



Meadow Wood School Breakspeare School

19th December 2016

Dear Parent, Carer and/or Member of Staff

CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF MEADOW WOOD AND BREAKSPEARE SCHOOLS

Recently, Meadow Wood and Breakspeare School following a consultation with parent, carers and staff agreed to build on many years of co-operation through forming a federation between the two schools. Currently we have appointed Ms. Merja Paakkonen as the Interim Executive Headteacher of both schools from 1st January 2017. Mrs. Caroline Day-Lewis will be the Interim Deputy Head at Meadow Wood.

The Governing Boards at each school are today beginning a consultation process with parents, staff and other stakeholders (such as Hertfordshire County Council) on the formation of a federation between the schools - a federation that would be led by a single Board of Governors.

The **Consultation Paper** that accompanies this letter sets out three things:

- A. The nature of the consultation process and the ways in which you can contribute to it
- B. The proposed structure for the new Board of Governors
- C. The Governing Boards' recommendation and the reasons for this, including their vision for the two schools as part of a federation

These papers are accompanied by a **Consultation Response Form**, which you are encouraged to complete and return. The consultation process begins **19th December 2016** and closes on **30th January 2017 at midnight**.

There are a number of ways in which you can participate and there will be opportunities for you to learn more about the governing boards' proposal in a series of face-to-face sessions at the two schools.

We look forward to your engagement in this consultation, which is important to the future development of our two schools.

Copies of this letter and the accompanying documents can be provided in other languages or in large print upon request.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Robinson
**Chair of Governors
Meadow Wood**

Michael Wheeler
**Chair of Governors
Breakspeare School**



CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF MEADOW WOOD AND BREAKSPEARE SCHOOL

A. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE NATURE OF THIS CONSULTATION PROCESS

SUMMARY

- As part of any move to a federation, the Governing Boards at each of our schools are required to seek your views on any recommendation or proposal.
- They are also required to consult with other stakeholders, including the Local Authority, Hertfordshire County Council.
- After these consultations, the two Governing Boards are required to come to a decision. They are not bound by the responses of any one group – for instance, parents, staff or the governing board - but they are required to demonstrate that they have taken these views into account. *For this reason, it is important that you respond.*
- If either or both of the Governing Boards feel that there is insufficient support for the formation of a federation, other alternatives will be sought.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. WHEN DOES THE CONSULTATION PROCESS BEGIN AND WHEN DOES IT FINISH?

This consultation process opens on **19th December 2016** and closes on **30th January 2017**.

2. HOW CAN I RESPOND?

Parents and Carers

There are several ways in which you can make your views known:

- At a series of face-to-face meetings and drop-in sessions (see below)
- By handing in the completed response form that accompanies this document to one of the schools (there is a sealed box in each school's reception area)
- By sending the form by post to either school
- By e-mailing your comments or queries to either school
- Parents are represented on the Joint Collaboration Committee

Two parent meetings have been scheduled to enable parents and carers to meet with school and governing board representatives to discuss the federation proposal. The dates and venues for these events are open to parents and carers with children at either school at either venue are:

MEADOW WOOD SCHOOL

DATE: 19th January 9.30 – 11.00 a.m.

BREAKSPEARE SCHOOL

DATE: 26th January 9.30 – 11.00 a.m.

Staff

- Staff will be consulted via regular staff meetings at their respective schools. In addition, meetings specifically dedicated to this issue is scheduled for Breakspeare staff 5th January 2017 and Meadow Wood staff on 12th January 2017.
- The Interim Executive Headteacher and other members of staff (from both schools) sit on the Joint Committee that has been established by the two Governing Boards to oversee this process.
- Staff are welcome to consult their trade unions and professional associations should they have concerns and queries. They can also invite them to the meeting above and would ask that you inform the Interim Executive Headteacher that they will be attending.

Children

- The federation process will feature in school assemblies and other aspects of school life during the consultation period.

