



Introduction

The Governing Bodies of Monyash and Winster CE Primary Schools issued a proposal to federate the schools on 6th June 2017, with a formal consultation to run from 6th June to 18th July. Feedback in writing was invited, and meetings were held in both schools. The Local Authority, the Diocese and both local churches have expressed their support for the proposal.

This document clarifies the position regarding points made and questions raised during the consultation, sets out the decision made jointly by the Governing Bodies after the consultation period closed and explains the next steps to be taken.

Response to Consultation feedback

Both schools are Church of England Voluntary Controlled, their ethos clearly promotes Christian values, and teaching includes the principles of the Christian Religion of the Church of England. The schools have a lot in common and have been in an effective and productive formal collaboration for nearly two years. While they are not as close geographically as we would ideally like, the journey time is only 15-20 minutes (depending on traffic) and has not hampered the schools' joint working. The schools are very similar in many respects, and this makes for an evenly balanced relationship between them.

School finances continue to be challenging. Following the General Election in June 2017, there is some debate in political circles about the wisdom of continued austerity as an approach to Government finances. While an easing of austerity might see some increase in school funding, it would also see an increase in costs as public sector wages could also rise. Budgets for both Monyash and Winster are extremely tight, and sharing an Executive Headteacher means each school saves approximately £10,000pa in teaching costs. Without this saving we would already have had to reduce teacher presence by a day or more per week in both schools.

Federating will mean one Governing Body, and one set of committees. All these groups will oversee relevant aspects of how both schools are run. The Governing Body will be set up so that it reflects both communities, and every Governor will have the needs of both schools central to how they perform their role and discharge their responsibilities. This even-handed approach will be enshrined in the Instrument of Government for the Federation and in any Constitution and Terms of Reference documents.

It is important to note that despite being under a single Governing Body in a Federation, both schools will retain their own identity and will have their own, separately managed, budgets. Both schools will also continue to receive the same level of support from the Local Authority and from the Diocese as they receive at present. The Federation makes no difference to this support.

In the Federation, the schools will continue to work closely with their neighbours. This involves collaborating with one or two nearby schools, plus being active members of Monyash's and Winster's respective "clusters" – groups of primary schools which feed a common secondary. Indeed, the opportunity for collaborative working has already increased with the schools benefitting from each other's clusters, particularly in staff training and professional development.

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During the period of formal collaboration between the schools, the Executive Headteacher has had to support two sets of committees and two Governing Bodies. As well as doubling the number of meetings, often in the evening, that the Executive Headteacher attends, there is twice as much preparatory work and other documentation to produce. In the Federation, this burden will be significantly reduced. In summer 2017, the schools began holding joint committee meetings, and this has already started to release some time for the Executive Headteacher.

During the formal collaboration, joint working between staff and between the Governing Bodies has been put in place and has shown benefits in teaching and in the running and administration of the schools. However, the temporary nature of the formal collaboration has impacted the continuity of teaching in Winster. The effectiveness of this joint working has increased as staff and Governors get to know each other better. There have been a few joint activities for pupils. While these have not happened as often as the schools would have liked, more frequent activities are expected as the schools join more closely together. Both schools have also had robust arrangements in place during the collaboration for senior teachers to provide leadership when the Executive Headteacher is offsite. These arrangements will be formalised in the Federation.

Governing Bodies' Decision

The two schools' Governing Bodies met in joint session on 19th July 2017. They considered the feedback they had received and discussed what was in the best interests of the schools in the light of the consultation and the original Federation Proposal. The Governing Bodies, both separately and jointly, unanimously decided to proceed as proposed, with the date for The White Peak Federation to come into being set as 1st January 2018.

Next steps

The relevant authorities will be notified of the decision. These are:

- The Secretary of State for Education, via the Department for Education
- Derbyshire County Council
- The Derby Diocesan Board of Education
- The Acting Archdeacon of Chesterfield

During Term 1 of the new academic year, the Governors will draft and get agreed the new Instrument of Government for the federated Governing Body, along with other required governance documents. Elections will be held for Staff and Parent Governors, and the Foundation, Authority and Co-opted Governors will be identified. Towards the end of Term 2, probably in December, both Governing Bodies will hold their final meetings and complete the technicalities of handing over to the new Federated Governing Body. The first meeting of the new Governing Body will take place early in the new calendar year.

On behalf of the governing bodies of Monyash and Winster Primary Schools

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