

## Federation Case Studies

Many schools across the UK have become part of a Federated group of schools. The benefits have enabled schools to share resources and specialities whilst keeping their own identity. The strategic and financial advantages of a Federation have provided schools with different models of leadership allowing schools to run more efficiently. The varied case studies prove how schools from all backgrounds have adapted to this new approach to school management.

### **Winsford High Schools Federation:**

Woodford Lodge High School & Verdin High School.

Established in January 2008, the Federation is lead and managed by a Principal and a single governing body of 21 Governors. Each school has a site headteacher and senior managers are appointed to the 'Federation' but most are involved in managing aspects of provision on only one of the two sites. Woodford Lodge has been designated as a 'National Challenge' school and receives additional resources and is supported and monitored by a National Challenge Adviser. Verdin High has been a specialist technology college since 2003 and has also gained Investor in People status. The pupils attending both schools come from an average range of social and economic circumstances, although there are some pockets with greater disadvantages. The Federation has worked well and is a caring, innovative centre of community learning delivering sustainable, high quality and inclusive education.

**Leathersellers' Prendergast Federation of Schools:** Prendergast Hilly Fields College and Prendergast Ladywell Fields College (New school Prendergast Vale College to join 2010).

In September 2008, the Leathersellers' Company formed the Leathersellers'

Federation of Schools. The Federation is lead by an executive headteacher with an associate headteacher looking after the day to day running of the schools. Prendergast Hilly Fields College is a top-performing girls' school with a specialism in languages and music. The newly built Prendergast Ladywell Fields College, for both boys and girls, is a specialist arts college. The schools share their specialist expertise and good practices and provide pupils with wider access to the curriculum. The schools will maintain their separate communities and identities on the two sites. The school uniforms will be similar, but not identical – both will have the same crest on the blazer badge. Many Lewisham schools work in Federations and almost every secondary school involved has been judged outstanding or good in the latest Ofsted inspections.

### **Chulmleigh Community School**

**Federation:** Chulmleigh Community College and Chulmleigh Primary. Established in September 2008, the Federation brings together Chulmleigh Primary School with Chulmleigh Community College. The Federation wanted a small governing body and obtained advice from the DCSF which confirmed they could have a governing body of 12. The schools carried out extensive consultation before establishing the Federation. This ensured that staff, pupils, parents and governors had a good understanding of the vision for federation and the process that would take place. Each school has its own headteacher. Having a single governing body for the Federation ensures that all governors have a good overview of issues in both schools, and allows sharing of resources. The long-term goal for the Federation is to combine the two schools into one.

This leaflet was produced by the Asset Management Team, CYPD.

## Federation Guide for Parents

## What is a Federation?

A Federation means two or more schools share a single governing body, sometimes called a 'hard' Federation. Alternatively, schools might choose to have a formal collaboration sometimes known as a 'soft' federation. This is a formal arrangement where each school retains its individual governing body.

Federations can involve a mix of primary, secondary and special schools. Within the Federation each school retains its separate legal identity in respect of its budget, admissions and performance tables. Schools can agree to pool some or all the school budgets within the Federation as long as there is a clear audit trail.

Currently each school is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection. However, Ofsted is looking at developing co-ordinated joint inspections for federations, joint sixth forms, and where there is an executive head over two schools.

The decision to federate is taken by the governing body, not the local authority. The regulations allow for different categories of schools to federate, such as faith schools with community schools.

There is no blueprint for federation. Each Federation is tailored to the different schools and communities that are involved. A successful Federation will ensure that all children can access a broad learning curriculum and high quality teaching expertise.

## Reasons and benefits for a Federation

- Foundation schools may want to join a new or existing Federation if their foundation or trust runs other schools.
- Schools may wish to federate with an established and high performing school nearby whose experience they would benefit from. Pooling curriculum expertise, resources and materials can enable schools to deliver an enriched pupil offer.
- Working together through a single federated governing body enables schools to raise standards and maintain local provision. A shared governing body provides capacity in the senior management team and enables economies of scale and efficiencies.
- Through federation and other kinds of partnerships schools can widen the impact of our strongest school leaders, teachers and governors and widen opportunities for collaborative professional development and deliver better value for money.

There are however, circumstances where a Federation would be inappropriate as it brings too few longer term benefits for the school community. These include:

- Schools located far apart making it difficult for quick access between school sites.
- Where schools are too small or have falling school rolls making one of the schools in the Federation educationally unviable in three years.
- Where arrangements might be predatory, leading to resources from one school being used to subsidise another.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Is there evidence that partnerships improve standards?

According to the DCSF federation website, there are numerous examples of schools thriving under formal partnerships and research has highlighted a range of benefits for schools and staff. These include an enhanced curriculum, more opportunities for pupils and greater personalisation which can lead to school improvement, new training opportunities for staff and economic advantages.

### Can Higher Education Institutions be part of, or work with Federations?

They cannot be part of a Federation, though they can work with schools in other forms of partnership. They could also become involved with a Trust School and support schools in that way.

### Who employs the staff within a Federation?

Employing staff depends on the category of the particular school i.e. staff in federated community schools will be employed by the local authority and staff in federated Foundation or VA schools will be employed by the governing body of the Federation. New job descriptions can be drawn up with contracts for new posts and roles. The proposed staffing structure should define leadership roles across the Federation.

### What is an executive head? What are the models of leadership we can use?

Executive heads provide strategic leadership across two or more schools, supported by a head of school or deputy head in each individual school in the partnership. In some federations there might be a mixed model where the executive head is the headteacher of one or more schools but other schools in the partnership might also have their own headteacher.

Alternatively, each school can retain a separate headteacher, either permanently, or with a view to move towards a single head as opportunities arise.

### Will the Schools wishing to Federate need to be renamed?

No. Only the new single governing body will require a new Federation name.

### Will the approval of a Federation have a direct impact on my child's day to day lessons?

This will depend on the decisions made by the Federation regarding the curriculum offered to pupils. In some cases the Federation will allow a broader choice of subjects, with shared teaching expertise and 'mixed' classes across the Federation.

### As a parent, do I have to be consulted about this change?

Yes. It is for the individual existing governing bodies to produce a single consultation document with all the information you need to know about setting up the proposed Federation. There will be a feedback sheet for you to complete and return to your child's school if you wish to comment on the Federation. You will have at least six weeks to do this.

### For further information logon to website

[www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/federations/](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/federations/)  
See also the Wirral website [www.wirral-mbc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/SecondaryConsultation.asp](http://www.wirral-mbc.gov.uk/PrimaryPlaces/SecondaryConsultation.asp)