

## Quotes from Ofsted

Report on 'Leadership of more than one school' – September 2011  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/leadership-of-more-one-school](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/leadership-of-more-one-school)

For the federations inspected, Ofsted found:

'[They were] successful in broadening and enriching the curriculum, guidance and support for pupils';

'Effective leadership was the single most critical feature that helped to generate improvements and build capacity';

'Pupils' enjoyment of school and their confidence increased because of greater opportunities open to them and a larger circle of friends'

## Recommendations

- Ensure that the strategic purpose of federation and subsequent planning are sharply focused on benefits to pupils' education
- Establish rigorous procedures to hold leaders to account for their work beyond the initial steps taken to establish the federation
- Consult and communicate effectively with parents, staff, pupils and the community at the earliest stage to avoid pitfalls on the road to federation

## Useful Websites

[www.babcock-education.co.uk/ldp/governors](http://www.babcock-education.co.uk/ldp/governors) then click on federation

[www.exeter.anglican.org](http://www.exeter.anglican.org)

[www.gov.uk/government](http://www.gov.uk/government)

## First point of contact

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## A GUIDE TO FEDERATION

A federation is a formal arrangement where schools (of any size or type) come together to share a single governing body. The schools retain their separate legal status and have their own budget allocations, individual admissions, performance tables and Ofsted inspections.

Each federation is different. Schools in federations work together to maximise funding, resources and expertise. Federation does not bring cashable savings to the Local Authority but they can ease financial pressure within schools because resources can be shared and deployed across the federation.

Federation brings the opportunity to secure strong strategic leadership and work differently to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century schooling.



## Why Federation?

One strategic governing body means a number of schools can work formally together to improve opportunities for children.

## What are the benefits?

- strong leadership using more strategic leadership and management structures allowing school-based leaders to focus on teaching, learning and raising standards
- broader learning and social experiences for children
- opportunities to develop future leaders with Heads of Teaching and Learning or Heads of schools being mentored by Executive Heads
- attractive recruitment opportunities and retention of staff by providing a range of professional development and new career pathways for staff across the federation
- new opportunities for staff to work together, increasing motivation, reducing workload and isolation through shared planning and activities.
- the sharing of resources, taking advantage of economies of scale and avoiding the duplication of resources and effort

- shared responsibilities and accountabilities for children across communities rather than just within a specific school
- the offer of extended services across schools and a variety of activities, childcare, parent support and community access which an individual school may not be able to provide
- community cohesion and help to sustain education provision within some rural communities.

## Who make the best partners?

Schools will investigate the potential for working with another school (or schools) which may not necessarily be geographically close to each other. The use of email, video conferencing technology, and more flexible professional roles can assist collaborative working. There is no blueprint for federation as each one has to reflect and meet the needs of their own schools but federation can;

- provide diversity and retain schools within communities by using different leadership structures and models.
- formalise collaboration with a manageable and sustainable framework with one strategic governing body.

## Common concerns when exploring federation

- Community perceptions about losing the headteacher and perceived loss of the individual identity of a school
- how new leadership roles will work e.g.
  - Executive heads working with staff and governors rather than teaching
  - Executive heads needing to understand different schools, cultures and issues where each school may be at a different stage of development and performance
- how governors and staff will operate their responsibilities and accountabilities for a greater number of children across schools
- practical and statutory issues of staff deployment, new roles and contracts
- how governors will ensure that they uphold and develop the Christian distinctiveness of church schools when federating with a community school

## The process of considering federation partnership structures

Governors and headteachers will have researched different forms of collaboration and decided upon federation as the most suitable model for their school. Governors may visit other federations and

invite Chairs of Governors and/or headteachers to speak at their meetings. The Local Authority through Babcock LDP also provides guidance, information and support for governors.

In some schools, governors have voted to agree federation as a principal before approaching any potential partners.

When another school(s) agrees to investigate federation, a joint committee of governors (with delegated powers) is formed to prepare the proposal. This group develops the long-term vision and a set of values and structures for the federation. It also organises the consultation process.

Members of the joint governor group present their proposal, which should be minuted, to the full governing body of each school. Each governing body decides whether or not to proceed into the formal consultation process.

The Anglican Diocese offers support and advice for Church Schools, has published guidelines and asks to be informed prior to the consultation process. See [www.exeter.anglican.org](http://www.exeter.anglican.org)

## The statutory consultation process

Governing bodies must allow at least six school weeks for the formal consultation period. This starts with the sending of a letter to all stakeholders giving details of the information in the proposal. There will be a sequence of information-giving, presentations and other opportunities for parents to raise questions and concerns. All parties are encouraged to submit written representations to the governing bodies.

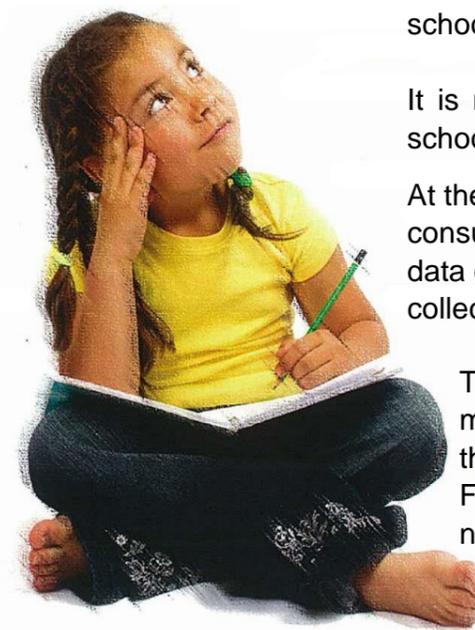
Governing bodies must inform the headteacher of each school; all staff paid to work at the schools; every person known to be a parent/carer of a registered pupil at any of the schools; the professional associations; the LA and the Diocese.

It is not a requirement, but is good practice to consult other agencies with whom the school work closely and also to inform the local elected members of the County Council.

At the end of the consultation period the joint governor group prepares a summary of consultation responses. This may include details of activities that have taken place, data on the numbers participating in the process and a summary of the comments collected.

This information is presented to the individual governing bodies before a simple majority vote is taken on whether to proceed or abandon the federation proposal. If they decide to proceed, they inform the relevant authorities.

Following the decision to move to federation, an Instrument of Government for the new federation governing body is drawn up. As part of the discharge process, each governing body provides a written report, outlining how it has fulfilled its responsibilities and providing an inventory of assets to inform the new governing body (model documentation is available).



**The decision to federate is made by the individual governing bodies and not by the Local Authority.**