



CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT FOR THE PROPOSED FEDERATION BETWEEN BOWES HUTCHINSON'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL AND COTHERSTONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

23 October 2020

Growing Together, Learning Together

Our vision for the federation is two distinct schools, each with their own unique character, working together to ensure the best possible outcomes for all our pupils.

Introduction

1. The Governing Bodies of Bowes Hutchinson's Church of England Voluntary Aided School and Cotherstone Primary School are proposing that they work in close partnership and become a federation, with a single Governing Body and a single Headteacher.

2. This will be named Bowes Cotherstone Federation (BCF).
The proposed date for the federation to commence is 11th January 2021.

3. Prior to the desire to federate, both schools agreed to an arrangement where they would be subject to a shared headship. Cotherstone school approached Bowes Hutchinson's School on 22 May 2019 because their headteacher had elected to take early retirement and the post was not to be replaced. The optimum solution was for Mrs Chris Matthewman to assume headteacher responsibilities at both schools from 1 September 2019. This was following agreement by both Governing Bodies and agreement from parents and carers after formal consultation had taken place.

Shared Headship achieved advantages

4. Briefly the Shared headship arrangements have resulted in the following advantages:

- Staff have co-partners to work with and we have used staff meetings, training, and social gatherings (when we could) to build relationships and work together.
- We are benefiting from shared expertise, creative group working and have shared many resources, material, and digital.

- The whole staff have benefitted enormously from working together and this in turn improves the educational offer and benefits the children and communities that we work with.
 - Parents from both schools have been encouraging and supportive and we are pleasantly surprised at how well they have responded to this necessary change.
5. Financial savings have accrued from the shared headship arrangements:
- Shared access to subscriptions for educational and organizational websites
 - A reduction in charges from Education Durham
 - Substantial reduction in headteacher salary costs
 - Reduction in charges for some shared training
 - Sharing of resources, including transport and educational – thus financial saving in purchasing of same.
 - Shared visits and trips for children

The case for Federation

6. When two or more schools work together under a single Governing Body, this is called a Federation. This single Governing Body can share resources and expertise across the schools and work to raise standards and improve teaching and leadership of the schools. There are local and national examples of the success of federations and the improvement in outcomes for children. It is in this wider strategy of close partnerships between schools that communities are able to have a greater say in the education of children.

7. This would mean:
- Our two schools would remain as separate schools, but under the leadership of one Headteacher
 - A single, shared vision
 - Bowes would retain their school's Religious character whilst ensuring the ethos of Cotherstone School remains unaffected
 - A single Governing Body responsible for governance and staffing in both schools
 - Shared leadership across the two schools
 - Shared policies and procedures

This is not a proposal to create one school; the two schools would remain separate under one Head Teacher.

8. Both schools would:
- Keep their own name, identity, and uniform
 - Have their own separate budget
 - Have separate Ofsted inspections

What would federation mean for children?

- A consistent approach to high quality teaching and learning for all pupils as best practice is shared between the two schools.

- A consistent approach to high expectations of behaviour, both in and out of the classroom
- More opportunities to share and manage expertise and facilities effectively thereby enriching the children's learning experience
- The opportunity for combined community activities - for example, fetes, sports days, musical activities etc.

What would federation mean for parents?

Through the federation reassurance that your child will benefit from the shared advantages of:

- One Headteacher for pupils
- A common approach to teaching and learning throughout both schools
- A shared vision whilst retaining their own ethos, with common approaches
- Consistency of communication and policies
- The opportunity for shared activities

What would federation mean for staff?

- The proposal is for shared leadership between the two schools: this will mean one Headteacher
- It is proposed that there will be One Deputy Headteacher in each school employed by the Federation who will create plans and systems to drive the strategic vision of the partnership forward
- There will be two Special Educational Needs & Disability Co-ordinators (SENDCO) across the federation
- Staff will continue to be employed on the same conditions of service
- Stronger collaboration and the size of the combined schools will allow for increased opportunities for continuing professional development and career development
- The combined size of the schools will enable the proposed federation to attract and retain high quality staff
- A common approach to teaching and learning, along with a single system of target setting, assessment, moderating teaching and learning, and tracking pupil progress
- Development of continuity and quality by identifying best practice from both schools and applying it across the federation.

What would federation mean for our local community?

- Two schools, under one leadership, will draw wider and improved community links, which would be strengthened by joint community partnerships and events
- Opportunities for the local community to become more involved in the work of the Federation would be enhanced, both during and after school
- Other service providers, in the positive support of children and families, will be used more effectively in the roles they perform within the schools
- A commitment to a stable, yet flexible, primary provision in the immediate local area.

In order to federate, both individual Governing Bodies (GBs) will be dissolved, and a federated GB established in their place.

It is proposed that the federated GB will consist of:

Total number of governors	14
Number of foundation governors	8
Number of parent governors	2
Headteacher	1
Number of staff governors	2
Number of LA governors	1

Consultation Period Timetable

9. This consultation starts on **Friday 23 October and ends on Friday 4 December** (6 weeks)

Continuing restrictions as a result of COVID-19 will mean that Open sessions for parents/carers, staff and others with an interest or stake-holding in the school cannot presently take place. However:

This Consultative Document proposal, our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and The Supporting letter from the Chair of Governors will be available on our websites:

<http://www.boweshutchinsonschool.org.uk/>

<http://www.cotherstone.durham.sch.uk/>

How can you give your feedback?

During the consultation period written representations via email may be made to either Governing Body regarding the proposals at the following address/es:

Mrs C Matthewman Headteacher
Bowes Hutchinson's C of E Aided Primary School/ Cotherstone Primary School

The email address is: bhcfed@gmail.com

All responses should be submitted before noon on **Friday 4 December**, but early comments or questions will allow the two Governing Bodies to consider them fully ahead of their final decision.

Final Notification

Upon completion of the consultation period, the two Governing Bodies will meet to discuss the feedback and to take a final vote on whether to proceed with the federation.

The final decision will be communicated to all parents/carers, staff, pupils, and stakeholders by Friday 8 January 2021.

This decision will affect us all, so please do be part of the process and ensure your voice is heard.

Mr Peter David Nicholls

Mrs Alison Butler

Mr P D Nicholls
Chair of Bowes Hutchinson's
Church of England
Voluntary Aided School
Governing Body

Mrs A Butler
Chair of Cotherstone Primary School
Governing Body

Distribution:

- The Secretary of State notifications@education.gsi.gov.uk
- The relevant Local Authority – Durham County Council.
- The Headteacher.
- The Diocese of Leeds – Director of Education
- Foundation Governors
- Trustee Governors of any trust relating to the school.
- The PCC – St Giles Church PCC.
- All staff paid to work in either of the schools.
- Every registered parent/carer of a registered pupil at either of the schools.
- Any other persons considered appropriate.