

Steeton and Sandy Lane Primary Schools
Proposal to federate: Questions and Answers

The questions below have been raised by parents and staff during informal discussions of possible federation during the Autumn 2023 term. Governors would like to thank them for their thoughts and hope that they find these responses helpful.

Where several questions touch on the same point, they have been grouped together.

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A. Reasons why the Governing Bodies propose to federate at this time

1. *Why has this become an issue now?*
2. *What benefits will it bring to each school, as we are already working collaboratively across the three schools?*
3. *What will be the day to day difference? How will this benefit pupils, staff and community?*
4. *How does formalising or changing the partnership we currently have bring any benefit to our pupils? We already share good practice / share staff meetings / moderate together / curriculum leaders meet up etc so we do we need to federate to do this?*
5. *Can't things like sharing resources and mini bus etc be done as the partnership we are now anyway? eg. SENCo is shared wages / Exec Head is shared wages - so sharing a mini bus should be easy compared to this?*
6. *Schools will be giving up some control if they join the proposed federation (because they will only have a few representatives on the Federation Governing Body). What benefits will federating bring that they don't already enjoy though the partnership?*

The schools have been working in partnership for some time now and the benefits have been felt by both schools, our pupils and staff. We could carry on with the current partnership arrangement and continue to enjoy those benefits. However, we think it would be in the strategic interests of the partnership as a whole – and enable us to help schools across Bradford – to develop a distinct federation identity.

We believe that Bradford schools are constrained by circumstances beyond their control, including low cultural capital, inconsistent funding of schools etc. This is a specific, unique and long-standing challenge for Bradford schools, which need a different approach to enable them to be great. The Federation Working Group envisages that proven success in our schools will demonstrate the efficacy and value of our approach. It sees scope to work with the LA to enable it to draw on the Federation as a force for positive change that they can support and work with to help the seventy or so other schools in Bradford that are not part of an Academy Trust, federation or other grouping.

Federation would enable the partnership itself to develop a distinct identity – in addition to the distinct identities of the member schools – that would enable it to:

- improve outcomes for all our children;
- grow its reputation as a leading thinker in education, so that we can promote our vision and good practice to others;
- influence local and national educational thinking;
- negotiate more effectively with the local authority and others;
- develop its reputation as an excellent provider of training and services to other schools;
- streamline cross-partnership working and opportunities;
- enable staff to refer in job applications not just to their experience in an excellent school but as part of a highly respected federation of schools; and
- reduce duplication of work (eg joint procurement instead of each school doing it for themselves; greater scope to relieve Heads of School of back-office work so they can focus on teaching and learning).
- possibly reduce the risk of enforced academisation of schools if we can show we are working effectively in an existing federation; or, if the current or a future government were determined that all schools should academise, reduce the risk of our schools being required to join different academy trusts.

7. *Is the proposal to federate designed to avoid the schools being made to become academies?*

No. It remains the stated intention of government that all schools should become academies by 2030, but there is currently no pressure on schools to do so. Our schools have Good Ofsted judgements so, if that changes, they are not at high risk of being obliged to become academies in the short term because they would not be considered to be “coasting” schools.

Our reasons for proposing to federate are positive rather than defensive: we believe the partnership would be stronger as a federation for the reasons given in the reply to questions 1-6 above.

If the current or a future government decided to press for all schools to become academies, being a federation would not prevent that. We would hope, however, that it the Department for Education would take a successful existing federation structure into account and not require the schools to move into different academy trusts.

8. *Is the proposal to federate designed to cut costs?*

9. *Why is this important why can't it stay the way it was is it due to budget cuts*

We believe that there may be scope for savings by reducing duplication and sharing information about suppliers. In time, there may also be savings from placing joint contracts. However, savings are expected to be minor and this is not a primary driver to federate.

Our reasons for proposing to federate are positive: we believe the partnership would be stronger as a federation for the reasons given in the reply to questions 1-6 above.

B. The unique identities of the schools

10. *Will my school retain its own identity or be absorbed into a greater whole?*

11. *Will the school lose its sense of community and independence?*

12. *As a parent, I worry that my school will lose its identity as a unique community school that is central to our locality.*

The vision and purpose of the proposed federation is to support each school to continue to develop its unique strengths and its focus on delivering a curriculum tailored to the needs of its own children.

One of the strengths of both schools is their strong relationship with their local communities. Addressing the challenges facing each school community is central to our approach to our visions, values and curriculums and to the progress that both schools are making. That individuality and responsiveness to each school's local community would be a priority for the proposed federation.

The proposed governance structure for the Trust includes a School Development Body for each school instead of the current Governing Bodies. It will be the job of the Federation Governing Body, each school's Development Body, the Executive Headteacher and the two Heads of School to safeguard the individuality of each school, its particular vision and values and its relationship with its parents and wider community.

