

The Federation of Amberley C of E Primary School and Coldwaltham St James C of E Primary School

The governing boards of the two schools agree to federate based on the following proposals.

We will jointly discuss any responses to these proposals and after full consideration of the responses will make a final decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposals as published.

The Proposals

Amberley and Coldwaltham C of E Primary Schools currently operate as a collaboration with two separate governing bodies sharing one Headteacher.

Additionally Amberley School is part of the STARS/Chanctonbury Locality group of schools whilst St James' School is part of the Rother Valley Locality group. The current situation imposes an increased burden on our Headteacher who currently reports to two Governing Bodies and works with two Locality groups. In parallel with this proposal Amberley School is planning to transfer away from the STARS/Chanctonbury Locality group and work solely with the Rother Valley Locality group of schools.

The proposal to move to a Federation has a number of key aims:

- To ensure that we provide the very best education to each and every child in our care, in a safe and welcoming environment
- To share resources and make use of staff with particular skills to the benefit of both schools
- To continue raising standards for all pupils including those who are disadvantaged, and those with Special Educational Needs
- To secure long-term financial sustainability for both schools taking into account funding challenges and fluctuating pupil numbers.
- To work in partnership with all stakeholders and in particular the local communities and the Diocese
- To protect the identity of each school and to cement their position within the local community

Having a formal legal identity as a Federation would not change the individual identity and character of the schools and aspects such as school uniform; school identity; parent organisations; and sports teams etc. would remain the same.

The main change would be the new governance and leadership arrangements – there would be one joint governing body for both schools.

The funding of schools is primarily based on pupil numbers and as these numbers would not be affected by Federating, the school budgets would remain the same. However, economic factors have been an important factor in prompting both governing bodies to consider new ways of working and protecting our schools in the light of the recent government funding announcements for schools, and in particular rural schools.

The two schools already share a Headteacher and there would be no immediate plans to change the staffing structure in either school as a result of Federation. Over time there may be more sharing of staff as roles develop, become vacant, or new ones are created.

Each school will continue to receive, and must account for, its own separate budget, but there is considerable scope, through a single governing body, to share resources across the schools in a Federation.

We believe that by forming a Federation, we can reduce costs by adopting measures such as joint purchasing and better use of IT.

Both schools pride themselves on their caring small school approach where children are known and valued as individuals - this is fundamental to our ideals and would continue if the Federation were to go ahead.

Our staff already share expertise and regularly have staff meetings together. We will encourage this to continue where it is beneficial and meets school improvement priorities. However, this is not something which would be imposed; decisions would be based upon consultation and negotiation. In the future, new staff would be appointed to the Federation, which would make them available to work at both sites.

We want to ensure that there is a positive partnership from the outset so that there is shared vision and commitment to children and families across both schools and that resources are shared fairly.

The proposed size for the Governing body is 12 governors. This would be composed of two parent governors, two staff governors, the Headteacher, one LA governor, two foundation governors and four co-opted governors.

The admissions authority would remain as West Sussex County Council.

The proposed date for Federation is 23 April 2019.

Responding to the proposals

You are welcome to make written representations regarding these proposals. Please send your comments by post to Ray Jackson at Amberley CofE Primary School, School Road, Amberley, West Sussex, BN18 9NB, or email to rjackson2@amberley.w-sussex.sch.uk or to Mary Wratten at Coldwaltham St James CofE Primary School, Church Lane, Coldwaltham, West Sussex, RH20 1LW or email to MWratten@coldwalthamschool.com.

The deadline for written representations is: 31st January 2019.

Ray Jackson,
Chair of Governors,
Amberley CofE Primary School

Mary Wratten,
Chair of Governors,
Coldwaltham St. James'
CofE Primary School