



**Christopher Reeves**  
**Living our Values**



## **The Report on the Consultation on the Federation of Christopher Reeves Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School and St Lawrence Church of England Primary School**

### Section 1

- Brief History
- Consultation Questions
- Consultation Process

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### **Section 1**

The Governing Bodies of the two schools are now in a position to report on the consultation to federate.

#### **Background and Context**

There have been ongoing discussions regarding possible federation for some time. These discussions have been supported by the Diocese of St Albans and the Local Authority. Both schools are former lower schools and have become primary schools following the change to two tier education for most of Bedford Borough. They will both have children in all primary year groups from September 2018. There are capital projects at both schools to support the expansion of the age range. Some of this is funded by the Local Authority. In the Autumn term 2017, both Governing Bodies agreed to consult on federation.

#### **Consultation**

The consultation process was carried out between 8 January 2018 and 19 February 2018; the outcome of this is outlined elsewhere in this report. Attached is a copy of the consultation document.

## **Who did we inform?**

We informed and invited comments from a wide range of stakeholders and the wider community through a number of approaches. The major consultees were:

- Department for Education
- Bedford Borough Council
- Parents of every registered pupil at the school
- Parents of potential pupils in our catchment area and in Early Years provision
- Staff who work at the school
- Our local communities and our current site users
- Other schools in the area
- The Church of England Diocese
- Anyone else who has an interest in the proposal

A public meeting was held for parents at each school as well as staff meeting at each school.

An electronic version of the consultation was placed for all stakeholders and interested parties on the school website.

## **Consultation on the Federation of Christopher Reeves Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School and St Lawrence Church of England Primary School**

The purpose of this section is to provide detailed information about the responses to the consultation process.

The consultation document asked for views on the following proposal:

- **From 1<sup>st</sup> June 2018, should St Lawrence and Christopher Reeves Church of England Primary Schools form a federation?**

## **Summary of responses**

A total of 21 written responses were received in relation to the consultation plus verbal questions and responses that arose from people who attended the consultation events. In terms of this report, there will also be a commentary derived from the comments that respondents made.

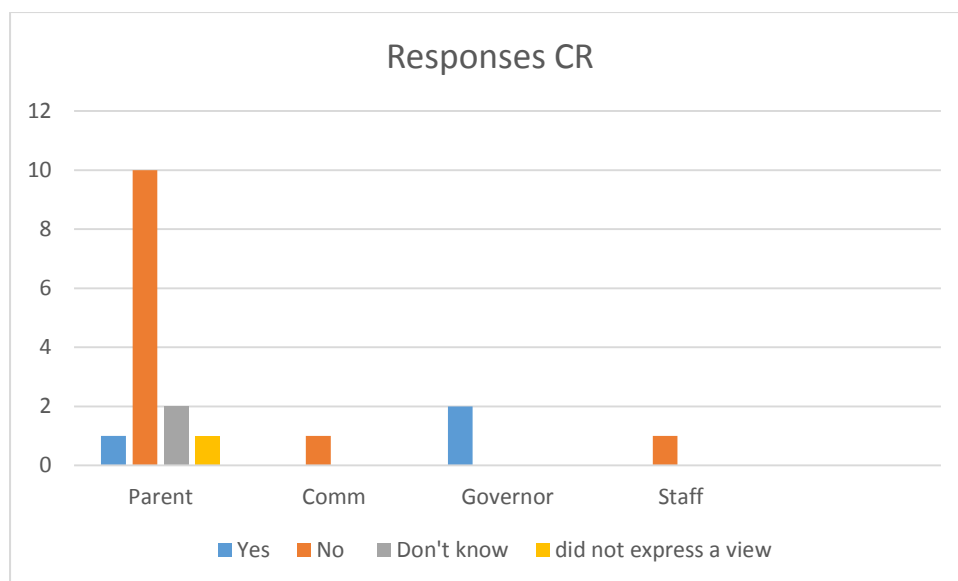
Some responses were anonymous. Some responses identified the relevant stakeholder group the response was coming from, some did not. Some responses gave more than one stakeholder group. Therefore, the numbers quoted in the stakeholder groups will not always equate to the number of responses received.

The responses have been split between the two schools.

### Christopher Reeves

Of the 17 responses received, who expressed a firm opinion in this way, 2 were in favour of federation, 12 were against, 2 did not know and 1 expressed concerns.

The stakeholder breakdown in relation to the proposals is shown below. As mentioned above, the number of identified stakeholders will not add up to the total number of responses.



### Areas of Comment/ Concern

Comments and concerns expressed in the consultation responses and meetings are summarised and captured below and are grouped according to themes.

#### This change is too soon

- We want a complete year with a full time Headteacher
- The school has had a lot of upheaval in the past
- Not against federation but the timing is wrong – let us get the build project completed first
- A period of less change would be desirable with the focus being on teaching and learning
- Staff should not have additional pressures at a time of transition
- The schools should sort themselves out first and then revisit
- Too much going on at the moment
- The school is now stable – we do not want to threaten that
- Federation should not happen at the same time as having year 6 children for the first time

#### Sharing a Headteacher

- This could mean a headteacher could focus more on one school than the other
- It is unacceptable because it is too much work to be a headteacher over two schools

- A shared headteacher will put too much work on other staff
- Moving between sites will unsettle pupils
- Both schools need help
- Unhappy that if one headteacher there will not be a headteacher on site
- An executive headteacher will have more responsibilities
- Will an executive headteacher stretch budgets?