13. *Will federation affect my choices for my child's secondary school?*

No – primary schools do not have any influence on which schools their pupils attend for their secondary education. This would not change if the schools federated.

C. Succession planning for the Executive Headteacher

14. *If my school federated and then the Executive Head was to leave/retire/get a new job elsewhere, it would not be guaranteed that the new Executive Head was fully in line with Steeton's ethos. The new Executive Head's strategic vision could be very different to the Head of Schools (at the schools) and therefore this would not be a benefit for Steeton in the long run. This is of course based on the notion that the Executive Head in the future was not a member of SLT from either of the schools and someone externally appointed.*
15. *If John retires/leaves/moves on, and a new Exec Head is brought in, can you guarantee that the schools will retain their individual identities and agendas where appropriate. Will we protected moving forward regardless of changes in leadership?*
16. *Succession planning - what happens when there is a need for a new executive headteacher? / are there plans for a central team to grow and add leadership capacity?*

When the time comes for the Executive Headteacher to leave or retire, it would be the responsibility of the Federation Governing Body, advised by the local authority, to recruit a new Executive Headteacher. The Federation Governing Body would look for a candidate who shared the strategic vision and values of both schools and the Federation itself. That candidate might be external or internal. The Working Group has identified this inevitable change as a key risk for the federation and has proposed the following actions to mitigate it:

- Ensure the Federation Governing Body has a clear understanding of the intentions of the current EHT and when he is likely to leave or retire.
- Continued emphasis on devolved leadership to grow the Federation's leaders.
- Develop a clear understanding of the recruitment market and the steps needed to attract high calibre candidates.

D. Teaching and learning

17. *How will the new curriculum differentiate from the current?*
18. *What will link the schools ie curriculum, sharing of teaching resources and how will this cater to the needs of the individual school communities?*

Both Steeton Primary School and Sandy Lane Primary School hold a deeply rooted philosophy that the Curriculum is designed to serve the different needs of the children that attend each school. We have created a richly diverse curriculum. We offer inspiration for all our pupils including our children with SEND and our most disadvantaged. All teaching and learning systems within school are designed to provide the best educational experience for all children.

We recognise that some of our children from both schools experience a significant deficit of "Cultural Capital"¹ in their lives. Our aim is to identify all children's development points in this area. We do this by providing a rich and diverse curriculum with a heavy emphasis on creativity. Art/Craft and Design, encapsulated in the schools' hugely successful 'Magic Mondays'² and Pupil Offer³, provides a springboard for children to gain an appreciation and taste for human creativity and achievement. Our ultimate aim is to

¹Cultural Capital: 'It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.' *Ofsted Education Inspection Framework*

² 'Magic Mondays': Part of the school's creative curriculum, a day each week devoted to the creative skills of Art/Craft & Design linked to curriculum themes producing age related products and outcomes across the school.

³ School also has a Pupil Offer, which sets out what each child could expect from the school as part of an integrated curriculum offer. The Offer includes, for each child every year: at least three Forest School days, at least two major visits or visitors, at least one outdoor training activity, a visit to a library and a museum or art gallery, visits to at least two places of worship, at least two whole-school events (e.g. events related to the Olympics, World War I) and a community activity (e.g. litter-picking, planting, singing at local nursing homes and hospital). The Pupil Offer is proving highly positive in terms of providing wider life experience for pupils and enabling them to improve their communication and other skills.

level up their experiences with those of their peers in more affluent areas of the city and of the country. Both schools firmly believe that this richness of curriculum is the key to improved self-esteem and ultimately improved outcomes both academically and socially.

Sandy Lane Primary School and Steeton Primary School offer a highly effective dual approach to learning. Each child needs the skills across the whole curriculum to create exquisite learning logs; focusing on honing their creative skills rather than relying on printed materials.

Equally important to children is the access to state-of-the-art Information Technology tools which we have meticulously planned into the whole curriculum to enable children easily and efficiently to complete fluency tasks which have, in the past, taken up so much learning time. Technology and Creativity working effortlessly together. This is what we have invested in as this is what our children need.

School leaders and Curriculum leaders at both schools share this passion for leveling up the opportunity for all our children. We provide a curriculum which has recently been described by Ofsted as Outstanding at doing just that job.

19. *What is one of the major changes that will impact our school?*
20. *What would be the benefits of joining the federation for my School itself?*
21. *What will be the day to day difference? - how will this benefit the pupils, staff and community?*
22. *I guess all I'd like to know is whether it would affect my children directly during the school day. Will teachers remain consistent in the classroom throughout the day and week or end up needing to go off for meetings etc. Thank you*
23. *Would it involve teachers supporting learning in others schools? Would this leave classes led by teaching assistants?*
24. *I worry that my children may not have the continuity of staffing and resourcing*

We do not expect federation to make a substantial difference to the day-to-day work of each school. The benefits are largely strategic rather than operational, though we believe that federation would bring some administrative advantages and, in time, release some leadership time from administrative work to focus on teaching and learning.

