



**Consultation for the Federation of the Governing Bodies
of
Newdigate Church of England Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School
St Michael's Church of England Infant (VA) School, Mickleham
Proposed start of Federation 17th January, 2023**



**Consultation Document
15th June 2022 until 19th July 2022**

The Federation of the Governing Bodies of Newdigate CE Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School, and St Michael's CE Infant (VA) School, Mickleham

The Governing Bodies of the above schools have resolved to seek federation through a shared, strategic vision of the schools' future.

What does Federation mean?

Federation means the formation of one single Governing Body across both schools; each school will remain legally separate whilst retaining their individual characteristics and ethos.

Why are we considering a Federation?

The Governors of Newdigate and St Michael's are considering federation in order to protect and promote the educational provision for the children. Newdigate and St Michael's schools have already developed a partnership for a number of years based on their shared Christian vision and strong values that place the children at the heart of all that they do. Both schools will retain their family feel and strong pastoral relationship with their pupils.

The schools are now in an excellent position to formally federate for the following reasons:

- responding positively to the National, Local Authority and Diocesan guidance that 'no school should stand alone';
- shared Christian ethos and strong values;
- both rural infant schools rooted in their communities and close enough geographically to share resources and work well together.

What are the benefits of Federation?

The federation will bring a consistently high standard of early years and infant education to their communities and strengthen both schools through collaboration and sharing of expertise amongst teachers, children and governors. It will consolidate our successful working partnership that started in 2017 under a Memorandum of Understanding.

Benefits to Children

- The development of a well-planned, broad and engaging curriculum, ensuring the best possible education for children within the federation.
- Strong continued professional development through the sharing of best practice and areas of deep expertise across both schools.
- Increased access for children to teacher specialist expertise from the existing staff of each school e.g. Mental Health First Aider (MHFA), On-line Safety Leader, Home School Link Worker.
- An extended range of services and opportunities available to children and their families.

Benefits to Staff

- A larger organisation will provide greater and more varied opportunities for all staff.
- Recruitment and retention within the federation will be enhanced by the wider opportunities available.
- Greater opportunity for continuing professional development.
- Greater opportunity for shared planning and resource creation.

Benefits for Governance

- Recruitment and retention of higher-quality governors is challenging. The creation of a single Governing Body for the federation will utilise the existing expertise of both school bodies and enable future recruitment.
- Monitoring is a fundamental part of the governors' accountability, being able to moderate across a wider community will improve benchmarking and the identification of best practices.
- Financial monitoring is another key element of the governors' accountabilities. Being part of a larger federation will enable economies of scale through greater negotiating power, joint purchases and sharing of resources.
- A more stream-lined governance arrangement that will support the well-being of the school leaders.

Admissions

There will be no change in the current arrangements for both schools; this will remain in place.

Pupil Journey (see Appendix A)

Staffing

Federation will not imply any change in the schools' current staffing teams.

Staffing levels will continue to be determined by the needs of the school within the existing budgets.

Federation will allow the possibility of new staff to be employed to work across both schools. Existing staff are contracted to work in one school but may wish to take any opportunity to work across the federation in future.

Facilities

The two sites continue to offer opportunities for all children to have access to excellent, well maintained buildings and surrounding natural environments supporting forest school and outdoor learning.

Size and constitution of Governing Body

It is proposed the new Governing Body is constituted as follows:

Headteacher

Ex-Officio Foundation governor (Rector of St Peter's Church, Newdigate or nominated representative)

Ex-Officio Foundation governor (Priest in Charge of St Michael's & All Angels, Mickleham or nominated representative)

One Local Authority governor

Two staff governors (one from each school)

Two parent governors (one from each school)

Two Foundation governors (Guildford Diocese appointment)

Two Foundation governors (One Steer & Booth School Foundation and one St. Peter's Newdigate PCC appointment)

Two Foundation governors (St Michael's & All Angels Church PCC appointments)

This gives a Governing Body of 14 members with a majority of Foundation governors 8 to 6.

The Governing Body of a Federation comprising only voluntary aided schools, which is the case here, must include sufficient Foundation governors to outnumber all the other governors by two.

