



Thursday 11th January 2018

**Consultation for the federation of the governing bodies of
*Firle Church of England Primary School and Laughton Community Primary School***

Dear Stakeholder,

As you are aware, Laughton Community Primary and Firle Church of England Primary schools began an agreed partnership in September 2016, in order to strengthen the infrastructure of the two schools and continue to enhance school improvement. The initial rewards of this partnership are clear, with children and staff already benefiting from wider expertise and resources as well as improved teaching and learning opportunities.

We plan to build on this success by establishing a formal federation across both schools. This will enable us to invest strategically in a forward thinking federation that has the ability to provide the highest of standards across all levels of school life.

We would like to invite you to share your views on our proposed federation.

The accompanying consultation paper outlines the benefits of federation. We welcome your views as stakeholders, as we believe it is important that you have your say in shaping the future of education in both schools. Whilst your views will be taken into consideration it is important to note that this process does not act as a voting mechanism. This consultation will start on Thursday 11th January and end on Thursday 1st March 2018.

You are invited to attend a briefing meeting where we can share our aims for the federation and you will have an opportunity to ask any questions. These will be held on:
Wednesday 24th January at 6:30pm at Laughton Community Primary School and Thursday 25th January at 9:00a.m at Firle Church of England Primary School.

Please feel free to attend any meeting at either school, regardless of which is your child's school.

To comment on our proposed federation please complete and return the feedback form at the end of this consultation paper. Forms should be returned in a sealed envelope, addressed to the "Chair of Governors" via one of the school offices or emailed directly to the chair. Letters should be clearly marked "Federation Consultation". These should be received at the schools no later than **3.15pm on 1st March 2018**. All responses should include your full name, address and signature which will remain confidential to the chair who will report to the governing bodies.

We believe that federation is the best way to ensure that children in both schools will

continue to have a highly effective education that provides them with skills and knowledge to prepare them for the next stage in their school careers, in partnership with parents and our local communities.

Yours faithfully

Denise Kong
Chair of Governors,
Laughton Community School
dkong@laughton.e-sussex.sch.uk

Damian Mooncie
Chair of Governors,
Firle Church of England School
dmooncie@firle-school.e-sussex.sch.uk

This letter and consultation paper has been circulated to all our stakeholders including:

- The Local Authority – Director of Children’s Services, East Sussex County Council
- The Director of Education , Diocese of Chichester
- The executive head teacher and heads of schools
- All staff paid to work at any of the schools
- Volunteers at either of the schools
- The parents/carers of registered pupils at either of the schools
- Parish Councils of Firle and Laughton
- District Councillors of Firle and Laughton
- County Councillors for the both schools’ wards
- Maria Caulfield MP
- Nus Ghani MP
- Ashdown Alliance education improvement partnership member school head teachers
- The Secretary of State via steve.jones@education.gsi.gov.uk

**Consultation on the Federation of:
Firle Church of England Primary School
Laughton Community Primary School**

Consultation start date: Thursday 11th January 2018

Consultation end date: Thursday 1st March 2018

We believe that federation is the key to future sustainability, not only maintaining our schools, but helping us grow them and improve them for our children today and in years to come.

Our aims

Our key aim is to ensure that our children will have access to successful, well-run schools that provide them with an excellent, well-rounded education, working in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community. We want to encourage our children to have aspirations that lead to great achievements as they learn and grow in a caring, safe and friendly community of schools.

Both our schools currently have a strong ethos of care, good behaviour, creativity and hard work. The strong ethos and deep sense of community that exists within each of our schools are all things that we wish to maintain, encourage and develop further - building on the success of our existing partnership.

We would like to formalise the closer working relationship that has been forged between the schools by establishing a federation. We look forward to entering into a consultation period where we can tell you more about our proposals and find out your views.

What is a federation?

A federation is where two or more schools work very closely together under one governing body. Each school remains legally separate and parents/carers and pupils should see little change. Federation is not a merger or a conversion to an academy; it represents a stable, long term commitment to working in partnership to the benefit of children in both schools.

Federation means that both schools:

- continue to be registered separately with Ofsted, retain their existing judgments and continue to be maintained by the local authority.
- continue to have their own separate budget.
- have a single governing body that would set the strategic direction across both schools and ensure educational and financial sustainability and accountability.
- would continue with the current admission arrangements which would remain the responsibility of East Sussex County Council.

Our proposal

The proposal is to federate Firle Church of England Primary School and Laughton Community Primary School starting on **1st September 2018**.

Firle Church of England and Laughton Community Primary Schools entered an agreed partnership in September 2016. By working collaboratively the two schools have been able to develop consistent educational approaches and share skills, expertise and resources across both school communities. For example, shared subject planning, whole schools walk, topic days e.t.c.

Should the federation go ahead, it will be led by an executive head teacher and head of school to oversee the continued improvement, with a robust senior leadership structure in place at each school.

