

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

**FROM: Mike Hammond, Corporate Director**

**REPORT NUMBER F57**

**TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
(COMMUNITY SERVICES)**

**DATE OF MEETING 25 July 2006**

### **REVIEW INTO THE WAY SCHOOLS IN SUFFOLK ARE ORGANISED**

#### 1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Suffolk County Council is undertaking a consultation exercise as part of a review into how schools are organised in Suffolk. The review is considering whether the existing structure provides the best opportunity for pupils, now and in the future, to achieve their full potential. The consultation period ends on 4 August 2006.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Helen Style, Corporate Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee, submits a response to Suffolk County Council reflecting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

#### 3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None

#### 4. **KEY INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Suffolk County Council has produced a prospectus on the review that sets out the reasons for undertaking the review and the issues that will be explored during it. A copy of the prospectus is at Appendix A.
- 4.2 The three key issues that the review is looking to answer are:
- **How well do pupils do** – when comparing the two-tier and three-tier systems in Suffolk, and compared with results nationally.
  - **How well are resources used** – are there opportunities in current government funding to maximise the amount spent on learning, address mismatches in school places and pupils, and take advantage of funding to maintain or upgrade buildings.
  - **Having a school system fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century** – how to best serve rural areas, attract and keep top quality teachers.
- 4.3 The Suffolk Policy Development Panel (PDP) has been set up to oversee the review. The Panel is made up of people responsible for education in Suffolk, including County Councillors, the churches and the Learning and Skills Council. At the end of the consultation period the results will be considered by the PDP along with other evidence and research and will make recommendations to the Suffolk County Council Cabinet if they believe change is necessary. The cabinet will decide whether it agrees with the proposals in January 2007. If change is deemed necessary there will be a further round of consultation prior to any changes coming into effect in 2008/09.

4.4 In order that the implications of the proposals can be properly considered, the Committee will be given the opportunity to receive a presentation from Suffolk County Council, other interested parties, and feedback from consultation Babergh DC has undertaken with schools in the district.

4.5 In considering this topic Members may like to give consideration to the following issues:

- The effect any restructure may have on rural villages.
- What issues affect poor performance between GCSE and A Level, and whether there is any significant difference between structures.
- The importance of 'structure' V socio-demographics in pupil achievement.
- What is the current state of the current school building stock, and the cost of repair?
- What benefits do Middle schools provide to pupils.

4.6 A full list of the schools in the Babergh area is at Appendix B

## 5. **APPENDICES**

Reviewing the way schools are organised in Suffolk – Appendix A

Schools in the Babergh District – Appendix B

## 6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO:**

None.

**CONTACT:** Simon Pitts

**DIRECT LINE:** 01473 826672

# Reviewing the way schools are organised in Suffolk

**Building a world class school system  
for the 21st century**

Stage one consultation - 15 May – 4 August 2006



[www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk)

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Suffolk County Council's  
Children and Young  
People's Services

con • sul • ta • tion

*noun:* the action or process of  
formally consulting or discussing



**Patricia O'Brien**  
*Portfolio Holder,  
Children, Schools  
and Young People*



**Rosalind Turner**  
*Director for  
Children and  
Young People*

## A Message from the County Council

We want the very best for Suffolk's children. We want to make sure they have the best possible schools, now and for the future. We want to build a world class school system fit for the 21st century.

### **We want you to help us design that system.**

Schools are at the heart of our children's future. Outside the family, nothing else offers greater opportunities and responsibilities for making sure children stay safe and healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution to society, and are able to get the most out of life. We must organise our schools so they can work, together with other services in the county, to provide the very best for future generations of pupils.

Within schools things have changed dramatically in the last 30 years. We now have a national curriculum and the way children are taught, and the way schools are run, is very different. Our teachers and support staff have responded magnificently to these challenges.

But they are now expected to achieve even higher standards, not only for their pupils, but for the whole community. And yet, the way schools are organised has changed very little since 1974.