The total membership of the Governing Body must be no fewer than seven governors and must include the following:

- (a) one parent governor elected or appointed in accordance with regulation 14 in respect of each school in the Federation;
- (b) the Headteacher of each federated school unless any such Headteacher resigns the office of governor in accordance with regulation 19 of the Constitution Regulations 2012;
- (c) one staff governor; and
- (d) one Local Authority governor.

Frequently asked questions and answers

Staff: Appendix B (page 6 of this document)

Parents: Appendix C (page 9 of this document)

Proposed date for the start of the Federation 17th January 2023

How do I contribute?

We are very keen to hear your views about this proposal. We should therefore be grateful if you would **return the attached form or access the online survey by scanning the QR code on the school websites before 4pm Tuesday, 19th July 2022** when the consultation closes. The governors of both schools will then consider the responses to the consultation and decide on Wednesday 20th July 2022. The decision made will then be communicated with all stakeholders on Thursday 21st July 2022.

How can I find out more?

The schools have arranged two informal in-person drop in sessions and a virtual meeting and discussion for people to ask relevant questions of the Governing Bodies of each school.

Parents at both schools invited	Wednesday 22 nd June at 7pm (see ParentMail for online meeting link)
St Michael's CE (VA) Infant School	Monday 4 th July at 2-3pm at the school
Newdigate CE (Endowed VA) School	Wednesday 6 th July at 2-3pm at the school

Let us know what you think

Please complete the response form attached (page 4) and return it either by email or in person (marked Federation Consultation) by 4pm Tuesday 19th July 2022 to one of the following:

- School office, Newdigate CE(VA) School (email to: consultation@newdigate.surrey.sch.uk)
- School Office, St Michael's CE(VA) School (email to: consultation@stmichaels-dorking.surrey.sch.uk)

Remember, all responses must be named and will remain confidential to the Governing Bodies.

FEDERATION CONSULTATION FORM

Please comment on the proposal to federate Newdigate CE (Endowed VA) Infant School and Pre-school and St Michael's CE (VA) Infant School. Please note any questions you may have.

Comments / Questions:

Name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	

Please tick one box that you feel most appropriately represents your interest in this matter:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/carer of a child at Newdigate school / Pre-school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/carer of a child at St Michael's school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of staff at Newdigate school / Pre-school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of staff at St Michael's school
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local resident
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify below)

Appendix A: Pupil journey for Newdigate Infant School and Pre-School, and St Michael's Infant School

Early Years Foundation Stage (Pre-School and Reception)

- Play-based learning is mixed with a variety of engaging and stimulating activities both in and outside to facilitate each child's personal, social and academic development.
- Child-led learning is encouraged, giving the children ownership over their learning and the freedom to explore their natural curiosity. Collaborative learning is introduced to develop positive social skills.
- Children have the chance to meet their new reception class teacher before the term begins in September through scheduled home visits and sessions are organised in the summer term for the children to become familiar with their new environment and begin to develop relationships with class adults and their peers. Teachers work closely with families to share children's progress regularly through on-line platforms or learning journals.
- Early reading skills are taught through an accredited Phonics programme where children learn the building blocks of reading.
- Early maths skills are taught in a stimulating, interactive environment where children consolidate their understanding using practical tasks and objects, at the same time developing their use of mathematical language.
- As a result of consistent, best practice modelling children develop independent and safe learning behaviours and learn to take responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- Children learn about the community which includes visitors coming into school and exploring the local area.
- From an early stage, children are taught how to stay safe, for example, taking part in NSPCC charity events, internet safety, road safety sessions.

