

# **Suffolk Local Authority guidance on forming federations**

## **Introduction**

### **Purpose of this document**

This guidance aims to provide direct support to school governing bodies looking to federate and support the due diligence process. It will also provide support for governors to ensure the decisions made have the best potential to secure sustainability in terms of both pupil numbers and school improvement.

Local Authority maintained schools can use this guidance, and the sources referenced within it, to explore the benefits that federating may provide and any lessons previously learnt by school leaders who have followed this path.

Local Authority officers are then able to support and advise schools on the detail of federating once there is commitment by governors to pro-actively explore a partnership. LA officers can support schools in considering the options open to them and in carrying out processes required. It is important that governors thoroughly explore the potential options first and consider what would be gained by federating with one or more other schools and any outcomes that cannot be achieved by working as a standalone school.

### **The Suffolk Context**

Increasingly schools find themselves in a challenging environment. This is an opportune time to revisit the options available and consider current guidance. Headteacher recruitment and retention, along with demographic changes, such as declining pupil rolls and overall viability, are important issues facing the future of small rural primary schools. It is likely that increasing numbers of Suffolk schools will need to look to federate to address these problems.

A decision to federate could help sustain schools otherwise likely to close due to falling pupil numbers and can provide a positive option to schools facing longstanding headteacher recruitment issues. Parents may be pleased to support this decision as a mechanism for sustaining a valued school in their community.

Understanding future pupil number profiles is an important consideration when looking at partnership working. In Suffolk there are significant variations in pupil number trends between different schools and different geographical areas. Pupil number forecasts for planning areas and individual schools are available on request from the LA's Infrastructure team who can be contacted through [schools@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:schools@suffolk.gov.uk).

### **What is a federation?**

Federations are formal agreements between schools and can be a strong way of maximising resources for the benefit of all pupils, to achieve higher standards through improved teaching, learning, leadership and governance.

A federation is defined as two or more schools that are governed collectively under a single governing body. There is typically one executive headteacher for the federation, but they remain as individual schools.

Federations can involve a mix of maintained primary, special and secondary schools of any size. These arrangements can take place between maintained schools of different categories – community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided and special schools – and of different age ranges. A key feature is that the status of each individual school does not change as within a federation each school can retain its own identity, its own budget and DfE unique reference number, and is inspected separately by Ofsted, although budgets can be pooled should governors wish to do so.

In considering federation, schools often form a less formal partnership in the first instance to give them time to try this form of working and to develop the most efficient way of organising roles and responsibilities bespoke to their schools.

Whilst many benefits of partnership working can be achieved through this structure, federation provides a formal framework, including shared governance, which can provide a single strategic direction and a more permanent commitment.

### **Why federate?**

In all decision making about schools, benefits for pupils must be at the heart. This includes any decisions made about partnership working arrangements. Looking creatively at sharing knowledge, resources and best practice can contribute to the aim of every child having a good start in life and the best opportunities to thrive, develop and achieve. The question 'Why federate?' should be considered with these benefits in mind. Forming a partnership or federation with another school or schools, can increase the potential for schools to provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities and to achieve academic excellence with no child left behind. In addition, staff will have the opportunity to develop and grow. Greater collaborative working between schools, within

partnerships or federated arrangements, will offer some schools greater opportunities for development and greater long-term strength, as well as stability.

### **What will your successful federation look like?**

When considering federating with another school, it is important to have thought about what you would like your federation to be like and what you want the identities of your schools within the federation to be like as a result. Setting direction and establishing the culture, values and ethos of the school are part of the sixteen competencies in the '[Competency Framework for Governors](#)'. Once established, these will capture both the strategic priorities for the school and how planning will reflect the values and ethos.

What are your school's values?



The six character benchmarks in the DfE document '[Character Education framework guidance](#)', November 2019, may also provide some helpful prompts for consideration when establishing the vision, ethos and values of the federation.

*'I have managed to keep the rural ethos of the existing schools, but mixed it with the advantages of a large town school and all that can offer.'*

## **Benefits of schools working together**

The potential benefits to schools of working together can be many and varied and will depend on the contexts of the schools and the reasons for partnering. The benefits for pupils must be at the heart of decisions about partnership working. Looking creatively at sharing knowledge, resources and best practice can raise pupil outcomes through improved teaching and learning.

There can also be benefits for school staff which in turn should benefit pupils. Increased opportunities for professional development and additional support and experience can create a larger pool of staff and increased capacity for succession planning. There will be access to colleagues with a wider range of curriculum expertise, and opportunities to share and learn from good practice which will support career development.

