



Consultation on the proposal to federate Netley Abbey Infant School and Netley Abbey Junior School

Introduction

The governing bodies of Netley Abbey Infant and Junior Schools are looking at ways our schools can work more closely together, in order to achieve the best educational provision for children in the local community.

We are extremely interested in the idea of “federating” both schools and would like to hear your views on our proposal which is to create a two-school federation. This document explains what a federation is, what it might look like in practical terms, and highlights some of the issues raised to assist parents/guardians, members of staff and other interested parties in responding to the consultation process. The process is designed to help us find out what you think about the proposal, and we would very much like to hear your views.

The deadline for responding to this proposal is midday on Friday 2nd October 2020. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to both governing bodies at a meeting to be held during the week commencing Monday 5th October 2020, at which point we will decide whether or not to proceed with the proposal to federate.

What is a Federation?

The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 allows for two or more schools to join together under one governing body. The new governing body can then pool staff expertise and resources across the schools to find new ways of improving leadership, teaching and learning, the curriculum, and standards of achievement. Changes are brought about by modifying the leadership structure of both schools.

It is important to note that Hampshire already has over thirty successfully federated schools, and that, under a federation, each school retains its own individual identity and character.

Why are we looking at this proposal?

Since January 2020 the headteacher of the junior school, Mrs Nicholas-Bond, has been working in the infant school in the role of Interim Executive Headteacher, which has now been extended to the end of the autumn term, allowing for continuity of teaching and learning.

The current arrangement between the two schools, with Mrs Nicholas-Bond employed as acting executive headteacher at the infant school, has been working very well, with both schools seeing the benefits of closer liaison and greater stability. This recent experience has been very rewarding and encouraged the governors of both schools to consider the potential benefits of federation.

Governors of both schools are clear that this is not a proposal to create one school or dispose of any property. However, the governing bodies of both schools believe that federation will result in a strong leadership team leading to a much closer working relationship between the schools, more consistency in teaching and learning and improved outcomes for the children.

Why do we believe that the proposal will benefit the children?

We believe that this proposal will improve the quality of education for the children attending both schools in the following ways:

- ◆ by providing stability, consistency, and sustainability of leadership for both schools,
- ◆ through the appointment of a strong and enthusiastic executive headteacher to cover both schools,
- ◆ by aiding in the retention and future recruitment of high-quality staff, including greater opportunities for their continuing professional development,
- ◆ by providing the opportunity to develop an exciting curriculum across the two schools that meets the needs of children in the 21st century,
- ◆ by offering a shared vision throughout the children's primary education,
- ◆ through the development of closer working relationships between Infant and Junior School staff,
- ◆ by the children being more familiar with each school and happier during their passage through them, including the transition from Infant to Junior,
- ◆ by enhancing opportunities to pool resources, including the grounds, by sharing staff expertise and undertaking joint professional development,
- ◆ by utilising the strengths of each school to benefit all pupils,
- ◆ by working together to take both schools, which are currently graded by Ofsted as 'Good with Outstanding features', to 'Outstanding',
- ◆ by ensuring a shared approach to the tracking of pupil progress,
- ◆ by securing a positive ongoing relationship with pupils and their families,
- ◆ by further developing the effective use of ICT across the two schools,

We believe that by federating the two schools, we will be better able to respond to the individual needs of the children in our community and build an even stronger sense of community in Netley Abbey.

What specific changes are the governing bodies considering?

That from Tuesday 24th November 2020, the governing bodies of both schools will cease to exist, and a new federated governing body will be formed. The name of the new two school federation will be The Federation of Netley Abbey Infant and Junior Schools.

The number and type of governors allowed on a federated governing body are set by the government. We propose that the new governing body will be made up of 19 governors, comprising of:

- 1 staff governor
- 2 parent governors
- 1 Local Authority governor
- 1 headteacher governor
- 14 co-opted governors

This will involve electing two parent governors and a staff governor and appointing a local authority governor and co-opted governors onto the new board. The existing governors will be able to put themselves forward for these posts.