Teachers would continue to work with their opposite numbers in their partner school as they do now, and there would be no need for them to attend more meetings than they do at present and no need for more classes to be led by support staff instead of teachers.

25. *What is the Ofsted ratings of the other schools?*

- Sandy Lane – Good (inspection of 08 November 2018)
- Steeton – Good, with evidence to suggest that the school would be judged Outstanding in a graded inspection (ungraded inspection of 07-08 November 2023)

26. *What are the main school priorities of the other schools?*

Sandy Lane objectives

- Pupils achieve excellent outcomes by building on each year's achievements. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils at Sandy Lane Primary School achieve above national average attainment and progress measures.
- All staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver an excellent curriculum to all pupils at Sandy Lane Primary School.
- Unlocking a pathway to each pupil's higher aspirations through:

- Careers development
- Pupil Passport
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Pupil Offer.
- Pupils learn the life skills featured in our RESPECT⁴ principles using them to develop a roadmap for success both now and in the future.

Steeton objectives

- Establish a Strong federation between Steeton and its Partner school(s), leveraging joint leadership for enhanced collaboration.
- Cultivate a cohesive academic and business partnership within the federation to yield superior outcomes in every facet of school life, ensuring excellent results for all students involved.
- Pupils achieve excellent outcomes by building on each year's achievements.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils at Steeton Primary School achieve above national average attainment and progress measures.
- All staff have the appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver an excellent curriculum to all pupils at Steeton Primary School.
- Unlocking a pathway to each pupil's higher aspirations through:
 - Careers development
 - World of Work programme
 - Pupil Passport
 - Knowledge and Understanding
 - Pupil Offer.

27. Why is one of the other schools involved in a partnership with Carlton Academy?

The Department for Education has directed Marshfield Primary School, a member of the Carlton Academy Trust, to work with Sandy Lane to investigate why, despite a strong curriculum and excellent teaching, pupil outcomes remain stubbornly just below national averages. Sandy Lane is gaining useful knowledge about making more strategic use of data and is sharing this learning with its partners.

28. Will the daily diet for pupils be the same across the sites? for example all start and finish at the same time with the same length of lessons and curriculum time on each subject?

29. Will schools be 'forced' to follow policies that are not bespoke to its students?

No. Curriculum, teaching and learning policies and procedures would continue to be designed by each school to meet the specific needs of their pupils – this is fundamental to the vision of the proposed federation. Where it makes sense to do so, the federation will look for opportunities to put in place the same policies and procedures in each school for back-office functions – this would reduce the amount of policy work that the Executive Headteacher and Heads of School have to do so that they can spend more time on the curriculum.

The schools are currently all advised by the same HR advisory service and use the HR policies and procedures provided by that service.

⁴ RESPECT - **R**esilience, **E**xcellence, **S**elf-awareness, **P**assion, **E**mpathy, **C**ommunication and **T**eamwork

E. Governance

30. *What powers will be held by the schools and what by the Federation?*

31. *Governance Structure: What will the governance structure look like, and how will it cater to the needs of all schools? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The Federation would be governed by a single Federation Governing Body, supported by a School Development Body (similar to the current Governing Body) in each school. The School Development Bodies would formally be Committees of the Federation Governing Body.

The general principle would be that the Federation Governing Bodies would delegate powers and responsibilities to the School Development Bodies for all matters that are best carried out at school level – examples would include the vision, ethos and curriculum; the day to day oversight of the school etc. The Federation Governing Body would hold the School Development Bodies to account and would retain responsibility for the strategic leadership of the Federation as a whole.

A detailed description of the roles of the Federation Governing Body, the School Development Bodies, the Executive Headteacher and the Heads of Schools is set out in Annex B to the Federation Background paper.

32. *How many governors will there be on the Federation Governing Body?*

The proposal is that the Federation Governing Body should consist of 11 governors:

- 2 parent governors (elected by the parents of both schools)
- 1 staff governor (elected by the staff of both schools)
- 1 local authority governor
- The Executive Headteacher
- 6 co-opted governors

The intention is that each school would have at least two governors on the Federation Governing Body at its launch, including the Chair of its School Development Body: the Federation Governing Body would be expected to maintain a balance of representation from the schools as governors left and were replaced in future.

33. *Parent and Staff Governor Elections: How will you conduct parent and staff governor elections to ensure fairness? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The election of parent and staff governors would be conducted according to Part 3 of The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012. All parents or staff at each school would be invited to nominate parents or staff for the vacant governor position(s). If more than one person was nominated, all parents or staff at both schools would be invited to vote for their preferred nominee. Nominees would be invited to prepare brief statements to inform the voting.

