

Kettlewell Primary School and Upper Wharfedale School Consultation by the two Governing Bodies on a Proposal for Federation

The Governing Bodies of Kettlewell Primary School and Upper Wharfedale School are consulting parents, staff and the local community on a proposal to change how the schools are led and managed.

What is being proposed?

The proposal is to federate the schools from January 2015 and the Governors of both schools would welcome your views on whether we should go forward with this idea. This paper sets out what Federation would mean and how you can make your views known.

What is Federation?

A federation is a formal agreement between two or more schools to work in partnership to raise standards, find new ways of improving teaching and learning, and build on the strengths of each school.

In this proposed Federation, the schools would remain separate schools, each retaining their own budget and buildings. The schools would have shared leadership and management working in the best interests of both schools and their pupils. Federation is not an amalgamation of schools and does not involve the closure of either school.

Federation allows partner schools to work together and combine the strengths of both schools through sharing a Governing Body, Headteacher and other resources. This would give more opportunities to pupils in terms of the breadth of what is taught, having access to well-qualified specialist teachers and the extra curricular and social opportunities open to them.

Why Federate?

Kettlewell Primary School and Upper Wharfedale School have been working in partnership for some time. We already share a Headteacher, an Associate Headteacher and a number of specialist staff and we have seen proven benefits to pupils, staff and budgets at both schools.

The six primary schools in the area, including Kettlewell, work in a cluster with Upper Wharfedale School, sharing good practice, funding, training and resources. The cluster of schools identifies and arranges more opportunities for children to work together.

The Federation would create a formal partnership that would further benefit pupils.

Sharing the leadership and management would mean a joint approach to teaching and learning, drawing on the best ideas from each in developing wider curriculum opportunities for all pupils. Recruitment of staff, including headteachers, to small schools can be very difficult. Federation can support existing staff in developing their skills and make employment in small schools more attractive for potential members of staff.

The shared governing body can provide an effective and accountable mechanism for the two schools to combine resources, purchasing, systems and staff which releases strategic capacity for the Headteacher, offering value for money and helping the schools to remain viable.

Federation can help small rural schools to remain sustainable on separate sites, opening up opportunities to share management, administration and governing body responsibility. Teaching

staff can also support each other, sharing curriculum expertise.

The Governing Bodies of both schools feel that Federation would help to secure a better future for all pupils by increasing opportunities at a time of challenge. Funding for all schools is uncertain and although the numbers of pupils on roll at both schools are expected to remain steady for some time, both schools are small and therefore vulnerable. Federation would increase the resilience of both schools.

How would the Federation be organised?

The two schools would still be separate schools legally and would keep their present names so pupils would be registered at Kettlewell Primary School or Upper Wharfedale School. Each school would retain its ethos and identity.

Admissions to each school would be made separately. North Yorkshire County Council would continue to be responsible for admissions to both schools.

Each school would continue to receive an individual **budget**. These budgets could be pooled, provided a clear audit trail is maintained. As school budgets are funded largely by student numbers, a Federation between the schools would allow the schools' funding to be used more efficiently by making savings through economies of scale to sustain a broad and balanced curriculum.

A new single Federation Governing Body would be created, which, legally must contain the following governors (either by appointment or election):

- 2 elected parent governors - one from each school
- 1 staff governor – elected by staff in both schools

- 1 governor nominated by the Local Authority
- The Headteacher would be a governor
- Up to 10 other governors would be co-opted governors appointed by the Federated Governing Body. Co-opted governors can include parents of pupils at the schools, staff of the schools and other members of the community. The initial co-opted Governor would be a staff member from the school not already represented in the core group.

It is important that both schools and their communities are represented, and the ability to co-opt governors ensures that fair representation and the required mix of skills are possible. It is likely that many existing governors would express an interest in being put forward for these posts.

School staff would continue to be employed by North Yorkshire County Council and would be under the direction of the Headteacher. Existing staff would be consulted about any changes to their terms and conditions of employment as in the medium term it could be expected that some staff may work in both schools. Newly appointed staff would be expected to teach in both schools if required.

Both Governing Bodies have given considerable thought to this proposal before asking students, parents, staff and the community for their views.

Next Steps

At the end of the consultation period, the responses will be analysed on behalf of the Governing Bodies by North Yorkshire County Council.

The Governing Bodies of both schools will meet together after the consultation period to consider the responses. After that, each Governing Body will meet separately to decide whether to proceed.

An announcement will be made about the decision. If it is decided to proceed, then a series of meetings will be held between the schools to agree detailed arrangements so that the Federation can start in January 2015.

How You Can Find Out More

A meeting will be held at Grassington Town Hall on Wednesday 10th September 2014 at 6.30 pm for parents of students attending either of the schools, and for any member of the community who would like to learn more.

How to Make Your Views Known

You can attend the meetings, a note will be taken of the issues raised at the meetings and will be considered as part of the consultation response by the Governing Bodies but we would also appreciate written responses.

