



CONSULTATION ON FEDERATION OF CHORLEY LOCAL AUTHORITY MAINTAINED NURSERY SCHOOLS

The Governors of:

- Highfield Nursery School, and
- Duke Street Nursery School

Propose to form a federation of the two schools with effect from 1st April 2019. The schools are currently working within a collaboration which is a soft federation.

Consultation period: As set out in the DfE document 'The Governance of Federations' – August 2014 the formal consultation with stakeholders will run for **6 weeks** starting on **28th January 2019** and closing on **18th March 2019**.

Consultation Circulation List:

- Parents and Carers of Children registered at the above named nursery schools;
- All Staff at both schools;
- The Governors and Clerks to Governors both schools;
- Professional Associations;
- John Readman Interim Executive Director of Education & Children's Services– Lancashire County Council;
- Councillors in whose wards the school catchment;
- Secretary of State for Education.

Brief Summary of the Consultation Paper

What is Federation?

Federation is the formal term used in certain situations where two or more schools work more closely together to achieve the best for their children.

So what would be different if these 2 maintained nursery schools federated?

In essence the main difference would be that all schools would have one shared senior leadership team. The two existing Boards of Governors would be merged to provide one Governing Board containing representatives from both schools.

Initially each school would retain its own identity, would retain its own budget, in the first instance each school and would be inspected separately by OFSTED. Once Federated governors will manage the Federation in the best possible way according to budget restrictions and best outcomes for children.

Admission arrangements would remain the same and children would be taught in their own school.

Although it is possible to undo a Federation, it would be intended that a Federation between these schools would be long-lasting, thus bringing more certainty and commitment to both schools.

What would be the benefits of Federation?

Federation would secure the continuation and growth of the high quality early years education and integrated provision for their children and families currently offered by both these Outstanding Nursery schools.

It would enable the schools to share their resources and expertise, e.g. curriculum development, leadership, teaching expertise and facilities, which would help sustain the performance and excellent outcomes for all children in all schools. It would enable more joint activities between staff and possibly children and more cost effective joint training for staff.

It would also provide more professional development and career opportunities for staff. Equally important, it would offer all schools a stronger foundation to embrace the challenges that lie ahead as national policy for education continues to change alongside budget cuts.

What happens next?

We want to know your thoughts and views on the proposed Federation. Please complete the comments form at the end of this paper and return to school by 9am Monday 18th March 2019.

1. Introduction

One of the three key roles for both school Governing Bodies is to set the strategic direction for the schools they have responsibility for.

The current national drive to create a self-improving school system is based on the premise that clusters of schools would work with, learn from and support one another to develop localised solutions to the challenges they might face. This document outlines the proposal for both maintained nursery schools to join together under a Federation.

A period of consultation has been agreed for stakeholders to comment on this proposal.

Interested stakeholders can contact their Nursery school directly to talk to the headteacher or email the Nursery schools direct

Duke Street Nursery School	bursar@dukestreet-nur.lancs.sch.uk
Highfield Nursery School	bursar@highfield-nur.lancs.sch.uk

There will be the opportunity for staff specific consultation meetings on Wednesday 6th February 2019.

2. What is Federation?

2.1 Under the Education Act of 2002, a Federation is a group of two or more schools with a single Governing Board. It is a way of bringing schools closer together. The schools then combine their Governing Boards into just one Governing Board for the Federation. This allows the federating schools to pool resources.

2.2 The creation and membership of a Federation is not just about structural change. It is also about a different mind-set where the Governors and school leaders share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the Federation, as opposed to just a single school, through a school-led system of raising standards and driving improvement.' (NCTL the Governance of Federations, 2014).

2.3 Nationally, a common reason for Federation has been the need for a school to work with a good/outstanding school in order to raise standards. This is not the case with this proposed as both are Outstanding schools who want to continue to deliver high quality early education in the face of ongoing challenges as set out above.

3. What would stay the same?

The short term plan is set out below, but may change to meet budget challenges, however outcomes for children at both schools will remain the priority.

3.1 Each school would keep its own identity and name. It is not a merger of schools.

3.2 Children would continue to be taught in their school although some activities may be shared. E.g. family services, professional services, out of school provision/holiday clubs.

3.3 Each school would continue to receive its own budget and be subject to all current funding protocols, reporting mechanisms and financial regulations. In the future the budgets may be merged but allocations of budget amounts will not change because the budgets have been merged.

3.4 Each school would be inspected separately by OFSTED.

3.5 Admission arrangements would not change.

4. What Would Change?

4.1 The Federation would need to have a name as it is a separate legally constituted corporate board.

4.2 Both Governing Bodies would be dissolved and replaced by a single, newly appointed Governing Body with responsibility for both schools. Further details of the composition of the Governing Bodies are set out later in this document.