34. *Co-opted Governors: What criteria will you use for appointing co-opted governors? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

Co-opted Governors are appointed by the Governing Body. At the moment, they are appointed by the Governing Body of each school. If the schools federated, Co-opted Governors would be appointed by the Federation Governing Body, which would follow Part 3 of The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

35. *Associate Member Management: What role will associate members play, and how will you utilize their expertise? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The proposal is that, if the schools choose to federate, each Head of School would be an Associate Member of the Federation Governing Body, appointed to their own School Development Body. This would give them the right to receive papers for, and attend, Federation Governing Body meetings and to vote at the meetings of their own School Development Body.

As the current School Governing Bodies do, the Federation Governing Body would be able to appoint other Associate Members to its Committees, with or without voting rights, where it considered that the person in question would bring skills, knowledge or expertise that would benefit the Federation and its pupils and schools. The Federation Governing Body would follow Part 3 of The School Governance (Federation) (England) Regulations 2012 in making such appointments.

36. *Instrument of Government Compliance: How will you ensure the Instrument of Government meets all statutory requirements? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

A draft Instrument of Government has been prepared by the Clerk to the Governing Bodies and cleared by Bradford Council's Legal Team, which will be responsible for putting the document to the Council to be signed and sealed if and when the Governing Bodies agree to proceed with federation.

37. *How will the overall chair be picked for the schools in the federation?*

The Chair of the Federation Governing Body would be elected by the Federation Governing Body itself at its first meeting.

38. *What will be the quorum for Federation Governing Body meetings?*

The quorum would be 6 governors.

39. *Misalignment of Goals: What strategies will you use to align the goals of the different schools in the federation? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The goals of the schools are already in line with each other – this is why we believe that federation would work well. The Executive Headteacher would continue to work with the Head of each school and its School Development Body to prepare its School Development Plan: these documents set out the school's priorities for the coming year and how it will achieve those priorities and would be monitored by the School Development Body and reported by the Executive Headteacher to the Federation Governing Body.

40. *Headteacher Representation: What is the plan for headteacher representation on the governing board? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The Executive Headteacher would be a Governor on the Federation Governing Board. Each Head of School would be appointed by the Federation Governing Body as an Associate Member of their School Development Body, with voting rights. This means that each Head of School would have a vote on the School Development Body and would see papers, and be able to attend, meetings of the Federation Governing Body.

41. *Governing Body Representation: How will you ensure fair representation of all schools on the governing body? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The Federation Governing Body would include six Co-opted Governors. The proposal is that these positions would be held by governors from each of the existing governing bodies. In addition, all parents would elect the two Parent Governors and all staff would elect the Staff Governor.

As the terms of office of the Co-opted Governors come to an end, the Federation Governing Body would re-appoint them or appoint new governors according to the needs of the federation and the schools.

Governing Bodies have a duty to take account of their balance and diversity, and the balance of governors from each school would form part of this.

42. *Leadership and Communication: What leadership and communication protocols will you establish to maintain each school's identity and control, and prevent mismanagement? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

Each school would have a School Development Body which, with the Head of School and the Executive Headteacher, would be the main guardian of the individual identity of the school. The School Development Bodies would be similar to the existing Governing Bodies and would formally be Committees of the Federation Governing Body. Members would be appointed by the Federation Governing Body, but the expectation would be that the Federation Governing Body would appoint parent and staff members who had been elected by parents and staff. It would be for each School Development Body to determine its own membership (ie number of governors of different types) provided that it followed the principles set out in legislation for governing bodies.

The minutes of Federation Governing Body would be made available to the School Development Bodies and *vice versa*, except where they touched on confidential matters. The agendas of Federation Governing Body and School Development Body meetings would include a standing item to address any School/Federation matters that needed to be communicated. The main channel of communication would be the Executive Headteacher.

F. Employment in the proposed federation

43. *Who would be the employer of staff?*

Staff would continue to be employed by the Local Authority, as they are now.

44. *Some members of staff have shared a worry that they may be told to go to another school. For example, next year you will be teaching at Sandy Lane and moved from your current school. Is this a possibility?*

45. *Will staffing be shared across the Federation? Who will be the employer for these staff? (The Federation board of the LA?)*

Teachers and leaders already work across both schools to some extent. The Working Group sees formal and informal secondments as a key benefit of federation, leading to:

- cross-fertilisation of ideas and practice; and
- career development and progression opportunities that small primary schools are not well-equipped to provide on their own.

These kinds of arrangements would be with the agreement of staff, whose contracts would continue to be with their “home” school unless they applied for and were appointed to a position in the other school.

The Working Group does not foresee circumstances in which the Federation would wish to move staff to another school against their preference. There would, however, be an expectation that senior staff would be willing to be deployed to other schools on a defined term basis to avoid the need to bring in leadership support (eg in case of illness).

