that this is "not about the privatisation of education but about giving local people a greater say in how their schools are run. The Plymouth and South West Co-operative Society will be a key partner in helping us generate further capacity within our local community to meet the National Challenge." Mr Baker added: "They are helping us to help ourselves." Lipson and the other LASC (Lipson Area Schools Council) schools are among the first wave of a national network of 100 Co-operative Trust schools announced by Ed Balls, and were in Manchester recently for the Co-operative Trust schools conference.

Local MP Linda Gilroy said: "Co-op values centre around self-help; self-responsibility; democracy; equality; equity and solidarity and provide a framework which encourages honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others. I am delighted that Ed Balls – who like myself is a Labour and Co-operative Member of Parliament - has had the chance to meet staff governors and students at Lipson college today."

"This model has a lot to offer Lipson's students and works with the grain of everything that they have been doing to raise standards and to provide them with a good all round education. I will be taking a keen interest in how the school goes forward and have certainly been very impressed with the enthusiasm of everyone I have met this afternoon."

The Co-operative College have been working with Lipson to develop the Co-operative Trust, and help them establish links with other Co-operative Trusts. College Principal Mervyn Wilson commented: "Becoming a co-operative trust school is a key part of Lipson's strategy to raise achievement and strengthen their links with the community. They will benefit from the growing network of co-operative trusts and their well established with the Plymouth and South West Society".