4.3 The new Governing Body would be responsible for school budgets and would determine how expenditure could be most effectively used across the Federation.

4.5 Closer working between schools would provide opportunities for career progression and professional opportunities.

5. Is the Decision to Federate Irreversible?

No – although the move to federate is intended as a long term approach it is possible for schools to withdraw from a Federation and Governing Boards must follow a prescribed process, set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2004.

6. Why are the Governing Boards Considering Federation?

6.1 Both schools have a shared vision to achieve a single sustainable organisation, with strong strategic governance and leadership delivering an inclusive and safe child led learning experience, strong family partnerships and outstanding outcomes for all children.

6.2 During a successful 18 months of collaboration between the two nursery schools, benefits of joint working together practices have been seen. National Studies by the NCTL (National College for Teaching and Leadership), the NGA (National Governors Association), and OFSTED Inspections conducted over the last 5 years show these benefits can be extended and improved by federating.

6.3 At the time of publication, Highfield Nursery had recently been through a success Ofsted inspection that highlighted the positive impact the collaboration had made: “You have seized the opportunities arising from the collaboration to improve the quality of education further at Highfield” (March 2018) .

6.4 Federation brings a better opportunity to secure strong, strategic leadership. Bringing both schools under one leadership structure would ensure that the best practice from each school can be applied to all.

6.5 There is now a growing body of evidence nationally that Federations are successful and have led to improved outcomes for children and better professional opportunities for staff.

6.6 Contextually, both nursery schools are experiencing:

- I. a greater need to support themselves and each other;
- II. increased accountability leading to pressure on Governing boards to provide effective support and challenge, in order to maintain and improve education standards while ensuring support for senior leaders in dealing with finance, business and estate issues;
- III. significant changes in local delivery of integrated early years services;

- IV. a growing national problem of recruitment of quality leaders and teachers to small schools. increasing numbers of collaborative school groups, as schools seek solutions to current challenges
- V. ongoing challenges to ensure delivery of high-quality early education and improving outcomes for children and young people within the current funding framework.
- VI. The changes in the role of the LA and increasing role of schools within the self-improving school system.

7. Some of the Benefits of Federation

7.1 For Children & Families:

- I. They would benefit from a greater variety of teaching expertise, resources, facilities and additional specialist provision which would be shared across both schools.
- II. Their own school would continue, but with access to a larger range of opportunities.
- III. They would have increased opportunities to work with children from other schools.
- IV. Confidence that strong and proven successful leadership of the schools is being utilised and strengthened for the benefit of both schools and their communities.
- V. In times of curriculum/school change, a strong Federation would be much better placed to manage those changes thus enabling children to receive maximum benefit.
- VI. the cooperation to deliver an integrated family service which wraps around, supports and enhances the quality early education in our schools and keeps safeguarding and inclusion at the heart of our schools.

7.2 For Staff:

- I. Increased opportunities to observe, build, and share best practice through innovative and reflective approaches to early education.
- II. Develop mutual support across schools.
- III. An enhanced Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme.
- IV. Wider career opportunities and progression at all levels.
- V. Access to a greater range of resources and professional support.
- VI. Continued focus on 2 to 5 year old children.

7.3 Federation Wide:

- I. Improved opportunities for the recruitment and retention of outstanding staff; maintaining and developing high quality teaching and learning.
- II. The development of a collaborative culture supported by Federation leadership, built on current strengths to manage and sustain in a landscape of ongoing change
- III. A sustainable model with schools remaining at the heart of their local community.
- IV. An opportunity to rationalise and reduce duplication across the two sites thereby increasing leadership capacity to develop our role in a school led system.
- V. An opportunity to develop and embed a shared philosophy and value base which includes commitments to: social Justice, equity, and social mobility; community focussed, participatory practice; democratic and professionally generous conduct; integrated early years services; being fully inclusive up to and including high levels of individual need; high quality education/pedagogy and a commitment to lifelong learning; being informed by evidence, knowledge and practice with a view to create and share new knowledge.

8. Admissions

Admissions to each school would continue to be under the current arrangements. Parents and carers would continue to apply for a place at the school of their choice in the usual manner in line with Lancashire County Council policy

9. Governance

9.1 After federating, there would be a single Governing Body covering both schools, supported by subcommittees. The Governing Body are required to focus on providing strategic leadership, holding the senior leadership to account, overseeing the financial performance of the schools and making sure the money is well spent.

9.2 This is a demanding task for which all Governors need to have, or develop, relevant and appropriate skills.

9.3 All potential Governors of the new single board would complete a skills audit. Governors would be appointed on the basis they have the skills to contribute to effective governance and the success of all schools.