3. HOW WILL A DECISION BE REACHED?

- The two Governing Boards are responsible for making the final decision. However, Governors are required to take account of the responses to this consultation process, and we shall do so.
- Once this consultation process is complete, a report setting out the consultation findings will be presented to a joint meeting of the Governing Boards of our two schools.
- Each Governing Board will then meet on its own to decide whether or not it supports the formation of a federation.
- Both Governing Boards have to independently agree to the formation of a federation for it to be created.
- As well as consulting with parents and staff we are required to consult with the Local Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, and to gain the approval of the Secretary of State for Education.

4. FURTHER MEETINGS

- Further information meetings will be arranged once the consultation is completed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions about federation that we have not addressed here or the process outlined in this document, please contact Ms. Merja Paakkonen (Interim Executive Headteacher) at either school.

Or email the Chair of Governors at Meadow Wood School – Mrs. Vanessa Robinson - kvknosnibor@gmail.com

Or email the Chair of Governors at Breakspeare School – Mr. Michael Wheeler - mwheelercars@gmail.com



CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF MEADOW WOOD AND BREAKSPEARE SCHOOL FEDERATION

B. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE FEDERATION

The role of the Governing Board is twofold:

1. To set, in collaboration with the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher, the strategic direction of the school federation;
2. To hold the Senior Leadership Team, including the Headteacher or Executive Headteacher, to account for the achievement of any objectives set.

Under a federation, a single, newly appointed Governing Board would be established and would be responsible for both of the schools in the Federation.

Having a single Board of Governors delivers advantages for both schools, it would ensure that:

- The two schools move forward together with a shared vision for our children.

If the recommendation to form a federation is accepted, the existing Governing Boards will begin the process of establishing a new single Board of Governors for the Federation.

It is proposed that the new Board of Governors would be constituted with 13 members as set out in the table below:

Category of Governor	Number of Governors on Board
Executive Head	1
Staff Governors	1 from across the Federation
Parent Governors	2 from across the Federation
Local Authority Governor	1 (who cannot be employed at either school)
Co-opted Governors	8 co-opted governors with appropriate skills who might come from staff, the wider parent community, local businesses and/or the local community, or a local community organisation.

The members of the new Federation's Board of Governors would be appointed with due regard to:

- Best practice, current thinking and existing regulations in school and federation governance;
- The need to ensure that parents and staff at each school, and the local community, are appropriately represented;
- The skills and experience of the individuals concerned – retaining the right to co-opt a significant proportion of the membership of the new Board of Governors is a way of ensuring that it has a broad and appropriate mix of skills and experience across the group;
- Their commitment to education, and the success of the children at both schools, whatever their professional, parental or community background.

It should also be noted that:

- The new Board of Governors might exceed its envisaged number of 13 in the first instance because it is proposed that those who are currently members of either Governing Board would be offered the option of being co-opted onto the new Board of Governors and, if they were to take up this option, would serve until the close of their existing term (Governors usually serve for a term of four years). Others may choose to become Associate Members which are not full governors, but are brought onto a governing board for their expertise or experience;
- Any vacancies that arise for the position of Parent Governors or Staff Governors would be filled following an election in which all parents across the Federation, or staff across the Federation would have a vote;
- The new Board of Governors would be encouraged to actively explore how to best engage the voice of our children in the governance and leadership of *their* schools;
- The new Board of Governors, whatever its formal constitution, would also be expected to give expression to the voice of other stakeholders.



CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF MEADOW WOOD AND BREAKSPEARE

C. THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE GOVERNING BOARDS

The Governing Boards at Meadow Wood and Breakspeare School recommend:

MEADOW WOOD AND BREAKSPEARE FORM A FEDERATION WITH A SINGLE BOARD OF GOVERNORS FROM 1st April 2017

BACKGROUND AND VISION

Both Governing Boards feel that to strengthen the leadership of the school and enable better sharing of resources progressing to a federation would be the next logical step. We believe the benefits of going further are as follows:

- Develop the opportunities for all our children
- Greater integration of staff development provision, giving extra opportunities to staff and saving on CPD costs
- Special Federation events, including joint Parents' Forum sessions and opportunity for joint school events for parents and pupils
- Shared policies on issues like child protection and safeguarding, and attendance and behavior
- To maximize resources and finances by sharing and rationalizing to ensure sustainability for now and the future

However, both Governing Boards believe that the benefits of federation are not limited to the kind of practicalities and associated cost savings set out above, important as these are. We believe that a federation offers the opportunity for a genuinely shared vision and educational philosophy across both schools, one that translates into a positive and joined-up experience for all of our children in both our school communities.

