



## Bringing co-operative values to education

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### Reddish Vale Co-operative Trust

Reddish Vale Technology College is the first school in England to become a co-operative trust, with the Reddish Vale Co-operative Trust established in March 2008.

Reddish Vale is a large secondary school, with nearly 1400 learners. OFSTED describes it as serving an area of relative disadvantage, and like Campsmount, the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than the national average. Its most recent OFSTED Report in 2007 described the school as good with some aspects, such as provision for care, guidance and support outstanding.

The Reddish Vale consultation document emphasized its tradition of embracing innovation and change stating 'in 1995 we were one of the first schools to become a specialist school. We now want to become one of the first to become part of a co-operative trust'. It added, 'the co-operative trust will give us a stable platform on which to build partnerships and continue to develop to meet the changing needs of our local communities'.

Phil Arnold, Director of Schools Improvement, emphasized how the Trust was enabling the school to seize new opportunities:

"Working with our partners we are keen to pursue new capital funding to complement our BSF plans and seek ways to engage young people through social enterprise. The 'My Place' programme, for example, has offered young people hands on opportunities to develop and manage a youth co-operative. They have come together through membership of the trust to bid to deliver sport, leisure, information advice & guidance and a safe place to be in the heart of their community. Their bid "Our Space" has a co-operative enterprise – run by young people for young people - as its centrepiece".

In a meeting of young co-operators at the school these young pioneers were clear "if you want an exciting range of facilities and activities for young people get us fully involved in the design, management and delivery, that way you know it will continue to work".