

From the Governing Bodies of Sandy Lane and Steeton Primary Schools



Consultation on:

The federation of Sandy Lane and Steeton Primary Schools

TO ALL STAFF, PARENTS and CARERS

We are very happy to let you know about a proposal to form a federation with our partner school.

As you know, we have been working closely as partner schools in the last few years. This has been very positive for both schools: ¹

Governors in both schools have been thinking hard about how to make this partnership even stronger. We believe that the best way to do this is to join together in a federation.

We have been thinking about this for the last few months and we believe it will be really good for all our children. We have taken time to make sure that we can do it in a way that lets each school keep everything that makes it special and continue to be at the heart of its own community.

We would really like to know whether you support this idea. You can find out more about it in the rest of this paper, and we have arranged additional meetings at the three schools so that you can discuss it with our leaders and governors.

Here are some of the very positive shared actions from which all three schools have benefited since we started to work together as a close partnership:

- **Partnership work towards good Ofsted outcomes:** When Steeton and Sandy Lane started the partnership back in January 2017 both schools benefited; with Sandy Lane quickly regaining its 'Good' Ofsted status the following year. Steeton were able to take a fresh look at all its systems and was also rated as 'Good' by Ofsted in the same year. We have been delighted with Ofsted's recent report on Steeton, which indicated that there is evidence to indicate that if it had received a section 5 inspection it would Outstanding.
- **Warm and welcoming schools:** As parents and staff across both schools in the partnership, we are sure you will have noticed that each school feels special and welcoming. This is something that is commented on all the time by visitors to our schools. School leaders and governors see it as very important to keep our schools the exceptional places they are for our children to grow and develop.

¹ See each school's website to see how our partnership has positively affected your school

- **The outcomes for our children across all three schools have improved** considerably, especially since learning started to normalise after the disruptions caused by the pandemic.
- **Shared Curriculum Development:** Although both our schools have separate and distinct curriculums, we have benefited from working together on our hugely creative curriculum designs. As a result, our curriculums create the magic that we want our children to experience through their primary school years.
- **Shared Continuing Professional Development:** our schools are special places because our staff are simply great. We have developed a great package of professional development for our staff which means that they are knowledgeable and have the skills that they need to give our children the best possible opportunities at school.
- **Shared staffing opportunities:** We have been very fortunate to have a high retention rate of staff across both schools. When staff do leave a school, quite often they have simply moved to a partner school, perhaps to another role or a permanent position. Staff who move schools within the partnership quickly feel the support of the receiving school and the full partnership.

What is a Federation of Schools?

1) What is a Federation?

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

2) What are the benefits?

- Sharing good practice between our schools continue to develop effective teaching & learning strategies, helping us to improve standards for our children.
- Opportunities for all schools to continue improving through collaboration, moderation & combined professional learning.
- Retaining & developing high quality leadership within our schools.
- Sharing some resources to improve value for money.
- Less bureaucracy so that our Heads of School can focus on teaching and learning.
- Developing a strong collective reputation as leading thinkers in education, so that we can promote our approach to education to the local authority and strengthen our offer of traded support for other schools in Bradford.

3) Why do we want to take this step?

- Federation would formalise and strengthen working structures that are already in place.
- Small schools are proven to be stronger & more successful when working together. By federating we are demonstrating a commitment to our children, our families and our schools working together for the good of all. This will help ensure our future security and continuity of educational provision.

- Federation will enable us to reduce duplication of tasks. This will increase efficiency for our schools and reduce the workloads for key members of staff so they can focus on providing the best education for our children.
- Federation will enable us to develop our collective reputation as leading thinkers in education so that we can promote our approach to education – which we believe could help other schools in Bradford – to them and to the local authority.

4) What about Myrtle Park?

- The proposed federation will work in partnership with other schools, as Myrtle Park has done. As the partnerships come to an end, if it is in interests of all the schools, we will consult again on those schools joining the federation.

5) What will it mean for our children?

- In day to day terms there will be no change in routine or provision in any of the schools.
- Each school will keep its own name, logo, uniform and family feeling. The creation of a Federation will not change a school's unique feel for pupils or parents. It will hopefully just add to it.
- We would love to develop more provision for our children across the schools. We have started this year with intraschool sporting competitions, but if we were able to pool resources to make transport less of a burdensome cost we would hope to have many more joint activities such as:
 1. Shared curriculum opportunities: quite often we have curriculum specialists come into schools for particular year groups. We would be able to have many more such days if we were able to share venues and resources.
 2. As you know clubs can be expensive to run and they don't always get the take up that allow them to run for longer than a few weeks. As a federation we could run dedicated clubs at each school which could be open across the federation. This could include sports, technology or arts and drama.
- There will be continued opportunities to share expertise across the schools, leading to more and better experiences, opportunities, progress and attainment. The national curriculum, is as you would imagine, taught in a similar fashion across both schools. It is left to schools to put their own unique slant on this to meet the needs of their own pupils. We like to give our children the opportunities to gain key experiences to enhance their learning and personal development. Together we can provide more of these key experiences by sharing resources across the Federation.

