

**Free Schools - Proposal Form**

The Proposal Form asks you for details on the educational aims and objectives, parental demand and premises of the proposed Free School. It also asks questions about the suitability of the provider(s) involved. All new Free Schools will be opened with the same legal status as Academies, in a binding agreement with the Secretary of State.

Please note, all information provided in this form will be published on the Department for Education website.

**INITIAL DETAILS**

**Name** (Please specify if you are the nominated representative of an organisation that wishes to set up a Free School)



**Name of your organisation**

Stour Valley Educational Trust Ltd

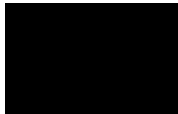
**Address** (of organisation or individual)



Clare, Suffolk



**Email Contact**



**Telephone Number**



**Are you an existing independent school wanting to convert to a Free School?**

**No**

**If yes, please provide your 6-digit school unique reference number (URN)**

**If no, please confirm the nature of your organisation** (educational group / charity / business / parent group etc)  
Community and Parent Group

**Please confirm whether your organisation is incorporated** i.e. set up as a Company which is registered at Companies House. If so, please provide the Company Registration Number, Company Address and details of the Directors and Secretary. If not, please indicate the approximate date by which it will be incorporated.

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes, our organisation is incorporated</b> Company Registration Number: Company Address: Details of Directors and Secretary:
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>No, our organisation is not yet incorporated</b> Approximate date by which it will be incorporated:

**In which Local Authority area will the school be based?** If you are near to a LA boundary, please include name of neighbouring LA(s)

Local Authority Suffolk
Neighbouring LAs Essex, Cambridgeshire

**Is your Local Authority aware of your intention to set up a Free School?**

**Yes**

(If Y please give details of your discussions with them so far) Meeting 29 March with Porfolio Holder for Education and Director of Education to brief them on proposal. Data and costs received from SCC Schools Organisation Review Project Manager for building maintenance, utilities and transport costs.

**SUITABILITY OF PROVIDER**

The Secretary of State will consider each proposal on its merits, and take into account all matters relevant to that proposal. Generally, he would expect that all proposals will comply with all aspects of the rigorous suitability and vetting tests throughout the application process, including due diligence and CRB checks and will reject any proposers who advocate violence, intolerance, hatred or whose ideology runs counter to the UK's democratic values.

Do any of the following apply to the organisation (or any consortium member), or to (any of) its director(s)/partners/proprietor(s) or individual applicants (select Y/N):	
Is in a state of bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors (including any Individual Voluntary Arrangement), or subject to an Administration Order or any legal proceedings concerning their solvency?	No
Has been convicted of a criminal offence?	No
Is involved in any illegal activities?	No
Has not fulfilled obligations related to payment of taxes?	No
Is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying information?	No
Is not in possession of relevant licences or membership of an appropriate organisation where required by law?	No
Is barred from certain work with children as a result of being:	
[a] included in the list of those barred from Regulated Activity with children, kept by the Independent Safeguarding Authority? Or	No
[b] included in the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999(4) (list of those considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children)? Or	No
[c] subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (5) (or any other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction)? Or	No

<p>[d] disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000(6)?</p> <p>For further information on [a], [b], [c] and [d], please contact the CRB <a href="http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk">www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk</a>.</p>	No
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 10A of the Children Act 1989(7) for child minding or providing day care?</p>	No
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006(8)?</p>	No
<p>Is a member, or has been a member in the past, of a proscribed organisation?</p>	No
<p>If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes" please give details below:</p>	

**EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Briefly outline your reasons for wanting to set up a Free School. Max 200 words.**

Reasons for wanting to set up a Free School

Suffolk County Council's (SCC's) decision to transition to a two tier system has led to the decision to close Clare Middle School (CMS) in July 2011. As a result, children in Clare, and the surrounding villages, will receive no state-funded secondary education locally and will be displaced to large schools up to 18 miles from their homes.

