

Decision Record – Proposal to Federate All Saint’s C. E. Primary School and Burton Green C. E. Primary School

Cabinet Portfolio Holder taking the decision Cllr Heather Timms
Children and Schools
Date of Decision (not before: 21st March 2014) 21/03/2014

Decision Taken

That the Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools:

- 1) Notes the proposal by the Governing Bodies of All Saint’s C.E. Primary School Leek Wootton and Burton Green C. E. Primary School; and
- 2) Supports the proposal and agrees any additional comments she would wish to forward to the schools as part of the response.

Reasons for Decisions

The proposed federation is that of a ‘hard federation’ which is a legally binding arrangement between the schools with a single Federated Governing Body. Full details of the proposed federation arrangements are included in the document provided by the schools and attached to this report.

A federation is a legally binding arrangement and while it is seen as a long-term plan, there is also a clear process for a school to leave a federation or for the dissolution of federation at a future date.

It is considered that this proposal would enhance the educational opportunities for pupils in the schools, strengthen and stabilise the leadership and management structures and enable the schools to maximise use of shared resources thus helping secure the longer term viability of the schools; therefore, the Portfolio Holder is recommended to support the proposal to federate.

The Process

The regulations *The School Governance (Federations)(England) Regulations 2007* provide for schools proposing federation and one of the strengths of this form of school organisation is that it gives flexibility in terms of the governance and management structures to suit a range of situations. These Regulations continue to apply until such time as it is decided to vary the instrument of Government. At such a time, it is the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 that apply.

The *School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012* set out statutory requirements on the composition of governing bodies in federations. The regulations apply to governing bodies constituted on or after September 2012. Regulation 21 sets out the requirement for all federations including the minimum size of the governing body and types of governors it should include. Regulation 22 sets out additional requirements for federations comprising of Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools. Regulation 21 states:

- (1) the governing body of every federation must be constituted in accordance with this regulation
- (2) the total membership of the governing body of a federation must be no fewer than seven governors
- (3) the governing body of a federation 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 head teacher 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
- (4) the governing body may in addition appoint such number of co-opted governors as they consider necessary provided that the requirements in Regulation 22 are met in respect of governing bodies of federations comprising foundation and voluntary schools.
- (5) the total number of co-opted governors who are also eligible to be elected as staff governors under schedule 3 must not exceed one third of the total membership of the governing body.

The legal position is that the County Council is one of the statutory consultees. The final decision as to whether or not to federate rests with the Governing Bodies of the schools concerned who meet, first jointly, to consider responses after the period of consultation ends. The individual Governing Bodies then meet separately and must decide whether to proceed to federation as published or proceed to federation but modified as it considers appropriate. If both of the Governing Bodies agree to proceed, it is expected that the Federation will come into place on 1st September 2014.

Background Information

The Governing Bodies of All Saint's C.E. Primary School Leek Wootton and Burton Green C.E. Primary School are consulting the County Council on their proposals to federate. The purpose of this paper is to brief the Portfolio Holder on the proposals and to seek a formal response to the two schools. A copy of the consultation document issued by the schools is attached as Appendix A to the proposed decision report.

School federation involves schools formally collaborating together, under a single Governing Body and in this case under a single Headteacher and integrated management structure, whilst the schools retain their separate school status and Department for Education reference number.

It is County Council policy to promote school federations. Federation and the closer collaboration between schools is an increasing feature of school organisation across the country and it is envisaged that federations will become a key feature of school organisation arrangements in Warwickshire in the future.

The schools consulting on the proposal to federate are relatively small and federation will help to ensure their longer term viability.

All Saint's C.E. Primary School in Leek Wootton is a Voluntary Aided Church of England School judged as 'outstanding' by Ofsted at the last inspection in November 2007. In October 2013, there were 138 children on roll with a total capacity of 140.

Burton Green is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School judged by Ofsted in May 2012 as 'good' with some outstanding features. In October 2013, there were 97 pupils on roll with a total capacity of 105.

The benefits of school federations will vary, but in this instance the Governing Bodies of the schools feel that federation will help to:

- Enable both schools to secure their identity and ethos as small, community-based, Church of England schools;
- Further raise standards for pupils in the classroom and respond better to their wider needs; for example, by extending the breadth and quality of provision, through shared training and specialist teaching, encouraging staff to support each other and developing integrated curriculum and pastoral policies;
- Offer pupils a wider range of learning opportunities; for example, by holding joint activities or sharing facilities or teachers that might be difficult to sustain individually;
- Continue and further develop a range of extended services and activities for pupils and the wider community;
- Maximise procurement and the sharing of resources, taking advantage of economies of scale;
- Provide a wider range of in-house training, mentoring and professional development and leadership opportunities for all staff;
- Improve staff retention by offering more options for career progression and attract a higher quality of applicant for future positions;
- Provide strong, consistent and sustainable leadership across both schools;
- Improve leadership development, management and creative thinking;
- Provide savings in the individual budgets of each school, allowing opportunities for investment in new facilities, resources and staffing;
- Allow sharing of management and governing body responsibilities; and
- Continue to attract new families to increase pupil numbers on roll at both schools for financial security and job security for staff. Federated schools under the same leadership and with a shared vision may attract families to either institution, therefore ensuring a more sustainable future for both schools.

The Governing Bodies have considered the key risks but believe the Federation can overcome these through consultation with stakeholders and careful planning in terms of school management and organisation.

Financial Implications

None listed.

Report Author	Janet Neale
Head of Service	Claudia Wade
Strategic Director	Wendy Fabbro
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Heather Timms

H Timms

Checklist

Urgent matter? No

Confidential or Exempt? No
(State the category of exempt information)

Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework? No

List of Reports considered - please include link to report

Link to published proposed decision report:

<https://democratic.warwickshire.gov.uk/cm5/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/645/Meeting/2863/Committee/555/Default.aspx>

List of Background Papers - please include a contact for access to background papers

None.

Members and officers consulted or informed – please include any comments

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Heather Timms

All Strategic Directors

Legal – Victoria Gould, Fay Ford, Barry Jukes, Peter Endall, Jane Pollard

Finance – Simon Smith, Chris Norton

Equality – Minakshee Patel

Democratic Services – Georgina Atkinson

Children & Young People OSC – party spokes:

Councillors Bob Hicks, Julie Jackson, Mike Perry and John Whitehouse