Benefits include:

- strengthening leadership across both schools and greater opportunities for leadership development within them
- increasing access to staff expertise during the school day and in after-school activities. This could also include joint working, for example on assessment and moderation as well as support and challenge for school improvement
- staff gaining from sharing wider ideas and experiences and access to a wider range of teaching resources. This can lead to developing a richer and enhanced curriculum and a greater range of sports, social and cultural opportunities for pupils which, particularly in very small schools, can be difficult to provide
- economies of scale
- potential to centralise teams including finance, HR and premises
- sharing of buildings, facilities and building maintenance needs
- centralising other leadership roles for example, curriculum innovation, outdoor learning and PE, the SENDCo role, child welfare, safeguarding and attendance can all increase the capacity of leaders to focus on school improvement
- more streamlined leadership structures can evolve with increased flexibility. Pairs or small groups of schools can have one leader with senior leaders in each of the schools, or one leadership team across all schools, or a mixed approach
- succession planning is made easier as there are more opportunities for staff to experience different leadership roles in different settings if they can work in more than one school
- the schools become easier to recruit to as aspirational teachers wanting to develop into leadership roles will see the opportunities a federation can provide over a small isolated school
- a greater range of social contact which would be beneficial to pupils in very small schools
- increased interest and stimulus for pupils and staff.

## **Successful federations will have...**

The criteria below have been identified as crucial to successful federations. They have been gleaned through discussion with headteachers and with governors in existing Suffolk federations and multi-academy trusts, evaluations and evidence from Standards and Excellence Officers (SEOs) and from reviewing publications in other Local Authorities.

- a sense of shared identity
- a sense of common purpose and standards
- strong cohesive leadership
- a strong management infrastructure with common working approaches
- trust, a sense of openness and the willingness to operate in a joined-up way
- robust systems of review
- commitment from all parties
- strong communication mechanisms when introducing changes – including with parents.

It is crucial to set firm foundations for the federation. When leaders are clear about the reasons for federating and how pupils will benefit from such an arrangement it will support the schools in working together to develop a sense of shared identity. Successful federations plan for the short term and longer term aims and build in frequent reviews to ask questions about how well the federation is performing. Being able to try the partnership first, prior to a formal relationship, can help to establish the partnership and to manage logistical issues, for example moving between two sites.

Staff 'buy in' is also important. Partnerships should feel equal, and any one school should not feel the partnership or federation process is being 'done to them' rather than with them. Buy in may not be strong if parents and governors feel they are losing something. Strong partnerships are based on a mutual need, not on convenience. It is important to work with staff so that they are clear on their roles and responsibilities, linked to the expectations of the federation.

## **Leadership Structure**

A benefit of partnering with another school is that leadership can be strengthened across both schools.

There are a number of possible leadership models for a federation:

- a single headteacher (often referred to as an 'executive headteacher') for the schools in the federation who may have 'Heads of School' reporting to them

- each school has its own headteacher reporting to the chair of governors of the joint governing body; one of them may have some responsibility for coordinating or leading the federation but he/she may not line manage the other head(s) with regard to their respective roles as headteachers of their schools
- there is a single senior leadership team consisting of an executive head and deputy / assistant heads working across all the schools
- each school has its own headteacher reporting to the chair of governors of the joint governing body but with a 'chief executive' (or similar title) with responsibility for coordinating or leading the federation or equivalent – but he/she may or may not line manage the other head(s) with regard to their respective roles as headteachers of their schools.

*'By sharing a high-quality head, schools benefit from sharing that expertise and leadership. The money saved by not employing two heads can be ploughed into additional teaching support. It depends from case to case, but usually this arrangement means that the head has more non-teaching time than the individual previous headship posts had, which means that they are better able to provide leadership and support to the other staff. It also means that management points can be built in to provide one or more of the other teachers with some career progression – something currently lacking in many small schools.'*

The role of the executive headteacher of a federation is different to that of a headteacher of one school and it is important for the executive headteacher (EHT) and school leaders to be aware of the different demands and expectations. There can be workload issues, particularly for a single headteacher, as each school will continue to have a separate Ofsted inspection (and SIAMs inspection for church schools). This might be offset, if the federation removes the need for a headteacher to have a significant teaching commitment. The EHT will need to be able to delegate some responsibilities to avoid overload.

It may be helpful to consider the National Qualification for Executive Leadership. (NPQEL). <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-professional-qualification-for-executive-leadership-npqel>

In any new leadership structure, it is advisable to have a clear scheme of delegation (who has what responsibility and what does it cover?). It is advisable to create a clear framework that sets out the arrangements for both schools to see. For governance, the National Governance Association (NGA) skills audit can be used to identify gaps in governor skills. Headteacher and staff well-being should be considered, particularly if staff are concerned that they may have less autonomy as a result of a new structure.

Another advantage of consolidating leadership is that potential senior leaders are likely to have opportunities for developing their leadership skills and experience. Federating can provide good continued professional development, can be motivating for career progression and can result in improved senior and middle management by giving wider opportunities across the federation rather than in just one school.