We need to make sure we help schools meet the challenges now and for the future. This will include the early years of children's education, meeting their different needs (including special educational needs) and ensuring better opportunities after the age of 14 and into adulthood.

But before we make any decisions we want your views. We hope you will take the time to read what we have to say and to respond. We will listen very carefully to your views.

# Have Your Say!

## on how schools are organised

We have set up a Policy Development Panel (PDP) to look at how the county's schools are organised. The panel is made up of people responsible for education in the county, including county councillors, the churches and the Learning and Skills Council.

Between **15 May** and **4 August 2006**, the panel wants to hear the views of children and young people, their families, schools and all other interested parties. These views will go to Suffolk County Council's Cabinet, our main decision-making body, next January.

## Why are we considering change?

We all want to make sure we have the best system to provide the best results. We need to look at the following.

- **Pupil Achievement**

Children and young people in Suffolk generally perform well compared to national averages. However, the results for 11 year old pupils have been below the national average for a number of years. Also, we do not have enough young people staying on after the age of 16 and students in some of our 6th Forms do not make the progress we would expect given their good GCSE results. We need to improve performance for all age groups, but particularly at age 11 and after the age of 16.

- **14-19 Education and Training**

We have agreed a new plan for 14-19 education and training with our main partners, including the Learning and Skills Council. We plan to offer more specialised courses (such as sport and leisure, business, art, design, engineering and construction) to all children from the age of 14 and we want to increase the number of students going on to further education at the age of 16. Working in local groups, we have been developing ideas on how we can offer better choice and higher standards.

To do this we need to think carefully about how we organise our schools because this will affect what our students can do after the age of 16. We have the opportunity to develop our schools and post-16 provision at the same time as developing a new university for Suffolk. Doing this together will enable us to get all these things right.

- **Population Changes**

Big population changes in Suffolk mean in some areas, where the number of pupils is falling, we have more school places than we need. In other areas, particularly where a lot of new houses are being built, we do not have enough places. Before we can take action, we need to be sure schools are organised in the best way possible for the future.

- **Every Child Matters – Services for Children**

We are working on a new plan for children's services, based on the Government's national initiative 'Every Child Matters'. We aim to bring together all the services needed to support children and their families.

We are looking at ways to use school buildings better - providing clubs and other activities both for children and the wider community outside school hours (known as extended schools). We are also building children's centres around the county, where a range of services for families will be based. To succeed, we need to plan where these services should be and we can only do this if we are clear about the way schools are organised.

- **Building Schools for the Future**

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a national initiative that will mean we can re-build or modernise our secondary school buildings. Extra funding for primary schools is also being provided. The Government will not give us money to do this unless we have a clear vision for the future and detailed plans about how we will improve our schools.

- **National Trends**

Local authorities all over the country are looking at the way their schools are organised. There are many different options that need to be explored. We need to look at whether we can sustain our current arrangements or whether we need radical change.

- **Sustainability**

Since 1974 Suffolk has had a mixture of two-tier and three-tier schools (see below). With very few middle schools now left in the country, we need to decide whether we can keep the current arrangements going successfully in Suffolk. Our middle schools need to have the best possible staff including subject specialists, primary experts, headteachers and other senior staff as well as newly-qualified teachers. We have to ask whether we can continue to attract and keep such staff when there are very few middle schools elsewhere.

## How are Suffolk schools currently organised?

Suffolk has a mixture of two different kinds of schools..

### Two Tier Schools

Primary  
Ages 4 - 11



Secondary  
Ages 11 – 16 (or 11 – 18)

In primary education, we have a few separate infant and junior schools.

### Three Tier Schools

Primary  
4 - 9



Middle  
9 - 13



Upper or High  
13 - 18

Our middle schools are counted as secondary schools.

Suffolk's nine special schools are in both two-tier and three-tier areas. Our review will look at how we can develop them to make the best possible provision for our pupils.

