



Consultation on the Federation of **Newington Green** and **Rotherfield** Primary Schools

Newington Green Primary School and Rotherfield Primary School have been working together informally through a strategic partnership, supported by the London Borough of Islington (LBI), since February 2017. The Executive Headteacher has worked across both schools on a 50/50 basis since that time, and the schools share other staff, as follows: Spanish Specialist, Clubs Manager, Partnership Premises Manager, Home School Worker, Music Specialist, Digital Strategy Leader/Computing Specialist, and Partnership Business Manager.

Our partnership vision is as follows:

We believe by working together we can achieve more than working as stand-alone schools. These are our core aims for both schools:

- *A rich and well-balanced curriculum offer, with enriching experiences;*
- *High outcomes for all pupils;*
- *Ensuring that all children, regardless of circumstance, achieve well; and*
- *Meeting children's individual needs through a nurturing ethos.*

The purpose of this document is to commence the formal consultation to seek views on the possible establishment of a Federation of Newington Green and Rotherfield Primary Schools. Federation is a way for the schools to unify the governance, leadership and administration arrangements for holding the schools to account.

It was the decision of the Newington Green and Rotherfield Governing Boards, following meetings held on 13th March 2020, that we should consult on a Federation of the two schools. The consultation period has been delayed due to the COVID pandemic.

The Federation would be the vehicle for fulfilling the governance, leadership and administration arrangements of both schools and would be known as **The Governing Board of Newington Green and Rotherfield Community Primary Schools**. To enter into a Federation, both schools must go out to consultation for six weeks and consult with parents/carers, staff, the community, trade unions and the local authority.

There will be consultation meetings advertised in the schools' newsletters which you can attend to contribute your views. You can also get involved in the consultation by responding via this electronic form, or by paper forms which are available from the school offices.

More information about the proposal

What is a federation?

Federation is the name given to **a way of bringing schools closer together**. From a leadership, administration and governance perspective, the schools will be considered as one. **It does not, however, mean that the two schools will merge, join or amalgamate.** One Governing Board will be duty bound **to advance the outcomes of pupils in both schools**, rather than each school.

Federation is not becoming an academy. We are two community schools and will remain as such, serving the communities of Rotherfield and Newington Green. This means we will continue to have the **support of the Local Authority, have a Local Authority appointed Governor, and will follow Local Authority policies** on admissions and staff contracts.

The Governing Board will **hold the Executive Headteacher to account** for the performance of both schools.

What won't change?

- The two schools will not merge to become one school. They will both retain their own identity.
- There will be no change to the names of the two schools.
- There will be no change to the uniforms, brand, ethos or identity of each community school.
- There will be no change in current staffing levels, class organisation or curriculum organisation as a direct result of Federation.
- There will be no reduction in budgets for each school as a result of the federation, although the GB will be able to decide how much is put into a joint pot for shared provision.
- There will be no change to admissions criteria – the Local Authority will continue to be the Admissions Authority for both schools.
- Each school will have its own Ofsted inspection.
- The public reporting of educational standards will remain the same for both schools.

What benefits are we already getting from working in partnership?

- Sharing of good practice opportunities between the schools has developed teaching and learning strategies. This has improved the quality of teaching in both schools.
- Sharing of workload between schools in terms of policy development, training, etc. This means a greater amount of leadership time has been focused on the quality of classroom practice.
- Sharing resources has provided improved value for money and improved curriculum provision (this includes shared staff including specialist provision; shared procurement had led to savings in areas such as cleaning and reprographics contracts).
- Professional development opportunities for staff have improved, with joint training broadening staff understanding and experience through collaboration with the sister school.
- The current partnership is time bound to five years, but this could be extended.

What additional benefits would we get from Federation?

- Longer-term strategic commitment for the schools to work together – giving greater stability to future planning.
- Greater security for some staff who are currently in temporary seconded roles and would be permanently appointed under the federation.
- Less duplication. At present, lots of the same, or very similar, information gets presented separately to each Governing Board. Under a federated structure there would be one Governing Board instead of two which would mean fewer meetings and more time for the Executive Head and Leadership teams to focus on pupil achievement and outcomes.
- One Board holding the Executive Head accountable for the performance of the schools.
- Greater financial flexibility within a Federation, as budgets can be used collectively with the agreement of governors. A federated governing body has control over how much is put into the shared pot for joint provision. Each school would remain financially viable so any shared commitments would be realistic and not threaten the viability of either school.
- The potential for further cost savings initially estimated at around £10k per school, per year, in terms of services/subscriptions that could be procured together under Federation but which are not legally possible under the existing partnership.

What are some of the perceived risks in Federation and how would they be mitigated by the Governing Board?

Identity of the individual schools may become diluted over time

- The schools do not compete with each other for pupils, due to location, and serve different communities. The terms of reference for the Children, Families and Communities Committees would include a clause on preservation of individual school identity.

The Governing Board's attention will be across both schools, and there might be less focus on each individual school.

- The Board will include parent and staff representatives from both schools, and other co-opted governors will be given particular responsibilities within individual schools. Terms of reference for all committees will focus on the challenge to improve both schools and comparative data will help governors to benchmark progress across the Federation.

It is the collective view of both Governing Boards that the benefits of Federation outweigh the risks, which is why we have voted to consult with stakeholders on Federation.

Other FAQs

What will it mean for the children?

- On a day-to-day basis there will be no change in routine or provision in either school.

What will it mean for the staff?

- The day-to-day management will be unchanged.
- Staff will remain employees of the London Borough of Islington.
- Greater security for those staff currently in temporary seconded or shared roles across both schools.

What will it mean for parents/carers?