*'the broader, more distributed leadership structure put in place provided brilliant training for headship'*

### **Staffing structure**

Models of partnership working are likely to raise considerations about staffing in both the short and longer term. For example, it is possible to create a central team for finance, HR and premises. Having one shared finance officer can relieve school leaders of having to manage finance and help them focus on school improvement activities. Similarly, there might be one person responsible for writing policies for both schools, which Individual schools can personalise with their own details and appendices.

Centralising some roles such as curriculum innovation, outdoor learning, SENCo attendance and safeguarding can enable heads of schools to focus on school improvement more easily. Some schools have set up a system where each school has had a well-being champion who meet regularly together to monitor well-being.

*'Do things only once –  
for example dual SEF/one  
admin basket/one  
headteacher's report. '*

It will be important to seek advice from HR in order to explore the particular implications for each school.

The contact details for Schools Choice HR are;

T: 0345 6066 046

E: [hr@schoolschoice.org](mailto:hr@schoolschoice.org)



## **Communicating with parents**

The process of bringing parents on board is crucial to a federation becoming quickly and successfully established. Clear and frequent communication is key to this process. Parents and carers are likely to be in support if they understand that forming a federation can help to sustain a school that they hold in high regard and would want to continue to send their children to. In communicating with them it may be important to emphasise that federating can help schools retain their identity and is a strong and proven alternative to academising.

Learning from existing federations is that parental concerns might include:

- fear that the larger, more financially stable schools would be subsidising the smaller and less financially stable schools – ‘one school gaining at the expense of another’
- ‘hidden agendas’ from the local authority, ultimately to close one or other of the schools
- parents possibly having to fund the travelling necessary for children to move between sites
- issues around siblings being collected from different sites (staggered start and finish times can resolve any timing considerations)
- uniform – whether the school that their child goes to will change their uniform, for example
- parents ‘losing’ their headteacher as a result of having to be in more than one school
- the school losing its ‘identity’.

Communication can be through regular meetings and/or letters to parents to explain any changes that will be taking place and the reasons why. Changes may be linked to class sizes, arrangements for transportation and deployment of staff.

There are a range of communication strategies that schools have used, for example

- creating a new prospectus
- competitions to design new logos for the school uniform
- establishing friends of the school associations

- public relations
- work by parents to promote the advantages
- publicity in the local press and presence at local events.

Presenting the option to federate as a great opportunity for the children and the community and constantly focusing on the positives, is an effective way of changing minds. Convincing parents that the sense of tradition will continue, even if two schools are effectively merging into one, can be reassuring and that there will be a sense of parity between the schools. It may be useful to refer to the benefits section on page 4 and 5 of this document when communicating with parents.

Parents themselves can become advocates for a federation and can promote the school alongside school staff, governors and pupils. This can help parents to feel positive. Examples where schools have worked with both parents and pupils to do this are:

- children take the messages home to parents regarding the new opportunities available to them, such as taking part in sporting events with their own peer groups for the first time, and engaging in extracurricular sports and performing arts clubs
- actively bridging the gaps between parents from different schools by providing frequent opportunities for them to come together
- setting up an after-school and breakfast club
- ensuring a regular presence at local community events.

### **Governance of Federations**

Governors play a key role in supporting the headteacher from the early stages of the federation by supporting partnership working. The importance of their role continues throughout the process and once any new arrangement is established. Their commitment and determinations to sustain the federation is key. When schools federate, a new federated governing body is created. A new federated governing body constitution will need to be agreed and legally drawn up in a new 'Instrument of governance' – please liaise with the governance team for advice on how to do this. For contact details, see page 14.

There must be no fewer than seven governors; there is no upper limit, but governors need to consider whether a smaller number would allow business to be conducted more effectively.

The governing body of a federation must include:

- two elected parent governors from across the federation<sup>1</sup>
- the headteacher
- one elected staff governor
- one local authority governor.

Governing bodies may also appoint co-opted governors.

Federations, including foundation and voluntary schools, are required to have partnership or foundation governors. Please consult the LA Governance team and, where applicable, your Diocesan Adviser for further information.

A further consideration is the possibility of each school having a link governor

To help support a smooth transition to federation, it is suggested that governing bodies take part in the following activities:

- joint training and development activities for all governors and senior leaders in the federation, to help them work together towards agreed goals and strategic objectives
- a review of committee structures. It is vital to define clear remits for each committee, which should reflect the current needs of the schools, both individually and collectively
- training for chairs on running meetings. This will help set the tone and structure of meetings to be more productive. (Schools' Choice should be able to provide advice on this.)

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<sup>1</sup> The GB of every federation must include 2 parent governors to be elected of any parent of any federated school or appointed by the GB of the federation. When there is a vacant parent governor position every parent of a child registered at one of the schools in the federation should be informed of the vacancy and their entitlement to stand as a candidate rather than a parent of each school in the federation.

