

# Proposal on the Federation of Marshbrook First School, Princefield First School, Penkridge Middle School and Wolgarston High School

## Consultation on the Federation of Marshbrook First School, Princefield First School, Penkridge Middle School and Wolgarston High School

The purpose of this document is to commence the formal consultation to establish the federation of Marshbrook First School, Princefield First School, Penkridge Middle School and Wolgarston High School from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

To enter into a federation, all four schools must go out to consultation for six weeks and consult with parents/carers, staff, the community, Trade Unions and the Local Authority.

This consultation document explains what a federation is and the benefits it will bring to all four schools. It also provides you with a form to complete to put forward your views. In addition to receiving the consultation document to respond to, drop-in sessions have been organised where questions can be posed and further information gathered about the proposal.

We would really appreciate your contribution to the consultation. Do please complete the form at the back of the consultation information pack and send us your views by 3rd February 2016 on our proposal to enter into a federation of the four schools.

## Vision

We take collective responsibility for ensuring that every child and young person in our federation receives an excellent education, achieves high outcomes and realises their potential.

## What is a Federation?

A federation is a group of two or more schools with a single governing body. It is a way of bringing schools closer together. It means from a governing body point of view, the schools will be considered as one.

*'The creation and membership of a federation is not just about structural change. **It is also about a different mindset** where the governors and school leaders share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the federation, as opposed to just a single school, through a school-led system of raising standards and driving improvement.'* (NCTL The governance of federations, 2014).

## **Why are we making this proposal?**

Marshbrook First School, Princefield First School, Penkridge Middle School and Wolgarston High School are already partner schools in the Wolgarston Collaboration of schools, which was established in 2011. The collaboration vision is to achieve educational excellence through working more closely together. The collaboration is committed to improving opportunities and services for every child and young person through the provision of best value.

Princefield First School, Penkridge Middle School and Wolgarston High School have had a shared business arrangement since September 2014. This has enabled administration to be restructured and an improved service to be delivered at a lower cost.

Our four schools already have a number of circumstances in common:

- We are the 4 non-church schools in the Collaboration, with similar ethos and aspiration, located geographically close together in the village of Penkridge.
- We share challenging financial circumstances and concern regarding sustainability.
- We share an ambition to drive up standards and be part of a sustainable, high performing local education system.
- We hold a shared belief in the importance of continually developing and retaining high-quality staff and that we are better able to invest in high quality professional development and staff training when costs are shared and jointly procured.

A relentless focus by the single governing body on raising standards from 2-19 years will help to ensure that our children have the best possible start in life and enhanced future life chances.

The proposal to federate will add significant benefits to the education of all pupils within the four schools. The sharing of expertise in areas such as learning and teaching, curriculum and assessment, SEND, behaviour and attendance, will benefit all the schools.

Improved school efficiencies and reduced costs through the growth of this joint approach by schools will also enable and stimulate growth. When leaders and teachers are able to focus more fully on the core purpose of learning and teaching rather than on, for example, premises management, high standards will stimulate growth in pupil numbers and capacity for improvement.

## **What will it mean for parents and children?**

Parents and children may not notice much change because most of the impact will be behind the scenes.

Certain important principles will remain the same:

- There will remain a headteacher at each school who will be an expert in the pupil age-range on that site.
- That headteacher will oversee the day-to-day delivery of education on that site.
- There will be a staffed office /reception on each school site.
- There will be an individual school governors' committee dedicated to that school.
- The school will retain its current name and uniform under the federation arrangement.
- The day to day contact arrangements between the school and their parents/carers will not be changed by the federation, but we will continue to seek ways to improve what we do.
- The schools remain as Local Authority schools.

## **What will it mean for the staff?**

- Existing staff will remain on their current terms and conditions.
- Any new staff will be employed by the federation.
- Staffing reductions and increases will be decided by the federation governing body.
- An executive business manager will be appointed by the federation to lead a central business team. All non-teaching staff will belong to this team.
- The central business team will have a presence on all four sites and will be responsible for all business functions, including HR, finance, health and safety, premises, ICT and catering.
- The federation will provide opportunities for staff to develop across the curriculum stages and this will be attractive for recruitment and career development.
- The schools remain as Local Authority schools.

## **What will it mean for leadership?**

- Headteachers are responsible for the day to day running of the school. Strategic leadership and accountability for driving up standards will be held by a new post of principal. The Principal will be one of the four current headteachers and will be appointed by the federation governing body. Initially, the role is expected to require two days per week.
- The Principal will be line managed by the chair of the Federation Governing Body.
- In the first year, the Principal will be responsible for creating the Federation's Development and Improvement Plan, strategic direction, targets, standards and policies and procedures.

