



# Haddenham Community Schools Federation Proposal



## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***Why can't we continue with the current arrangement?***

A formal link between the adjacent Community Infant and Junior Schools would provide greater opportunities to:

- procure and share resources
- recruit and retain staff
- further develop the curriculum
- embed efficiencies and improvement
- further improve outcomes (e.g. ensure continuity of learning and experience through the Key Stages)

### ***Why Federate now?***

Federation means that the two schools will be in a better position to respond effectively and efficiently to both local and national changes, such as housing growth and increasing financial pressures on schools.

### ***What changes would occur to the leadership of the schools under Federation?***

Each school would have its own Headteacher reporting to the Chair of Governors of the Federation Governing Board.

### ***Will the school names be changed?***

No. A Federation is not the same as an amalgamation/merger (where the schools involved become one). Each school would retain its individual identity and character and their current titles for independent use. They would also develop a complementary, shared identity and ethos based on high achievement and educational excellence. The Federation would adopt the title "The Haddenham Community Schools". This title would be used in all common literature, publicity material and media.

### ***What is the Vision for the Federation?***

Our vision for the Federation is to deliver an environment across the two schools where all pupils can thrive, by developing the existing close physical and working relationships between the schools.

The Haddenham Community Schools will deliver a high quality, innovative, creative and consistent curriculum which meets the needs of all our children from Early Years to the end of Key Stage 2. We will create a happy, caring and supportive environment where rich learning experiences are provided which encourage a love of learning, ensuring that every pupil achieves their potential throughout the primary school phase.' The Headteachers and Governing Board would review and refine the vision, as the Federation develops.

### ***What would be the impact on Haddenham St. Mary's Church of England School?***

The Federation would not be expected to have impact on Haddenham St. Mary's Church of England School. Children from St. Mary's would still be able to join the Junior School at the start of Key Stage 2 and parents would still have a choice of infant school.

### ***What would be the consequences for children in a school that is not part of the Federation?***

The Federation would not change the current situation. In line with the Admissions arrangements, children join the Junior School from a variety of feeder schools and no Key Stage 1 pupil from outside the Federation would be disadvantaged.

### ***Could children be forced to change schools?***

No. The admissions arrangements would remain exactly as they are at present.



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### ***Will children have to move between the schools for lessons?***

No. The schools may occasionally share staff, though pupils would be based in their current schools. However, there would be increased potential for children to benefit from specialist resources in both schools and so pupils may occasionally move from site to site for specific events e.g. using specialist sports / teaching / kitchen / outdoor facilities.

### ***What are the arrangements for admissions and support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities?***

Education, Health and Care Plans would be issued by the Council in the same way as they are now to support any SEND admissions and children within the school. The Federation would enable the schools to provide greater continuity of support throughout the primary education phase for any children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

### ***How are staff being kept informed about the Federation proposal?***

Staff members have been informed about the proposal in staff meetings and are being invited and encouraged to comment on and input to the proposal to shape the future of their schools. The Governing Boards of both schools welcome all staff feedback, queries and inputs into the vision for the schools, and on how to develop viable and effective leadership and staffing structures to deliver excellent teaching and learning within the proposed Federation.

### ***What impact could federating have on the teaching and support staff?***

Staff roles would not change as a direct result of federating and no jobs are at risk. The new Governing Board after Federation would continue to require high standards from staff and would support the leadership teams to deliver these by means of support, training and development, with diligent assessment of performance. It is the essence of education that people can learn and grow, and this is as true for the staff as for the pupils. For members of staff, the opportunity to get involved across both schools may provide enhanced career progression and prospects, enabling them to extend themselves and to cooperate with colleagues in another adjacent setting.

### ***Would there be a change in terms of employment for staff?***

The staff would remain at their sites and would continue to be employed by and work in their current school. Specialist staff may work at a specific site or may be asked to take their specialist knowledge from one school to another, to share best practice. Some staff may request to move between sites as part of their career development. The Federation would enable this to happen more easily. New staff members may have contracts which allow them to work across both schools within the Federation.

### ***How would this impact future staff recruitment and retention?***

The Governing Board intends that the schools would become known for attracting and developing high achieving staff, some of whom, with the increased opportunities to work across Key Stages 1 and 2, might well move on to more senior roles within education. This makes it possible for staff to accrue a broader experience of education across the whole primary range thus enhancing their provision within the federation.

### ***What is the role of the Governing Board?***

The role of the Governing Board is very clear – it must seek excellence in outcomes for pupils, a commitment to the development of the staff and the community that the schools serve. The specific skills required to carry out the role of governing the schools would include financial skills, organisational development experience (this includes human resources, training and professional development, quality and standards of provision), an understanding of special educational needs, business, buildings and health and safety, together with time spent in the schools and their own development as a Governor.



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The Governing Board has three important tasks as well as understanding and contributing to the life of the schools:

- To ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- To hold the Headteachers to account for the educational performance of its schools and its pupils, and the performance management of staff.
- To oversee the financial performance of the schools and making sure money is well spent.