CMS was built as an 11-16 school and currently educates some 480 pupils. The site is extensive and the fabric of the buildings good. Parents have campaigned in vain for the retention of secondary education in Clare for four years, and there is overwhelming community support.

The community is essentially very rural. It has high proportions of people with low qualifications and in lower social groups. Parents of school age children of course wish for the best possible education, but resent the disruption that daily transportation to Haverhill or Sudbury will necessarily bring.

Stour Valley Educational Trust, which was set up at the behest of the community, believes that establishing a medium sized community school, to be called Stour Valley Community School, on the site of CMS is the best option for the education of local children as well as the best use of public money for that purpose.

**Please set out the Free School's aims and objectives.** You should also describe:

- the teaching methods that will be used and whether the Free School will follow a particular philosophy (eg Montessori);
- the outline of the Free School's proposed curriculum, including any religious ethos;
- how the Free School will improve pupil learning and ensure strong discipline;

Max 2000 words.

THE SCHOOL'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

VISION

Stour Valley Community School will provide a secure, stimulating and inclusive centre of academic excellence in which Pupils from all backgrounds

and faiths in the surrounding Suffolk and Essex community are equally valued.

#### MISSION: BRIGHTER FUTURES

Our mission will be to open Pupils' minds to their personal potential and to lay firm foundations for brighter academic, professional and vocational futures in our community and beyond.

#### THE SCHOOL'S KEY FEATURES

Leadership by inspired, inspiring teachers: Teachers recruited and empowered to lead in a structure that places Pupils at the top.

A 'human scale' with Teachers knowing each Pupil's name and needs: there is clear evidence that medium-sized schools achieve better results than larger schools. Academic research in the UK and USA ('Secondary School size, a systemic review 2004' and 'The impact of school size and single sex education on performance 2002') concludes that Pupils' outcomes are maximised in schools with year groups of under 200. This is clearly in evidence in Suffolk where, of the 38 SCC schools offering GCSEs over the past three years, an average of almost 8 out of the 10 top performing schools by GCSE results (including Maths and English) had PANs of less than 200 Pupils, whilst 7 out of the worst performing 10 schools had year groups of 200 or more.

A Curriculum designed to meet the needs of our children: emphasis will be placed on maths, english and triple science, supported by a broader curriculum featuring modern languages, humanities and sport. The curriculum will be enhanced by use of digital technologies and devices to prepare Pupils for increasingly technological environments. Extended curriculum and extra-curricular enrichment activities will combine with the academic focus to develop confident, considerate and collaborative contributors to our community, and to the UK economy and society.

A School run by the Community for the Community: existing support for the School is evidenced by the existence of over 1,200 letters of support. Clare is a close-knit community and will form strong links with, and add value to, the School.

Improved Quality, Diversity and GCSE Results: the target is 65% of Pupils achieving 5 GCSE A\*-C grades including maths and english in the first year of GCSEs, rising to 70% by the third year, and a target of 0% of Pupils not in education, employment or training after leaving the School. We believe that the School will offer genuine choice and diversity in the wider area, and will help to drive standards up in all surrounding schools. We shall seek partnerships, collaboration and dissemination of best practice with all schools in the area.

Best Value for Suffolk and Essex Ratepayers and National Tax Payers: an emphasis on individual Pupils and strong leadership by Teachers, together with a clear focus on the achievement of targeted educational and business

outcomes on the part of the Head and Governors, will deliver this.

#### MORE DETAIL

##### Aspects of Learning, Teaching and the Curriculum

Teachers will be given the freedom and autonomy to make a real difference in the classroom and the community. They will be rewarded and remunerated in line with the responsibility they assume and the results they deliver.

The current CMS relationship with Homerton College Cambridge will be developed and we shall seek to become a Centre of Excellence for ITT (initial teacher training), bringing in talented and enthusiastic new Teachers on placement and helping to raise everyone's standards.