### **Disadvantages of federating**

Locally managed schools have had extensive autonomy to determine their own identity and priorities for many years. Some schools may feel that there will be a dilution of this with more structured arrangements for partnership working. In small communities, there may be traditional separation which governors would need to work with the community to overcome.

There may be anxieties around the increased time commitment on already hard-pressed staff. Central to this increased commitment is the need to establish good communications with all partners. It is generally the case that the less formal the partnership, the greater the increase in workload. This is why federations which are formal may be more efficient than less formal partnerships between schools.

Some partners may be wary of the stronger influence of larger schools, or schools which are perceived to be in a stronger position. Faith schools may find it more challenging to identify an appropriate partner school.

### **Top tips from existing Suffolk federation executive headteachers and governors.**

- The most important thing to consider is the rationale and the reasons for federating to ensure that all parties share the same vision. The federation is not just a temporary arrangement. This is a union that is set up for the long-term benefit of the pupils and should be sustainable after the current leaders and governors have left the school.
- Due diligence is needed when setting up the federation and consent and goodwill from all parties.
- Try before you buy. Establish an informal partnership first, but don't remain uncommitted for too long, for example, an 18-month trial period should be plenty of time to know whether the relationship will work for you both.
- While there are two governing bodies, try to have one governor who is on both. Moving to one governing body in the longer term helps avoid duplication.
- If your first partnership does not succeed, do not give up. Establish a partnership with a different school.

- Consider to what extent individual schools will retain their individual character and ethos and what will be shared and consistent across both schools. For example, shared progression routes and assessment opportunities in national curriculum subjects but different contexts for the delivery of the curriculum that is pertinent to the individual school locality.
- Agree financial decision processes / budgeting in advance.
- Work towards all staff having a contract that enables them to be deployed in any of the federated schools. Ensure you contact HR regarding any changes to existing staffing contracts as this can be complicated.
- It takes time to get the staffing structure right. When it is, there are big gains from genuine partnership working between staff. Be clear what staffing structure you need to suit the way that you want to operate.
- Clear job descriptions are more important than job titles.
- Try to be consistent with communication processes and leadership systems. For example, have the same self-evaluation and monitoring systems in all schools. Ensure communications are given to school staff at the same time.
- Be equitable regarding the time spent in each school. Ensure meetings take place on both sites, but they needn't be the same days each week.
- Make all staff meetings joint meetings and arrange for staff to sit together in year group teams or subject teams across both schools to facilitate working together and developing professional relationships.
- As executive head it was great to have the governors' agreement for me to be in each school according to need, rather than agreeing a defined amount of time in each.
- We started with a collaborative governors' group which had a simple agenda at meetings focussing on staff, pupils and finance. These were very effective meetings as they had a clear focus.
- Maintain clear communications with parents throughout.

The executive headteachers and chairs of governors of the existing Suffolk federations are all willing to provide support and answer any questions you may have about federating. Their contact details are in the following table:

<b>Federation</b>	<b>Executive HT</b>	<b>Contact details</b>	<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Contact Details</b>
Fairfield Infant School and Colneis Junior School	Mark Girling	E: <a href="mailto:m.girling@fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk">m.girling@fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk</a> T: 01394 283206	Celia Davies	E: <a href="mailto:c.davies@fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk">c.davies@fairfieldandcolneis.co.uk</a> T: 07518 734933
Birchwood and Holbrook Primary Schools	Steve Cloke	E: <a href="mailto:s.cloke@birchwood.suffolk.sch.uk">s.cloke@birchwood.suffolk.sch.uk</a> T: 01473610701	Paul Heskett	E: <a href="mailto:paul.hesketh1@icloud.com">paul.hesketh1@icloud.com</a> T: 07952 484259 or
St Josephs and St Edmunds Catholic Primary Schools	Maria Kemble	E: <a href="mailto:MKemble@st-edmunds.suffolk.sch.uk">MKemble@st-edmunds.suffolk.sch.uk</a> T: 01284 755141	Zoe Crane	E: <a href="mailto:zoeicrane@googlemail.com">zoeicrane@googlemail.com</a> T: 07982 996084
Otley and Witnesham Primary Schools	Michaela Harris	E: <a href="mailto:head@owfed.co.uk">head@owfed.co.uk</a> T: 01473 890302/ 785252	Ian Liddell	E: <a href="mailto:ian.liddell@suffolkshow.co.uk">ian.liddell@suffolkshow.co.uk</a> T: 01473 892008
Copdock Primary and Bentley C of E VCP School	Jo Austin	E: <a href="mailto:head@copdock.suffolk.sch.uk">head@copdock.suffolk.sch.uk</a> T: 01473 730337/ 310253	Simon Hurst	E: <a href="mailto:simon.hurst@copdock.suffolk.sch.uk">simon.hurst@copdock.suffolk.sch.uk</a> T: 07565510633
Bildeston Primary and Whatfield C of E VCP Schools	Julia Shaw	E: <a href="mailto:Julia.shaw@bwfederation.uk">Julia.shaw@bwfederation.uk</a> T: <u>01449 740269</u>	Phil Clark	E: <a href="mailto:Phil.Clark@bwfederation.uk">Phil.Clark@bwfederation.uk</a> T: 07968376805
Hundon Community Primary and Thurlow C of E VCP Schools	Sharon Fitzgerald	E: <a href="mailto:ht@thurlowschool.co.uk">ht@thurlowschool.co.uk</a> T: 01440 783281	Carole Thompson and Penny Smith	E: <a href="mailto:cthompson@Hundonschool.co.uk">cthompson@Hundonschool.co.uk</a> T: 07708 899579 and E: <a href="mailto:psmith@hundonschool.co.uk">psmith@hundonschool.co.uk</a> T: 01440786375
Bramford and Somersham Primary School Federation	Emma Burgess	E <a href="mailto:headteacher@bramsomfederation.net">headteacher@bramsomfederation.net</a> T: <u>01473 741598</u>	Sharon Titford-Keller	E: <a href="mailto:chairofgovernors@bramsomfederation.net">chairofgovernors@bramsomfederation.net</a> . T: <u>01473 741598</u>

