



## **The Upper Wharfedale Primary Collaboration**

### **Proposals to Federate**

The Governing Bodies of Burnsall Voluntary Aided Primary School, Cracoe and Rylstone Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Grassington Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, and Kettlewell Primary 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 1st February 2017 and the Governors of all 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 its own budget and buildings. The schools would have shared leadership and management working in the best interests of all schools and their pupils. Federation is not an amalgamation of schools and does not involve the closure of any of the four schools.

Federation allows partner schools to work together and combine the strengths of all 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, and the extracurricular and social opportunities open to them.

#### **Why Federate?**

The four schools have already been working in partnership. We already share a Headteacher, and we have seen proven benefits to pupils, staff and budgets at all schools.

The six primary schools in the area, already work in a cluster 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 within the cluster 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 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 all four 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 all schools are expected to remain steady for some time, all four schools are small and therefore vulnerable. Federation would increase the resilience of them all.

### **How would the Federation be organised?**

The four schools would still be separate schools legally and would keep their present names. Each school would retain its ethos, nature and identity. Each school would also retain its individual unique reference number (URN) and would be inspected as a separate school.

**Admissions** to each school would continue to be made separately.

North Yorkshire County Council will remain the admissions authority for Cracoe and Rylstone Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Grassington Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, and Kettlewell Primary Schools and the Governing Body will remain the admissions authority for Burnsall Voluntary Aided Primary School.

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, would contain the following governors (either by appointment or election) – twelve in total.

The Executive Headteacher

2 Parent Governors – elected by parents in all schools

1 Staff Governor – elected by staff in all schools

1 Governor nominated by the Local Authority

1 ex officio Governor

3 Foundation Governors – nominated by the Craven School Foundation and the parishes of Cracoe, Burnsall and Grassington

3 Co-opted governors co-opted by the Federated Governing Body

The Governing Body would be advised by two standing committees including members of the Federated Governing Body and Associate members from the local communities.

There would also be an Admissions Committee to carry out the functions of the Admissions Authority for Burnsall VA Primary School only.

It is important that all 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.

**Existing School staff** would continue to be employed by their existing employers and would be under the direction of the Executive 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 more than one school. Newly appointed staff would be expected to teach in more than one school if required.

**All four 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 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 February 2017.

### **How You Can Find Out More**

A meeting will be held at St. Margaret's Catholic Church, **Threshfield, at 7.00pm on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2016** for parents of students attending any 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:

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS  
Strategic Planning  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON  
DL7 8AE

## **Proposal for Federation**

### **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?

Mrs Morton Lee would remain Headteacher at all four 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 occasional 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?

Existing staff would continue to be employed by their existing employer NYCC and would be under the leadership of the Executive 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 could be expected to teach in more than one school 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. All 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.

#### 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 all schools. The new governing body would be drawn from all the schools and the wider communities.

#### What would happen to admissions?

Admissions arrangements for the schools will not change and will remain separate. North Yorkshire County Council will remain the admissions authority for Cracoe and Rylestone Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Grassington Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, and Kettlewell Primary Schools and the Governing Body will remain the admissions authority for Burnsall Voluntary Aided Primary School.

#### 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.

**Burnsall Voluntary Aided Primary School, Cracoe and Rylstone Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Grassington Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, and Kettlewell Primary Schools. Proposals for Federation**

**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 - please indicate:

Parent/carer of pupil – please state school

Pupil – please state school and year group

Member of staff – please state school

Other (Please state)

**The closing date for this consultation is 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

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 FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS  
Strategic Planning, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, NORTHALLERTON  
DL7 8AE