The School will adopt an academic mentoring and support enrichment programme and, to ensure that the School remains focused on the achievement of its goals, a comprehensive but simple-to-operate performance management system will be implemented for all staff. The watchword will be clarity, in terms of everyone knowing both how they fit into the structure and what is expected of them.

The School will work closely with feeder primary schools to ensure that there is a carefully planned transition.

The School will implement best practice in tracking and monitoring Pupil progress, and using this in producing personal learning plans that meet the needs of every Pupil. Pupils will be encouraged to be proactive in setting their own goals and targets, and to shape how they learn.

Particular attention will be paid to Contextual Added Value scores and other key educational performance indicators.

There will be a 2-year skills-based Key Stage 3, establishing the core focus on english, maths and science, together with Design Technology, ICT, modern languages, humanities and sport. Other subjects, including RE, drama, music and art will also form part of the curriculum.

Key Stage 4 will comprise the four current pathways (foundation learning, general courses such as GCSE, apprenticeships and diplomas) in a 13-19 continuum. This will provide routes for Pupils to develop at their own pace, using a 'stage not age' model of progression. Partnerships with other schools and FE institutions will enable both the delivery of this breadth of opportunity and post-16 planning from the outset.

Personalised learning pathways will allow Pupils to make progress at a pace matching their aptitude for, and interest in, various subjects. For example, starting on a Maths GCSE course in Year 9, completing in Year 10, with an AS-level option for Year 11, while other GCSEs would start in Year 10. This is in keeping with the 'stage not age' approach mentioned above that has synergy with both personalised learning pathways and vertical grouping

arrangements. Where vertical grouping is used, Pupils in a Tutor Group will be from all year groups, so that rather than 30 Pupils of one age only, a Tutor will have 6 students from each of Years 7 to 11, remaining with the Tutor throughout their time in the School. In this way, the Tutor will know each student's strengths and areas for development more closely, and be able to liaise more effectively with subject teams using this deeper understanding of Pupils.

An emphasis on preparation for the world of work and adult life will be an important feature of life at the School. Thus, due attention will be paid to Active Citizenship (through PHSE and extra-curricular activities), work-related learning (through work-experience and enterprise education) and a cross-curricular focus on the Key Skills (application of number, communication, ICT, working with others, problem solving and improving own learning and performance). A range of extra-curricular enrichment activities will also be provided, often in association with community groups.

The Trustees are committed to the role they and the school play in safeguarding and protecting children, and in promoting life skills beyond the conventional confines of education in association with parents/guardians and other agencies. This commitment will sit firmly at the heart of the School, ensuring that Pupils are safe, healthy, happy and confident, and able to make a positive contribution as well as acquiring the skills to achieve economic wellbeing.

The School will espouse traditional values. Thus, Pupils will learn to understand and respect others, promote common values, gain awareness of human rights and the responsibility to uphold and defend them, and develop skills of participation and responsible action. They will understand and promote equality of opportunity, tolerating others' positions and celebrating diversity

The emphasis on English and maths throughout the curriculum is considered vital. Maths underpins many aspects of adult and working life, as does fluency in English, the world's international language. In addition, Pupils will be inspired to become inquisitive about how the planet and people, machines and materials, electricity and the elements work. Science education is underprovided within the UK and this will become one School in which it is brought to life for enquiring minds, creating a natural inclination to the use of science to solve problems.

Appropriate, affordable, personal computing devices (such as netbook computers and mobile phones) will be at the heart of each Pupils' learning and will also perform a number of other functions including daily registration and timetabling dissemination. With access to the School's learning platform, virtual learning environment and their e-portfolio available at home, Pupils' learning can be seamless and take place at times and in locations other than at school. This could involve workplace learning or field trip activities in practical subjects such as science, where data logging and imaging may be enhanced.



### Identifying and Tackling Underperformance

Data on Pupils from entry will be subject to robust analysis, in order to identify under-performing individuals at an early stage, and to provide the necessary support as quickly and effectively as possible. We will use the Jesson Value Added model to raise standards. Particular attention will be paid to vulnerable Pupils, not only directly with the Pupils but also via family learning initiatives and links with wider children's services.

