

# Consultation Proposal to Establish A GOVERNING BODY-LED FEDERATION



## Bishopston Primary School and Kneiston Primary School



# Peninsula Primary School Federation



## CONSULTATION PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A FEDERATION

CONTENTS PAGE	Page
What is a Federation?	1
Which schools will be part of the Federation?	2
Why are we Federating?	2
What are the key aspects of a Federation?	2
Background to these proposals	3
The vision for the Federation?	3
Benefits of a Federation	4
Admissions arrangements	5
Governance arrangements	6
Leadership arrangements	6
The Federation process	7
Have your say	8
Frequently Asked Questions	9



## WHAT IS A FEDERATION?

A Federation is a formal and legal agreement by which the schools involved work together in a formal partnership. There is a single Governing Body, which has strategic oversight of all schools within the Federation. It is not a merger; each school will retain its name, category, budget and staff.

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## WHICH SCHOOLS WILL BE PART OF THE FEDERATION?

The Governing Bodies of **Bishopston Primary School** and **Knelston Primary School** have met and agreed to consult on a proposal to federate. Swansea Council have provided guidance to the Governing Bodies for this governor-led proposal. This proposal is to establish a local authority maintained schools federation under the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 (Welsh Statutory Instrument 2014 No.1132) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 or as soon as possible following procedures.



## WHY ARE WE PROPOSING TO FEDERATE?

There have been numerous changes within education in recent years which have challenged school communities to think more creatively to ensure that we are well placed to maintain the best possible educational experience for all our children. Bishopston and Knelston Primary schools have been successfully working together closely within the same cluster for some time and the success of this collaboration has been monitored by the governing bodies of both schools. As part of our ongoing commitment to continuing school improvement, we are proposing to strengthen this collaboration and enhance the shared learning experiences for pupils across the two schools.

- Sharing best practice and whole school ethos and shared philosophy
- Better able to adapt to meet the needs of all pupils including those with multiple needs.
- A single set of policies and procedures.
- The school would only require one governing body.
- Greater opportunities for staff continuing professional development.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY ASPECTS OF A FEDERATION?

- The existing Governing Bodies of both schools would be dissolved, if the proposals to establish a federation proceed – following consultation. A new single Governing Body would replace the individual Governing Bodies and have responsibility for the strategic oversight of both schools in the federation.
- The two schools are not merging together. Each school would retain its name, category, budget and staff. If federated, moving forward the schools would be able to explore the advantages of sharing resources.
- Each school would continue to have its own Estyn inspection, although this can be coordinated to occur at the same time.
- Each school would benefit from the strength of the federation, yet still retains its own unique identity, its name, uniform etc.



## BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSALS

The two schools are situated in south Gower and have been successfully collaborating over a number of years as part of the Bishopston Comprehensive school cluster of partner schools.

Historically both schools have worked together closely sharing training days and collaborating on sharing good practice. Since the development of the new curriculum for Wales this partnership has become closer with the schools working collaboratively on developing aspects

of the curriculum, including having a shared vision. During this time both schools have seen the positive benefits of working together with standards improving and opportunities to share best practice across both schools.

This shared vision and ethos of the new curriculum is essential for both schools and is crucial to ensuring our learner experiences are key to achieving the four purposes. Our curricula are broad and balanced, emphasising inclusivity for all ages, aptitudes and abilities of learners. Both schools plan a range of indoor and outdoor provision to ensure progression for all children, whilst fulfilling the mandatory requirements and cross curricular skills of the curriculum.

## VISION FOR THE FEDERATION

In preparing for this process, the two schools have adopted a set of fundamental principles:

- Establish and maintain a strong and effective leadership team that would provide clear focus, direction and high standards throughout both schools.
- Improving and enhancing educational opportunities and raising standards for children, helping them to move forward into the future with confidence and success, through working closely together and building on our existing strengths.
- Develop knowledge, skills, and expertise across the whole staff, through the sharing of professional practice of all school staff who work at both schools.
- Continue the fundamental importance of the two primary schools within their local communities for the essential role and added value they provide beyond the provision of education.
- The opportunity to work together under one Governing Body & Headteacher, whilst retaining the capacity for each individual school to maintain its own voice and determine its own future.

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## BENEFITS FOR PUPILS

The focus of the Federation would be the pupils who attend both schools.

Some of the benefits would be to:

- Secure the consistency of good and outstanding teaching and learning across both schools.
- Provide a greater range of educational and extra-curricular opportunities.
- Improved social opportunities.
- Enhanced preparation for transition to Bishopston Secondary School.