## **Next steps**

The more thought given to preparing and planning before setting up the federation, the more likely it will be to succeed and be adopted and accepted by all stakeholders including parents. The first step is to discuss potential reasons for federating with your governing body. The discussion should include what your school would hope to gain from it and a vision of what the partnership might look like. Use of the separate Implementation Guide and the audit tool in the appendix, will be helpful. The Implementation Guide also includes Frequently Asked Questions.

There is a legal requirement to prepare a formal consultation proposal (known as the ***statement of intent***) and to consult publicly on this with parents, staff, unions / professional associations and the wider community.

## **Contact details of Local Authority Officers who can provide advice:**

Gill Larkin - Head of School Leadership Development

E- [gill.larkin@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:gill.larkin@suffolk.gov.uk) T- 07850908586

Ruth Symington - Senior Standards and Excellence Officer (Leadership and Management)

E- [ruth.symington@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:ruth.symington@suffolk.gov.uk) T- 0771241808

Emma Eynon - Project Manager, Headteacher Recruitment

E- [emma.eynon@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:emma.eynon@suffolk.gov.uk) T- 01473 263943

Joanna Howell - Senior Governance Adviser

E- [Joanna.howell@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Joanna.howell@suffolk.gov.uk) T- 01473 263972

Lyndsay Cook - Governor Development Adviser

E – [Lyndsay.cook@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Lyndsay.cook@suffolk.gov.uk) T- 01473 260163

## APPENDIX

### **1. Audit tool for school leaders and governors considering federation**

This audit tool is designed to enable school leaders to explore the opportunities and possible challenges to collaborative working with other schools. It has been developed for use by school leaders and governors to consider before starting to seek partner school/s for federation.

It is recommended that the audit is completed prior to any formal discussions taking place with the Local Authority and diocese, for church schools. The audit tool draws together information that is already held by the school but enables leaders to begin to look at it from a collaborative perspective. The Local Authority will be able to provide advice when required.

It is suggested that the audit tool is completed by staff and governors in a working party, or it might be possible to use current committee structures to undertake the work. The working party will need to set aside sufficient time to explore all the key issues and to complete the document and take the follow-up actions required.

**The key aim of any collaborative working is to provide benefits for pupils, so please try to keep these outcomes at the heart of your thinking.**



<b>SCHOOL FACTS AND FIGURES</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
What is the school status (Community / VC / VA/Trust)?		
What are our pupil numbers currently and projected for the next three years? Can we cope with additional pupils expected? Can we continue to be sustainable if pupil numbers fall?		
Who are our geographical neighbours? Do we have any 'natural' partners - e.g. similar schools, schools we already have a particularly strong relationship with?		
What are the travel links to nearest neighbours/natural partners? How far away is the school? Is travel difficult at certain times of year? How long does the journey take?		
<b>COLLABORATION</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
What current collaborations are in place with other school(s) and / or organisations / settings? For example - informal collaboration, teaching school alliance.  Shared CPD offers?		
How has the school made parents aware of current collaborations? If not; what opportunities exist to obtain parental views on current collaborations?		
What is the impact of collaborations on outcomes for children so far?		
Is there any negative impact of current collaborations?		
What collaborations are in planning for the near future?		
What benefits for children might emerge from further collaboration?		

COLLABORATION (continued)	NOTES	NEXT STEPS
What needs to be improved re outcomes for pupils currently?		
Which area(s) of provision need improving, e.g. Sports partnerships, challenge partnerships, moderation?  Shared CPD offers?		
Which area(s) of provision could be improved by collaboration?		
Which staff are involved in that provision, what is their role and frequency?		
What is the current impact of collaborations on staff?  What impact is needed on staff? What are the school's priorities?		
How has the school developed its aims and vision in line with collaborative working practice?		
How does the school currently meet its aims through collaborative working?		
What disadvantages might emerge from further collaboration?		