6) What will it mean for staff?

- Day-to-day management will remain unchanged. However, by developing closer working relationships the federation will enable staff to share expertise, undertake joint professional learning and provide support for colleagues in similar schools.
- It will also help with the recruitment and retention of our high quality staff by providing opportunities for career development within the federation.

- Staff will continue to be employed by the local authority.
- There would be no changes to the contracts of existing staff working in either of the schools as a direct result of federation: all staff will continue to be employed on national terms and conditions.
- No changes will be made to the existing staffing structures at either of the schools as a direct result of federation.
- We expect that there will be opportunities for staff who wish to do so to lead cross-federation projects.

7) What will it mean for parents and carers?

- A federation will mean that the schools will continue to operate individually, with their own identities, visions and values.
- Each school will continue to engage with and support its parents and local community.
- Parents and carers will continue to receive the same high quality provision from staff & governors.
- Good communication will continue to be a top priority.
- Federation will not change the day-to-day contact arrangements between the school & parents/carers.
- Parents and carers will still be able to get in touch with The Head of School as usual and also individual School Development Boards.

8) What will it mean for our schools?

- There will be no name change for the individual schools.
- Each school will retain its own staffing structure.
- There will be no reduction in budgets and both schools will continue to receive their own individual budget.
- There will be no changes in current staffing levels, organisation or curriculum as a result of federation.
- There will be no change to the admission criteria for any of the schools.
- Each school will still have its own Ofsted inspection.
- Each school will keep its own uniform.

9) How will the school budget work?

- School budgets will operate in the same way that they do now. Each school will receive its own budget from Bradford Council.

- The federation will have a shared budget pot for joint projects carried out across all schools. For example, leasing a shared minibus so that we can reduce the costs of visits.
- At the parents' meetings some parents were concerned that a school may have to pay into a shared budget pot for things they didn't want to take part in. That would not be the case. Heads of School would only contribute into a shared budget pot for spending that matched their school priorities. Each school still has full control over its budget and will only spend on what it wants and for what it needs.

10) What will it mean for the Governing Body?

- The current Governing bodies would be dissolved and replaced by one Federation Governing Board and a School Development Body for each school. The School Development Bodies will be Committees of the Federation Governing Board and will include elected staff and parent members.
- The Head of School will be a member of the School Development Body and the Executive Headteacher will be a member of the Federation Governing Body. The Heads of School will have the right to attend meetings of the Federation Governing Body.

11) Who would be on the Federation Governing Body?

The Federation Governing Body will consist of:

- a) 2 Parent governors
- b) 1 Local Authority governor
- c) 1 Executive Headteacher of the Federation
- d) 1 Staff governor
- e) 6 Co-opted governors

**Total number of governors on the Federation Board = 11
(Each meeting will be professionally clerked)**

The first Federation Governing Body will be made up of governor representatives from each school in equal number as far as possible. Their terms of office will be 4 years.

12) Who would be on the School Development Bodies?

- a) 2 x staff members (1 of whom will be the Head of School)
- b) 1 x parent member

- c) A number of Co-opted members, to be determined in discussion between the school and the Federation Governing Body.
- d) The school may have observers at the School Development Board e.g. School Business Manager

The Chair of each School Development Body would also be a member of the Federation Governing Body.

Their terms of office will be 4 years.

13) What do the Governors think?

- Both Governing Bodies have been consulted and agree wholeheartedly with the proposal to federate and to consult you on your views. We have similar visions and values and we believe federation brings great opportunities to support each other, share our strengths and provide activities and resources that we could not afford on our own.
- Federation would offer more security for our small schools and provide them with a sound foundation on which to move forward.

14) What do the Local Authority think?

- The Local Authority supports this proposal.
- The Local authority will continue to be the Admissions Authority for both schools.

What is Our Vision for the new Federation?

The first and primary reason that schools federate is to improve the opportunities and outcomes for every child within the federation.

- Within the current partnership, Sandy Lane and Steeton Primary Schools are rightfully proud of our distinct branding and ethos which has made us unique places to be. We are equally proud of our curriculums which are designed to provide to ALL our children an engaging, purposeful curriculum that inspires, motivates, challenges and excites them. We believe that providing our pupils with key experiences will develop their cultural capital and enhance their learning and personal development to help them become successful, confident learners.
- Each year group has a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum that is tailored to the collective and individual needs of our children and provides them with the opportunity to learn about a variety of inspiring topics. We have carefully researched and thought about the needs of our children and have planned a series of themes that will provide excellent learning opportunities where our children can develop their basic and creative skills, enjoy exciting real-life experiences and make strong progress.

