

Formal Proposal

Consultation Document

The Governing Bodies of Lea CE Primary School and Gorsley Goffs Primary School propose to form a hard federation of the two schools with effect from 8th July, 2019.

Circulation list

- Parents and carers of children registered at Gorsley Goffs Primary School
 - Parents and carers of children registered at Lea CE Primary School and Pre-School
 - All staff at both schools
 - Governing Bodies and clerks to Governors of both schools
 - Andrew Teale - Diocesan Director of Education (Interim)
 - Chris Baird - Director for Children's Wellbeing Services (LA)
 - Parish Councils of both schools
 - Parochial Church Councils/Trusts of both schools
 - Church wardens
 - Rector/Vicar/Pastor of both parishes
 - County Councillors of both schools
 - Jesse Norman MP
 - Secretary of State for Education
 - Union Representatives for all teaching and non-teaching staff
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The hard federation will mean one Governing Body for both schools

The following aspects of school life will remain the same

School names Location of schools Headteacher Staffing Uniform Admissions
Class names House groups in school Badge Ofsted arrangements Unique identities

Introduction

One of the key roles for all Governing Bodies is to set the strategic direction of the schools that they have responsibility for.

The current educational drive to create a self-improving school system is based on the premise that schools will work with, learn from and support one another to develop local solutions to the challenges and opportunities they may face.

This document outlines the proposal for Lea CE and Gorsley Goffs Primary Schools to formalise their federation.

A period of consultation has been agreed for all stakeholders to comment on this proposal using the attached response form.

Two Consultation Meetings will be held on the same evening of Monday, 4th March 2019 as follows:-

- * For Lea CE School parents/carers and stakeholders from 6.30 – 7.15pm at Lea School;
- * For Gorsley Goffs School parents/carers and stakeholders from 7.30 – 8.15pm at Gorsley Goffs School;

Current Educational Climate

At present there are many opportunities in the world of education but there are also challenges.

An enforced scaling back of local authorities means that schools are seeking local leadership solutions and are focusing on more self-improvement – as we already have been, including through the current soft federation arrangements between our two schools.

Increased accountability is leading to challenges for Governing Bodies in providing effective support and challenge in order to maintain and improve educational standards whilst ensuring support for senior leaders in dealing with finance, business and estate issues.

Schools are reflecting on how to deal with real cuts in funding and rising costs whilst delivering improved outcomes for children.

There is a growing national problem of recruitment of quality leaders and staff to small schools.

What is a hard federation?

Under the Education Act of 2002, schools and local authorities can propose that schools can join together to form a hard federation.

This is a group of two or more schools with a single Governing Body. The schools can combine their Governing Bodies into just one body for the federation.

The creation and membership of a federation is not just about structural change. It is a chance to continue our commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children in our federation through a school led system.

So in essence, it is what we are already doing but with a more formal structure.

Mrs Diana Atkinson would continue to be Head of the hard federation with each of the two schools having its own Head of School. Staff have been made aware of these proposals and no redundancies are required. Newly appointed staff may be appointed to the federation.

Is hard federation irreversible?

It is possible for schools to withdraw from a hard federation with Governing Bodies following an agreed process, as set out in the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012

Why are the Governing Bodies considering hard federation?

Both schools currently work together and have since 2016 through a 'soft federation' partnership which has already seen educational improvements for children across both schools.

Both schools have a shared vision to ensure that educational excellence is maintained and developed as time moves on.

They share an ambition to improve opportunities, provide best value, be sustainable, high performing and at the centre of their communities. They also hold a shared belief in the importance of continually developing and retaining high quality staff in order to provide the very best education for our children.

All this is built on the Christian foundations of both schools, where Christian values are actively promoted to help each child fulfil their true potential and become respected and respecting valued members of society.

Through hard federation our work can continue.

Admissions

Admissions would continue under the current arrangements, applying to each school, as published on the school websites.

What would stay the same?

- Each school would keep its own identity and name
- Each school would continue to be taught on their own school site
- Each school would have its own badge
- Each school would have its own DFE number
- Each school would have its own inspection by Ofsted and SIAMS
- Admission arrangements would remain separate, the same as at present
- Existing members of staff would continue to be employed
- Each school would receive its own budget and would be managed effectively across the federation
- Each school would have Governors who would provide challenge and support to both schools
- There would be a single head teacher as there is now
- Each school would hold a special place within its own community

What would change?

