



Proposal to Federate



Cutcombe C of E First School

Dunster First School

Exford C of E First School

St. Dubricius C of E First School

Timberscombe C of E First School



Consultation on the Federation of

Dunster First School, Exford C. of E. First School, Porlock C. of E. First School, Timberscombe C. of E. First School and Cutcombe C. of E. First School (The Beacon Federation)

The purpose of this document is to start the consultation process to establish the formal Federation of these schools under the name of The Moorland Federation.

For a number of years these schools have worked together both independently and under the banner of the Exmoor Coast Federation. We all share a similarity of vision and ethos and our heads and governing bodies have worked closely together to create a forward-looking idea of what our schools would achieve by working together formally while retaining our strong leadership structures and the special individuality of each school which is so important to us and our communities.

This consultation document explains what a Federation is and the benefits to our schools. It also provides you with a form to complete to put forward your views. The results will inform the governing bodies' final decision on whether to proceed with a formal Federation.

The consultation runs from the 5th May 2017 to the 16th June 2017.

In addition to receiving the consultation document to respond to, drop in sessions have been organised at all the schools involved where questions can be posed and further information gathered about the proposal:

Tuesday 16th May: Timberscombe School, 4.00pm – 5.00pm

Tuesday 16th May: Cutcombe School, 5.30pm – 6.30pm

Thursday 18th May: Dunster School, 5.00pm – 6.00pm

Monday 22nd May: Exford School, 4.00pm – 5.00pm

Monday 22nd May: St. Dubricius School, Porlock, 6.00pm – 7.00pm

We would really appreciate your contribution to the Consultation. Do please complete the form at the back of this consultation pack and send us your views by the morning of 16th June 2017 on our proposal to enter into a formal Federation.

1) What is Our Vision?

A Federation between our schools will ensure continued and sustained high quality learning and development opportunities for current and future pupils at our rural village schools. The Federation will allow each school to retain its own individual identity and character formed within the context of their individual communities.

The purpose of federating is to both support and raise existing standards and to improve learning opportunities across schools.

2) What is a Federation?

Federation is the name given to a way of bringing schools closer together. It means that a single governing body manages all the schools. It does not mean that the schools will merge or amalgamate.

3) What will it mean for schools?

- ✚ There will be no change to the names of the individual schools. We will work together under the banner name of the Moorland Federation.
- ✚ Each school will retain its own headteacher and staff.
- ✚ There will be no changes in current staffing levels, class organisation or curriculum organisation as a direct result of federation
- ✚ There will be no reduction in budgets and each school will continue to receive its own individual budget
- ✚ There will be no change to the admission authority or admissions criteria for any school.
- ✚ Each school will still have its own Ofsted inspection.
- ✚ The reporting standards will remain separate for all five schools.

4) What are the benefits?

- ✚ Sharing good practice between schools to develop effective teaching and learning strategies, helping us to improve teaching and learning standards.
- ✚ Opportunities for children to learn from one another through shared learning activities and work together prior to transition to middle school.
- ✚ Opportunities for all schools to continue improving through benchmarking and combined INSETs.
- ✚ Opportunities for staff through comparative working and collective development.
- ✚ Schools will retain their special relationships with their local communities.
- ✚ Retaining and developing quality leadership within our schools.
- ✚ Sharing some resources to provide improved value for money.
- ✚ Less bureaucracy: under a federated structure there would be only one Governing Body.

5) Why do we want to take this step?

- ✚ Federation would be the formalisation of working structures that are already in place.
- ✚ Small schools are proven to be stronger and more successful when working together. By federating we are demonstrating a commitment to our schools working together into the future. This will ensure our future security and sustainability and a continuity of educational provision within our villages.
- ✚ Federation will 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.

6) What will it mean for the children?

- ✚ On a day to day basis there will be no change in routine or provision in any school.
- ✚ There will be continued opportunities to share expertise across the schools, leading to a rise in standards and attainment.
- ✚ There are opportunities to use school resources more effectively.
- ✚ Each school would retain its own emblem, uniform and family feeling.

7) What will it mean for staff?

- ✚ The day-to-day management will remain unchanged. However, by developing closer working relationships between staff, federation will enable them to share expertise, undertake joint professional development and provide support for colleagues in similar areas.
- ✚ It will also be a positive aid in the recruitment and retention of our high quality staff.
- ✚ There would be no changes to the contracts of existing staff working in any school.
- ✚ No changes will be made to the existing staffing structures at any of the schools as a direct result of federation.
- ✚ We are not anticipating any reduction in staffing as a result of the schools federating.

8) What will it mean for parents/carers?

- ✚ A federation will mean that the schools will continue to operate individually.
- ✚ All the schools will continue to seek ways to encourage more parental involvement and support within their own individual setting.
- ✚ Parents/carers will continue to receive the same high quality provision from staff and governors.
- ✚ Good communication will continue to be our priority and we will continue to seek ways of improving.
- ✚ Federation will not change the day-to-day contact arrangements between the school and parents/carers.

