



# Worpleston Primary School and Wood Street Infant School Federation Proposal

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### **FAQ Table of Contents**

1. Federation and anticipated benefits
  2. The Governing Board
  3. Staff
  4. Leadership
5. School policies and processes
  6. Federation process
  7. Success criteria

## **1. Federation and anticipated benefits**

### **Q. What is a federation?**

*A. A federation is a group of two or more schools with a single governing body. It is formally constituted under statutory regulations.*

### **Q. Why have the schools proposed that a Federation is the way forward? What would be the advantages?**

*A. We believe that this is the best way forward to benefit both staff and children. The Federation will provide:*

- *Greater learning opportunities for pupils and staff*
- *Sharing of good practice and expertise*
- *Sharing of staff skills with greater flexibility for supporting learning*
- *Strong leadership structure*
- *Stronger purchasing power and potential economies of scale savings*

*For our children, this would mean:*

- *A consistent approach to teaching and learning, and a smooth transition when some children move from Wood Street to Worplesdon*
- *Increased capacity to meet the needs of children through the sharing of resources and knowledge*
- *Greater opportunities for an enriched curriculum including after school provisions*

### **Q. Will either school lose their character as part of a federation?**

*A. Each school will continue to be individual schools, retaining all aspects of their individuality, including their names and uniforms, but will benefit from enhanced shared services, collaboration on Continued Professional Development (CPD) and curriculum development.*

### **Q. Why would federation be beneficial? Why can't each school continue as we are?**

*A. For the future financial stability of each of the schools. Current and future projected intake numbers are decreasing due to low birth rates (and continued declining projected birth rates). We need to be proactive now to secure the future viability of the schools, whilst also benefiting the children and staff.*

### **Q. What role would the Local Authority (LA) play during this consultation?**

*A. The decision to federate sits with the two governing bodies. After formal consultation, if both governing bodies decide to go ahead with the federation, they would inform the LA who would support the process.*

## **2. The Governing Board**

### **Q. What is the role of the Governing Board?**

*A. The Governing Board is legally required to:*

- *Ensure the school is a safe environment for all stakeholders and complies with Government and Local Authority Health and Safety and Safeguarding Legislation and Guidelines.*
- *Ensure that the school budget is not in deficit, takes measures to ensure that best value is obtained in the spending of school funds and has financial measures in place to monitor and approve spending.*

- Approves and reviews school policies.
- Ensure that the school provides a broad and balanced national curriculum in line with national legislation and guidelines.
- Provides a performance management structure for the Executive Headteacher, Headteacher and staff.
- Approve the appointment of staff.

*The Governing Board is also responsible for the monitoring of the short-term operation of the school and, in conjunction with the Executive Headteacher, the long-term strategic planning of the school.*

*The Executive Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the school, including staffing matters, and the implementation of national and school policies, guidelines and legal requirements*

**Q. What will happen to the individual Governing Boards?**

*A. On the federation date, the governing boards of each school will dissolve and a new governing board will be formed. This governing body will be structured based on the current Federation Regulations and a ‘governor skills audit’ will assist in informing the process. The new governing board will be accountable for the success of the Federation, incorporating both schools.*

**Q. Can the dissolving of both governing bodies take place over time?**

*A. No, due to the legal framework that we must follow.*

**Q. Will the new Governing Board have fair representation from both constituent schools?**

*A. Yes. The intent shall be to structure the Board to achieve a fair representation within the context of the regulations and delivery of the Boards statutory duties.*

**3. Staff**

**Q. What would this mean for the members of staff?**

*A. As all members of staff across both schools are Surrey County Council employees, they will continue on their current terms and conditions of employment and continuity for contractual purposes will remain unchanged. There will be no detriment to staff pay or pension. However, the new governing body of the federated school will take over the staffing responsibilities currently undertaken by each school’s individual governing body.*

**Q. Will posts be reduced as a result of the Federation?**

*A. The existing staffing structures will continue to be reviewed, as they are currently, dependent on need.*

