



Kilgarth
School
Wirral



FORMAL PROPOSAL CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Governors of Kilgarth School and Gilbrook School propose to form a federation of the two schools with effect from 1st September 2017

CONSULTATION PERIOD: Monday 27th March until midday on Friday 5th May.

Consultation Circulation List:

- Parents and Carers of children registered at Kilgarth and Gilbrook Schools
 - All Staff at both schools and Trade Unions
 - The Governors and Clerks to Governor of both schools
 - Julia Hassall, Director of Children's Services Wirral Borough Council
 - Secretary of State for Education
 - Regional Schools Commissioner
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This formal proposal was published on 27th March. It follows consideration of the proposal by both Governing Bodies who have independently agreed to publish at meetings held on 13th and 15th March 2017.

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Brief Summary of the Consultation Paper

This section provides a brief overview of the Formal Consultation Document regarding the proposal being considered by Governors, for Kilgarth and Gilbrook Schools to share a Principal and Governing Board from September 2017.

It contains the main points of the proposal, but you are encouraged to read the full Consultation Document which explains in detail what is being proposed.

What is Federation?

Federation is the formal term used in certain situations where two or more schools work more closely together to achieve the best for their pupils.

So what would be different if Kilgarth and Gilbrook schools federated?

In essence the main difference would be that both schools would have one shared Principal, who would be Steven Baker. The two existing Boards of Governors would be merged to provide one Governing Body containing representatives from both schools.

Each school would retain its own identity.

Each school would have its own budget and would be inspected separately by OFSTED. Admission arrangements would remain the same and children would be taught in their own school with the opportunity for some joint activities that would benefit all children.

Is it possible to undo a Federation?

It would be intended that a Federation between Kilgarth and Gilbrook would be permanent, thus bringing certainty and commitment to both schools.

What would be the benefits of Federation?

It would enable both schools to share their resources, e.g. teaching expertise and facilities, which will help improve the performance of both schools. It would enable more joint activities between pupils and more cost effective joint training for staff.

It also provides more professional development opportunities for staff. Equally important, it would offer both schools a stronger foundation to embrace the challenges that lie ahead as national policy for education continues to change.

What happens next?

We want to hear your thoughts and views on the proposed Federation. At the end of the document a confidential Response Form is provided to share your thoughts. **We really want and need to know what you think, so please share your thoughts with us.**

Introduction

One of the three key roles for all school Governing Bodies is to set the strategic direction for the schools they have responsibility for.

A period of consultation has been agreed for stakeholders to comment on this proposal.

The current national drive to create a self-improving school system is based on the premise that clusters of schools will work with, learn from and support one another to develop localised solutions to the challenges they might face. This document outlines the proposal for Kilgarth School and Gilbrook School to join together under a Federation.

Current Educational Climate

The current educational climate is best characterised as experiencing:

- an enforced scaling back of the traditional middle tier of our education system – the local authority – which means schools are seeking local leadership solutions and focusing more on self-improvement.
- increased accountability leading to pressure on Governing boards to provide effective support and challenge, in order to maintain and improve education standards while ensuring support for senior leaders in dealing with finance, business and estate issues.
- increasing numbers of school groups as the academy programme continues to expand.
- schools reflecting on how to deal with real cuts in funding and rising costs while delivering improving outcomes for children and young people.
- a growing national problem of recruitment of quality leaders and staff to small schools.

What is Federation?

Under the Education Act of 2002, schools and local authorities can propose that between two and five schools join together to create a Federation. A Federation is a group of two or more schools with a single Governing Body. It is a way of bringing schools closer together. The schools then combine their Governing Bodies into just one Governing Body for the Federation. This allows the federating schools to pool resources.

'The creation and membership of a Federation is not just about structural change. It is also about a different mindset where the Governors and school leaders

share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the Federation, as opposed to just a single school, through a school-led system of raising standards and driving improvement' (NCTL. The Governance of Federations, 2014)

Nationally a common reason for federation has been the need for a school to work with a good/outstanding school in order to raise standards. This is not the case with this proposed federation of two OFSTED rated outstanding schools.

What stays the same?

- Each school will keep its own identity and name. It is not a merger of schools.
- Children will continue to be taught in their own school.
- Each school will continue to receive its own budget. The new Governing Body will determine how this can be most effectively used within each school.
- Each school will be inspected separately by OFSTED.
- Admission arrangements will not change.
- Existing members of staff will remain employed by their current schools

What will change?