Infants (Key Stage 1) Years 1 and 2

- We work with both pupils and parents to ensure a smooth transition from learning through play towards more structured learning, introducing new activities and challenges which embed our core vision and values that improve wellbeing and resilience.
- Early reading continues with children building upon existing phonic knowledge from EYFS and developing their phonic knowledge further to provide them with the skills to decode increasingly complex texts with fluency and automaticity.
- The teaching of language comprehension skills so that children become competent readers who can understand and learn from texts and books.
- Children learn to read and write based on the national Reading Framework which places books at the heart of the curriculum.
- Maths foundations are built upon, with understanding of number and place value, mental strategies and problem solving taught regularly, ensuring concepts are revisited to embed them for all learners.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and carefully mapped and planned around creative topics that engage and motivate all pupils. When possible, it is enriched through extra-curricular clubs and whole school activities.
- Teachers know all pupils very well as individuals and are therefore more able to understand and provide for their needs.
- Subject leaders ensure there is a robust curriculum plan for each subject with appropriate coverage across a 2-year curriculum cycle.
- Through outdoor learning our pupils learn to experience and manage risk and work collaboratively to achieve thereby raising self-esteem, self-motivation and self-confidence.
- Children experience a strong holistic focus on their personal, social and emotional development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpinned by our Christian values.
- Children learn about healthy relationships through a progressive Relationships and Sex Education curriculum that is closely aligned to the Personal Social Health and Economic curriculum and the schools' values.

Appendix B: FAQ – Staff

This document hopes to answer immediate questions that staff members may have, but should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to direct them to your school leader.

If the federation were to happen, what changes would I see in my school?

Initially, the main change would be new governance – there would be one new Governing Body for both schools. Within this arrangement we could share and develop leadership across the federation by using skills and experience in a flexible way across both schools, so that each school could benefit from a wider pool of talent and expertise by:

- working together to tackle shared school improvement priorities and CPD opportunities,
- facilitating the sharing and exchange of good practice across partner schools,
- streamlining practice, background management, and support functions to give a sharper focus on teaching and learning.

Federations can create valuable opportunities for the children from both schools to work together and share great experiences.

Is my job secure?

There are no planned changes to staffing levels at either school. Existing contracts remain in place; the only change is the name of employer to the new Federation's name. However, all new contracts will be issued to the federation, not the individual schools.

Is the federation an attempt to create one school?

No, the governors are clear this federation proposal is not an attempt to create one school (or dispose of any property). Both schools would retain their own identities as two separate schools with neither school leading over the other.

Will this affect my pay and conditions?

All current staff contracts will remain unchanged; your pay and conditions will remain as is, but there may be an opportunity for you to work across both schools for your own development and experience. The federation may choose to advertise future positions that would work across both schools, but all current staff contracts will remain as stated above.

Would staff get the opportunity to work across both school?

In the first instance, it is anticipated that staff will remain in their existing school under the conditions of their existing contract.

The potential benefits in terms of developing staff and sharing expertise, would be explored and cross school working would be encouraged where it was beneficial to the meeting of either school's development priorities. However, this is not something that would be imposed, decisions would be based upon consultation. If a change of site is an opportunity you would like to discuss, expressions of interest would be welcome.

In the interests of sharing and developing good practice, you may be asked to meet, collaborate or share working practices with members of staff from the other school, just as you might already with other schools (e.g. school-school moderation events, local professional networking groups i.e. DSP ELSA/PE/Bursar/SENCo, shared training sessions etc).

Could the children from one school use the other school site either for events or on a regular basis?

Yes, this is again one of the potential benefits and this would need to be agreed beforehand though between both schools' leadership team.

What opportunities are there for me as a staff member in a newly-federated school?

There are many opportunities to the staff working in both schools within a federation. Some are direct changes that will affect you (such as shared CPD, collaborative working opportunities and wider career development opportunities), while others are indirect (such as greater power to purchase resources, or sharing of assets). It also offers the opportunity for career development without having to move to a new school.

What changes will I see in my day to day role?

Both schools will continue to operate in a very similar way as they do now. As with any school, federated or non-federated, however, there will always be changes brought about by school leaders for the benefit of the children. In the first instance, each school's individual policies and expectations will remain in place, e.g. dress code, feedback and marking, behaviour, teaching and learning, performance management. A strong focus on teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils will be maintained.

Who will carry out my Performance Management/Appraisal?

Either your existing line manager or the school leader. Monitoring and evaluation of performance activities will continue in line with school priorities and the requirements of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions document.

Will there be a need for transition based on leadership changes?

No, the governors are currently securing the final details of leadership arrangements but do not anticipate any significant changes other than the clarification of the title and responsibilities of the leadership roles.

Will federation affect the school policies?