## **What will it mean for the school budgets?**

- The federation governing body is responsible for the delegated budget of each school. In the first year, the four budgets will have 2% top-sliced to provide the funding for the effective running of the federation.
- The remainder of the budget will stay with the individual school.
- There will be one appropriately skilled Federation Finance Committee.
- Savings made by the federation will initially belong to the federation and will not automatically return to the individual school in which the savings are made.

## **What will it mean for Governors?**

- Our four current governing bodies cease to exist at the point of federation.
- By forming a single governing body, decision-making moves from school to federation level.
- The new governing body both morally and in law must be equally concerned for the good of all four schools. They cease to champion one school. The governors will share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the federation, as opposed to just a single school.
- Governors will be sought from all four schools' parent and staff bodies as well as seeking governors from the wider community to ensure that the school has access to the skills necessary to properly and effectively oversee the work of all four schools.

The federation's governing body will have 15 members:

- One parent governor of each federated school
- One Local Authority Governor
- The headteacher of each federated school
- One staff governor
- Five appropriately skilled co-opted governors

In addition, each individual school will have a school committee. This committee will be able to consider delegated issues and bring recommendations to the federation governing body.

## **What do the governors think?**

Following extensive research and discussions the governors of all four schools support the proposal to consult on federation. Federation will offer greater security to all schools, and provide them with an excellent foundation on which to continue to move forward.

## **What does it mean for our collaboration of schools?**

- The four schools will continue to be committed to the collaboration of schools.
- Children from St Michael's CE (A) First School and St Leonards CE (C) First School will continue, as they currently do, to transfer to Penkridge Middle School at the start of Year 5.
- Children from Brewood CE (C) Middle School will continue to transfer, as they currently do, to Wolgarston High School at the start of Year 9.

## **What does it mean for admissions?**

Admissions to all four schools will continue to be under the current arrangements. Parents and carers will continue to apply for a place at the school of their choice in the usual manner.

## **What does it mean for Ofsted inspections?**

Schools in a federation are inspected separately, but Ofsted can be asked to inspect the schools at the same time to form a rounded picture of the work of the federation.

## **Can a school leave a federation? Can other schools join?**

It is possible for schools to withdraw from a federation and governing bodies must follow a prescribed process, set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

Additional schools can join a federation and the prescribed process is also set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

## What happens now?

This document is the start of a six week consultation period on the proposal to federate. All written comments will be considered by the governors when the consultation period closes on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 and they will then decide whether to proceed or not.

If the decision taken is to proceed, the schools will inform the Local Authority that they wish to federate and a new, unified governing body will come into operation.

## Consultation Events

We have arranged two information sessions where you can find out more and contribute your comments. The Headteachers and representatives from the four governing bodies will be present at both sessions. Each session is open to families of pupils attending any of the four schools and members of the wider community.

Date	Venue	Time
13 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	Wolgarston High School	6.30pm
14 <sup>th</sup> January 2016	Penkridge Middle School	9.30am

In addition, there will be a staff consultation meeting held in each school.

## What happens next?

You have until 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016 to express your views. Once the consultation has finished, the four governing bodies will together review all comments before making a final decision whether to federate. The table below shows the next steps involved.

Activity	Date
Consultation (6 term time weeks)	7th December 2015 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2016
Governing bodies meet to consider feedback and make final decision	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2016
Proposed conversion date*	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2016

\*subject to the decision of the governing bodies

## Completion and return of the Consultation Response Form

Please respond in one of the following 3 ways:

**By post:** To any of the four schools marked for the attention of 'Federation' –

Marshbrook First School  
Teddlesley Road  
Penkridge  
Staffordshire  
ST19 5BA

Princefield First School  
Saxon Road  
Penkridge  
Staffordshire  
ST19 5EP

Penkridge Middle School  
Marsh Lane  
Penkridge  
Staffordshire  
ST19 5BW

Wolgarston High School  
Cannock Road  
Penkridge  
Staffordshire  
ST19 5RX

**In person:** By handing it in to one of the school offices

**By email:** You can also take part in the consultation by sending an email with your feedback to [thefederation1@outlook.com](mailto:thefederation1@outlook.com)

The closing date for comments is Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2016.

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## Consultation Response Form

### 1. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed federation? (tick the appropriate box)

- I agree with the proposed federation
- I disagree with the proposed federation
- I am not sure

### 2. Comments and questions

### 3. Your details

Name (BLOCK CAPITAL)

School (if applicable)

Please indicate which group you belong to by ticking the appropriate box:

Parent

Staff member

Pupil

Other – please specify

Date:

**Thank you for taking the time to complete the response form. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.**