As well as staff moving between schools on short or long term secondments, the FWG also sees scope for one school to take on work on behalf of both – for example a staff member in one school could lead on international learning (the replacement for Erasmus) for the federation – with TLR⁵ allowances where appropriate.

46. What is the staff view?

Staff have asked a lot of questions that have helped Governors to refine the proposal to federate and pin down how it would work in practice. Staff are being invited to give their views formally through this consultation.

47. What is the staffing turnover at the other schools?

At both schools, staff turnover is on average between 0 and 5%.

48. How will expertise and resources be utilised and shared?

As already happens, staff in both schools would continue to work together to share their areas of expertise. For example:

As described above, both schools share a unique educational philosophy and attitude to children's need to develop their cultural capital. This is in order to level up their experiences with peers in more affluent areas of the city and of the country. Both schools firmly believe that this richness of curriculum is the key to improved self-esteem and ultimately improved outcomes both academically and socially.

Areas across our curriculum where leaders have worked together as a single team have been: the teaching and training of Phonics, Reading and Writing for Pleasure, Learn by Questions Math's which compliments the White Rose Planning which is recommended by National Math's Hubs.

As a federation, this would not change but could, we believe, be extended into other areas. For example, there could be scope for staff to lead work across both schools to reduce duplication of effort on work such as researching participation in international and other initiatives, letting of contracts etc.

As is the case in the existing partnership, this kind of sharing of expertise and resources would be carefully planned so that it benefited the pupils and staff of both schools. We would not, for example, leave a class in one school without a teacher so that the teacher could provide support in another school. Our experience in the existing partnership is that the pupils and staff of both schools benefit from this kind of sharing, whether they are leading or learning in any given instance.

The schools already have some experience of jointly resourcing some services. For example: they jointly pay the salary costs of the Executive Headteacher and administrative support. If the schools federated and created a central budget for this kind of cost, it would remove the need for schools to recharge such costs to each other.

In future, the schools might agree to share the costs of purchases that neither could afford on their own: examples might be the lease of minibuses or Class VR. This could be done without federating, but federation could make the administration more efficient.

⁵ TLR – Teaching and Learning Responsibility: an additional allowance paid to teaching staff with leadership responsibility across the school in a specific area (eg a Key Stage, SEN, Numeracy, Literacy), and the first step on the leadership ladder

49. *Could the Federation Governing Body change the Terms and Conditions of staff?*
50. *I am also concerned that my terms and conditions are not guaranteed to stay as is.*
51. *Staff at maintained schools that have joined Academy Trusts were promised that there would be no change to terms and conditions only to find that the Trust did in fact changed their terms and conditions after conversion. What guarantee is there that this would not happen under federation?*
52. *Will the proposed federation diverge from national terms and conditions by varying the pay scales at which posts are advertised?*

The Governing Bodies of both schools wish to make clear that there is no intention for the Federation to diverge from the national Terms and Conditions for staff and they cannot envisage circumstance in which it would wish to do so.

- *Could the Federation Governing Body change this in future?*

PACT HR – the HR advisory service used by both schools, have given the following advice:

“Nationally negotiated conditions aside, all types of school including federations would need to undertake a process of consultation of no less than 10 working days for small scale changes (19 or fewer affected employees) or at least 30 days where between 20 and 99 employees are affected by any proposed change to contractual elements. The GB would have the final decision in all cases but Steeton and Sandy Lane may be required to liaise with the Local Authority dependent on the nature of the change.

“It’s difficult to summarise without reference to a specific element as the nature of the change will determine how consultation progresses and the course and necessity of any negotiations with the Trade Unions. As the governing body will be amalgamated it will be able to change these elements for all three schools through a process of consultation and would make the final decision.*

“I assume that staff questions will likely revolve around role, pay and mobility in cases of federation. All three would need to follow the principles of the Workforce Change policy even if there are no anticipated redundancy terminations.

“There would be no additional protection afforded simply because they are employed by the LA in these circumstances. It should be noted also that TUPE protections ensure that staff are not treated less favourably when transferring to a new employer.”

*Note: this advice was provided before the Governing Body at Myrtle Park Primary School decided not to proceed with federation at this time.

53. *Would there be written and signed documentation of things put in place such as no change to terms and condition, MPPS [Myrtle Park Primary School] budget is ours to do with as we see fit and not 'lent' to other schools in the federation? Etc*

There would not be written and signed documentation on these points. However, the consultation document and supporting papers set out the firm intentions of governors and would guide the Federation Governing Body. As explained in other answers, the Federation Governing Body would be able to make changes to terms and conditions for both schools, as the existing Governing Bodies can do, through a process of consultation and would make the final decision. Governors cannot, however, foresee circumstances in which the Federation Governing Body would wish to depart from national terms and conditions.

The budget element of this question is addressed in section G of this paper.