Each school has its own policies and it will be an opportunity to align them in the future.

Would federation change the schools' start and finish times?

No, there would be no change to the start or finishing times of the school day as part of the federation process. Any future changes to these would be led by government directives that would need to be implemented at the individual school level.

Would there be any change to the date of INSET days?

No, INSET days would be set across both schools. Both schools already plan shared INSET days so as to maximise the potential of shared professional development and training and have done for a number of years.

How would federation affect an Ofsted or SIAMS Inspections?

Each school will have independent Ofsted and SIAMS inspections and reports that would involve the Federated Governing Body as part of school leadership.

Where would the Federated Governing Board hold their meetings?

The Federated Governing Body would alternate their meetings and governor training between the two school buildings.

Does federating the schools ultimately cost more money?

No, in fact it provides schools with opportunities to share costs and gain access to staffing and resources that might not otherwise be available to an individual school.

Would federation mean there will be one school budget?

No, each school would still operate their own school budget. The federated Governing Body would be accountable for both budgets.

Is this just a government cost saving exercise?

No, the proposal to federate has been reached jointly by the Governing Bodies of both schools; no external influence has been applied.

The funding of schools is primarily based on pupil numbers and as these numbers would not be affected by federating, the school budgets would remain the same.

However, it is true that economic factors have been an important element in prompting both Governing Bodies to consider new ways of working in the light of trends in the funding of schools.

Would federation mean one school will be taking the lead over the other school?

No, it would mean the current governing bodies would federate and work together, bringing their experience and expertise together to form a new Governing Body. Both schools have already been working together for over 4 years in a healthy and successful collaborative manner, this partnership work is widely recognised as a strength within the educational community.

Are there examples of other federations within the county?

Within Surrey examples include: Newlands Federation; Knaphill Federation of Schools. There are also hundreds of federated schools throughout the country.

Can a federation be dissolved?

Yes, defederating is a straightforward process and could happen if the governing body decide that the federation is not working in the best interest of the two schools and the children. It is considered good practice for a federation to be reviewed every two years.

Appendix C: FAQs – Parents and Pupils

Why Federate?

The Governors of Newdigate CE Infant (Endowed VA) School and Pre-School, and St Michael's CE Infant (VA) School, Mickleham are considering federation in order to protect and promote the educational provision for the children in their local communities.

If the federation were to happen, what changes would I see in my child's school?

Initially, the main change would be new governance – there would be one new governing body for both schools – and the overarching leader. Within this arrangement we could share and develop leadership across the federation by using skills and experience in a flexible way across both schools, so that each school could benefit from a wider pool of talent and expertise by:

- working together to tackle shared school improvement priorities and CPD opportunities,
- facilitating the sharing and exchange of good practice across partner schools,
- streamlining practice, background management, and support functions to give a sharper focus on teaching and learning.

There will always be a member of the Leadership Team available in each school in order to ensure smooth operational running of the school. Any queries will continue to be dealt with in line with each school's existing procedures.

Federations can create valuable opportunities for the children and staff from both schools to work together and share great experiences.

How would parents and carers communicate with the school leaders?

There is already a clear communication system at both schools that parents use to contact school leaders, this will continue. Parents and carers would continue to have access to leaders via the admin office in each school; email contact for something more official; informal meet and greet at the school gate for a casual chat. Both schools will continue their strong pastoral care.

Would there be any additional financial implications to parents or carers?

No, there would be no additional cost to parents and carers, uniforms will remain the same to keep each school's own identity.

Would there be a change to parent organisations or pupil school councils?

The Friends Association in each school will not be affected by federation and will continue in their current format. Each school will continue to have their own pupil school council.

Is the federation an attempt to create one school?

No, the governors are clear this federation proposal is not an attempt to create one school (or dispose of any property). Both schools would retain their own identities as two separate schools with neither school leading over the other.

Will the federation affect the school admission policy?

No, each school will have its own admissions policy.

Will the federation affect the school policy on term time holidays?

No, each school will continue following government policy

Would federation change the schools' start and finish times?

No, there would be no change to the start or finishing times to the school day as part of the federation process. Any future changes to these would be led by government directives that would need to be implemented at the individual school level.

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