GOVERNANCE	NOTES	NEXT STEPS
Which governors are due to finish their terms of office in the next three years?		
Are there current vacancies on the governing body?		
Are there particular skills and/or experience which could help the governing body to do its work more effectively?		
Could reconstitution help the governing body to do its work more effectively? E.g. a smaller body, with co-opted governors holding certain skills and experience?		
What links are there between governors or governing bodies of other schools?		
When was the vision and values ethos of the school last reviewed by governors? Is this reflected in current policies, practice and curriculum offer currently? To what extent? What needs improving? How can collaboration support this?		
How does the current governing body secure the unique ethos of the school, including religious character where appropriate?		

<b>FINANCE</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
What is our financial projection for the next three years? Is the school viable if no changes are made to its organisation?		
Do governors have a good level of understanding of financial issues?		
Are there any potential additional factors where the full details are not yet clear – e.g. proposed new housing, changes in the funding system, primary pupil numbers profiles going forward?		

<b>STAFFING</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
<b>Headteacher</b>		
What are the current headteacher's career plans for the next three years?		
What are we doing with regard to succession planning? Is there anything further that we can do?		
What are the benefits to us and others of extending the responsibility of the headteacher beyond our school?		
What needs to improve re the leadership structure in the school? Are there clear lines of accountability? Clarity of roles? How will this work if the HT is leading two schools?		
How do we support the headteacher's professional development?		

When looking at our school, do we know what the current challenges for our Headteacher are? - How have we addressed these to date?		
How will financial decisions be made when schools collaborate? What if there are differences of opinion?		
Do we know how our headteacher views their work-life balance and what support they might like in this area?		
Do we support the headteacher to work beyond the school and with other schools e.g. collaborative working?		
What networks does the headteacher work with?		

<b>STAFFING (continued)</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
<b>Teachers</b>		
What is the current teaching structure, including responsibilities held and how are individuals held to account? Is this structure sustainable for the next 3 years?		
Are any staff due to retire over the next 3 years?		
Are any staff expected to move on / promotions be promoted in the next 3 years?		
Are any staff expected to ask to reduce hours over the next three years?		

Are any staff interested in leadership and promotion opportunities internally? Are any staff aspiring leaders?		
Which staff have taught successfully across FS1/KS1/ KS2/KS3/KS4/KS5 and which staff are able to take on leadership responsibilities and / or other teaching areas?		
Are any staff specialists who could apply their expertise in other schools as well as ours?		
Is there specialist expertise missing from the school? Could it be provided by specialist staff from other schools?		
<b>STAFFING (continued)</b>	<b>NOTES</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS</b>
<b>Support staff (admin, teaching assistants, clerk to governors, site staff, caretaking cleaning), MSA and catering)</b>		
What is the current support staff structure? Is this structure sustainable for the next 3 years?		
Are any staff due to retire over the next 3 years?		
Are any staff expected to move on / be promoted in the next 3 years?		
Are any staff expected to ask to reduce hours over the next 3 years?		
How much of the finance / budget management is undertaken by an admin officer / the headteacher / FMS support officers / school business manager and are there plans to change this over the next three years?		

Does the admin post have a strategic management role – e.g. managing other support staff? Could it be developed with the current post holder?		
Is the current clerk to GB a school appointment or part of the clerking service? Do they currently work across more than one school?		

## **2. An example partnership agreement and terms of reference**

**These documents outline the collaborative partnership between two schools.**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### SCHOOLS' PARTNERSHIP COLLABORATION WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. The Collaboration Working Group (CWG) will have delegated power from each governing body to monitor the partnership arrangements and interim executive headship. Any variation of the Partnership Agreement will be decided by both governing bodies.
2. The CWG meetings will comprise of – executive headteacher, the chairs and vice chairs of both governing bodies and the head of school/acting deputy headteacher, if available. Representatives of the LA and the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich if a Church of England school may be invited in an advisory capacity when requested.
3. The quorum shall be a minimum of two representatives from each school or governing body plus the interim executive headteacher.
4. The CWG will meet termly to review the effectiveness of the collaboration and the interim executive headship against the aims, aspirations and guiding principles of the partnership, including measurement against the specific success criteria as outlined in the partnership agreement. The CWG will also consider the outcomes of internal and external reviews.
5. The CWG will provide a summary report to each of the full governing bodies after each meeting, in the form of minutes.
6. As part of the termly reviews (three each year) the CWG will undertake a formal review of the interim executive headship arrangement in relation to the partnership agreement and its links to each school and the School Development Plan.
7. The CWG will be responsible for monitoring the financial arrangement and all costs of the Interim Executive Headship and will ensure that agreed financial transfers take place (where applicable), via the direction from the chair to the finance committees of each Governing Body.
8. The CWG will be responsible for the management of the Interim Executive Headteacher's Performance Management.
9. The membership and constitution of the CWG will be reviewed at least annually.
10. The terms of reference will be reviewed each year.