### Extended School Services

Extended School provision will reflect the fact that a school cannot work in isolation when helping children to achieve full potential. By working in partnership with other agencies that support aspirational outcomes and better life chances, the School will ensure that it becomes the hub of wrap-around services in the area. The school will be part of a team that will include statutory agencies such as Primary Health Care, GPs, Library, Safer Neighbourhood Team, Social Care Services and Connexions. Youth services will be built around the current Middle School arrangements, which provide a Summer Scheme and Junior and Senior Youth Clubs.

### Special Educational Needs

The quality of provision will be the Headteacher's responsibility. A SENCO will manage provision, supported by a small team of assistants. The "human scale" of the School will enable teachers to give attention to the needs of SEN pupils. AbilityNet guidance will provide a template for supporting Pupils with low prior attainment, alongside accelerated learning for Gifted and Talented Pupils.

### Inclusion

To avoid Pupils from being excluded, or feeling excluded, from educational opportunities, barriers to participation will be removed through a tolerant approach and maximum exploitation of empowering technology. The availability of learning pathways to suit all learners, avoiding the 'one size fits all' inclusion trap, will provide a dividend in terms of achievement through participation. This, coupled with an engaged and committed parent community, and formalised with planned Home School Contracts, will ensure that all learners will be given every opportunity to achieve in a supported and personalised way.

### Sharing Facilities

An active campaign to encourage full use of the School's facilities out of hours and term times will be launched. The foundations for this will be in the current interaction between CMS and the community, within which a number of classes, clubs and associations use the hall and other facilities, with the swimming pool open under safe supervision during the summer holidays. As well as facility sharing with fee-paying community groups, it is envisaged that in some instances community groups will work with the School to provide

enrichment activities. It is intended, within the first year of operation, to establish a School Foundation as a separate charitable trust. This will be a key focus for engaging the wider community in the activities and development of the school. It will be additional to, and work alongside, the PTA. Some of its Trustees will be Trustees/Governors of the school, but a greater number will be drawn from the wider community in and around Clare, so that it remains closely aligned with, but independent of, the school. All members of the local community will be eligible to be members or supporters, and involvement will be encouraged.

#### Leadership

From the outset, a core principle set by the Trustees is the delegation of leadership, together with autonomy and commensurate responsibility for results, from the Governors and the Headteacher, to all Teaching staff in their classrooms. From the outset, an inverted pyramid approach will empower the Teachers and the operational management of the school. This process has begun with the Trustees'/Governors' vision and will continue with the appointment of the Headteacher Designate. The Trustees are confident that this project will attract a naturally gifted Headteacher to create an original, innovative and distinctive set of systems and values for the educational and operational management of the school.

**What are your organisation's core areas of work / aims? Max 500 words.**

Stour Valley Educational Trust Ltd has been incorporated as a company limited by guarantee, and has applied to the Charity Commission for charitable status. The charity's Articles of Association specifically restrict the charity's objects to the advancement of education for the public benefit. The sole purpose of the charity is to establish Stour Valley Community School.

**What capacity and capability do you have (or have access to) in order to deliver the educational vision set out above? Please indicate the resources, experience and expertise (educational and legal) that you have or have access to. Max 500 words.**

The lead executive responsibility for implementing the vision will clearly lie with the Headteacher who is yet to be recruited.

Among the Trustees and Prospective Governors, we have a wide range of educational and business expertise: please see separate section below for details of their expertise and experience.

██████████, a ██████████, has agreed to become a Trustee with effect from 8 July 2010. It is anticipated that during the summer a further ██████████ will become a Trustee.

In terms of time commitment, the Trustees are collectively able to commit to the equivalent of 10 man-days per week.

In addition, the ██████████ is able to commit the equivalent of 1 day per week, and other members of the Group a further 1 day per week.