54. *Will staff be expected to work at other schools in the federation?*

Teachers and leaders already work across both schools to some extent. The Working Group sees formal and informal secondments as a key benefit of federation, leading to:

- cross-fertilisation of ideas and practice; and
- career development and progression opportunities that small primary schools are not well-equipped to provide on their own.

The Working Group does not foresee circumstances in which the Federation would wish to amend the national terms and conditions of staff, including in relation to mobility. Specifically, it does not envisage that the Federation would wish to move staff to another school against their preference. There would, however, be an expectation that senior staff would be willing to be deployed to other schools on a defined term basis to avoid the need to bring in leadership support (eg in case of illness).

G. Budgets and assets

55. *Would there be written and signed documentation of things put in place such as no change to terms and condition, MPPS budget is ours to do with as we see fit and not 'lent' to other schools in the federation? Etc*

56. *Will the schools continue to have their own budgets?*

57. *Concerns over budget going central*

58. *As a staff member, I am concerned about the pooling of resources between the schools and how this may impact us.*

The local authority would continue to delegate each school's budget to that school.

- *Could this change, at least in theory?*

Yes: it is possible for a local authority to treat a federation as a single school and delegate the budgets of the member schools to the Federation Governing Body, but that is not proposed for this federation.

- *Could the Federation Governing Body decide, in the future, to change this?*

Yes, in theory the Federation could, in future, ask the local authority to delegate the schools' budgets to the Federation to allocate to the schools. There are no plans to do this, and certainly not without the agreement of the School Development Bodies (which would replace the current Governing Bodies). It is also highly unlikely that the local authority would agree to delegate school budgets to the Federation against the wishes of the school.

59. *Will the schools have to pay a topslice of their budget to the federation?*

60. *As part of the federation does there need to be an executive head and where does the money come from for this ? Which budget?*

61. *Does it require any increased spending on 'management positions'?*

The proposal is that schools would each pay a contribution to the Federation to cover central costs and any jointly purchased services. These costs are currently paid by one of the schools (Sandy Lane) and recharged to the other (Steeton). Paying these costs to a central federation budget would save the Federation, schools and suppliers of any centrally purchased goods or services the time involved in invoicing each school for every such cost or invoicing a single school and that school re-charging the others.

There would be no additional "management positions" at the outset. It is possible that, as the proposed federation becomes established and savings are realised, some of those savings might be used to purchase additional expertise (for example in strategic procurement or fund-raising), but this would only be done if the benefits outweighed the costs.

The purpose of the proposed federation in terms of financial management would be to minimise the time, money and energy that schools spend on “back-office” functions so that they can be devoted instead to the curriculum, teaching and learning.

62. *Will the schools pay into a central fund equally? How will it be ensured that each school gets what they put in back in equal measures?*

63. *What is evenly? same for each school or a pro-rata basis such as price per pupil?*

64. *How will the size of each school’s contribution be determined?*

The schools currently contribute to shared costs such as the EHT salary on the basis of their pupil numbers. The Federation Working Group (made up of governors from all three schools) has reviewed this and other options and decided that this remains the fairest way to calculate the contributions to take account of the different sizes of the schools.

Agreements are already in place between the schools to ensure that they “get what they put in back in equal measures”. For example, there is an agreement between the schools on the proportion of the Executive Headteacher’s time that he spends on each school.

65. *Financial Management: What measures will be put in place to manage and equitably distribute funds among the schools in the federation? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

66. *Budget Management: How do you plan to manage individual school budgets while ensuring equitable resource distribution? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

67. *I worry that my children may not have the continuity of staffing and resourcing*

68. *Governance Structure: How will you ensure effective governance to prevent any school from dominating resource allocation? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

Each school would continue to manage its own budget. The only budget that would be managed centrally is the contributions made by the schools to central costs and any services that the schools agree to buy jointly to make savings.

69. *Would the schools budget increase or decrease?*

Neither. Schools would continue to be funded as they are at present. The proposal is that each would contribute to central costs and any jointly purchased services.

70. *If a school receives a donation, does the school keep the donation or does it belong to the federation?*

Donations belong to the schools to which they are made. That would not change if the school joined the proposed federation.

71. *School Maintenance: What strategies will be implemented to ensure all schools in the federation receive adequate maintenance and care? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

Each school would continue to be responsible for its own maintenance and upkeep, paid for through its own budget. The only change to this would be if it made better financial sense to contract with a single supplier for (eg) grounds maintenance. In that case, the Executive Headteacher would discuss with Heads

of School whether the central contract should be part of the central budget to which schools would contribute.

72. *What is the financial position of the other schools?*

Both schools are financially viable. It is anticipated that federation will lead to some financial savings to the benefit of both schools.

