

**Consultation between Christopher Reeves VA C of E Primary School
and St Lawrence VA C of E Primary School**

Frequently asked Questions and Answers

Q. What is a Federation?

A. A federation is a maintained school structure where a number of schools come together under one governing body. The schools' individual governing bodies are disbanded and a new single over-arching governing body is formed which is the accountable body for all the schools and sets the strategic direction for the group of schools.

The principle of governance is : one board governing two or more schools.

The schools in a federation still exist as separate legal entities and continue to have individual delegated budgets and admission arrangements. The individual schools have different names, and will appear separately in the performance tables. They may be inspected at the same time by Ofsted, but will have their own individual Ofsted reports.

Q. What are the benefits of setting up a federation?

A. There is a reasonable body of evidence to show that working in a federation with another school has advantages for all parties and, most importantly, for the pupils. Federations are able to provide a better offer to pupils; a broader curriculum and extra-curricular activities. It can also provide improved teaching and learning, in some cases through more specialised staff, but also as a result of strong leadership and staff CPD (continuing professional development) across the federation.

Ofsted has produced a report on federations and found a number of benefits gained by schools federating. It was found that achievement and behaviour had improved in all the federations visited. Furthermore, federation was seen to aid staff retention and development, providing more opportunities for staff to gain experience in different types of school, and/or more progression opportunities.

There are particular benefits in federation for small schools, in terms of educational and social experiences for pupils and professional development for staff.

Q. Would our school lose its identity, ethos and traditions?

A. No. Federation is beneficial for village schools because it supports the continuing resilience of separate institutions, but with benefits often seen in larger schools. Each school would remain a part of its own community but with a close relationship between the schools benefiting pupils.

Q. What will the Governance arrangements be? Will there be representation from each school on the Governing Body?

A. In a federation, a single Governing Body is responsible for the governance of both schools. The new Governing Body would be drawn from both schools and the community.

Q. Would children at each school keep their present uniform?

A. Yes

Q. Would the federation improve children's education?

A. It would formalise arrangements for greater access to resources, specialised teaching, shared provision and development of staff expertise.

Q. How will existing staff be affected?

A. Both schools are Church Schools with St. Albans Diocese and Bedfordshire Borough Council. Staff would continue to be employed under their direction as before.

Q. How will federation affect the financial position of the schools?

A. The budget for each school will remain separate. However, the federated Governing Body would be able to continue to look at ways of giving value for money and formalise arrangements for joint purchasing and provision.

Q. What happens when a member of staff leaves?

A. If anyone leaves, the Governing Body would review the situation and decide if that position needs to be replaced, or if there is a possible different solution. Newly appointed staff would be appointed to 'The Federation' and may, if required, be expected to teach in both schools.

Q. Can a federation be removed or dissolved?

A. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that federations do work and benefit their pupils and wide communities. However, as a worst case scenario it is possible to dissolve a federation through a statutory process.

Q. Is the reason is to save money?

A. There is the potential for the schools to make money saving so that the schools are in a much stronger position as a federation to protect provision in an uncertain climate. Both schools would continue to receive the same budget allocation whether they are in a federation or not, and so there is no potential for the Local Authority to save money.

Q. Have Governors already decided to federate?

A. No definitely not. This is a consultation by the Governing Bodies on possibly moving to a federation with a single Governing Body. They will consider the consultation responses before making a decision about federation.