**Q. Given the size difference between both schools, will it feel like a takeover?**

*A. No. Both schools will continue to implement their own school policies and procedures however best practice will be shared across schools for the mutual benefit of the whole community. The uniqueness of both schools will be maintained and nurtured.*

**Q. Will the schools still have their own budgets?**

*A. Yes, and Governors and staff will continue to strive for best value for money whilst seeking the best outcomes for all of the children. The budgets of each school will continue to be separately accounted for.*

**Q. What happens if one school's budget looks like it is going to go into deficit?**

*A. The Federated Governing Body will be responsible for both budgets remaining in credit as they currently do.*

**Q. When will both schools see each other's budgets?**

*A. As part of the consultation process, both schools will carry out due diligence which will involve sharing financial information. School Business Managers and other appropriate members of staff will be involved in this process.*

**Q. Will staff be able to work across schools?**

*A. There will be opportunities for staff to work across schools if it is to benefit the children and staff would like the opportunity.*

**Q. Will staff at either school be able to benefit from training delivered at the other school?**

*A. Yes.*

## **4. Leadership**

**Q. Will there be changes to school leadership?**

*A. No, school leadership structures will remain as-is and will continue to be reviewed, as they are currently, dependent on need.*

## **5. School policies and processes**

**Q. Will the admissions criteria change?**

*A. No, Wood Street would remain on the Worplesdon's admissions criteria.*

**Q. Could a child move from one school to another?**

*A. The normal Surrey procedures would need to be followed.*

**Q. Will there be just one OFSTED inspection in future?**

*A. No, both schools will continue to be inspected independently.*

**Q. Will schools continue to publish their school's data separately?**

*A. Yes.*

**Q. Will the schools have the same School Improvement Partner (SIP)?**

*A. It is beneficial to have the same SIP supporting both schools to ensure consistency in monitoring and academic standards.*

## **6. Federation Process**

**Q. What is the timeline for becoming a Federation?**

*A. Once individual Boards are agreed in principle to formally explore Federation the process moves to planning 'consultation'. Boards will engage early with all stakeholder groups to talk about the consultation process and the reasons driving consultation. It is advised that*

consultation should take no less than 6 weeks. The consultation period begins on 27th April and will end on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Feedback will be collated and the final Board decisions will be made before the end of the Summer Term 2022.

**Q. How will key stakeholder views be collected and considered?**

A. Parents/carers, and the staff, will all be encouraged to feed back to the board of governors at their respective school, so the governors can consider whether they have the support of key stakeholders. Sessions shall be offered, with considerations given to the practicalities with continued COVID-19 safeguarding. Other than parent/carers and staff, stakeholder groups include the Local Authority, Professional Bodies (such as Trade Unions) Pupils, and partners, such as Freemantles.

**Q. What happens if it doesn't work out, the benefits are not realised, or either of the schools begin to lose their reasonable control?**

A. Federations may in exceptional circumstances be 'dissolved' where they only incorporate two parties, in accordance with *The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012*. However, the governing bodies of each school do not view entering into a federation as a temporary measure.

## **7. Success criteria**

**Q. How will we judge if the process of Federation has been successful?**

A. The consultation period will be used to identify all benefits and challenges, including the definition of the success criteria for both the initial federation process and the run state. Both individual Boards will need to vote to Federate during the Summer Term 2022. Set against the benefits and risks (with agreed mitigations and action plans), the new Board will complete the implementation plan and be in constant review with stakeholder groups to monitor and judge its own effectiveness in delivering the benefits and mitigations.

**Q. Following federation, how will the Board monitor and judge successful operation and outcomes?**

A. The new Board shall design a fit for purpose Annual Plan, which will incorporate specific objectives relating to the operation of the Federation. The annual plan is public and is therefore a transparent instrument with which to hold the Governing Board to account.

## **7. Additional Questions**

**Q. Will the name of the school change?**

A. No. The names of both schools will stay the same.

**Q. Will the school uniforms change?**

A. No. The school uniforms and colours will remain the same.

**Q. Will there be joint Ofsted inspections?**

A. No, the schools will retain their separate Department of Education identities and will be inspected separately.