The leadership and management of both schools would be restructured so that an executive headteacher would have the responsibility of managing both schools. The two schools would remain open in separate buildings on the same site, retain separate budgets, and Hampshire County Council would remain as their admissions authority.

The Executive Headteacher would be responsible for the overall strategic direction and management of the two schools. The Executive Headteacher would be supported by two Heads of School working across both schools, as well as a director of teaching and learning at the Junior School and an assistant director of teaching and learning at the Infant School.

What would happen to the existing staff?

There will be no changes to the contracts of existing staff working in either school. Contracts are currently held with Hampshire County Council and this will remain the case. The retention of high-quality staff is a crucial element in the Local Authority's drive for improving standards and raising pupils' achievement.

We believe that the proposal will allow for enhanced professional development and more opportunities to share professional expertise.

New staff appointed after the formation of the federation will be contracted to work at either of the schools.

Is there anything else we are trying to achieve through this proposal?

We believe there will be advantages in helping each school to operate efficiently as well as allowing for greater financial flexibility and stability. There will be many opportunities to share resources.

The new executive headteacher will have a long-term view of each child's education and be tasked with ensuring that their progression from home or pre-school through reception and onwards to secondary education is managed smoothly, effectively and in their best interests.

Both schools need to continue to explore ways of serving the community and we hope that a federation will be better placed to ensure that both schools provide appropriate facilities, which meet the needs of the local community.

Will parents, staff and members of the community have the opportunity to discuss the proposals and ask questions?

Governors are planning to hold two 'drop-in' sessions where members of both governing bodies will be on-hand to provide more information and answer any questions you may have.

Any comments you make on the day will be reported back to the governing body of each school and will be fully considered before a decision is made.

Assuming schools are open and there are no coronavirus restrictions in place these sessions will be held on:

Tuesday 22nd September 2020

Netley Abbey Infant School
9.00am – 11.00am

Wednesday 23rd September 2020

Netley Abbey Junior School Hall
4.00pm – 6.00pm

If restrictions are in place and we are not able to hold drop-in sessions alternative arrangements will be made so we can answer any questions you may have. If this becomes necessary, the details of the arrangements will be shared with you nearer the time.

Parents and members of the local community will be welcome to come to a session at either school. There will be two separate sessions arranged for members of staff to attend and the dates and times of these sessions will be confirmed to staff as soon as possible.

The chair of governors for each school can be contacted via the schools' receptions should you have any questions or comments and are unable to attend either of the drop-in sessions. However, we have produced a list of FAQs that we hope will answer as many of your queries as possible.

How can my views be heard?

As well as attending either of the drop-in days or staff meetings, you may wish to complete the attached questionnaire and return it to either of the school offices by midday on Friday 2nd October 2020. Envelopes should be addressed for the attention of the chair of governors and be clearly marked "Federation".

The questionnaire or other feedback may also be sent by email to either school using the following addresses.

consultation-response@netleyabbey-inf.hants.sch.uk

consultation-response@netleyabbey-jun.hants.sch.uk

What happens next?

All responses to this consultation will be considered by the governing bodies of both schools before a decision is made. This will happen at a joint governing body meeting to be held during the week commencing 5th October 2020. The outcome of the meeting will then be communicated to parents, staff, and all other interested parties as quickly as possible.

**Consultation on the proposal to federate Netley Abbey Infant School and
Netley Abbey Junior School**

Response Form

The proposal is that Netley Abbey Infant School and Netley Abbey Junior School should enter a federation with one governing body with effect from 24 November 2020

Yes, I agree with the above proposal

No, I disagree with the above proposal

Comment: *(please continue overleaf if necessary)*

Which of the following best describes your connection with the school? *(Please tick one only, which should be your main interest)*

Parent

Member of teaching staff

Member of support staff

Member of the community

Other (please state)

Please return this slip to the school office **by midday on Friday 2nd October 2020** at the latest. Envelopes should be marked for the attention of the chair of governors and be clearly marked "Federation".