73. *Will there be any 'big ticket' events such as joint sports days/ Christmas shows, summer fates? - Will schools be expected to contribute evenly to these?*

We think it is likely that the schools will want to get together from time to time for events such as sports days and celebrations, and for staff training and professional development events – this could happen either as a federation or as further development of the existing partnership arrangements. As with the proposed contribution to the costs of central services, we propose that costs should be based on the sizes of the schools.

H. Not joining, or leaving, the proposed federation

74. *If one of the schools decides not to join the federation, will that prevent the other two schools from doing so?*

75. *Post-Consultation Decision Making: What steps will you take if some schools decide not to proceed with the federation? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

In these circumstances, the federation would not proceed.

Both Governing Bodies have reviewed the options for their schools in light of uncertain local and national policy on the structure of schools and their funding. Neither Governing Body believes that continuing on the current basis is a realistic long-term option.

It remains government policy that all schools should become academies by 2030, though it is not clear how firmly that policy will be pursued for schools that are Good or Outstanding or whether any new government would continue with that policy. We believe that federation is the best way to control our own destiny as far as possible. It gives us the opportunity to:

- demonstrate the effectiveness of our curriculum and ways of working in improving pupil outcomes;
- maintain our own ethos and values;
- develop further as strong schools seeking continual improvement;
- work with like-minded partners; and
- benefit from shared savings through joint purchasing and efficiencies.

A federation of strong schools with a demonstrable record of improving outcomes would be in a stronger position than individual schools to negotiate whatever the future might bring.

76. *Can a school withdraw from a federation?*

Yes

77. *Defederation and School Closure: What procedures are in place for schools wishing to leave the federation or if a school is discontinued? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The process for a school to withdraw from a federation is set out in Part 6 of the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

The process to be followed if a federated school is discontinued is set out in Part 8 of the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

78. What happens when a school leaves a federation?

The local authority must appoint a temporary governing body for the school as set out in parts 3 and 4 of the New Schools Regulations 2007, which set out arrangements for the appointment of temporary governors.

The school’s budget, as delegated to it by the local authority, continues to belong to the school.

Any land held by the Federation Governing Body for the purposes of the school transfers to the new Governing Body of that school.

I. Federation vs Academy Trust

79. How is a federation different from an Academy Trust?

80. Is a Federation an Academy under a different name? What are the key differences between these models?

- A federation is an agreement between schools to work together, whereas an academy trust is a company, usually limited by guarantee.
- Schools in a federation continue to be maintained or foundation schools as at present; those in an academy trust do not.
- Schools in a federation continue to be funded as separate bodies by the local authority; those in an academy trust are funded directly by the Secretary of State for Education through the Trust Board.
- Schools in a federation are governed by a single Federation Governing Body that is responsible for all the schools and children in the federation. A Federation Governing Body is made up of elected parent and staff governors, the Executive Headteacher, a local authority governor and a number of Foundation and Co-opted governors appointed by the Governing Body itself.

Schools in an academy trust are governed by a Trust Board, which is appointed by the Members of the Trust. Typically, a Trust has between three and five Members who meet approximately annually: they are similar to the shareholders in a company. The Trust Board is similar to the Board of Directors in a company.

Table 1 – comparison of Academy Trust and Federation

	Academy Trust	Federation
Legal form	A company limited by guarantee with a number of academies.	A governing body incorporated by the decision of the governing bodies of the member schools, overseeing the separate schools.
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust members, usually three to five, who meet approximately once per year and are akin to shareholders. • A Trust Board appointed by the Trust members, which governs all schools in the Trust and is similar to a Board of Directors. • Local Governing Bodies for each academy, appointed by the Trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No equivalent • A Federation Governing Body made up of elected parents and staff, an LA governor, the Executive Headteacher and Foundation and Co-opted governors appointed by the Federation Governing Body itself. • School Development Bodies including parents and staff as well as the

		Executive Headteacher and Foundation and Co-opted governors.
Controlled by	Trust Members	Local authority
Funded by	A single allocation from the Secretary of State for Education to the Trust, which then allocates school budgets.	Local authority budget allocations direct to each school.
Accounting	Trust-level consolidated and audited company accounts covering all schools, submitted to the Education Funding Agency	Budget monitoring by the local authority for each individual school.
Ofsted inspection	Schools inspected individually but considered jointly so that performance at a member school reflects on the central management of the Trust.	Schools inspected individually.
Staff terms and conditions	Academy Trusts have powers to vary staff terms and conditions subject to consultation.	The Federation Governing Body would have powers to vary staff terms and conditions subject to consultation. Governors can foresee no circumstances in which it would wish to do so.

J. Future development of the proposed federation

81. *Are there plans to develop this partnership more?*

There is no proposal for the federation to take on more schools within any particular time frame. Rather, governors think that our schools might offer support to others and, after working together for a defined period of time (eg via school-to-school support), if the school and the Federation feel they are a good fit, they might join the federation after consultation.

82. *Could a school join the Federation at a later date?*

Yes.