Additional community secretarial support is available for 1 day per week.

Thus, in total, the Trust will, as necessary, have manpower of over 2 1/2 FTEs available during the remainder of Stage 1, and Stage 2 and beyond. This resource is able to cover a wide range of work, including strategic oversight, educational input, communication with parents and other stakeholders, marketing/branding, finance, and HR input as well as the more routine clerical and administrative functions. It is hoped that this resource may be supplemented by external assistance once Stage 1 approval has been obtained.

Legal advice has to date been provided on a pro bono basis by

██████████

Suffolk  
[REDACTED]

This is a highly regarded, regional firm of solicitors which deals in corporate and personal legal matters.

For accounting services we have held discussions with

[REDACTED],

Ipswich

Suffolk [REDACTED]

This firm provides a specialist service to the Charity/Not-for-profit sector. The Trust's main contact is [REDACTED] who is both [REDACTED].

**Do you have plans to work with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisation?** If so, please include their details below and set out the intended nature of that relationship (for example, a contract, co-sponsorship arrangement, informal partnership).

Stour Valley Community School proposes to run an open tender process to let a contract for the provision of 'School Services' including Facilities Management, HR, School Business Management and Recruitment Support. Our vision is that teaching and learning staff will be free to concentrate on Pupils' educational success and enjoyment, while a professional services company takes ownership of the 'business of education'. As premises have already been identified, this element is not required.

Stour Valley Community School will seek to partner with an organisation that can demonstrate a strong track record in managing the 'business of education'. Tendering organisations will be asked to evidence how the efficiencies driven by professional back office services can provide a direct benefit to front line teaching and learning. Additionally, companies will be required to evidence experience in encouraging collaborative working with other schools to realise economies of scale. We would expect that any tendering company be able to display a strong track record, and the tender process will be designed to ensure that any service efficiencies are re-invested back into teaching and learning.

In order to ensure a period of stability for the School post opening, the Directors/Trustees are considering an initial contract period of three years, with the potential to extend for a further two periods of 12 months - subject to satisfactory performance as measured by a pre-agreed Service Level Agreement and Key Performance Indicators. The contract will be overseen by the Governing Body, which will take advice on performance from the Headteacher. To ensure that adequate alternative provision can be secured, a

termination period of two terms will be included, based on a 'failure to meet standards' as outlined in the contract.

Fees for this work are yet to be fully confirmed. However, they will be met from the School. Fees will be benchmarked against comparable Local Authority schools and the basis of the contract will be to deliver any savings back into front line teaching and learning.

We expect all tendering companies to be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of and passion for improving life chances for children and young people. This commitment, and a track record of providing similar services outlined above, will be key aspects of the selection process. Within the legal framework of the procurement exercise, we wish to include providers of goods and services based within the Stour Valley community who are able to match or better current second-tier providers. This naturally helps to cement the school's core cohesion with community. All participants in the tendering process will be expected to agree to comply with this approach.

**Please name the key individuals / trustees involved in setting up the Free School** (if available). Please also indicate whether trustees have been chosen and their roles confirmed. Please provide details of employment of these individuals and any conflicts of interest you believe might arise.

Directors of Stour Valley Educational Trust Ltd responsible for submitting this proposal:

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] – [REDACTED]

The following have been short-listed by the Directors as Prospective Governors, pending approval of the school and final selection:

██████████: ██████████.

██████████: ██████████.

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██████████: ██████████.

It is recognised that the Governing Body will evolve once the school becomes operational. There will be a need for 2 Teacher Governors and some 4 Parent Governors and these will be elected from the appropriate constituencies. It will be made clear to those who become Governors by September 2010 that their appointment is initially as an interim. Copies of the Job Description and Person Specification for Governors and the Chair of Governors have been agreed and are available upon request.

**EVIDENCE OF DEMAND**

**What evidence of local parental demand do you have?** For example, a petition or a declaration from interested parents or pupil number projections for the area. Max 200 words.