In this context, we are committed to achieving excellence through collaboration between our two vibrant and successful schools. We want to value, nurture and develop the strengths and identities of both schools, whilst working together to enhance outcomes for our children. Our aim is to offer outstanding provision and deliver excellent progress and achievement - and cherished and memorable educational experiences.

We want to give every child in our care the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential as a confident, informed, sociable and well-rounded individual, ready for the next stage of their personal, developmental and educational journey, and for the world beyond.

In short, we believe that evolving into a federation, with one Board of Governors, is in the interests of children, parents and carers, and teaching and support staff.

THE ADVANTAGES OF FORMING A FEDERATION

The Governing Boards believe that there are benefits for children, parents and carers, and staff in forming a federation, including:

Children

- Governors believe that a federation would enable each school to further develop the quality of its teaching and learning and provide a broader curriculum that encourages each child to fulfil his or her maximum potential.
- Governors also believe that a federation would more effectively support the transition. We want this to be as smooth as it can be for the children, and that learning initiated in one school is built upon in the other, while retaining the distinct ethos of our separate infant and junior schools.
- In addition, Governors believe that a federation is likely to enable the more effective use of resources, so that more energy is put into enriching our children's experience, within the curriculum and beyond.

Parents and carers

- Governors believe that parents would see a range of tangible benefits from the formation of a federation, for instance, in terms of shared approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, jointly planned extra-curricular provision, the use of shared technology systems, and shared expectations of achievement and behaviour.
- Governors also believe that the shared strategic direction offered by a single governing board is likely to reassure parents about the consistency of the curriculum offer and approaches to assessment and curriculum.
- In addition, Governors believe that a federation would allow the two schools to build on the increased collaboration that has taken place in recent months, for instance in better aligning term and training day dates and school policies so as to more effectively support school-parent communication, especially those with working parents.

Staff

- Under a federation, Governors believe that staff would have access to a wider range of professional and career development opportunities, enabling both schools to further strengthen their ability to attract and retain the best teachers and support staff, and enabling everybody in the Federation's employment to reach their personal and professional potential.
- Governors also believe that a federation would strengthen recruitment and retention through enabling staff to have the opportunity to teach in different settings (if they wish) and to gain experience working across more than one site, something that is likely to become increasingly common as schools, and especially small schools, seek to find ways of working together to share resources and professional experience.
- In addition, under a federation, *new employees* would be contracted to the Federation - Governors believe that this would enable teaching and support staff to be deployed where their skills and experience are in most need, or across both schools where they have a specialism needed on each site and where this is thought most beneficial to the children and the organisation.

Taken together, the two Governing Boards believe that a federation is likely to deliver enhancements for children throughout their journey while retaining what they regard as the clear benefits of specialist educational provision. They also believe that a federation is likely to deliver tangible benefits in terms of 'buying power', such that greater resource can be devoted to enhancing teaching and learning and, therefore, positive outcomes for the children.

However, as is outlined below, parents, carers and staff should be assured that a federation would not mean "all change" – many day-to-day operations would remain the same.

THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE SHOULD A FEDERATION BE ESTABLISHED

Forming a federation is not the same as a 'merger'; should a federation be established between our two schools:

- Each school would retain its existing character and identity, with uniforms continuing to remain unique to each school, with individual badges and colour schemes, with children remaining at their existing school sites for classes and lessons
- Admissions arrangements to both schools would remain the same (and Hertfordshire County Council would continue to be the Admissions Authority for each school)
- The schools would retain individual budgets and keep their own clear audit trails for all income and expenditure
- The schools would be inspected as separate schools by the schools' inspectorate, Ofsted

In this context, Governors do not believe that a federation would have any impact on arrangements that are popular with children, teachers, parents and carers, and which work well at present.