- The Federation will need to have a name as it is a separate legally constituted corporate body.
- The two separate Governing Bodies will be dissolved and replaced by a single, newly appointed Governing Body with responsibility for both schools. Further details of the composition of the Governing Body are set out later in this document.
- There will be a single Principal. It is proposed that Steven Baker is appointed.

Is the decision to Federate irreversible?

It is possible for schools to withdraw from a Federation and Governing Bodies must follow a prescribed process, set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

Why are the Governing Bodies considering Federation?

Both schools have a shared vision to achieve educational excellence through working more closely together. Each Governing Body is committed to improving opportunities and services for every child through the provision of best value. They share an ambition to drive up standards and be a sustainable, high performing local presence. They also hold a shared belief in the importance of continually developing and retaining high quality staff.

Through collaboration, both schools have experienced some of the benefits that joint working can bring for the pupils. National Studies by the NCTL (National College for Teaching and Leadership), the NGA (National Governors

Association), and OFSTED Inspections conducted over the last 5 years show these benefits can be extended and improved by federating.

Federation brings a better opportunity to secure strong, strategic leadership. Bringing both schools under one leadership team would ensure that the best practice from each school can be applied to both.

There is now a growing body of evidence nationally that Federations are successful and have led to improved outcomes for children and better professional opportunities for staff.

Some of the Benefits of Federation

For Pupils:

- They will benefit from a greater variety of teaching expertise, resources, facilities and additional specialist provision which will be shared across both schools.
- Their own school will continue, but with access to a larger range of opportunities.
- They will have increased opportunities to work with pupils from other schools.
- Confidence that strong and proven successful leadership of the schools is being utilised and strengthened for the benefit of both schools and their communities.
- In times of curriculum/school change, a strong Federation will be much better placed to manage those changes thus enabling pupils to receive maximum benefit.
- Advantages of pupils benefitting from enhanced primary/secondary transition.

For Staff:

- Increased opportunities to share best practice.
- Develop mutual support across schools.
- An enhanced Continued Professional Development (CPD) programme.
- Wider career opportunities.
- Access to a greater range of resources.

Federation Wide:

- A sustainable model with schools remaining at the heart of their community.
- Improved opportunities for the recruitment and retention of outstanding staff; maintaining and developing high quality teaching and learning.
- The development of a collaborative culture supported by Federation leadership to manage and sustain future change.

Admissions

Admissions to each school will continue to be under the current arrangements. Each school will continue to manage in-year admissions.

Governance

<p>After federating there will be a single Governing Body and a single set of committees covering both schools. Governing Bodies are expected to focus on providing strategic leadership, holding the Principal to account, overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure the school's money is well spent.</p> <p>This is a demanding task for which all Governors need to have, or develop, relevant and appropriate skills.</p>	<p>All potential Governors of the new single body will complete a skills audit. Governors will be appointed on the basis they have the skills to contribute to effective governance and the success of the schools.</p> <p>It is proposed that the new Governing Body is constituted with 15 Governors. This should allow us to ensure a balance of representation from both communities.</p>
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Table 2. Constitution of the Governing Body

Category of Governor	Who appoints them?	Number
Principal	Ex Officio	1
Head of School	Ex Officio	2
Elected Parent Governor	Elected by all parents/carers of children on roll at the schools	4
Staff Governor	Elected by all the staff employed at the schools (one from each school)	2
Local Authority Governor	Proposed by Wirral Council	3
Co-opted Governor	Appointed by Governing Body according to skills	3
Associate Governor	Appointed by Governing Body according to skills	As appropriate

Leadership and Staff

We propose to appoint Steven Baker the current Executive Headteacher at both schools as Principal of the Federation. Staff will remain working within the school to which they are appointed, though it may be possible for staff to work across either school if this is deemed beneficial to them and the pupils. Newly appointed staff (including those promoted to jobs from within) will be offered contracts to the Federation, rather than to one school, so that they can be deployed in both or either school. Staff teams at both schools have been made aware of these proposals and no compulsory redundancies are required. It is our intention that there will continue to be a Head of School (Mr Simpson at Kilgarth and Mrs Brown at Gilbrook) at each school site.

What Next?

How to Respond to the Consultation

The Governing Bodies of both schools would really like to hear your views. If you have any comments please let the Governing Bodies know by the deadline, which is midday on May 5th.

You can share your comments by:

Completing the attached response form or writing a letter. In both cases please EITHER send your reply to:

Ms Sally-Anne Watkiss

Chair of IEB
Gilbrook School
Glebe Hey Road
Woodchurch
CH49 8HE

Mrs Sandra Simmons

Chair of Governors
Kilgarth School
Cavendish Street
Birkenhead
CH41 8BA

Please mark your envelope: FEDERATION RESPONSE to the School Administrator.