The proposed site for our Free School is currently Clare Middle School which is scheduled for closure in July 2011 by Suffolk County Council under their Schools' Organisation Review. This school currently has 291 pupils from the local catchment area and its PAN is 120. It is anticipated that the majority of those 291 children would remain in the Free School as year 7, 8 and 9 pupils.

In 2006 a community petition in favour of retaining a secondary school in Clare raised 1,200 letters of support.

As part of the work in April 2010 leading up to this submission, over 150 directly affected parents signed preference forms in favour of Stour Valley Community School.

Stour Valley Community School will serve a geographical area covering both the Suffolk and Essex sides of the River Stour. Existing primary feeder schools to Clare Middle School are located in Clare, Cavendish, Glemsford, Hartest, Wickhambrook and Hundon. Strong expressions of interest have been received from parents in other nearby Suffolk villages of Long Melford and Kedington as well as Great Yeldham, Belchamp, Ridgewell and Bulmer on the Essex side.

**What is the proposed capacity (number of pupils)?** Max 200 words.

We expect the school to open in September 2011 with the majority of the current 291 Pupils staying on from the current Middle School. In addition, it is anticipated that some 40 pupils from the three closest Essex primary schools will join at that time, together with a small number from villages further away. We anticipate opening with the 330 pupils quoted in our original application made to NSN on 5 May 2010. Over the following 3 years we expect to achieve the planned capacity of 600. Our confidence in being able to achieve these numbers is enhanced by the St Edmundsbury Local Development Framework that contains plans for 255 new houses in Clare, and more in the surrounding villages, in the coming years.

Once a successful track record has been established, we believe that the Stour Valley Community School reputation will have grown to the extent that we could envisage increasing total capacity to 750 and beyond.

**What is the proposed age range of the Free School?** Please include details of planned pupil numbers in each year group.

Stour Valley Community School will serve year groups 7 -11 with children aged 11-16. We anticipate that Stour Valley Community School will have its first intake of pupils in September 2011 with 291 pupils remaining from the existing Middle School and some 40 new pupils being attracted for the new catchment area on both the Suffolk and Essex sides of the Stour river.

Once at capacity of 600 we plan 120 Pupils in each year group.

**When do you hope the Free School will start operating** (for your first set of pupils)?

The entire proposal is dependent upon Stour Valley Community School having its first intake of pupils in September 2011 with 291 pupils remaining from the existing Middle School and some 40 new pupils being attracted for the new catchment area on both the Suffolk and Essex sides of the River Stour.



**PREMISES**

**What steps have you taken to identify a potential site?** Please include details of the geographical area the school seeks to serve; a list of any sites you have considered; and any discussions you have had to identify a suitable site. If known, please include the proposed location, premises and postcode of the Free School.

It is proposed to locate Stour Valley Community School on the existing site of [REDACTED], which is located at [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Sudbury, Suffolk, [REDACTED].

This site was visited by [REDACTED] from the Partnership for Schools on 17 June 2010 and was deemed to be entirely suitable for us to open the school in September 2011 with the number of pupils we anticipate.

**Further information**

Please note, all information provided on this form will be published on the Department for Education website. Information that you supply on this form may be shared with (a) the New Schools Network and (b) the Local Authority in which you wish to set up the Free School. Information about the New Schools Network can be found at <http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org>.

Submission of this form will be treated as consent, from both you and anyone else whose personal data is contained on this form, to the sharing of this information as set out above.

In addition, information that you provide on this form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Next Steps**

Please email completed Proposal Form to  
[freeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk)

You will hear back from a named official at the Department for Education within two weeks, who will offer you advice on how best to progress your application. The Secretary of State will make a judgement on the potential of the project based on criteria relating to educational aims and objectives, evidence of demand, potential premises, suitability of provider and any other relevant considerations to decide whether the proposed Free School project should move into stage 3, namely that of drawing up a business case and plan.