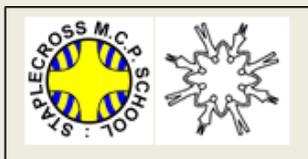


SALEHURST CHURCH OF ENGLAND & STAPLECROSS METHODIST CHURCH
PRIMARY SCHOOLS

COLLABORATION TO FEDERATION CONSULTATION



✝ 'Learning with God at our side' ✝

'Working together for the future of our village schools'

Federation Vision

Whilst maintaining the unique character of each school, our shared vision is for children to leave school well prepared for the challenges ahead in the wider world. Through the provision of an outstanding curriculum and with an inclusive approach in the context of strong Christian values, we expect our children to have:

- respect, tolerance and understanding of the values and beliefs of those around them
- good Literacy and Numeracy skills and, most importantly, an open approach to learning in order that they are well equipped to embrace the ever-changing technology of the 21st Century
- a creative approach to their learning; being able to apply the skills and knowledge they have absorbed from Reception to Year 6, but also having the ability to think divergently, with a problem solving approach to new areas of learning.

We recognise that this is a shared journey in partnership with parents and carers. We know that building strong emotional literacy from the first day that children begin school is an integral part of our role. Our job is to harness the innate curiosity and creativeness of our children, through meticulous but flexible curriculum design. Excellent teaching provides our pupils with opportunities to question, wonder and engage with the tremendous breadth of the world around them.

Consultation on Federation

From the Governing Boards of Salehurst Church of England Primary School &
Staplecross Methodist Church Primary School

For the attention of the:

Staff, parents, pupils and associates of Salehurst Church of England Primary School and Staplecross Methodist Church Primary School.

We are pleased to enclose a proposal for Salehurst Church of England Primary School and Staplecross Methodist Church Primary Schools to form a Federation under the leadership of Mrs Liz Avard.

The aims of this proposal are to:

- cement further the successful collaboration in order that both schools will continue to have access to a rich and innovative school experience which promotes excellence
- enable the schools to maintain the current focus of high standards in pupil welfare, behaviour, progress and achievement
- ensure the future sustainability of the two schools so that each community retains a village school at the centre of its life in a time of economic uncertainty.

We do hope that you can take the time not only to read the proposal but to let us have your comments. You will also see that two open meetings have been arranged for informal discussion and various contact details are given if you would like to speak to Mrs Avard or one of the governors individually. The Consultation Period will run from **Monday 8th January 2018 to Thursday 22nd February 2018**, by which date all comments will need to have been received please. Even if you are happy with the proposal, we would value your comments.

Further copies of the proposal are available from both school offices and can also be downloaded from the Salehurst CE Primary website or the Staplecross MCP website page.

Both school Governing Boards would like to thank you in advance for spending your time on this, and look forward to receiving your comments.

What is being proposed?

The proposal is to federate the schools from September 2018 and the Governors of both schools would welcome your views on whether we should go forward with this idea. This paper sets out what Federation would mean, how Federation is different from Collaboration and how you can make your views known.

What is Federation?

A Federation is a formal agreement between two or more schools to work in partnership to raise standards, find new ways of improving teaching and learning, and build on the strengths of each school.

In this proposed Federation, the schools would remain separate schools, each retaining their own budget and buildings. The schools would have shared leadership and management working in the best interests of both schools and their pupils. Federation is not an amalgamation of schools and does not involve the closure of either school.

Federation allows partner schools to work together and combine the strengths of both schools through sharing a Governing Board, Headteacher and other resources. This would give more opportunities to pupils in terms of the breadth of what is taught, having access to well-qualified specialist teachers and the extra-curricular and social opportunities open to them.

Federation helps small rural schools to remain sustainable on separate sites, opening up opportunities to share management, administration and Governing Board responsibility. Teaching staff can also support each other, developing and sharing curriculum expertise.

How is Federation different from Collaboration?

Salehurst CE Primary School and Staplecross MCP School have been working in collaboration since September 2016. We already share an Executive Headteacher and Inclusion Manager, and have seen benefits for pupils and staff.

