

# Opportunities and activities for member schools



### School Improvement

The challenges of school improvement and the inspection process face all of us. The SCS SW is able to help in the following ways:

- Broker structured school to school support, to draw on and share the experience and expertise of others. This could be developed to become, for example, our own version of a Challenge Partners approach
- Facilitate networking between schools to provide peer to peer support
- Maintain a list of recommended professionals able to support schools including Ofsted inspectors and recently retired HMIs. The intention is that this will become more than a list, developing into a 'community' of advisors/consultants where there are, for example, some shared protocols, quality assurance mechanisms and fee scales
- Facilitate the SCW SW **Co-operative Leadership Forum** – an open meeting of school leaders who currently get together 3-4 times a year to share issues of mutual concern/development
- Develop and draw upon SCS SW Partners to offer advice and guidance
- Facilitate the setting up of networking groups based on location/subject area

### Taking a Leading Role

There are currently 6 constituent sub-regions in the SCS SW, each with 2 representatives who serve on the Board. The Board determines the regional strategy and oversees activity. Elections occur every autumn. You could take a leading role and help shape the organisation as it grows and seeks to better meet the needs of its members. If you are a senior leader in a co-operative school, consider standing at the next election and helping take the organisation forward.

### About Us

The SCS SW is the regional network of the 200 or more co-operative schools in the South West of England - from Gloucestershire and Dorset to Cornwall. It is a region of the national network which unifies co-operative schools across England and is owned and democratically controlled by its member schools. The South West has the largest number of member schools and since January 2013 has had a regional organisation with an elected Board made up of senior school leaders, representing both primary and secondary schools, a part time co-ordinator made possible through grants from the Co-operative Group and a growing number of partner organisations. This bulletin lists all of the current opportunities for member schools in the region. *It is not limited to these and can create new and responsive services to meet member needs as they are identified.* It can become what its members chose it to be.

### Co-operative Teaching & Learning

- School improvement through effective co-operative teaching & learning is the focus of the **Teaching & Learning Forum**, which is an open meeting of school practitioners who currently get together 3-4 times a year to share practice from co-operative pedagogical perspectives
- The Teaching & Learning Forum are piloting **peer to peer webinars** to share and develop ideas and ways of working
- One day **Co-operative Teaching & Learning Conferences**, annual regional conferences in the west and east of the region. These involve a wide range of high level contributors to stimulate good practice
- **Promoting local initiatives**  
Tavistock College with Plymouth University have organised annual events to celebrate the research being undertaken by school staff  
Co-operative TeachMeets – organised by staff from co-operative schools in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire Area

### Partners

#### Higher Education Institutions

Partnerships with HEIs in the South West are being developed for mutual benefit. We currently have firm partnerships with Plymouth University and the University of St Mark & S John, Plymouth (Marjon), have working links with Exeter University and have had initial discussions with Bath Spa University.

Here are some examples of the activities (not mentioned elsewhere):

- **Senior HEI staff members attending Forum and other meetings:**  
Leaders from Plymouth University and Marjon regularly attend our meetings and offer useful insights and suggestions for innovation and development
- **Supporting HE student learning:**  
We have supported a group of first year students from Plymouth University by creating a project for them to pursue which sought to identify ways of marketing membership of Co-operative Trusts  
We have supported two MBA students from Exeter University by co-constructing research projects which have examined member recruitment and development for co-operative schools
- **Evidence through research:**  
We will have an advisory role for a research project at Exeter University which aims to undertake research through a comparative case study including a co-operative primary school  
The opportunity to set up a significant research project with Plymouth University, to commence autumn/winter 2014-5. Suggestions of the focus for the research include: the impact of co-operative values on teaching and learning and student achievement, how co-operative values are being translated in different ways within and between schools and what impact being a co-operative school has on the overall culture and success of a school. Schools are invited to work in partnership on this project to help shape the research question and take part in the research
- **'Growing our own' through Initial Teacher Training**  
Marjon proposed a model of organising Schools Direct with clusters of co-operative schools that has been promoted and is being brokered through the SCS SW. The first cluster to take this up is the Tavistock Co-operative Learning Trust who will develop Schools Direct trainees from Sept 2014 in partnership with Marjon's Teacher Education Partnership; the PGCE will have a specific focus on teaching in a co-operative school

#### Other Partner Organisations

The SCS SW is pleased to have formed productive partnerships with a range of organisations including:

##### i. The Success For All (SFA) Foundation UK

SFA is a charitable non-profit making foundation that has effectively developed and worked in partnership with schools on a whole school improvement strategy proven to increase children's outcomes through a co-operative learning approach to literacy. In 2013 SFA received funding from the Education Endowment Fund to carry out research. Through negotiation, SCS SW schools were given the first option to be part of the national research that was worth £40K for primary schools and £19K for secondary schools to implement the programme. One of our primary schools, Mount Street Primary in Plymouth that is taking part, has been using the scheme since Sept 2013. Their Ofsted inspection in early 2014 graded them 'Good'; the Ofsted report makes reference to their successful use of Success For All. Although the research is now under way, the SCS SW partnership with SFA is able to provide opportunities for engagement with co-operative schools.

##### ii. Oxfam Education

Our partnership with Oxfam in 2013-2014 enabled 14 secondary schools to run collapsed curriculum days with the services of Oxfam coming free of charge via sponsorship from the Co-operative Group. It is regretful that the South West Office for Oxfam is now closed and the education work has moved to their headquarters in Oxford; however, it is hoped that we can still maintain some good liaison.

##### iii. Co-operatives South West

This is the co-ordinating body for all co-operatives in the South West. We have presented at their conferences and advertise in their Directory, to enhance our shared principle of *Co-operation amongst Co-operatives*.

#### Economies of Scale and Procurement

This is an area for development and currently offers:

- Discounts on books from Kagan Co-operative Learning
- Book Supply and Literacy Consultancy through Crediton Community Bookshop
- The possibility of joint purchasing at discounted rates for the Accelerated Reader scheme from Renaissance Learning

#### Communication

SCS SW Newsletters– 6 times per year supplemented by other notices and information sent out electronically in between Newsletters. South West pages of the SCS website. These are not currently in use; however, there is great potential for them to be developed to meet interests and needs best suited to SCS SW.

#### One voice

We have the opportunity and scope to:

- share good news stories widely in the education press and elsewhere.
- to have shared representation such as our submission to the Education Select Committee in 2013 on our views regarding co-operation and school partnership. This submission was posted on the DfE website.

#### A local point of contact for all issues related to the SCS in the South West.

A central contact point to respond to and signpost queries

**For further information on any aspect of this Bulletin or the development of the SCS SW contact:**

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