If Federation goes ahead, a single Governing Board will be formed to replace the two existing Governing Boards, drawing upon the expertise and experience of the existing Governing Board members. This new single group of governors would be able to benefit from shared experiences and good practice. Their experience and commitment will benefit both schools.

### ***How will the new Governing Board be structured?***

The new Governing Board would comprise:

- 2 headteachers
- 2 elected parent governors
- 1 elected staff governor
- 1 Local Authority governor
- 7 co-opted governors

In addition, Associate Governors may be appointed. A senior member of staff from the Infant and Junior Schools will be invited to attend meetings as an Associate Governor if they are not elected as the staff governor or serving as a co-opted governor. All Governors would be appointed for four years, with the Chair and Vice-Chair positions elected annually from within their ranks.

If the Federation goes ahead, elections will be held for the parent governor and staff governor positions during the Summer Term of 2024. The inaugural meeting of the new Governing Board will take place at the beginning of September 2024. Governors will be allocated individual roles and responsibilities at this time.

### ***What are the risks of federating?***

The Governing Boards have considered whether there would be any risks arising through the formation of a Federation. The identified risks are presented below together with how they will be addressed:

Risk 1: A single Governing Board for two schools may lead to an increase in Governors' workload, which could result in challenges concerning Governor recruitment, retention, and effectiveness.

Mitigation 1: Careful consideration will be given to the structure of the new Federation Governing Board to ensure that individual workloads are practical and that Governors can fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Through this we will build a resilient and passionate governance and leadership structure that is up to date with developing educational policy and can respond to change effectively.

Risk 2: Disagreements between the leadership teams of the two schools could be detrimental to the effective running of the schools and / or Governing Board.

Mitigation 2: Effective leadership of the Governing Board by the Chair will reduce both the likelihood and impact of any disagreements. We will develop and maintain a



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balanced leadership structure with clear individual responsibilities to build a common ethos and co-operation across the schools in the equal interests of both schools. We will also maintain clear and open communication with staff to enable a smooth transition and minimise disruption.

### ***How will the Federation be financed?***

The rules defining Federation state that each component school must continue to maintain a separate budget and financial control system. Each school would continue to receive its annual grant from the Local Authority and would pay for its own costs. Procurement would be reviewed regularly to maximise purchasing power, and when services are procured for the benefit of both schools, a fair method of allocation would be used.

### ***Is this a step toward the schools becoming an Academy/Multi-Academy Trust?***

No. The change to a Multi-Academy Trust is not under consideration at this time.

### ***Will the Parent Associations merge too?***

The Friends of Haddenham Infant and Haddenham Junior Schools have provided invaluable support to their respective schools for many years. It is hoped this would continue after Federation. They may decide, in due course, whether they wish to amalgamate or remain as two separate organisations.

### ***What happens following the closing date for comments?***

The schools will follow the regulatory guidance on federating, in addition to best practice guidance regarding the formation and joining of groups of Schools. Following review and consideration of all responses to the consultation, the Governing Boards will meet to agree a final recommendation. Subject to agreement to proceed, the Working Party will agree key priorities and short and longer term transition plans. Elections for Parent Governors and Staff Governors would occur in the Summer term of 2024. The implementation date for the Federation would be 1 September 2024, when the two existing Governing Boards would be disbanded and the single Governing Board structure initiated.

### ***Who decides whether or not the Federation goes ahead?***

Once the consultation process is complete, a report setting out the findings will be presented to a joint meeting of the Governing Boards for the two schools. Each Governing Board will then meet on its own to decide whether or not it supports the proposal. Both Governing Boards must agree to the proposal before it can be accepted.

### ***What happens if we decide not to federate?***

In the event that the proposal is not supported by both Governing Boards, the schools will continue as separate entities.

### ***What if either school wants to end the Federation?***

There is a standard process that would be followed, with a final decision being made by the Federation's Governing Board. This would lead to the disestablishment of the Federation and the Local Authority would establish a new temporary Governing Board for each school.

### ***How do you make your views known?***

You can discuss this proposal with members of the Governing Boards' Working Party at the following planned drop-in meetings:

- Haddenham Community Infant School: 9.30am to 10.30am on Tuesday 5 March 2024
- Haddenham Community Junior School: 5.30pm to 6.30pm on Monday 4 March 2024



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You can contact the Governing Boards' Working Party by e-mail to either of the following addresses:

Haddenham Community Infant School: [governors@haddenhaminfant.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:governors@haddenhaminfant.bucks.sch.uk)

Haddenham Community Junior School: [govs@haddenhamjun.co.uk](mailto:govs@haddenhamjun.co.uk)

Please return your completed consultation response form by 31 March 2024 to one of the schools. The form should be in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Chair of Governors, handed in to either school Reception, or sent by e-mail to one of the addresses above.