9.4 It is proposed that the Federated Governing Body will be constituted as shown below. This should allow us to ensure a balance of representation from across all communities. At this point the governors and Lancashire County Council have not agreed a final number of governors on the federated body. There must be at least 7 governors in any federated governing body, according to regulation 21 of the 2012 regulations (as amended by regulation 3 of the 2016 regulations).

This must include:

- 2 parent governors (previously this had been 1 parent governor per federated school)
- The headteacher of each school* (unless any Headteacher resigns as a governor)
- 1 staff governor
- 1 authority governor

(*In the current collaboration arrangements there is one headteacher leading both schools)

10. Leadership and Staff

10.1 Initially, there will be no changes to staff leadership structures in both schools.

10.2 Staff would remain employed by Lancashire County Council and at their current school upon formation of the Federation, although it may then be possible for staff to work across both schools with their agreement if this is deemed beneficial to them and the children and to support budget sustainability. All newly appointed staff (including those promoted to jobs from within) will be offered contracts to work across the Federation, rather than limited to one school to increase flexibility. Staff teams at both schools have been made aware of these proposals and it is our intention that there would be a designated senior leader at each school site. Any changes required in the future would follow the appropriate procedures.

11. What Next?

11.1	Would the name of the schools change? No. Each school would keep its own name but there may be a separate over-arching name for the Federation and a single Governing Body.
11.2	Would school uniforms and logos change? No. Each school would keep its current uniform and logo and unique identity.
11.3	Who would lead the new Federation? Our proposal is for an overarching senior leadership structure working across both schools which the Federated Governing Board would strategically lead.
11.4	Who would lead the schools? The single Head teacher would continue to lead both schools with the support from the two assistant head teachers.
11.5	Would there be any change to admission arrangements? No. The current admissions policy would continue to apply for both schools.
11.6	Would school start and finish times change? In the short term NO but they could be reviewed in the light of experience.
11.7	Would children be registered to the Federation or a single school? Children would be on roll at their individual school within the Federation.
11.8	Would the schools share a single budget? Each school would continue to receive its own funding and initially manage separate budgets and keep separate records of its accounts. However, if working practices identified time and financial benefits to combining the budgets the governing body would consider this. The focus of change would be to enable better value for money to continue to ensure good opportunities for children.
11.9	In the current climate of financial challenge is there an opportunity to review efficiency? Yes. It would be the responsibility of the Federated Governing Body to review the quality and efficiency of provision and the individual financial circumstances of each school, with a view to making efficiencies which would support and develop the quality of provision at each site whilst securing the future sustainability of the Federation.
11.10	Would the Federation be inspected by OFSTED? Initially each school would have separate OFSTED inspections and be graded separately, as they are now, however governors may in the future consider requesting a single federated inspection.
11.11	Would there be any changes in the conditions of service for staff? Staff would continue to be employed on the same conditions of service as defined by Lancashire County Council contracts. This means that, for example, all employment rights and pension arrangements would stay as they are now. The only change may come from location of working across both schools.
11.12	Would staff work across both schools in the Federation? Initially staff would continue to work in the school as they presently do. However, there may be opportunities for staff to work across schools. We hope that staff would be able to take these opportunities as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and sharing of good practice to improve the pupil outcomes.
11.13	Would the schools have the same Inset/Training Days? Yes, wherever possible. Both schools would be able to choose when to hold these days, as they do now, and it is likely that they would take the opportunity to have the same Inset/Training Days.
11.14	Do schools in a Federation share a Governing Body? Yes. The previous Governing Bodies of each of the schools would be dissolved and a new single Governing Body would be set up.
11.15	Would one school take the lead over the other? No. The both schools in the Federation would collaborate and work together as equal partners. We would try to ensure that the single Governing Body has representation from both schools, although the reconstitution would be skills-led.
11.16	Is there any research on the impact of Federations? OFSTED has reported that, where schools work together and share leadership, standards have been raised and there have been improvements in children's achievement and behaviour. (Leadership of More than One School; OFSTED, September 2011). There is a growing body of other evidence.

11.17	If Federation of the schools goes ahead, when would this happen? If a decision is made to federate, the proposal is that this would take effect from 1 st April 2019
11.18	If the Federation goes ahead, what work would be done between now and April 2019? Initially the governing bodies anticipate little change to the current collaboration structure. Time would be spent finalising the formation of a single Governing Body.
11.19	Can a Federation be dissolved? Yes. The Governing Board can choose to end a Federation if it is believed that it is no longer in the best interests of the children and stakeholders. This is not an action that would be taken lightly or without due diligence and consultation.

Comments on Federation Proposal – Please return to school by 9am 18th March 2019

Name

Please circle

Parent	Stakeholder	Community representation	Lancashire County Council
	Chorley Borough Council	Staff member	Other