### Numbers

Number  
of pupils

55,000  
three-tier  
pupils

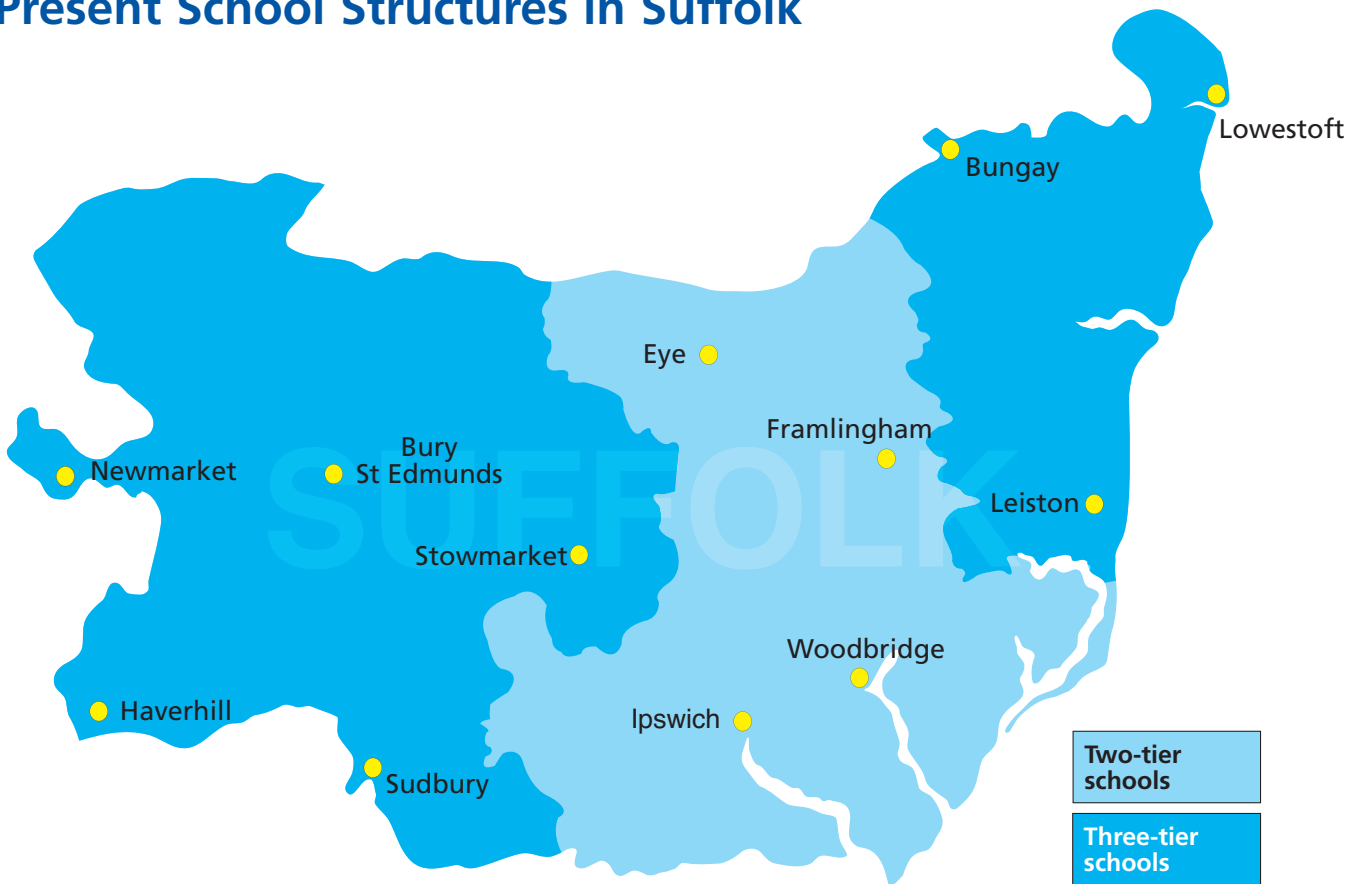
45,000  
two-tier  
pupils

Numbers  
of schools

193  
three-tier  
schools

139  
two-tier  
schools

## Present School Structures in Suffolk

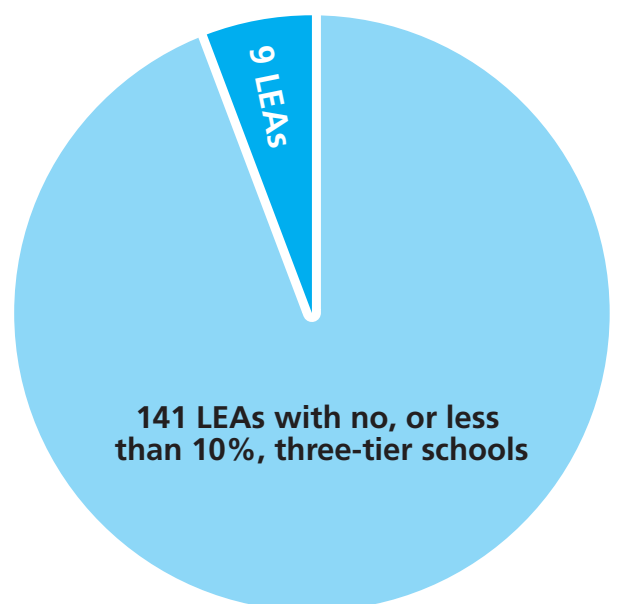


The three-tier system was set up in Suffolk in the 1970s in line with national educational thinking at the time. It was felt this system was best for the social development of young people and avoided the need for very large secondary schools. It was believed children would benefit from the special attention that could be given to them, particularly between the ages of nine and 13.

This is still an important consideration for parents. During the review we will look not only at which system provides the best exam results, but also which system provides the best overall education for children, allowing them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Most parts of England now have a two-tier system. There are only three other areas that still have a large number of middle schools counted as secondary, like Suffolk. In the Isle of Wight they have decided to continue with this, but Northumberland has decided to change to a two-tier system, while Bedfordshire, like us, is considering what to do. Some areas have middle schools counted as primary – for example, Norfolk (which has decided to change to a two-tier system).

**LEAs with more than 10% three-tier schools in 2004-05**



## What are the issues we will consider as part of the review?

The Council has asked the Policy Development Panel to look at three issues:

**Theme 1: How well pupils do in school.**

**Theme 2: How well we use our resources.**

**Theme 3: How we can build a successful school system for the 21st century.**

We will look at each of these in the following sections.