### **Sharing staff**

- Pupils might have to move between sites
- If staff are shared, pupils may be unsettled if there is not continuity

### **Impact on Christopher Reeve**

- Parents may take their children out of the school if they are not in favour of federation but it proceeds
- School could lose its current strength as a small village school
- The school would be making an unequal contribution
- Staff will have more work
- It will get less attention because of the recent Ofsted at St Lawrence
- The school should be focussing on becoming a primary school and its build project

### **Ofsted inspection – St Lawrence**

- This will impact negatively on Christopher Reeves
- Christopher Reeve should not federate with a struggling school
- Staffing and resources will be more focussed on St Lawrence than Christopher Reeves
- St Lawrence should be focussing on addressing the issue in the Ofsted report and on establishing itself as a primary school

### **Collaboration/Federation**

- Several respondents whilst not necessarily in favour of federation noted the benefits from the two schools working together in terms of activities for pupils and joint working between staff
- Federation would assist joint working in areas such as moderation, specialist teaching and resources
- The two schools would retain their identities in federation
- It may help in terms of new schools being built in the surrounding area
- What are the risks of not federating?
- If Christopher Reeves is to remain viable it must federate
- One respondent thought that federation would halve teacher work loads and the staff were not thinking of the pupils
- What do the budgets look like with and without federation – this information is needed before a decision can be made
- Federation will give increased financial protection to small schools
- There will be increased opportunities for staff in a federation

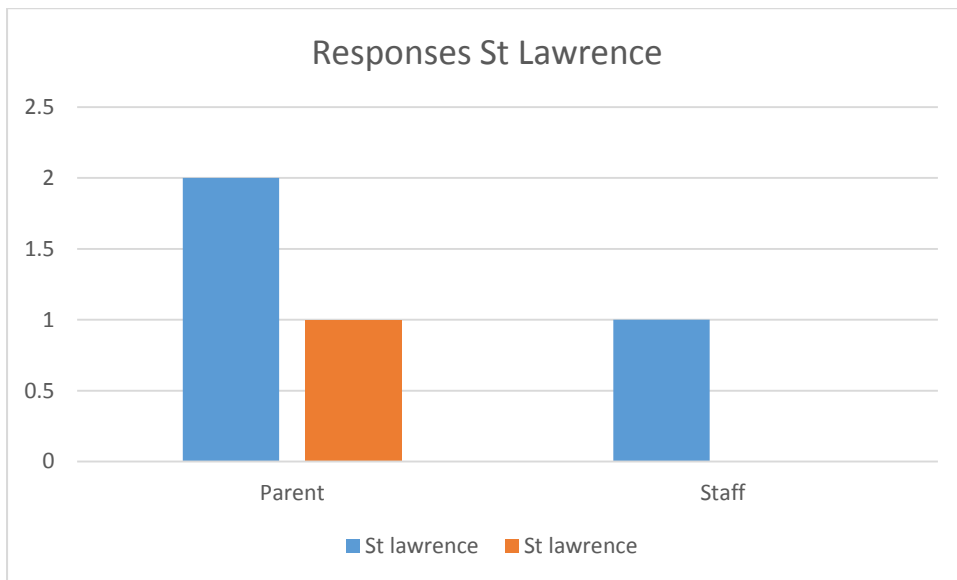
- We need to look at the medium and long term benefits of federation and not focus on short term problems
- What offer are we selling and how will it impact on the attraction to out of catchment families

**Staffing**

- What learning schemes will be used?
- How will roles fit around the current teaching structure?
- How will staff contracts be affected?
- What is the staff representation on the Governing Body?

**St Lawrence**

Of the 4 responses received, who expressed a firm opinion in this way, 3 were in favour of federation and 1 was against.



**Areas of Comment/ Concern**

There was one comment on the forms returned:

The timing is not appropriate given the state of flux at St Lawrence in terms of staffing, Ofsted and becoming a primary school. It needs to get the basics right first, If there is to be an Executive Headteacher it should be an external appointment with a proven track record to undertake the challenges the school currently faces.

**Feedback from Staff Meeting**

Most were in attendance. All staff agreed that federation would enhance working practice and encourage greater collaboration with extra curricular activities. The only concerns were around fixed term and temporary contracts. These have not been resolved as they are waiting on the outcome of the consultation. This was explained and accepted by staff.

### **Feedback from Parents' Meeting**

The parent consultation meeting was attended by four parents and four governors. Most questions were around the timing of the proposed federation as we have only just become a Primary school. All four parents had children in Y5. All discussion seemed in favour of federation but the changes with Primary, building sites and employing a Y6 teacher were a concern.

Both meetings were held as informal question and answer sessions.