



「Proposed Hard Federation of Bellenden & Pilgrim's Way Primary Schools & Ann Bernadt & Nell Gwynn Federation of Nursery Schools Consultation Document」

18 September 2023

Summary:

Four Schools, Already Working Together

- Bellenden, Pilgrims' Way Primary Schools and Nell Gwynn and Ann Bernadt Nursery Schools are Southwark LA maintained schools, serving communities in South East London
- All were rated **Good schools** in their last OFSTED inspections
- Both primary schools are **one form entry schools**, and the Nursery schools have the potential to act as feeder schools
- Following the departure of the Executive Headteacher at the Nursery schools in the summer term 2022, the schools entered a discussion with Southwark Education Department about the possibility of all the schools **working more closely together**
- The Governors of both federations made the decision to form a **Soft Federation** between the two Federations and subsequently invited the Executive Headteacher of The River Peck Federation, Gregory Doey, to become Interim Executive Head Teacher of both Federations with effect from September 2022
- This 'soft federation' has been very successful, with **many benefits** for both Federations



Proposed Hard Federation to Safeguard High Educational Standards and Financial Stability

- The Soft Federation has been in place for 12 months but is **due to be reviewed in September 2023**
- Rather than leaving a soft federation, both governing bodies fully believe that a hard federation will be the best option to safeguard the future of both federations
 - As a result of the current challenges facing all schools' conversations involving the Southwark Education Standards team and stakeholders at all four schools the Governing Bodies at both federations believe that the schools are in danger of a **decline in outcomes and provision for pupils without the ongoing strong senior leadership support provided by the soft federation structure**
 - As small schools, both Governing Bodies are also conscious of **potential future funding challenges** and wanting to put forward balanced budgets whilst increasing opportunities for staff to develop and for provision for pupils to be maintained and strengthened.
 - Each school has considered whether the other schools' existing **values and ethos** are in alignment and have found them to be a good fit.
 - Both Governing Bodies have also considered how both federations **complement each other's strengths** and how that can help with further areas of development such as **curriculum development and staff development**

To secure strong leadership for the two schools in the future, both governing bodies have decided to enter a formal consultation process with the intention that the four schools form a Hard Federation, starting in November 2023. This consultation is open to all interested parties in the schools and will end on Tuesday the 31st of October 2023.



The Proposal in Detail:

What is a Hard Federation?

- A Hard Federation is a **formal agreement between two or more schools to work together**
- Through this proposal, the partnership of the four schools would be led and managed under the direction of a **single Governing Body**
- Each of the schools in Federation would continue to **retain its individual identity and school budget**, as well as continue to receive **separate inspection report**
- This approach would ensure a single **shared vision, equality of provision and expectations** across all the schools; and enable pupils to achieve the **best possible outcomes** across all the partner schools

How is this Different to Today

- The proposal for Hard Federation would **formalize and strengthen** the Soft Federation:
 - One joint Governing Body for the Federation, which will have a **strategic overview of the whole of the four schools** from Nursery to Year 6
 - A formally appointed **Executive Head Teacher** overseeing the work of the Federation
 - **Formal contracts of employment** for the Leadership Team in schools
 - Further opportunities for **shared staffing and resources** going forward

How will the Governing Body Work?

- The proposed size of the Governing Body of the Federation is fourteen; one Local Authority Governor, two Parent Governors (one parent of a pupil in each federation), the Executive Head Teacher, two Staff Governor and eight Co-opted Governors
 - The co-opted governors will include an elected member of staff from each federation, so that there is parity between the federations
 - Other Leadership members would become Associate Members of the Governing Body
- The Governing Body reserves the right to appoint other Associate Members to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise
 - The Governing Body will accord Associate Members limited voting rights on committees
- There may not be enough room to retain all existing Co-opted governors, so a skills audit will be carried out to ensure the Governing Body is as strong as it can be



The Benefits:

All the advice the governors have received from the Local Education Authority, points to strong evidence that academic achievement will be enhanced from the schools working in Federation

Governors believe that Hard Federation would significantly contribute to the sustainability of further improvement of each school without jeopardizing the other.

In particular, there would be greater ability to share resources, particularly for **arts, music, languages, sport and special educational needs and disabilities provision**, which would further enhance opportunities for pupils at each school.