## Theme 1: How well do pupils do in Suffolk?

We have carried out a lot of research into how well pupils do in Suffolk schools. There is very little similar research available nationally as most local authorities have only a few 3-tier schools, if any. The findings have been checked by external researchers.

Our research has produced some important findings. Generally, pupils do well in Suffolk. There are high performing schools in all parts of the county, along with a few schools facing difficult challenges. However, when we look at the two systems as a whole, there is a definite difference in pupil performance. Our findings show that:

- many children who go to three-tier schools do not perform as well at the age of 11 in English, Maths and Science.
- from ages 7-14 children in two-tier schools make nearly a school term better progress overall.
- lower performing students do catch up in three-tier schools but higher performing students in two-tier schools gain better A\*-C grades at age 16.
- performance is better in two-tier schools for all GCSE subjects.
- students from two-tier schools also do better at 'A' Level and gain more university entry points.

The findings and evidence nationally also show that the more times children change schools the bigger the effect on progress. This is particularly critical when, as in Suffolk, children change school halfway through a national curriculum stage.

These findings deal with pupil attainment. However, we cannot measure every aspect of a pupil's achievement, such as personal and social development, which contribute so much to the development of the whole child. Ofsted inspections suggest pupil attitudes, values and personal qualities are good in both systems.

You can see our full findings on our website: [www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk). Please follow the links to School Organisation Review and then to Research Library.

### What have schools and the authority done to improve the situation?

Since 1999 we have been doing a lot to improve results for pupils at the age of 11 and over 16. It has also been a high priority for schools, particularly those in the three-tier system. We have provided:

- extra support as pupils change school;
- extra staff training to develop writing, reading and mathematics at age 11; and
- offered better courses for students aged 14-19.

We have all been doing our best to move things forward but the situation has not changed significantly over the last four years despite everybody's best efforts. We have to think carefully about the reasons for this and whether it is the way we organise our schools rather than the efforts of our school staff.

### **Does this mean structures have to change?**

Not necessarily. We must improve performance but there may be more than one way of doing this. Before we make any decisions we want your views. We'll look at all the evidence and then decide what to do.

## **Theme 2: How well we use our resources**

The review is about investing in the future of our children. It is not a cost-cutting exercise. Our aim is to make best use of current funding and any future investment.

In particular we need to think about how we can:

- make best use of the money we get from Government for schools, so more is spent on teaching and learning;
- deal with the issue of too many school places in one area and not enough in another;
- make the most of the opportunities to improve our school buildings;
- reduce the distance children have to travel to get to school; and
- help our schools provide more services to parents and the community.

We need to think carefully about the impact of any changes, particularly how they might affect our schools. We also need to make sure we can pay for any changes we make and that we are getting value for money.

## **Theme 3: How we can build a successful school system for the 21st century**

Whatever system we have, we need to make sure it will last well into the 21st century. The school system will need to meet future needs, in relation to children's learning, our teachers and support staff, and the needs of our communities.

In particular we have to think about how we can:

- modernise the way our children learn;
- attract the best newly-qualified teachers;
- recruit and keep the best subject experts, senior staff and headteachers;
- best serve our rural areas;
- reduce the environmental impact of the changes we face;
- make sure as many parents as possible can send their children to the school they want; and
- make sure we provide the best education we can for children and young people with special educational needs.

## **What options are open to us?**

We are keeping an open mind. We need to ask how best we can provide for future generations of Suffolk pupils and we will consider new ideas that are forward looking and innovative. We need to look carefully in particular about how any changes before the age of 16 would affect opportunities for students after the age of 16. These are some of the options that we are looking at:

### Keeping things as they are

Keep and improve the current mix of two and three-tier schools.

### All age schools

Have all-age schools in some, or possibly all, areas of the county.

These provide education for 4-16 year-olds, and can also have a nursery and sixth form. They are common in some Scandinavian countries and there is a growing number in England, with one area planning to move totally to all-age schools in the future.

### A new two-tier system

Have schools that cater for children aged 4-13 and then 14-19. These would reduce the number of times children change schools and keep the benefits of middle school education. They could help us develop better opportunities for children after the age of 14.

### All two-tier schools across the county

Have the system based on the national curriculum key stages, for the whole county

- Primary age 4-11 (Key Stages 1 and 2)
- Secondary age 11-16 (Key Stages 3 and 4)
- Develop options for students after the age of 16 in line with our new 14-19 strategy

This would make Suffolk the same as most parts of the country, including the nearby counties.

### All three-tier schools across the county

Have the first, middle and upper or high school system, for the whole county

- Primary age 4-8
- Middle age 9-13
- Upper or high from age 13 upwards

### Different systems in different parts of the county

Allowing parents and the local community to decide which system is right for their area.

This could mean having a lot of different systems in different parts of the county.

## What happens next?

### The consultation finishes on Friday 4 August.

The Policy Development Panel will look at the results, along with other evidence and research, before making a recommendation to the Cabinet, our main decision-making body.

The Cabinet will then decide if it wants to make any changes in early January 2007.

If there is to be change, there will be a second stage of consultation, so everyone will get another chance to comment.

If there is a second stage, it would start later in 2007 and any agreed changes would not happen until 2008/9 at the very earliest.

