

# Consultation

The Governing Boards of Langley Fitzurse Church of England Primary school and Stanton St Quintin Primary school propose the creation of:

The Federation of Stanton St Quintin and Langley Fitzurse.

Securing independent, high-quality education.

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Chairs of the respective Governing Boards.

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## Purpose of this Document

The Governing Boards of the two schools believe it is in the best interest of the schools and the pupils, parents and communities that they serve, that the two schools formally come together in a “hard federation”. This document sets out the thinking behind this policy and asks for your input in developing the future model.

## Background

Both schools are small rural primary schools.

Both exceed national standards for pupil achievement and are proud of their record in developing pupils into rounded independent young people. However, this does not safeguard their future, as budgets get tighter and demographics change.

LF has already benefitted from a shared headship model, moving forward markedly over the last 3 years. A frustration, however, has been the lack of clear ‘buy in’ of the partner school, and thus the lack of longevity in the headship. The proposed model looks to establish the desired level of commitment, and therefore secure long-term stability in the headship.

SSQ has suffered with a falling number on roll, requiring the reduction from 4.5 classes to 3 classes over the past 7 years. This has placed constraints on the school that mean it can no longer afford a full-time, non-teaching head. All other elements of the school remain strong and the will of the Governing Board is to ensure a sustainable future for the school.

The latest Ofsted framework challenges schools to provide a wider balanced curriculum, rather than largely concentrating on high achievement in maths and literacy. This requires staff to lead on a number of new subjects, and thus poses significant challenges to small schools and their staff.

In small schools staff also suffer in a number of ways: they can feel isolated in dealing with their specialist role and have limited scope for progression. A larger organisation would provide opportunities for peer discussion, support and progression.

Schools often struggle to secure high quality Governing Board members. Both schools have been blessed in recent years with strong Governing Boards, but again this should not be taken for granted. The two Governing Boards require a large number of people to contribute to the school’s success, but also to work through a number of unglamorous tasks e.g. procedure refinement and agreement. A single Governing Board over two schools would hugely improve this situation.

As small buying entities, the individual schools have little purchasing power. Group procurement presents opportunities to secure greater value for money.

The proposed model has been developed with and has the full support of the Local Authority and Diocese of Bristol Education Team.

## Principles of the Hard Federation:

- The schools will share a Board of Governors, who will seek to secure the success of both schools as independent entities.
- The schools will share an Executive Head Teacher, who will lead a senior leadership team (SLT) with senior staff from each school. The SLT will look to apply best practice across the two schools.
- The schools will maintain separate budgets, and not cross subsidise each other. They will, however, where advantageous, pool resources to secure better value across the federation.
- The schools will receive separate Ofsted inspections.
- LF will continue to receive SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections.
- LF will continue to be a Church of England school, fully committed to living out and developing its Christian distinctiveness in ways that will enhance the development and education of its pupils. See details on: <http://langleyfitzurse.wilts.sch.uk/church-school/>
- SSQ will continue to be a non-denomination community school.
- Each school will retain its identity and character within the federation. Each will have its own Parent Teacher Association.
- Staff will continue to be employed by the Local Authority. The schools do not see this as a step towards moving into an academy trust, and indeed federating will allow both schools to maintain their independence.
- The Governing Board and Senior School Staff will be able to identify additional benefits over time (e.g. staff interaction, pupil interaction, sharing best practice).

## Governance

The Full Governing Board will comprise 12 members. It will oversee cross federation strategy and policy, finance and staffing, and will have responsibility for health & safety

The Governing Board composition will be:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 3 | Foundation Governors (Church of England)                          |
| 2 | Parent Governors (one from each school)                           |
| 1 | Staff Governor  |
| 4 | Co-opted governors (one of who will be a military representative) |
| 1 | LA representative   |
| 1 | Executive Headteacher   |

The Full Governing Board will usually meet five times a year.

There will be two sub-committees: Finance and Resources (dealing with finance, premises, Health and Safety and compliance); Teaching, Learning and Development (all matters pertaining to child development including academic achievement, SENCO and wider curriculum learning opportunities). Full details will appear in the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference, that are adopted at the

beginning of the academic year for the new Hard Federation, however they are being heavily based on the existing governance documents used by both schools.

