

**Executive Member for Children & Young  
People's Services and Advisory Panel**

Thursday 4 December 2008

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

**Federation between Hob Moor Oaks Special School and Hob Moor  
Primary School**

**Summary**

1. This report informs Members of the decision made by Hob Moor Oaks Special School and Hob Moor Primary School to federate. Members are asked to positively support the decision of the governing bodies.

**Background**

2. When Hob Moor Oaks School and Hob Moor Community Primary School moved into the new Hob Moor building it was anticipated that, there would be future opportunities to develop a stronger integrated partnership and leadership of a unique site that would be to the benefit all pupils, parents, carers, staff and members of the local community.
3. Both schools needed a period of time to settle into their new environment and so Federation was not considered by the governing bodies at that early stage. However, changes in leadership and management in both schools has prompted the Governing Bodies to consider ways forward that would enhance learning, achievement and personal development for all pupils at the site.
4. As time has gone on it has become clear that both schools would gain from shared strategic leadership and management structure, with one overall Principal. This will provide greater opportunities for both schools to work together in a strategic and planned approach so that every child is given every opportunity to receive the best possible education and experience that this unique site can offer. In the Summer of 2008 Governors felt that it was now the right time to consult with the community of both schools about Federation and to seek views on the proposals through a formal consultation process (attached as **Annex A**).
5. Federation is a governance structure which provides a firm and flexible basis for extensive school to school partnership working. When two or more school governing bodies agree to federate they combine to form a single governing body and to discharge their governance responsibilities jointly. The term and definition was invoked in the 2002 Education Act which allowed for the creation

of a single governing body or a joint governing body committee across two or more schools from September 2003 onwards.

## **Consultation**

6. In the second half of the summer term:

- Representatives of the two Governing Bodies met with City of York Council officials to discuss options and possible ways forward for the schools.
- Each Governing Body met to consider and agree consultation on Federation. This was followed by simultaneous staff meetings in both schools.
- A letter went out to all parents and carers to explain the position, to inform them of the proposal on Federation and the plans to go out to consultation.
- The joint steering group, comprising 4 Hob Moor Community Primary School governors and 4 Hob Moor Oaks School governors, began meetings to develop an agreed consultation document.
- Hob Moor Community Primary School and Hob Moor Oaks School Governing Bodies both ratified the document and initiated a widespread consultation on the implications of that document.

7. In the first half of the autumn term

- Briefings were held for the staff of both schools about the consultation.
- The document was presented at meetings for parents and carers. These meetings provided the opportunity for parents and carers to ask any questions. Further meetings were arranged to enable parents, carers, staff and other interested people to ask any further questions.
- Copies of the consultation document were forwarded to all interested parties on the 8 September. The six-week consultation period lasted from 8 September to 20 October 2008. The last day for written comments to be submitted to the Chairs of Governors at the schools was 20 October 2008 by 5pm.
- The two Governing Bodies met to receive feedback and consider written comments and responses.
- Each Governing Body met separately to consider its position regarding the proposal to federate the schools under a new Federated Governing Body and with the resulting proposed management structure for the school. Each governing body and in the light of the feedback through the consultation process have voted in favour of federation.

## **Options**

8. Governors had the option of choosing to federate or not to federate. The LA supported governors in their decision to consult on federation.
9. It should be noted that authority to take the decision about whether or not to federate rests with the two governing bodies and not the LA.

## **Analysis**

10. The consultation document provided the following summary rationale for the proposed federation giving benefits for the different stakeholders:

11. Pupils will benefit through:

- having a shared set of values and expectations across both schools
- having increased opportunities for learning across both schools
- having more opportunities for the schools to come together e.g. by bringing the two schools together for assemblies and other special occasions
- their schools being at the cutting edge of inclusive education and provision, being part of a wider and more inclusive community
- having consistent shared policies and values across both schools
- sharing a greater number of resources e.g. information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, libraries, classrooms, play equipment, the new building overall and play areas
- having greater support from all staff across both schools
- having access to a wider set of staff expertise and a wider range of teaching and learning styles
- having more chances to develop friendships with each other.

12. Parents and Carers will benefit through:

- having a shared ethos across the Hob Moor site which will enable a common set of beliefs, values, policies and practice
- having co-ordinated and joined-up leadership across both schools, leading to improved communication and clearer expectations for all pupils across both schools and with the community
- knowing that their children will be in schools that are striving to be outstanding and that jointly offer excellent education and provision
- knowing their children will have a greater range of teaching expertise

- knowing their children will gain from all staff expertise to ensure all pupils achieve to their full potential in line with the highest aspirations of parents, carers, staff and governors
- knowing that their children will be able to access teaching from both schools to enhance their learning
- knowing that resources and facilities will be shared across both schools, which will give richer provision for their children.

13. Staff will benefit through:

- being in outstanding schools that are jointly at the cutting edge of inclusive education and provision
- having increased opportunities to work with other colleagues and year groups. This means enhanced opportunities for teaching and professional development
- having a greater understanding of the different but complementary approaches needed for individual pupils
- sharing of specialist knowledge and experience, eg sharing musical, dance and drama projects
- having a broader range of expertise amongst the staff on the site that will raise expectations and educational standards for the children in both schools
- being part of a highly motivated and experienced workforce, which fully believes in providing inclusive education that will bring considerable benefits to all the children
- more opportunities for economies of scale and sharing of resources.

14. The community will benefit through:

- having clearer communication from the Hob Moor site
- being able to communicate more easily with staff on the Hob Moor site
- being part of an enhanced, stronger and inclusive community.

### **Corporate Priorities**

15. Federation will support Corporate Priorities 7 (Increase people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects) and 9 (Improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city).

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

16. The two school budgets will remain separate, meaning that the schools will continue to access more funding than if they merged as a single school. This means that funding around pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities will not be affected. However, funding could be pooled between the two schools, where appropriate, in order to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources. This means that pupils would gain from more facilities and equipment e.g. information and communication technology (ICT) resources, play equipment and books.
17. The budgets of both schools will support the new leadership structure of one Principal and their individual budget will fund their Head of School. There will be no negative impact on either budget. There is flexibility in both budgets to support the proposed structure.

### **Human Resources**

18. Staff will continue to be employed by their own school which retains its discrete identity and DCSF number. This provides a level of job security that would not exist if the schools were to merge. Once Federation is in place, the senior leadership team could explore opportunities for staff to work across both schools, where appropriate, and if the staff had the necessary skills.
19. Governors could decide that in the future, staff would be appointed by the federation.
20. The current Headteacher of Hob Moor Primary will become Principal of the federation as described in the consultation document.
21. The recruitment process for each Head of School will take place with a view to appointing from Easter 2009.
22. There are no other implications for the management of Human Resources in a school federation.

### **Legal**

23. Section 24 of the Education Act 2002 provides that maintained schools may federate under one governing body if they so wish. The statutory framework for federation is set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007 and accompanying guidance.
24. Where a governing body decide that they should federate with one or more other governing bodies, they must jointly with the other governing body or bodies publish proposals for federation. The governing bodies of the two schools are required jointly to consult with the staff, parents and the LEA, following which they can decide to federate on a simple majority vote of the governing body. The rules governing the consultation are not complex, but require the governing body

to publish proposals about the size and composition of the governing body, arrangements for staffing the schools, timescales and 'such other matters as the governing body consider appropriate'. The consultation period must be 'not less than 6 weeks after the publication of the proposals', following which each governing body must separately consider the responses and decide whether to proceed with the federation.

25. On the federation date the governing bodies of the federating schools are dissolved and the governing body of the federation is incorporated. All relevant land, property, rights and liabilities subsisting immediately before the federation date are transferred to the governing body of the federation.
26. Federation provides the maximum opportunity for joint working and the flexible use of resources. All policies and schemes of work, for example, can be jointly produced and, to all intents and purposes, the two schools are free to work as one. Schools in federations do however continue to be individual schools and keep their existing category and character.

### **Other implications**

27. There are no specific equalities, IT, property or crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

### **Risk Management**

28. Federations are a nationally recommended model for the delivery of improved leadership and governance in schools. The federation will be monitored through visits by advisory staff of the authority, the Locality Adviser, the School Improvement Partner and through regular School Improvement Panel meetings.

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score all risks has been assessed at less than 16, This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report".

### **Recommendations**

29. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to support the decision of both governing bodies to federate.

Reason: to brief members of a key decision by the governing bodies of two local schools

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**Report Approved**  **Date** 19/11/08

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** *List information for all*

*Jo Sheen, HR  
Richard Hartle, Finance  
Peter Cairns, Legal*

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None

**Annex**

Annex A The Federation Consultation Document