## BENEFITS FOR STAFF

Members of staff are the most valuable asset of the Federation and some of the benefits would be to:

- Enable the sharing of expertise and practices between both schools.
- Share teaching resources, ideas and policies.
- Provide a greater range of professional development and training opportunities.
- Become a more attractive proposition with regards to the recruitment of new staff.



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## BENEFITS FOR THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- The Federation would ensure a higher profile for both schools within the local Gower community, across Swansea and in Wales.
- The Federation would develop to become a dynamic and innovative centre of excellence in teaching and learning, serving two neighbouring local school communities.
- The Federation would be well placed to respond to future challenges and opportunities.



## ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

The schools would continue to operate as separate schools with individual admission criteria as detailed in their admissions policies. Parents will continue to apply for places through *Swansea Council's* admissions system selecting their preferred choice of school. Each child will continue to be a registered pupil at their individual school within the federation.



# Peninsula Primary School Federation



## GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The current governance arrangements for each school are as follows:

Governor Category	Bishopston	Knelston
Parent	5	4
Community	4	3
Local Authority	4	3
Community Council	1	1
Head Teacher	1	1
Teaching Staff	2	1
Support Staff	1	1
Clerk	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>

We propose to adopt the Governance model as prescribed in the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014. The size and structure of the new governing body is as follows:

Parent Governors	4	2 from each school
Teacher Governors	2	1 from each school
Staff Governors	2	1 from each school
Local Authority Governors	4	Maximum allowed
Community Governors	4	Maximum allowed
Community Council Governor	1	Maximum allowed
Head Teacher	1	Maximum allowed
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	

## LEADERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Federated Governing Body would provide strategic leadership for both schools.

Should this proposal to federate go forward, the new Governing Body would need to agree the new leadership arrangements for the federation, which could include having a Shared Head Teacher leading both schools, supported by a Deputy Head. The Federated Governing Body would be responsible for the performance management of the Shared Head Teacher. The senior leadership team within both schools would then be agreed, developed and formalised by the Federated Governing Body and Shared Head Teacher in order to provide consistency and to support the Shared Head Teacher.





## THE FEDERATION PROCESS

In order to establish a Federation certain steps have to be followed:

### STEP 1: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL FOR FEDERATION

- An agreement between both Governing Bodies of the schools, together with the Local Authority that they wish to explore Federation options.
- The co-creation of a formal proposal with which to consult with all stakeholders.
- Informing staff and any key stakeholders at both schools of the process and progress
- Setting a potential date for the proposed Federation to become operational.

### STEP 2: PREPARING THE CONSULTATION PROPOSAL

- Governing Bodies finalise the proposal with the support of the Local Authority
- Proposal issued for consultation to all stakeholders including pupils, staff, parents, local community and wider community.
- Proposal needs to contain: - Reasons and benefits for federating - Size and composition of the single Governing Body - Senior Staff arrangements - Admissions - Deadline for comments - Date for potential federation to take place - Consultation arrangements.

### STEP 3: AFTER CONSULTATION CLOSES

- The Governing Bodies meet to consider the responses from the consultation process.
- Summary report for each Governing Body produced for consideration.

### STEP 4: DECISION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- The Governing Bodies meet to make the final decision on whether or not to proceed with the Federation.
- Stakeholders informed of the decision.
- If applicable, the Local Authority will work with the Governing Bodies in order to form and appoint the new single Governing Body
- Appointment of Head Teacher

### STEP 5: DEVELOPMENT

- The newly formed Governing Body meets to elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the Federation
- Any new Sub-Committee structures are considered and formed where required.
- Senior Leadership Teams confirmed.
- Review of systems, policies and practices takes place.

### STEP 6: MOVING FORWARD

- The embedding of any new polices, practices and systems.
- Implementation of monitoring and evaluation procedures.



# Peninsula Primary School Federation



## HAVE YOUR SAY

The governing bodies would like to hear the views of as many stakeholders as possible during the consultation process. The consultation feedback will help to inform a final decision about the proposed federation. If you would like to comment on these proposals, you can do so by completing the online response form. Please click on the link below or scan the QR code.

<https://forms.office.com/e/N44DZagfUk>



Or scan the QR code:

If you would like a paper copy of the document and the response form, please contact: [Hughes-MorganR5@Hwbcymru.net](mailto:Hughes-MorganR5@Hwbcymru.net) We look forward to receiving your views on this proposal.

The closing date for comments is **31st December 2023**.