- Parents/carers of both schools will continue to receive the same high level of quality provision, and can expect both schools to continue to improve.
- The two schools will continue to operate individually on a day-to-day basis. Parents/carers from both schools will have the opportunity for direct representation on the Federated Governing Board.
- The day-to-day contact arrangements between the schools and their parents/carers will not be changed by the Federation, but we will continue to seek ways to improve parental engagement.

What will it mean for the Governing Board?

- The current Governing Boards of Rotherfield and Newington Green will be replaced with one Governing Board made up of representatives from both schools.
- There will be some streamlining of Board committees with one Revenue and Resources Committee across both schools. Individual committees for Teaching and Learning, and Children, Families and Communities will be retained for both schools.
- Governors will be sought from both schools' parent and staff bodies. We will also continue to seek governors from the wider community to support our commitment to equality and diversity, and to ensure that the school has access to the skills necessary for proper and effective oversight of both schools.

How will the Federated Governing Board work?

The new Federated Governing Board will undertake the three core functions as set out in the Department for Education (DfE) Governance Handbook:

- 1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic vision.*
- 2. Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff.*
- 3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.*

Who can be on the Federated Governing Board?

The membership of the Federated Governing Board is determined by the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended in 2016, and specifically as stated in Regulation 21:

1. The governing board of every federation must be constituted in accordance with this regulation.
2. The total membership of the governing board of a federation must be no fewer than seven governors.
3. The governing board of a federation must include the following —
 - a. two parent governors;
 - b. the head teacher of each federated school (in this case, the Executive Head) unless any such headteacher resigns the office of governor in accordance with regulation 19 of the Constitution Regulations 2012;
 - c. one staff governor; and
 - d. one local authority governor.
4. The governing board may in addition appoint such number of co-opted governors as they consider necessary provided that the requirements in regulation 22 are met in respect of governing boards of federations comprising foundation and voluntary schools.
5. The total number of co-opted governors who are also eligible to be elected as staff governors under Schedule 3, when counted together with the staff governor and the head teachers, must not exceed one-third of the total membership of the governing board.

We will initially be seeking to appoint at least two parents from each participating school as governors. To comply with the regulations this will need to be achieved through a mix of election and co-option. Currently each school has 3 parent Governors in the Board structure.

Once formed, the new Federated Governing Board will appoint the Chair(s) and Committee Members.

Proposed Membership of the Federated Governing Board

We are proposing the following membership the new Governing Board of Newington Green and Rotherfield Community Primary Schools:

- **15 members, comprising:**
 - **2 parents (elected one from each school)**
 - **One Executive Headteacher**
 - **One staff governor (elected)**
 - **One LA governor**
 - **10 co-opted governors¹**

For voting purposes, a quorum will be 50% of the active membership.

Existing governors will be asked to apply to join the new Federated Governing Board. We intend to select co-opted governors for the Federation Governing Board so as to ensure that there is equal representation from the two predecessor governing boards. The Governing Board will be mindful of the need to diversify the board on appointment and in future planning, so that the Board is more reflective of the communities it serves.

¹ Co-optees will include: 2 parents, one from each school, additional to those who have been elected; and 1 staff member from the school not providing the elected staff representative. NB: the total number of any co-opted staff cannot exceed a third of the membership of the whole Governing Board.

The proposed membership of the new Governing Board is not fixed and could be revised in the light of responses to the consultation.

What happens now?

- This document is the start of a six-week consultation period on the proposal to federate.
- All written comments will be considered by the governors when the six weeks end and they will then decide whether to proceed or not.
- If the decision taken is to proceed, a new, unified governing Board will come into operation and the schools will inform the Local Authority that they wish to federate.

How long will the federation process take?

- **November 2021:** Federation consultation opens for at least 6 weeks. Due diligence is undertaken on both schools for report to the individual Governing Boards.
- **7 January 2022:** deadline for responses to the consultation.
- **By end January 2022:** Preparation of Consultation Feedback Report.
- **18 February 2022:** Deadline for papers for meetings of the Rotherfield Governing Board & Newington Green Governing Board.
- **4 March 2022:** Formal consideration of consultation feedback by RF FGB and NG FGB and decision taken by each Board on whether to proceed with Federation.
- **Late March 2022:** joint meeting of both Governing Boards to agree constitutional structure for new Federated Governing Board and to set a date for Federation to take effect.
- **April 2022:** If approved, Instrument of Government for Federation to be formally sealed by LBI Legal.
- **1 May 2022:** Federation takes effect if it is decided to proceed.

How can I get more information or make my voice heard?

- Drop-in sessions will be arranged in both schools to provide parents/carers with opportunities to ask questions and put forward their views.
- There will be consultation meetings in both schools to provide staff with opportunities to ask questions and put forward their views.
- Send in your views via the online or paper form.

Your views are very important to us. Please do let us know whether you agree or disagree with the proposal, together with your wider views.

Please complete and return the attached response form electronically by using the 'submit' button or return to either school office, by hand or by post, by no later than **7th January 2022**

Response on the proposed federation of Rotherfield and Newington Green Primary Schools

Your views are important to us. Please let us know what you think.

Note: You can type your comments directly into the boxes if completing the form on a computer screen and provide as much information as you want as the box will expand with a scrolling bar. If you complete the form by hand, then please continue on another page if required.

I welcome the following:

I am concerned about the following:

My questions are:

Do you agree/disagree with the proposal (please put a cross in the appropriate box)?

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Not sure

Any other comments?

Other information (this section is optional)

Your name (BLOCK CAPITALS):

School:

Please indicate which group you belong to by putting a cross the appropriate box:

- | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trade Union rep | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Staff member | <input type="checkbox"/> | Community member | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Governor | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |