

Consultation on the proposal to hard federate: Frequently Asked Questions

Proposal for the Federation of:

Dunster First School

Exford C. of E. First School

Porlock C. of E. First School

Timberscombe C. of E. First School (The Beacon Federation)

Cutcombe C. of E. First School (The Beacon Federation)

Together forming The Moorland Federation

1. What are the benefits of federation?

- Sharing good practice opportunities between schools to develop effective teaching and learning strategies
- Opportunities for children to learn from one another through shared learning activities
- Opportunities for schools to continue improving
- Sharing resources will provide improved value for money
- Retaining and developing quality leadership
- Less bureaucracy though having only one Governing Body
- Development opportunities for staff, for example shared training and collaboration.

2. Why can't we continue as we are now?

- By federating we are demonstrating a commitment to our schools working together into the future.
- Federation will also enable us to reduce duplication of tasks, especially regarding preparation of Governing Body documentation. This will increase efficiencies for our schools and reduce workloads for key members of staff.

3. What will happen if the decision is taken not to federate?

If, at the end of the consultation period, the decision taken is by a particular school not to proceed with the Federation, it would be the governing bodies' intention for that school to continue as previously.

4. Is there any research on the impact of Federations?

According to the National Governors' Association (The Road to Federation – Summary Report, 2013) there is evidence that federation confers significant benefits. This summary report cites Ofsted's 2011 study Leadership of more than one school, which made clear the advantages to pupils' attainment, cost efficiency and governance. In addition to financial stability, perceived benefits

of federating also mentioned in this report include attracting and retaining staff, pooling resources, and broadening the horizons of small village schools.

5. Will the schools share a single budget?

No. Each school will continue to receive its own funding, manage separate budgets and keep separate records of its accounts. The single governing body would be responsible for ensuring that the budget for each school would balance and would not use the budget of one school to the disadvantage of the other. However, there may be occasions when the schools share costs or combine purchasing if this means that they will be able to get better value for their money

6. Will the name of the schools change?

No. Each school will keep its own name. We will work together under the overarching name of The Moorland Federation.

7. Will school uniforms change?

No. At this time, each school will keep its current uniform.

8. Will there be any change to admission arrangements?

No. The current admission policy will continue to apply for each school.

9. Will the schools have the same Inset/training days?

Yes, wherever possible. Each school will be able to choose when to hold these days, as they do now, and it is likely that they would take the opportunity to have the same Inset/training days.

10. Will school start and finish times change?

No. At this time, start and finish times will stay as they are now in each of the schools.

11. Will pupils be registered to the Federation or a single school?

Pupils will be on roll at a single school within the Federation; the schools will belong to the Federation.

12. Would the federated schools combine their pupil results?

No. Results will continue to be attributed to the individual schools.

13. Can a Federation move pupils from one school to another?

No. There are no special arrangements for moving pupils within a Federation. An individual school may only move a pupil via managed move or transfer if

he or she is experiencing significant behavioural difficulties. This is the same for non-federated schools.

14. Will Ofsted inspect the Federation?

No. Each school will have separate Ofsted inspections and be graded separately, as they are now. However Ofsted are trying to align inspections of Federated Schools, but the inspections will remain separate.

15. Will children from all the schools have the opportunity to work together?

Yes. Federation means that there will be more opportunities for children from all schools to work together.

16. Who employs the staff of a Federation?

Staff will continue to be employed by each of the schools, but managed by the single governing body of the Federation.

17. Will there be any changes in the conditions of service for staff?

No. There will be no changes and staff will continue to be employed on the same conditions of service as defined by current contracts. This means that, for example, all employment rights and pension arrangements will stay as they are now.

18. Will staff work across more than one school in the Federation?

Existing members of staff cannot be directed to work in a school where they were not originally contracted to be employed. However staff may want to develop their skillset by sharing expertise to improve pupil outcomes. In the future, vacancies could be advertised as working across more than one school, so any new employees will know their contractual position and job roles when they accept the post.

19. Can schools in a Federation share CPD arrangements?

Yes, when they wish to do so. Sharing training days and sessions and leadership meetings will be a key advantage of belonging to a Federation

21. Would one school take the lead over the others?

No. The schools in the Federation would collaborate and work together as equal partners. The single governing body would have a balanced representation from each of the schools. The Federation would provide an overarching management and administrative structure.

22. How long do people have to make comments or ask questions about the proposal to federate?

Everyone has six weeks in which to have his or her say. The consultation starts on 5th May and ends on the morning of the 16th June 2017.

23. What happens at the end of the six-week consultation?

At the end of the consultation period, the governing bodies of the each school will make a final, independent decision on whether to hard federate, with due regard to everyone's views and comments. This decision will be communicated to children, parents, staff and others with an interest in the schools by 21st July 2017.

24. If federation of the schools goes ahead, when would this happen?

If a decision were made to federate, this would take effect from 4th September 2017, which is called the Incorporation Date.

25. Can a Federation be dissolved?

Yes. The Governing Body can choose to end a Federation if it is believed that it is no longer in the best interests of the pupils. This is not an action that would be taken lightly or without due diligence and consultation.

26. What about the future?

Whilst it is difficult to anticipate what challenges the future will bring, the single governing body would always make decisions that are in the interests of both school communities and consult, as necessary with parents, staff and other stakeholders.