The Benefits So Far of Schools Working Together Under Soft Federation	
Sharing Resources to Ensure Budgets Stretch Further	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing support staff skills and expertise across both schools (e.g. languages) Ability to share resources to ensure budgets stretch further Administration Staff supporting each other across schools ICT support (computer) closer linked between both schools
Raised Educational Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More learning opportunities for the whole community (children and staff) Consistency of learning strategies across schools and marking; Evaluation of children's work made more consistent;
Greater Staff Development Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff sharing expertise, training and responsibilities across schools; Schools cross-fertilising good practice – each school learning from the other
Stronger Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger Senior Leadership structure for all schools Strategic Management covering all schools Leadership Team working across and supporting all schools
More Fun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extra-curricular activities across all schools, with schools coming together for events Children working together across all schools on our creative curriculum and enrichment projects

Risk Management:



Is there a risk that one of the schools will lose out in this arrangement?

NO

- The Hard Federation will have a strong Senior Leadership Team structure, working across all schools, with key senior staff based in each of the schools, as is the case under the current arrangement
- The Governing Body and the LA will work closely together to ensure that the Senior Leadership Team is appropriately supported
- Both current Governing Bodies have plans for Senior Leadership Team development, based around a Leadership team working across both schools



Is there a risk that the Senior Leadership Team will be too thinly spread?

NO

- The aim of the Hard Federation is for the schools to work together in a full and equal partnership in order to continue to **grow stronger together**
- The structure of the Hard Federation will enable resources to be **appropriately and fairly shared** across both schools
- The single combined Governing Body would ensure each school's interests were **fully and equally represented** and would be better placed to serve the strategic development of both schools
- It is proposed that there will be **equal Parent and Staff Governor representation** from each of the schools on the Governing Body



What it means for you:

Children, Parents & Carers

- Hard federation will mean that the schools will continue to **operate as usual** and that parents/carers and children of all schools will continue to receive the same high level of quality provision
- On a day-to-day basis there will be **no change in routine or provision** in any of the schools
- We believe that a hard federation will enable **each school to learn from the others** to the benefit of all sets of pupils
 - There will be opportunities to share staff ideas across the four schools, which will give children access to a much **larger pool of specialist knowledge**
 - There are opportunities to use school resources more efficiently, meaning that children will have access to **more opportunities for good quality learning**
- The retention of quality staff would ensure a **continued high standard of education** for the pupils at all schools

Staff

- There will be **very little change** at the start of Hard Federation
 - Staff will continue to be employed by each of the four schools but managed by the single Governing Body.
- In time, the governors believe an exciting new venture such as this would be an **attractive place to work** for teachers and support staff looking for a new challenge whilst providing welcome professional development opportunities for the staff of each school
 - As a Federation we would continue to recruit extremely well and attract **high-impact and talented staff** with the flexibility of working across all schools.
 - There will be **greater opportunities for all staff** across all schools impacting upon positive outcomes for all pupils and leading to **continued professional development** for all staff
- It should be noted that the consultative process is about **continuing to invest and nurture staff** and job losses are not part of the vision for federation



FAQ:

Will the schools change their name and identity?

No. Each school will keep its own name and identity. The Federation will be known as The River Peck Federation but each school will keep their own name.

Will there be any change to admissions arrangements?

No. Southwark's admissions policy will continue to apply to all schools and is on our websites.

Will the uniforms change?

No. Changing uniforms is not currently part of this proposal.

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

Yes. Pupils will be on roll at a single school within the Federation.

Will the schools share a single budget?

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

Will the amount each school receives change?

No. All school budgets are worked out using a formula based on pupil numbers.

Will the Federation be inspected by Ofsted?

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

Will the Federation combine their academic results?

No. Results will continue to be attributed to the individual schools.



What Happens Now?

This document is the start of a six week consultation period on the proposal to federate

All comments will be considered by the Governors when the six weeks end on 31st October 2023 and they will then decide whether to proceed or not

If we do proceed, a new, unified governing body will come into operation and we will inform the Local Authority that we wish to federate.



Tell Us What You Think

- **Consultation Meetings**

Nell Gwynn : Wednesday 27th September @ 4pm

Ann Bernadt : Tuesday 3rd October @ 4pm

Pilgrims' Way : Monday 9th October @ 4pm

Bellenden : Friday 20th October @ 4pm

All meetings to take place in schools' halls

- **Contact Us Directly**

Pilgrims' Way – admin@pilgrimsway.southwark.sch.uk

Bellenden – office@bellenden.southwark.sch.uk

Nell Gwynn – office@nellgwynn.southwark.sch.uk

Ann Bernadt – office@annbernadt.southwark.sch.uk