## **Partnership Agreement**

### **PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN SCHOOLS**

For the purposes of this agreement, the term partnership refers to the management of both schools by the headteacher of one of the schools assuming the role of interim executive headteacher (EH) under the terms and conditions laid down below.

#### **1. Vision and Aims**

##### **1.1 Our joint aims and aspirations to:**

- ensure the partnership brings clear benefits for the children and stakeholders of both schools
- share and develop staff expertise across both schools
- embrace new, different and innovative ways of working
- raise the aspirations of children, staff, parents and governors
- secure strong strategic leadership
- identify and develop the strengths and characteristics of both schools
- identify and action areas of the curriculum that could be developed and engage in joint curriculum work
- identify and act on opportunities to exchange and share good work practices between the schools and beyond to any satellite schools
- work collaboratively to provide support and share issues and circumstances that will enable staff at all levels to develop their professional skills and enhance their capacity
- build on existing provisions within each school whilst developing a partnership between both schools for the educational future of the pupils and their families/carers, the professional development of staff and to ensure inclusion and commitment to the local community.

##### **1.2 Our guiding principles are that:**

- the interim executive headteacher of the partnership is to secure leadership of both schools and the progression of all children
- each school is to retain its own identity and character
- trust and good relationships are to be developed, not compromised
- raising achievement, securing outstanding teaching and providing high quality learning are the key priorities
- both governing bodies will collaborate to oversee the effective development and operation of the partnership
- there is a flexible approach over the effectiveness of the partnership

- each school will retain its autonomy with regard to resources and finance
- the success criteria of the partnership will be based upon the evaluation of:
  - a. timely and appropriate communication - to all stakeholders, including parents, regarding the effectiveness and actions of the partnership
  - b. leadership and accountability – of interim executive headteacher and heads of school/acting deputy
  - c. pupil achievement and progress in both schools as a result of collaboration
  - d. a common Self Evaluation system – accessible and readily understood by stakeholders
  - e. CPD / INSET opportunities for joint staff training with positive impact across both schools
  - f. joint activities - opportunities for pupils to engage in joint activities.

These success criteria will be monitored at all CWG meetings throughout the period of the collaboration as stated in the Terms of Reference and as part of the Interim Executive Headteachers performance management.

## **2. Interim Executive Headship (IEH)**

- 2.1 A school partnership established from (insert date) under which both schools are to be managed by one Interim Executive Headteacher.
- 2.2 Both schools will maintain separate governing bodies but will also allocate members of a Collaboration Working Group (CWG), with clear terms of reference, to oversee the partnership and Interim Executive Headship. The CWG will meet on a termly basis (3 times per year) to monitor the extent to which the aims, aspirations and guiding principles of the arrangement are being met.
- 2.3 The CWG will comprise of the Interim Executive Headteacher, the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of both governing bodies plus one additional member such as the Head of School – if available. Representatives of the LA and of the Diocese may be invited in an advisory capacity if a Church school is involved.
- 2.4 The working arrangements for the Interim Executive Headteacher, including dedicated leadership time, shall be agreed and kept under termly review by the CWG. The Interim Executive Headteacher will split their time between each school as agreed locally.
- 2.5 Both schools will maintain separate identities in the eyes of the LA but the LA will respond in ways where interventions match and support the work of the Interim Executive Headship arrangement.

### **3. Implementation of Partnership**

- 3.1 Both schools will pay due attention to the contractual rights of all affected employees and will seek professional advice with regard to these matters from the Local Authority Leadership and Governance Team, the Diocese and Schools Choice HR.
- 3.2 Both governing bodies will ensure that, in the absence of the Interim Executive Headteacher, arrangements are in place to ensure that each school has an appropriate level of day to day management and leadership of teaching and learning at all times.
- 3.3 Monitoring of work-life balance of the interim executive headteacher and the head of school/deputy headteacher will be the responsibility of the CWG.
- 3.4 Any complaints or concerns about the implementation or impact of the partnership arrangements will be managed jointly by the chairs of governors, who will refer to the CWG.
- 3.5 Any complaints or grievances against the interim executive headteacher will be managed jointly by the chairs of governors, who will refer to the CWG as necessary.
- 3.6 Feedback. The outcomes of any external or internal feedback (parents, staff, LA etc) will be reported to the CWG who will then report back to both governing bodies individually.

### **4. Performance Management**

- 4.1 The CWG will be responsible for the interim executive headteacher's performance management and will delegate responsibility to two members of the CWG as appropriate.
- 4.2 Performance management targets for the interim executive headteacher will be agreed by the CWG.
- 4.3 Performance management targets will need to be set at the commencement of the collaboration.