- It is our priority to provide our children with the best, first-hand experience that will engage their interests and drive their learning with a key purpose.
- Federating will allow us to continue to share our curriculum expertise across all of its schools, but will also enable us to utilise our collective resourcing capacity in such a way that all children can access more learning opportunities as a federation of schools than as a single unit.
- Greater opportunities for pupils include: the ability to extend provision such as sports, language and music, procuring specialist provision as part of a group of schools that they would have been unable to offer as a single school. There is also the opportunity for schools to share access to facilities across school sites for example a shared minibuss or two would dramatically cut the cost of school visits.
- Greater opportunities for school staff to work together. Teachers plan amazing lessons for our pupils. To be able to share expertise and ideas across a federation of schools, through joint planning and training activities, has already been beneficial to each school within the existing partnership. Staff feel supported by a friendly network bigger than their own school. Teachers will moderate work across the federation in order to ensure that the children in each school are producing work of the highest quality.
- Stronger leadership and management – a federation provides opportunities and reminders that our children that are central to our core mission. That is to fulfil their potential using a richly creative curriculum, to ensure that no child is left behind, with all children having the opportunity to unlock their unique talents. Our leaders work together towards this common purpose. They create this opportunity within their own school but also look for the chance to grow federation wide opportunities which every child can benefit from.
- Shared expertise and collaboration – federating gives schools the opportunity to share expertise. There may also be scope for joint curriculum planning and assessment.
- Strengthened governance – both schools within a federation are governed by one governing body, which is likely to result in fewer governors being required. The process of reviewing the required knowledge, skills, backgrounds and experience of governors to inform the construction of a new board could lead to a stronger team and more effective governance.
- Efficiencies that lead to cost savings – federations can make use of greater purchasing power together.
- Efficiencies that lead to saving in the time of senior leaders on “back-office” functions so that they can focus instead on the curriculum, teaching and learning.
- An opportunity to develop the collective reputation of our schools as leading thinkers in education, promote our approach to education with the local authority and share it with other schools by offering more traded support services, which are an important stream of income.

What happens now?

- This document is the start of a six-week consultation period on the proposal to federate.
- When the six weeks end on 08 March 2024, the governors of each school will meet separately and together to consider all written comments and decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal to federate.
- If the decision is taken to proceed, a new Federation Governing Board will come into operation & the schools will inform the Local Authority that they wish to federate.

The green-highlighted text below will be reviewed following a meeting between members of the FWG and a PR professional to discuss how best to determine the name of the federation

- The Federation working title is :

Learning for Life Schools

Where the Magic begins...





We will be running a further consultation down the line to see if staff, parents and pupils like this name or have any really good ideas themselves. We would love to hear from you. Perhaps you could suggest a name in your response to this consultation.

Federation Timetable

Consultation opens

- Friday 19 January 2024

Consultation events

Date	Time	Place	
Tuesday 20 th February 2024	6.30PM	Teams meeting scan QR code to be sent later.	
Wednesday 21 st February 2024	6.30PM	Teams meeting scan QR code	

Consultation closure

Friday 08 March 2024

Analysis of feedback

- 11 March to 08 April 2024

Governors meetings to consider the outcome of consultation and decide whether to federate

- Week beginning 22 April 2024

Governors hold Reconstitution Meeting if they all agree to proceed

- Week beginning 22 April 2024

Federation comes into being

- 01 June 2024

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

Please come to one of the teams sessions: this will be an opportunity to speak with the Executive Head, Head of School & Governors. Please do tell us what you think. As Governors we want to make the best decisions 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 PING response form by **Friday 08 March 2024 before 3.00pm**. Alternatively you can send an email reply marked 'Federation Proposal' to the: office@sandylane.bradford.sch.uk

All information will be available on the schools' individual websites:

- This consultation document
- The discussion document that sets out the federation proposal in more detail
- A detailed question and answer paper addressing all the questions raised during informal discussions with parents and staff during the autumn 2023 term

We really appreciate all your thoughts & comments on this proposal.

Thank you

The Governing Bodies of Steeton and Sandy Lane Primary Schools

Response to Consultation

The federation of Myrtle Park, Sandy Lane and Steeton Primary schools

Thank you for taking the time to read the consultation paper, and we hope you have been able to attend one of the consultation events to talk the proposal over with school leaders and governors. We are very keen to hear what you think, and it would be especially helpful if you could answer the following questions:

1. Your name (optional):

2. Your school: Sandy Lane / Steeton Primary school

3. Do you support the proposal for the schools to join together as a federation?

Yes / No

Your comment: _____

Thank you again for your help