### Briefing sessions for staff of each school will take place on:

Bishopston Primary School	Knelston Primary School
3.30pm Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	3.45pm Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2023

A joint meeting of the Governing Bodies of both schools will be held on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January to decide whether or not to proceed with the Federation.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FEDERATION

Extracts from Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales Circular number: 011/2014

### Q1. What is a federation?

Federation is used to describe a 'formal partnership' of schools (between two and six) and is a legal and formal agreement where schools share a single governing body. The schools in a federation can be a mixture or maintained nurseries, primary schools, special schools and secondary schools. However, faith based schools can only federate with other faith based schools. The decision to federate is made either by the governing bodies of the schools involved or by the Local Authority. Each school in a federation remains open in its community and keeps its own budget, character, school uniform, admissions arrangements and ethos and will have its own Estyn inspection. Federations can have a head teacher in every school and/or they can have a single head teacher for all of the schools in a federation – the decision is one for the governing body to make. There is no blueprint for federations. Each one will be tailored to suit the needs of the different schools and communities. A successful federation will allow the children to access a broader curriculum to enrich their experiences and provide a high quality education to help raise their attainment.



### Q2. Why has federation become an option for your school?

There are many reasons why schools of all sizes and type wish to federate or the LA wishes to federate them. Sharing resources such as budgets, teachers and teaching expertise, school leadership and facilities and learning from one another and sharing good practice are just some of the triggers for federation. For some schools, working more closely in a federation can mean sharing heavy workloads amongst the staff whilst allowing schools to continue to provide a wide curriculum that offers real choices and options for pupils, that smaller schools cannot provide with fewer staff. Federation can also offer career opportunities for staff not normally available to them, for example working in another school in the federation. This can help aid the recruitment of new highly qualified teachers to the school. Some schools also face difficulties recruiting good head teachers and federation allows schools to adopt more creative solutions to leadership appointments.

### Q3. What advantages does federation offer the pupils?

Federation can bring many benefits but these will vary depending on the focus and purpose of the federation. Generally, though federation should offer opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to meet and work as part of a larger group. Other benefits include pupils being able to access specialist teaching, more sustained and structured social and educational opportunities, team sports, wider curriculum expertise and a wider choice of after curricular or out of school activities and clubs.

# Peninsula Primary School Federation



## Q4. How is federation going to work?

Federations will work in different ways. How a federation is structured and operates will be decided by the governing body and head teachers or single head teacher. These people are best placed to ensure the federation workings and arrangements match the needs of all the schools involved. Every federation should have a detailed action plan and agreed staffing structure which provides the framework for more detailed planning and the day to day organisation and management of the schools.

## Q5. Will governors or the Local Authority listen to the views of the parents when they consult on federation proposals?

Governors and LAs are required in law to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposals to federate. The stakeholders are parents, staff, unions, pupils and other partners such as diocesan authorities. Views can be sought in a number of different ways which might include written responses, questionnaires, information surgeries and formal meetings. Once all the views are submitted to the governing body they must consider the points raised and make their decision based on a majority of votes taken at a governing body meeting. Where a Local Authority is establishing a

federation it will consider the responses received and make a decision.

## Q6. Is federation about financial savings?

No. It is about schools pooling resources to improve performance, raise standards of attainment and achieving more for the children whether that is providing access to opportunities and facilities children would not normally be able to access, or jointly funding, for example, a drama teacher or support teachers.



## Q7. Does federation mean that our school will receive less money from the Local Authority?

No. The way in which an individual school's budget is calculated is not affected by federation - each school in the federation should continue to receive its own budget based on the number of registered pupils at the school plus any other factors. However, schools will be able to pool or share their budgets. For example, if the schools wished to employ a drama teacher or to purchase or upgrade sports equipment, they would each contribute a share of the costs from their budget. The governing body of a federation should be in a position to take strategic decisions on the deployment of their resources including budgets, staff and facilities. Each school will need to keep a clear audit trail and accounts for their budget spend.

## Q8. What are the financial benefits of federation?

# Peninsula Primary School Federation



Federations can increase capacity within the schools to achieve better value for money improving standards and provision. Some of the benefits include: a more cost effective way of increasing the opportunity for specialist teaching (if required); curriculum entitlement; extended after-school curricular activities; out of hours clubs sharing the costs of purchasing goods and facilities etc.; purchasing to achieve economies of scale and avoiding duplication; saving on curriculum; strategic planning and administrative time; being able to pool funding to award higher salaries and recruit more experienced staff.