- The overarching federation would be called 'Gateway Federation.' This would not affect the school names
- The two separate Governing Bodies would be dissolved and replaced by a single, newly appointed Governing Body with responsibility for the federation as a whole

What would the benefits be?

Children's own schools would continue as they are.

They would continue to benefit from a wide range of teaching expertise, resources, facilities and specialist provision eg artists in residence.

Strong and proven leadership and staffing would continue to be utilised for the benefit of the schools and their communities. A strong federation can and does manage change in a clear way, ensuring that the children have maximum benefit from educational developments.

Staff, as now, would have the opportunity to develop professionally and to share best practice. This, coupled with mutual support and wider career opportunities would aid staff retention.

A hard federation provides a sustainable model whilst, most importantly, each school remains at the heart of the communities that they serve.

Governance

A hard federation is made up of one Governing Body and a single set of committees covering both schools. Governing Bodies are expected to focus on providing effective, strategic leadership, holding the head teacher to account, overseeing the financial performance of the schools and making sure that the schools' money is well spent.

This is a demanding task for which all governors need to have, or develop, the relevant skills. All potential governors of a hard federation would complete a skills audit and would be appointed on the basis that they have the skills and qualities necessary to contribute towards the effective governance of the federation.

It is proposed that the new Governing Body would be constituted with 14 governors. This would allow a balance of representation from both communities.

Category of Governor	Who appoints them?	Number
Headteacher	Ex Officio	1
Parent Governors	Elected by parents/carers of children on roll (one from each school)	2
Staff Governor	Elected by all staff across both schools (one from each school)	2
Local Authority Governor	Proposed by Herefordshire Council	1
Foundation Governors and Clergy	Appointed by Diocese, Lea PCC, Goff Trust (four by Diocese/Lea PCC, three by Goff Trust)	7
	Clergy – appointed by Diocese	1

What next?

The Governing Bodies of both schools would really like to hear your views. If you have any comments please submit your response by the deadline of 3.30pm on Friday, 22nd March, 2019.

Your form should be marked 'Hard Federation Response' and can be handed to the School Office or posted to Clerk to the School Governors at either school address.

If you wish to email comments, please put Hard Federation Response as subject title and send to:-

admin@gorsleygoffs.hereford.sch.uk

or

admin@lea-primary.hereford.sch.uk

All responses will be considered by the Governing Bodies and any agreed adjustments to the proposal made. There will then be a separate meeting of each Governing Body to decide whether to proceed or not. We aim to reach a decision by 8th April and to let you know the outcome as soon as possible.

Some frequently asked questions

Would the name of the schools change?

No. Each school would keep its own name but there would be a separate over-arching name for the Governing Body/Federation, which would be Gateway Federation

Would school uniforms change?

No. Each school would keep its own uniform and unique identity

Would pupils be registered at the federation or a single school?

Pupils would be registered and on roll at their individual school

Would federated schools combine their pupil results?

No. Results would be attributed to the individual schools

Would the federation be inspected by Ofsted and SIAMS?

No. Each school would have a separate Ofsted and SIAMS and be graded separately

Would there be any changes in terms and conditions for staff?

No. TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings- Protection of Employment Regulations) process would ensure that staff have the same employment rights and pension plans

Would the schools share a Governing Body?

Yes. The previous Governing Bodies would be dissolved and a new single body set up

Would one school take the lead over the other?

No. The schools would collaborate and work together as equal partners

What would happen to the PTFAs?

They would both continue as now, linked to each school

Confidential Response Form

This document is in response to the consultation document outlining the proposal to form a hard federation between Lea CE and Gorsley Goffs Primary schools. All responses will be treated in the strictest of confidence; however we will not be able to take anonymous comments into consideration. Responses must be received by 3.30pm on Friday, 22nd March 2019.

Name

I am a (please select)

- Parent/carer of a child in Gorsley Goffs Primary School
- Parent/carer of a child in Lea CE Primary School and/or Pre-School
- Member of staff at Gorsley Goffs Primary School
- Member of staff at Lea CE Primary School and/or Pre-School
- Other interested party (please specify)

Your response (please select)

- I support the proposal
- I do not support the proposal
- I am not sure

Please give your reasons/views if you wish to do so:

Thank you for completing this response form.

Please submit as per instructions on Page 6.