### **5. Financial Operation**

- 5.1 The CWG will agree an appropriate salary level for the Interim Executive Headteacher for the time for which they will lead the partnership. This committee will seek guidance (from the LA Leadership & Governance Team) to inform their decision.
- 5.2 The Interim Executive Headteacher's salary and other employment costs will be divided between the partnership schools based on time spent in each location.

- 5.3 Each school will make arrangements, in conjunction with their School Bursars, for the calculation and transfer of the proportionate employment costs of the interim executive headteacher. These costs and any savings will be managed within existing school budgets.
- 5.4 The interim executive headteacher will be responsible for matters relating to the head of school/deputy headteacher pay and performance and for seeking budget approval from the respective governing bodies.

## **6. Dissolution of Partnership**

- 6.1 The CWG will conduct a review of the partnership termly and make a recommendation on any changes to the future of the partnership.
- 6.2 The partnership will be deemed to be dissolved if, upon the recommendation of the CWG following either a termly or formal review, the aims and purpose of the interim executive headship are not being met and in the view of the CWG will not be met under the current leadership arrangement. A minimum of two terms' notice will be given.
- 6.3 Upon the dissolution of the partnership, the interim executive head will return to their substantive post and scale point, plus any salary points awarded due to performance management during the time of the interim executive headship, at their school unless other arrangements have been agreed. A minimum of two terms' notice will be given.
- 6.4 Upon the dissolution of the partnership, any other staffing or salary adjustments made to support the interim executive headteacher arrangement will also cease. A minimum of two terms' notice will be given.
- 6.5 Should the partnership be dissolved, a review will be undertaken by governors of both schools to ensure that staffing and management structures match the future needs of each school.
- 6.7 In the case of the partnership being dissolved, any outstanding monies or credits owing will be reconciled between the schools and signed off by the CWG.

We hereby agree to the above contract for partnership between (insert names of schools) as outlined above.

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Chair of Governors of School 1

Name .....

Signature .....

Date .....

Chair of Governors of School 2

## **EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER ARRANGEMENTS**

***These pages need to be agreed and completed between the respective Chair of Governors at both schools and in liaison with the Executive Headteacher. This information will provide the basis of the contract.***

### **Executive Headteacher - interim post for one year**

Substantive post: School 1 – Starting salary Sept 2020 - L\*\*

Planned 1<sup>st</sup> partnership year start and finish dates: insert dates on Salary point L\*\*

Agreed Interim Executive Headteacher salary scale point: L\*\*

Possible advancement through performance management review applies as usual. Suitable performance management arrangements will be agreed by the CWG.

The Interim Executive Headteacher costs will be divided between the two schools based on time in each setting.

Each school will make its own arrangements to meet leadership and management requirements during the absence from the site of the Interim Executive Headteacher. Any additional costs arising will be met by each school.

### **Interim Executive Headteacher working arrangements:**

Interim Executive Headteacher working arrangements will be reassessed at each termly and formal CWG review.

### **Leadership arrangements at each school when the Interim Executive Headteacher is off-site:**

Leadership by a Head of School/Deputy Headteacher at each school when the Executive Headteacher is off-site. Any later changes will be agreed by the relevant Governing Body.

Additional Safeguarding: The Designated Person (DP) must be in a leadership position

For School 1 this will be: \*\*\*\*\*

For School 2 this will be: \*\*\*\*\*

## **Arrangements to apply at the dissolution of the Executive**

### **Headship arrangement (including premature dissolution)**

The Interim Executive Headteacher will revert to their substantive post at the scale point shown above, plus any point/s awarded due to performance management during the time of the Interim Executive Headship. This will be with immediate effect on the closure of the arrangement. A minimum of two terms' notice will be given.

Any staffing/salary adjustments at both schools, made to support the Interim Executive Headteacher arrangement, will also close at the end of the above notice period.

### **Success Criteria – to be defined by CWG**

#### **Pupil Achievement and progress**

**To ensure that collaborative pupil and staff practice supports the development of pupil progress**

#### **Leadership**

There must be clearly defined and effective leadership roles for the Interim Executive Headteacher and the Head of School/Deputy. The Interim Executive Headteacher is to be accountable to the governing bodies of both schools. They are also to maintain and develop pupil achievement in both schools.

#### **Communication**

All stakeholders are advised in a timely and appropriate manner of events that affect the collaboration and individual schools. They are also to maintain high levels of communication with parents relevant to their daily working.

#### **Self-Evaluation**

There must be an accessible system that is readily understandable to stakeholders. Similar formats for self-evaluation should be used across both schools to include sustainability of pupil numbers.

#### **CPD**

Success will be measured by joint training having a positive impact across both pupil bodies and by maximising staff input. There should be an overlap of appropriate inset days. Parents will be informed of these dates.