You can also email comments if you wish to the Clerk of Governors:

clerktogovernors@kilgarth.wirral.sch.uk

**All responses will be considered by the Governing Bodies meeting together.
They will then have separate meetings to decide whether to proceed or not.
We aim to reach a decision in May 2017.**

A selection of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Will the name of the schools change?

No. Each school will keep its own name but there will be a separate overarching name for the Federation and a single Governing Body.

Will school uniforms and logos change?

No. Each school will keep its current dress code, logo and unique identity.

Who will be the Principal of the Federation? Our proposal is for the Federation to appoint Steven Baker currently Executive Headteacher at both schools, as Principal to oversee both schools.

Will there be any change to admission arrangements?

No. The current Wirral Council's admissions' policy will continue to apply for each school.

Will school start and finish times change?

No.

Will pupils be registered to the Federation or a single school?

Pupils will be on roll at their individual school within the Federation.

Will the schools share a single budget?

No. Each school will continue to receive its own funding, manage separate budgets and keep separate records of its accounts. However, there may be occasions when the two schools share costs or combine purchasing if this means that they will be able to get better value for their money to continue to ensure good opportunities for children.

Will the Federation be inspected by OFSTED?

No. Each school will have separate OFSTED inspections and be graded separately, as they are now.

Will there be any changes in the conditions of service for staff?

No. There will be no changes and staff will continue to be employed on the same conditions of service as defined by Wirral Council contracts. This means that, for example, all employment rights and pension arrangements will stay as they are now.

Will staff work across both schools in the Federation?

Existing members of staff will continue to work in the school as they presently do. However, there may be opportunities for staff to work across schools. We hope that staff will be able to take these opportunities as Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and sharing of good practice to improve the pupil outcomes.

Will the schools have the same Inset/Training Days?

Yes, wherever possible. Each school will be able to choose when to hold these days, as they do now, and it is likely that they would take the opportunity to have the same Inset/Training Days.

Do schools in a Federation share a Governing Body?

Yes. The previous Governing Bodies of each of the schools will be dissolved and a new single Governing Body will be set up.

Will one school take the lead over the other?

No. The schools in the Federation will collaborate and work together as equal partners. As far as possible we will try to ensure that the single Governing Body will have equal representation from each of the two schools.

A selection of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Is there any research on the impact of Federations?

OFSTED has reported that, where schools work together and share leadership, standards have been raised and there have been improvements in children's achievement and behaviour. (Leadership of More than One School; OFSTED, September 2011). There is a growing body of other evidence.

If Federation of the schools goes ahead, when would this happen?

If a decision is made to federate, the proposal is this would take effect from 1st September 2017.

What success criteria will be used for the Federation?

The success will be determined around stability and the continued improvement of both schools

Will there be a reduction in costs for both schools?

Neither the Local Authority, nor the governors of either school, are looking for a reduction in costs. This process is designed to benefit pupils and staff, ensuring the continued success and stability of both schools.

If the Federation goes ahead what work will be done between January and September 2017?

The two terms lead-in will provide a really good opportunity to carefully plan as many matters as possible in advance. This should ensure that your children will not have any change to their daily experiences. It will also give those people expected to be members of the new Governing Body an opportunity to work closely with existing Governors to achieve as much continuity as possible.

Can a Federation be dissolved?

Yes. The Governing Body can choose to end a Federation if it is believed that it is no longer in the best interests of the pupils and stakeholders. This is not an action that would be taken lightly or without due diligence and consultation.

What are the long term plans for the schools after Federation?

The current policy of the Department for Education and the Regional Schools Commissioner is to support academisation on a multi-school basis. Whilst we are focusing on developing a hard federation, future national policy may dictate a variation in the federation to a Multi-Academy Trust and ultimately an expansion of the schools.

Confidential Response Form

In response to the consultation document outlining the proposal to form a Federation between Kilgarth and Gilbrook Schools from 1st September 2017. All responses will be treated in the strictest of confidence, however we will not be able to take anonymous comments into consideration. **Responses must be received by midday on May 5th.**

Name:

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Address (Optional)

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I am a (Please select)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/Carer of a child at Kilgarth School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent/carer of a child at Gilbrook School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of staff at Kilgarth School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of staff at Gilbrook School
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other interested party (please specify)		

Your response (please select)

<input type="checkbox"/>	I support the proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	I do NOT support the proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	I am not sure
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Please give your reasons/view if you wish. (If necessary use the reverse side of this form).

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