9) What will it mean for the Governing Body?

- ✚ The current governing bodies would be replaced by one governing body made up of a balance of representatives from all the schools.

10) Who would be on the Federated Governing Body?

- ✚ We propose a single combined governing body of 18 permanent governor positions, comprised as follows:
 - 4 school Heads
 - 1 elected LA Governor
 - 1 elected Staff Governor
 - 2 elected Parent Governors
 - 3 *ex officio* (church) Governors
 - 4 Foundation Governors (one of which is always to be nominated by the Ellsworth Trust)
 - 3 Co-opted Governors
- ✚ We also propose that within the structure of the governing body there is present at all times a 'school champion' for each school, as nominated by the governing body, who will be the point of contact for parents and staff within each individual school. This will help to ensure that the unique needs of each school are observed.
- ✚ Care would be taken to ensure that each school is equally and fairly represented.

11) What do the Governors think?

- ✚ All our governing bodies have been consulted on the proposal: Dunster School, St. Dubricius School, The Beacon Federation governing body (Timberscombe and Cutcombe) and the Exmoor Federation (for Exford School) and all agreed wholeheartedly with the proposal to federate. We feel that there is a shared caring ethos, child-centred philosophy and commitment to providing innovative, creative and outstanding education opportunities between the schools that would only be enhanced by a closer working relationship.
- ✚ Federation would offer security to our small First Schools and provide them with a sound foundation on which to move forward.

12) What do the Local Authority and the Church of England diocese of Bath and Wells think?

- ✚ The Local Authority and the Church of England diocese of Bath and Wells fully support this proposal.

13) What happens now?

- ✚ This document is the start of a six-week consultation period on the proposal to federate.
- ✚ The governors of each school will consider all written comments when the six weeks end on 16th June 2017. They will then each decide whether to proceed or not.
- ✚ If the decision is taken to proceed, a new, unified governing body will come into operation and the schools will inform the Local Authority that they wish to federate.

Timetable:

5th May – 12.00 noon 16th June 2017: Federation Consultation open for 6 weeks (5 weeks term time and 1 week holiday time). During this time drop in sessions will be held at all schools; anyone is welcome to attend any or all of these sessions.

30th June 2017: Final analysis of Consultation Feedback Form for governing body meetings for each school.

July 2017: Governing bodies meet and make their decisions on whether to pursue the Federation. Results will be published to all stakeholders by 21st July 2017.

14) How can I get more information or make my voice heard?

- ✚ Drop in sessions have been arranged to provide parents/carers, staff and other interested parties with an opportunity to speak with Heads and Chairs of Governors.
- ✚ All information will be available on the schools' own websites.
- ✚ We have attached a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) leaflet. We are of course willing to answer any other questions you may have. Publication of FAQs is designed to help you decide whether a hard federation is the way forward for our schools.

Please do tell us what you think. As governors we want to make the best decision we can for the future of our children, our schools and the local community. We will be able to do this with your help so please let us have your views on this proposal.

Please complete the attached response form and return it to your school office by the morning of 16th June 2017. Envelopes should be marked for the attention of the Chair of Governors and be clearly marked 'Federation'. Alternatively, you can email it to the school office with the subject line 'Moorland Consultation'.

We really appreciate all your thoughts and comments on this proposal: **thank you**.

M Capel, Head of Timberscombe and Cutcombe First Schools; *P Prideaux*, Chair of Governors The Beacon Federation; *P Hoyland*, Head of Dunster First School; *N Philp*, Prospective Head of Dunster First School; *S Stanbury*, Chair of Governors Dunster First School; *L Weaver*, Head of Exford First School; *D Lyndsay*, Chair of Governors The Exmoor Federation; *C Blazey*, Head of St. Dubricius First School; *L Allenby*, Chair of Governors St. Dubricius First School.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE FORM

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**

The consultation period starts on 5th May 2017 and runs for six weeks until the 16th June 2017. This form enables you to give your views and comment on the proposal. The proposal, along with a copy of this form, can be found on all school websites or you can obtain a hard copy from the school offices.

Forms should be returned to your school office. Envelopes should be marked for the attention of the Chair of Governors and be clearly marked 'Federation'. Alternatively, email to the form to the school office with the subject line 'Moorland Consultation'.

All returns must be received by 12.00 noon on the 16th June 2017.

Which of the following best describes your connection with the school (Please tick)?

Parent

Staff Member

Member of the community

Church

Other (please state)

I agree with the above proposal:

Yes

No

If you would like to discuss the proposal, please contact your school.

If you would like a personal response to your comments, please provide your name and contact details.

Your views are important, please do let us know what you think. Please give your comments below, continuing overleaf or on a separate sheet if required.