

SCLT: A Potted History



The Trust came into being in 2011. It was based on the Regent's Park 'cluster' – i.e. Regent's Park secondary and the primary schools that fed into it. As a *foundation* trust – not an *academy* trust – its schools continued to be financed through the local authority, but the land and buildings were transferred from the local authority to the Trust. Mutual ownership of the properties helped to tie the schools together, and also to protect them from forced academisation – something that was looking very likely at the time, and is still a possibility.

At first it was called the Regent's Park Learning Trust and its members were Regent's Park, Foundry Lane Primary, Banister Infant and Nursery and St John's Primary and Nursery. Freemantle Primary and St Mark's Primary could not join formally because the Church of England owned their land, however they became partners the following year. The Polygon School joined the Trust as full members in 2016. In that same year, the name was changed to the Southampton Cooperative Learning Trust, to reflect our wider identity. Banister Infant and Nursery became a primary school in 2002, and more recently St Mark's Primary has been rebuilt as an all-through 3-16 school.

We have always sought to build partnerships with other organisations in the wider community. Over the last 11 years our formal and informal partners have included:

- Total Coverage, a design co-operative
- The WEA – Workers Educational Association – our most long-running partnership
- Solent EBP (Enterprise Business Partners)
- No Limits (Southampton Charity for Young People)
- Solent University
- Southampton University (School-University Partnership)

Since 2011 three more cooperative schools trusts have been formed in Southampton: Aspire, Reach and Bridge. We are beginning to build links with these, based on our shared belief that through cooperation we can create a better future for our children and communities.

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