In a Collaboration, the Governing Boards of the schools are separate. In a Federation, a formal partnership with one Governing Board oversees the governance at both schools. The schools remain separate entities within a Federation – it is only the governance that changes.

Sharing the leadership and management would mean a joint approach to teaching and learning, drawing on the best ideas from each school in developing wider curriculum opportunities for all pupils.

How would the Federation be organised?

The Federation will secure the leadership and retain valued staff for the future. Recruitment of staff, including Headteachers, to small schools can be very difficult. Federation will make the schools more attractive for potential members of staff and offer existing staff improved opportunities for professional career development.

The two schools would still be separate schools legally and would keep their present uniqueness. Each school would retain its ethos and identity as has already been clearly demonstrated.

Admissions to each school would be made separately. East Sussex County Council would continue to be responsible for admissions to both schools.

Each school would continue to receive an individual budget.

A new single Federation Governing Board would be created, which, legally must contain the following categories of governors (either by appointment or election):

- Two elected parent governors, one from each school, elected by parents
- One staff governor – elected by staff in both schools
- One governor nominated by the Local Authority
- Four Foundation governors
- The Executive Headteacher would be a governor
- Up to 7 other governors would be co-opted

Co-opted governors can include parents of pupils at the schools, staff of the schools and other members of the community.

The total number of governors would be 14-16.

It is important that both schools and their communities are represented, and the ability to co-opt governors ensures that fair representation and the required mix of skills are possible. It is likely that many existing governors would express an interest in being put forward for these posts.

Staff would continue to be employed by East Sussex County Council and would be under the direction of the Executive Headteacher. Existing staff would remain on their current contracts. Newly appointed staff would be employed by the Federation.

Both Governing Boards have given considerable thought to this proposal before asking the children, parents, staff and the community for their views.

Next Steps

At the end of the consultation period, the responses will be reviewed by both Governing Boards. After that, each Governing Board will meet individually to decide whether to proceed to Federation by a simple majority vote.

An announcement will be made about the decision, which will be taken during the week beginning 12th March 2018.

How You Can Find Out More

Two meetings will be held at each school, once during the school day and once in the evening, as follows:

- **Staplecross on Monday 15th January 2018 at 3pm & 6pm**
- **Salehurst on Wednesday 17th January 2018 at 3pm & 6pm**

These meetings are for parents/ carers of pupils attending either of the schools and for any member of the community who would like to learn more. If you would like to submit a written question to be covered at one of these meetings, please do so via the school office before **Friday 12th January at 9am**.

We have purposely chosen two dates and times to give more opportunity for as many parents/carers as possible to attend but again, we would stress that no matter which school your child attends, or the community you belong to, you are invited to attend a meeting at either school.

The Executive Headteacher and members of the Governing Boards will be present during these meetings to help answer any queries you may have.

How to Make Your Views Known

You may attend the meetings. A note will be taken of the issues raised at the meetings and will be considered as part of the consultation response by the Governing Boards, but we would also appreciate written responses please.

During the consultation period you can make your views known at one of the meetings, or in writing to either school office, at the following addresses:

Salehurst CEP School
George Hill
Robertsbridge
East Sussex
TN32 5BU

Staplecross MCP School
Bodiam Road
Staplecross
Robertsbridge
TN32 5QD

OR

By email to either Chair of the Governor Boards:

Salehurst – Gill Atkinson – gatkinson@salehurst.e-sussex.sch.uk

Staplecross – Nicola Stephenson – nstephenson@staplecross.e-sussex.sch.uk

The closing date for responses is 3:30pm Thursday 22nd February 2018

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Federation?

A Federation is a formal arrangement between two or more schools which includes joint governance. The Governing Boards are consulting on moving to a Federation.

This is different from an amalgamation, which is a permanent merging of two or more schools, usually by the formal closure of one or more of them.

What is the background to this proposal?

The schools are already collaborating and sharing an Executive Headteacher.

Why are the schools federating?

Both schools are successful, viable schools in their own right. The Governing Boards feel that to federate now is in the best interests of pupils currently at the schools and those that will attend in the future.