## Key Benefits Expected from the Federation

The pupils and school community are expected to benefit from:

- The employment of an Executive Headship, rather than a stand-alone headteacher, will allow the continued release of significant funds into front line teaching at LF. The saving to date has resulted in the employment of extra TAs to focus on support and interventions.
- Securing the future of SSQ with a balanced school budget and will allowing SSQ to open an early years' unit on the site.
- The creation of the combined leadership team and spreading of subject leadership responsibilities of the wider staff - resulting in a higher quality curriculum across the two schools and allowing wider and more tailored opportunities for learning.
- A resilient, happy staff team – because the spreading of responsibilities across a wider staff group will improve work life balance.
- Building and broadening staff development opportunities by enabling leadership development across the schools.
- Sharing our resources to provide high quality professional development opportunities for staff.
- Joint purchasing which will allow the schools to access and share equipment (e.g. for science and sports) that would have been a luxury for either school individually.
- Joint contracting which will continue to allow the school to access better value for money
- Joint trips and activities which will not only be more cost effective, but will allow selective mixing of the children in larger groups, improving social skills to better equip them for life at larger secondary schools
- The Governing Board requiring fewer members overall and being able to draw in talent from a wider area, will increase the likelihood of securing high quality members for the future.
- Greater stability of senior leadership at LF as the Executive head is a permanent role.
- A larger pool of staff which will reduce the requirement for using outside supply teachers when cover is required.
- Outcomes for children across both sites will improving due to the points outlined above.

## Risks & Mitigations

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
The Governing Boards may struggle to form a new cohesive unit	Some governors will be transitioning from each school and some will be new and have no allegiance to either school. All governors are keenly aware that this is a new Federation responsible for both schools. Even staff and parent governors from each school will have a clear remit to work for both schools equally. Strong established leadership and support from the LA will guide all governors through the process of establishing the new team.
The Governing Board will fail to balance the maintenance of the individual character of the two schools, while driving the schools forward through harmonisation and cooperative working.	Both schools share many characteristics as small village schools. The distinctive features are separately defined and will form a small, but crucial part of the federation makeup. Each school will maintain its own Parent Teacher Association. Harmonisation will focus on teaching best practice and back office efficiencies.
Stress levels of the staff of both schools may be increased at a time of uncertainty due to the change in leadership.	Any significant leadership change will cause some additional stress on staff. The governing board are aware of this and are working with the new Executive head to ensure a smooth transition. The executive head has a long history at SSQ and is already building relations with the team at LF. Of course, the LF staff are used to working with a shared head.
One school may end up subsidising the other	Both schools will maintain separate budgets, and cross subsidisation is not permitted by the LA. If either school becomes unviable in the future, the governors will be at liberty to dissolve the Hard Federation and allow either school to continue independently.
LF may lose its Christian ethos	The Hard Federation will have 3 foundation governors present and there are no plans or expectations that the Christian ethos of LF will be diluted in any way.
SSQ may become a Church of England School	SSQ is a community school, specifically without any religious denomination. As part of this Hard Federation, SSQ is remaining as a community school, without denomination. Federations with such a mix of schools are already up and running successfully.

## What would we like you to do?

This consultation is running from 5th June to 17<sup>th</sup> July. We want your input to ensure the schools' futures are taken forward in the best possible way. Your answers will have an impact on the implementation plan for the creation of the Hard Federation, and on its ultimate shape

The two Governing Boards would like your views as follows:

1. Do you support the creation of the Hard Federation?
2. Can you identify any additional significant risks that have not been mentioned in this document, and that need to be mitigated?
3. Can you identify any additional benefits that have not been mentioned in this document, that the schools should seek to exploit?
4. If you are a parent or guardian, do you have any concerns for your child under this new leadership model?

There will be stakeholder meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, details will be shared separately, otherwise input can be as hard copy handed to the reception of either school or sent to the following e-mail address: [clerk@stantonschool.net](mailto:clerk@stantonschool.net)

We will aim to respond to the input by September 2020 and aim to conclude the federation process by October 2020.