K. General

83. *Are there any other partnerships between Federation school with other schools?*

Although not in formal partnership with other schools, Steeton and Sandy Lane collaborate with

- Marshfield Primary School from the Carlton Trust on ways to make more strategic use of data; and
- the Two Valleys Learning Collaborative (TVLC).

84. *How will a potential change in government impact the federation?*

85. *How will a potential change in government impact schools?*

This is very hard to predict. It depends on the policies they adopt, particularly in relation to the structure of education. If a new government wishes to press for all schools to become academies, having federated would not prevent this – although a successful federation might be in a stronger position to argue that our schools should not be required to join different academy trusts.

86. *What happens to positions like the Executive Headteacher and Senco roles?*

The Executive Headteacher would continue to provide strategic leadership for both schools, supported by the Heads of School as at present. The Executive Headteacher would also be responsible for the strategic leadership of the Federation as a whole. The breakdown of responsibilities between the Federation Governing Body, the School Development Bodies, the Executive Headteacher and the Heads of School is set out in Annex B to the Federation Background paper.

87. *Leadership Structure: Can you detail the proposed leadership structure and the rationale behind it? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The leadership structure would not change as a result of federation. The schools would continue to be led by a single Executive Headteacher and a Head of School in each school.

88. *Federation's Ethos and Values: How do you plan to integrate the ethos and values of the different schools? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

We don't. The schools would continue to have their individual visions and values that are appropriate to their pupils and the communities they serve. Their current visions and values are consistent with each other – that is one of the reasons that we think it makes sense to federate.

The Federation Governing Body may well wish to establish its own vision and values to guide the strategic development of the federation. If so, it would consult the schools and develop a vision and values statement that reflected their collective strategic vision, for example in terms of the federation becoming recognised as a leading thinker in education and a provider of services to other schools in Bradford.

89. *What will happen to the partnership?*

The partnership would become the federation.

90. *What legal and professional advice have you sought to guide the federation process? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The development of the proposal to federate has been supported by the governance professional who provides clerking services to the existing governing bodies. Advice has been taken from:

- Bradford Council:
 - Assistant Director for Schools
 - School Governor Service
 - Legal Department
 - Property, Commercial and Development Department
 - HR Department
- PACT HR – the HR advisory service used by both schools (a traded service from Bradford Council)
- The National Governors Association (NGA)

91. *Stakeholder Engagement: How will you engage and incorporate feedback from staff, parents, and local authorities? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

We have discussed the proposal with the local authority in detail. We have engaged parents and staff in informal discussions during the autumn 2023 term to help us to develop the proposal further. The outcome of these discussions is this Question and Answer document, which we hope parents and staff will find helpful when they decide how to respond to the formal consultation document.

92. *What are the potential threats to the success of the Federation?*

The Federation Working Group has identified the following threats (risks) to the success of the proposed Federation:

- The Secretary of State requires one or more of the schools to join an academy trust.
- Financial deficit at overall federation level:
 - Reduced funding (eg low pupil numbers)
 - Increased expenditure (eg unfunded SEND needs, unfunded pay awards)
 - Plans to generate income (through school-to-school support, SCITT etc) fail
- Cost savings through economies of scale, joint procurement fail to cover central costs.
- Poor pupil outcomes at one or more school
- One or more school receives an RI Ofsted judgement
- Irreconcilable differences between a school and the federation leading to a school withdrawing
- Loss of the Executive Headteacher *Including*: implications for the part time nature of the EHT post for recruitment
- One or more Head of School and/or School Development Body chooses to prioritise the interests of their own school above those of the federation as a whole, leading to the school leaving the federation.

These risks will be actively managed through a Federation Risk Register.

93. *Formal Consultation Process: How will the formal consultation process be managed to ensure legal compliance? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The consultation process has been designed in accordance with the requirements of the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 and the statutory guidance "Federations: guidance on the governance processes".

94. *Pre-Federation Documentation: How are you organising necessary documentation and decisions before federation? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The development of the proposal to federate and the pre-federation processes such as consultation are being overseen by a Federation Working Group made up of governors from both schools, supported by a governance professional. Meetings of the Federation Working Group regularly monitor a timeline and risk register and develop a Federation Discussion Document on which the consultation document and the answers in this Q and A are based. All documents are version controlled.

95. *Stakeholder Engagement: How do you plan to engage parents and staff effectively to maintain trust and support in the federation? (Question generated from ChatGPT using the government document to train the model)*

The main relationship for parents and staff would continue to be with their school, its Head of School and its School Development Body. We envisage that members of the Federation Governing Body would be available at school parents' evenings and other events. We would welcome comments from parents and staff on the level of direct engagement they would wish to have with the Federation Governing Body: for example, would they want federation governors to offer federation-wide or single-school meetings with parents and staff?

Federation Working Group
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