## How can I get more information?

**Go to our website at:** [www.suffolk.gov.uk/sor](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/sor)

**Or write to:** School Organisation Review, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich IP1 2BX.

# Have Your Say!

Your views matter to us – please fill in this form and return it to: Communications Team, FREEPOST NAT 18364, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2BR by Friday 4 August.

## Reviewing the way schools are organised in Suffolk Your Chance to Help Plan the Future of Suffolk's School System

### About you

This section is optional

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

### To help us with our analysis, please complete this section:

Age: 0-16 <sup>1</sup> 17-25 <sup>2</sup> 26-40 <sup>3</sup> 41-59 <sup>4</sup> 60+ <sup>5</sup> (Please tick)

### Are you responding mainly as a:

Parent/carer of a child	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	Member of school staff	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>
School governor	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	Student or pupil	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>
Member of the community	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>6</sup>

Do you live in a: three-tier area <sup>1</sup>  
two-tier area <sup>2</sup>

Postcode

### Your views

#### After reading this booklet, which are the 3 issues that matter most to you (please tick)?

Pupil achievement	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	Managing population changes	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>7</sup>
Better choice for 14-19 year olds	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	A modern education system	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>8</sup>
Fewer changes of school	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>	Better support for children and families	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>9</sup>
Better value-for-money	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>	Personal and Social Development	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>10</sup>
Getting and keeping good teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>5</sup>	Community services in schools (Extended Schools)	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>11</sup>
More students staying on after 16	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>6</sup>	Keeping village schools	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>12</sup>

Other issues of concern (please give details):

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**Do you think Suffolk should change the way schools are organised?**

Strongly agree <sup>5</sup>    Agree <sup>4</sup>    Don't mind <sup>3</sup>    Disagree <sup>2</sup>    Strongly disagree <sup>1</sup>

**If you think Suffolk should change, which option would you like?**

Schools for ages 4-11 and 11-18	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>1</sup>	All age schools	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>3</sup>
Schools for ages 4-8, 9-13 and 13-18	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>2</sup>	Schools for ages 4-13 and 14-19	<input type="checkbox"/> <sup>4</sup>

Other (please give details):

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Communications Team  
Suffolk County Council  
FREEPOST NAT18364  
IPSWICH  
SUFFOLK  
IP1 2BR

**SCHOOLS IN THE BABERGH DISTRICT**

<b>School</b>	<b>East/West</b>
<b>HIGH SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>East Bergholt High</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Hadleigh High</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Holbrook High</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Royal Hospital School</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Woolverstone Girls High School</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Sudbury Upper</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Great Cornard Upper</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>MIDDLE SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>Stoke by Nayland Middle</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>All Saints Middle</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Great Cornard Middle</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Uplands Middle</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b>	
<b>Bentley CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Bildeston Primary School</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Brantham - Brooklands Primary School</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Capel St Mary CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Chelmondiston CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Copdock Primary</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>East Bergholt CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Elmsett CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Hadleigh – Beaumont CP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Hadleigh – Hadleigh CP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Hintlesham &amp; Chattisham CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Holbrook Primary</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Nayland Primary</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Sproughton CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Stoke by Nayland CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Stratford St Mary Primary</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Shotley CP</b>	<b>East</b>

<b>School</b>	<b>East/West</b>
<b>Stutton CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Tattingstone CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Whatfield CEVCP</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>Acton - Abbots Green CP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Cockfield CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Great Cornard – Pot Kiln Primary</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Great Cornard – Wells Hall CP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Hartest CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Kersey CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Lavenham CP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Lawshall – All Saints CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Long Melford CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Monks Eleigh CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Old Newton CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Sudbury – St Gregory CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Sudbury – St Joseph’s RCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Sudbury – Tudor CEVCP</b>	<b>West</b>
<b>Sudbury – Woodhall CP</b>	<b>West</b>

**Schools in the east of the district are in a two tier area (with the exception of Stoke-by-Nayland Middle). Schools in the west are in a three-tier system.**