## **Q9. Will my school lose its identity within a Federation?**

Schools within a federation will not lose their individual identity though they will share a single governing body. The schools retain their separate legal status and have their own budget allocations and will be subject to

their own Estyn

Inspection. The schools will also remain in their community and retain their own character, name, ethos and school uniform. Whilst each school receives and must account for its own separate budget, there is scope, through the single governing body, to use pooled budgets across the schools in the federation. Federation works on the basis that all schools have their



own particular strengths and advantages, whether it is facilities, staff or resources.

## **Q10. What are the differences between school federation and school mergers?**

If two schools merge they may remain open in their community but they become one multiple site school with a single name, governing body, head teacher, ethos, budget, character and school uniform. In a merger, there would only be one head teacher and it is possible there would be redundancies or staff would have to re-apply for posts in the new single school. In a multi-site school the LA could also close one of the school sites and transfer the pupils to the other sites without the need to go through statutory proposals. In a federation, the schools remain open in their communities but they also retain their own individuality, name, ethos, character budget and school uniform. Staff would also keep their jobs and may have wider opportunities for further professional development by working across the schools in the federation. Head teachers may also remain in post although some federations may only have a single head teacher. Schools in a federation can be closed as part of school organisation proposals but the Local Authority would have to apply the statutory proposals process to do this.

# Peninsula Primary School Federation



## Q11. What are the Inspection arrangements for Federated Schools?

Estyn's document 'When will the next school inspection take place?' sets out guidance on inspecting federated schools. The Education (School Inspection) (Wales) Regulations 2006 require Estyn to inspect maintained schools every six years and produce an individual report for each school. This would also apply to schools in the federation. Estyn cannot move a school inspection to later than six years but may carry out inspections in a way that the schools in a federation are

inspected in the same term, especially where the schools have the same head teacher. Estyn would also consider requests from a governing body or Local Authority to inspect schools in the same term. Estyn would also try to ensure that the inspection teams for the schools in a federation have overlapping membership.

## Q12. What happens to staff within a federation? Will their Conditions of Service change?

In a federation, all staff would be employed on the same conditions of service as now and by the same employer. Whoever is the employer of staff will continue to be the employer under the contract of employment. For community, voluntary controlled, community special schools and maintained nursery schools, the Local Authority is the employer under the contract of employment although the governing body of the federation retains responsibility for certain staffing functions i.e. staff grievance, capability, redundancy, staff disciplinary and dismissal matters and appointments. The governing body is the employer under the contract of employment for staff in voluntary aided and foundation schools. Combined strategic and financial planning should mean that jobs can be better protected in any combined period of contraction and that specialist staff can be used to best effect, recognising that all support and teaching staff have specialist skills and knowledge. Staff would be able to learn from each other within a coherent approach to deliver professional learning communities that use data and the National Model to focus on school improvements that link to national priorities and their school development plans. The governing body of a federation would also be able to appoint new staff to work within all schools in the federation. This could include the appointment of a single head teacher with responsibility for all the schools in the federation, or the appointment of a Bursar or person with financial management skills and/or business management skills to oversee the non-teaching aspects of the federation business.



# Peninsula Primary School Federation



## **Q13. Are parent governors elected by the parents from their school only or from parents across all schools in the federation?**

The proposal for federation should state the number of parent governors from each school which in law is that every school must have at least one parent governor elected by the parents (or appointed by the governing body if no parent stands for election), at that school but no more than two parent governors per school. It is reasonable therefore that once a decision has been made as to how many parent governors each school would have, the parents of only that school should vote in the parent governor elections. If the decision is that a school should have two parent governors each, and no parents in a particular school stand for election or only one parent stands for election, the federated governing body may appoint parent governors in accordance with Schedule 2 of the 2014 Federation Regulations. This means that the governing body could appoint a parent of a registered pupil at the school; or the parent of a registered pupil from another school in the federation; or the parent of a child of compulsory school age (or under compulsory school age for a nursery school).



## **Q14. Do the teachers and children move from school to school?**

There may be some opportunities for school staff to move between sites dependant on their contracts. There also may be opportunities for the children from both schools to work together on projects and through special events, which could include use of technology, facilities (such as sports equipment and science laboratories) and video conferencing.

## **Q15. Can a Federation be time-limited?**

A federation should be seen as a long term commitment. The Local Authority or respective governing bodies will have considered in depth the benefits and risks of establishing a federation in relation to the impact on children and young people's achievements. A federation would put in place strategic and operational plans to insure the sustainability and development of the schools. That will require medium to long term planning. Nonetheless, the 2014 Federation Regulations do allow individual schools to leave a federation and for a federation to be dissolved.