You can complete the attached response sheet and return it to:

Kettlewell and Upper Wharfedale Schools
Federation Proposal
North Yorkshire County Council
Prevention and Commissioning
FREEPOST NEA10908
NORTHALLERTON
DL7 8BR
OR

You can complete the response sheet
online at

<https://forms.northyorks.gov.uk/eforms/?TAG=KettlewellandUpperWharfedale>

The closing date for responses is **10
October 2014**

Anne Vetch
Chair of Governors
Kettlewell Primary School

Val Berry
Chair of Governors
Upper Wharfedale School

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is a federation?

A federation is a formal arrangement between two or more schools which includes joint governance. The Governing Bodies are consulting on moving to a federation.

This is different from an amalgamation, which is a permanent merging of two or more schools, usually by the formal closure of one or more of them.

What is the background to this proposal?

The schools are already working closely together and share a headteacher.

Why are the schools federating? They are successful, viable schools in their own right.

The governing bodies feel that to federate now is in the best interests of students currently at the schools and those that will attend in the future.

Federation would enhance the existing collaborative working, secure better and wider opportunities and would contribute to the long-term viability of the schools.

There are particular benefits in federation for small schools, in terms of educational and social experiences for pupils and professional development for staff.

What would the leadership arrangements be?

Mr Taylor would remain Headteacher at both Upper Wharfedale and Kettlewell schools. Structures would be reviewed as opportunities arise, as they normally would be in any school.

Would students share facilities?

Whilst it is expected that there would be some joint activities on an irregular basis for students, it is not expected that students would move between the schools on a regular basis.

Would children at each school keep their present uniform?

Yes

How would existing staff be affected?

Both schools are Community Schools which means that the employer is North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC). Staff would continue to be employed by NYCC and would be under the leadership of the Headteacher. The Federation would have a single governing body and would continue to work closely with NYCC.

What would happen when a member of staff leaves?

When anyone leaves, the Governing Body would review the situation and decide if that position needs to be replaced or if there is a possible different solution. Newly appointed staff would be appointed to the Federation and would be expected to teach in both schools if required. Recruitment of teaching staff is difficult in small rural schools. A federation could be more appealing and this could ease recruitment difficulties.

How would federation affect the financial position of the schools?

The budget for each school will remain completely separate. However, the Federation Governing Body would be able to look at ways of giving value for money through joint purchasing, service provision or future cross-federation working.

Is the real reason for this to save money?

There is the potential for the schools to make savings so that they are in a stronger position as a federation to protect provision in an uncertain economic climate. Both schools would continue to receive the same budget

allocation whether they are in a federation or not and so there is no potential for the Local Authority to save money.

Would money from the budget be used to subsidise the other school?

No. Each school would continue to receive an individual budget. Although these budgets can be pooled, a clear audit trail is required. There is no intention at this time to pool budgets.

Would our school lose its identity, ethos and traditions?

No. Federation is beneficial for schools because it supports the continuing resilience of separate institutions, but with benefits often seen in larger schools. Each school would remain a part of its own community, but with a close relationship between the schools benefiting students.

What would the Governance arrangements be? Would there be representation from each school on the Governing Body?

In a federation a single governing body is responsible for the governance of both schools. The new governing body would be drawn from both the schools and the wider communities.

What would happen to admissions?

NYCC will remain as the Admissions Authority and the admissions

arrangements for the schools will remain separate.

What about Ofsted?

The schools will continue to be inspected by Ofsted as separate schools.

Is it possible for new members to join the Federation after it has been formed?

Yes, it is possible for other schools to seek admission into the Federation. They would be required to conduct a statutory consultation process, and to gain approval from the Federation Governing Body.

Can a federation be removed or dissolved?

There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that federations do work and benefit their students and wider communities. However, as a worst case scenario it is possible to dissolve a federation through a statutory process.

Have Governors already decided to federate?

No. The schools are already working together on a collaborative basis, but the governing bodies are consulting on moving to a formal federation with a single Governing Body. They will consider consultation responses before making a decision about Federation.

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Response Form

Observations and/or suggestions on the proposal

You are not required to complete the personal information below. However, it will be helpful to the Governing Bodies if you do so.

Name

Address

Postcode Date

Your interest in Kettlewell Primary School and/or Upper Wharfedale School - please tick appropriate box

Parent/carer of pupil at Kettlewell Primary School Parent/carer of pupil at Upper Wharfedale School

Pupil of at Kettlewell Primary School – please state year group Pupil of Upper Wharfedale School – please state year group

Member of staff at Kettlewell Primary School Member of staff at Upper Wharfedale School

Other (Please state)

The closing date for this consultation is 10 October 2014

Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation may be accessed by members of the public

Please detach the response form before returning to Kettlewell Primary School and Upper Wharfedale School Federation Proposal, North Yorkshire County Council, Prevention and Commissioning, FREEPOST NEA10908, NORTHALLERTON, DL7 8BR