Federation would enhance the existing collaborative working, secure better and wider opportunities and would contribute to the long-term viability of the schools. There are particular benefits in Federation for small schools, in terms of educational and social experiences for pupils and professional development for staff.

What would the leadership arrangements be?

Mrs Avard would remain Executive Headteacher at both Salehurst CE Primary and Staplecross MCP schools. Structures would be reviewed as opportunities arise, as they normally would be in any school.

Would pupils share facilities?

Whilst it is expected that there would be some joint activities on an irregular basis for pupils, it is not expected that pupils would move between the schools on a regular basis.

Would children at each school keep their present uniform?

Yes

How would existing staff be affected?

For both schools, the employer is East Sussex County Council (ESCC). Staff would continue to be employed by ESCC and would be under the leadership of the Executive Headteacher. The Federation would have a single Governing Board and would continue to work closely with ESCC.

How would Federation affect the financial position of the schools?

The budget for each school will remain completely separate. However, the Federation Governing Board would be able to look at ways of giving value for money through joint purchasing, service provision or future cross-federation working.

Is the real reason for this to save money?

Both schools would continue to receive the same budget allocation whether they are in a Federation or not, so there is no potential for the Local Authority to save money.

Would money from the budget be used to subsidise the other school?

No. Each school would continue to receive an individual budget. Although these budgets can be pooled, a clear audit trail is required. There is no intention at this time to pool budgets.

Would our school lose its identity, ethos and traditions?

No. Federation is beneficial for schools because it supports the continuing resilience of separate institutions, but with benefits often seen in larger schools.

Salehurst School would remain a Church of England School and Staplecross would remain a Methodist Controlled School and, therefore, the ethos and vision of both schools would continue to be distinct and unique. Each school would remain a part of its own community, but with a close relationship between the schools that would continue to benefit all pupils.

What would the Governance arrangements be? Would there be representation from each school on the Governing Board?

In a Federation, a single Governing Board is responsible for the governance of both schools. The new Governing Board would be drawn from both the schools and the wider communities.

What would happen to admissions?

ESCC will remain as the Admissions Authority and the admissions arrangements for the schools will remain separate.

What about school inspections?

The schools will continue to be inspected as separate schools by Ofsted. Statutory Church Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) will be also be undertaken individually.

Is it possible for new members to join the Federation after it has been formed?

Yes, it is possible for other schools to seek admission into the Federation.

Can a Federation be removed or dissolved?

It is possible to dissolve a Federation through a statutory process.

Have Governors already decided to federate?

No. The schools are already working together on a collaborative basis, but the Governing Boards are still consulting on moving to a formal Federation with a single Governing Board. They will consider consultation responses before taking a vote and making a decision about Federation.

Will the Executive Headteacher be less 'visible' following Federation?

Federation brings the Governing Boards together and will not change the way in which the schools run on a day to day basis. Structures are already in place for days when the Executive Headteacher is not working on site.

What benefits to collaboration have there already been and what further benefits would federation bring?

There have been a number of benefits to collaboration to date, all of which have been communicated via school newsletters, for example:

- The opportunity to appoint high calibre staff who work across both schools
- Increased opportunity for colleagues to work in collaboration on curricular and extra-curricular activities
- There have been a series of joint staff meetings and training events for both teachers and teaching assistants, for example, to enhance the teaching of spellings and phonics, whilst also introducing new strategies such as mindfulness
- Each term teachers have joined together to moderate the assessment of writing
- Both schools have adopted the White Rose Hub for maths which has been expertly overseen and supported by Mrs Meeds
- Mrs Nice has been developing Special Educational Needs and Disability provision as Inclusion Manager across both schools
- Teachers have joined together in their respective year groups to plan themes such as Victorians, Local History and Volcanoes. They have also shared talks e.g. Shackleton and resources such as reading texts in literacy and shared artefacts
- There have been shared activity days that all children have benefitted from.

Federation would enable governors to play a more strategic part in such developments continuing for the benefit of each and every pupil. Tasks/protocols that currently need to be replicated by both Governing Boards need only be considered once, leaving valuable time to analyse, question and provide critical friendship to the schools' leaders.