Why form a federation?

We are passionate about ensuring the very best education for the children in our communities. We are aware of the vulnerability of rural schools which operate as a single entity and recognise this proposed model as being mutually supportive and one which provides long term stability. It brings an opportunity to achieve economies of scale to secure financial stability and sustainability of our schools into the future. Federation has been fully discussed with governors, the Local Authority and the Diocese and we feel it is the best way to achieve our goals and secure a supportive future for both schools.

The benefits and opportunities of federating

There are greatly improved opportunities for children and staff at both schools to interact, learn from each other and share best practice.

For children:

- Children will have greater access to specialist expertise from each school's current staff and a wider range of resources to broaden their curriculum.
- Children within the federation will continue to receive the highest quality teaching and learning, enriched by collaborative working and enhanced resources across both schools.
- Stability and continuity with increased opportunity to meet and work with other children in a wider community (especially as the two schools are close together).

For parents/carers and communities:

- It strengthens the ability of our schools to develop and improve while maximising our ability to cope with changes in educational policy, enabling us to continue to provide excellent education in our villages.
- It provides the opportunity to develop the relationships between our village communities, to the benefit of all and provides sustainability for both schools.
- It extends the opportunities available to children and their families by creating a long term, stable school structure.

For staff:

- Leadership will be secured for the future and staff development opportunities will enable our schools to retain valued staff.
- Shared staff meetings and combined staff training have the effect of widening the circle of peers that our staff can call upon for fresh and creative ideas and support.
- Shared ideas and resources help staff avoid needless duplication of effort and materials and will allow for more time to be devoted to teaching and learning.
- Increased joint working enables us to develop our subject leads across the two schools as well as giving us an opportunity to jointly develop and plan our school curriculum to the benefit of all our pupils.

For governors:

- A single governing body will be formed to replace the existing governing bodies. This new single group of governors will be able to benefit from shared experience and good practice.
- The membership of the governing body will be skills based.

The governing body

The role of the federated governing body will be to:

- Ensure that the character of each school is maintained whilst moving forward as one.
- Define a shared vision and strategic direction for the schools that places the children at its heart.
- Ensure due diligence and financial probity; honest and effective financial management.
- Hold the executive head teacher to account for the educational performance of the schools.

There would be a maximum of 14 governors, of which there would be:

- 2 x Parent elected governors (1 from each school)
- 1 x Executive headteacher
- 2 Foundation Governors
 - 1 x Local Authority governor
 - 1 x staff elected governor
- Up to 7 x co-opted governors (elected for their skills, knowledge and expertise)

The aim is to have equal representation across both schools.

This structure complies with Department for Education regulations regarding the constitution of governing bodies.

Staffing

The executive head teacher, supported by the leadership team will lead and manage the federation. Staffing levels will continue to be determined by the school budgets. Federation will allow employment of specialists and new staff across all schools when vacancies arise.

What are the timescales?

Governing Bodies of both schools are bound by Department for Education regulations that dictate the process to be followed.		
Stage	What will happen?	When will it happen?
6 week stakeholder consultation	During this stage the consultation document is widely circulated for comment, the last page of this document provides details of how to submit your views and opinions.	Thursday 11th January 2018 to Thursday 1st March 2018
Decision	The joint executive committee made up of governors from both schools meets to discuss the consultation responses and makes a recommendation to the two governing bodies. Each governing body then meets separately to decide whether to proceed with federation.	Monday 5th March 2018
	Parents/carers and other key stakeholders will be advised in writing of the governing bodies' decisions	Monday 26th March 2018
Outcome	If both governing bodies agree to federate, it is envisaged that the new governing body would be formed and federation take place on 1st September 2018. The current governing bodies will continue to operate as they have previously within the partnership until the new governing body has been formed.	1 st September 2018

What do you think?

Please complete the response form and return it by 3:15pm on Thursday 1st March 2018 to one of the following:

Chair of Governors
School Office
Firle CE Primary School
Firle
BN8 6LF
dkong@laughton.e-sussex.sch.uk

Clerk to the Governors,
School Office,
Laughton Community Primary School
Church lane
Laughton BN8 6AH
dmooncie@firle-school.e-sussex.sch.uk

Remember, all responses must include your full name and address (in capital letters), and signature (anonymous

responses will not be considered) and will remain confidential to the chair who will report to the governing bodies.

**Consultation on Proposed Federation of
Firle Church of England Primary and Laughton Community Primary Schools**

Do you support the proposal to federate Laughton Community Primary and Firle Church of England Primary schools? (Please tick one box)

Yes

No

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Please tick one box that you feel most appropriately represents your interest in this matter:

- Parent/Carer of a child at Laughton Community Primary School
- Parent/Carer of a child at Firle Church of England School
- Member of staff at Laughton Community Primary School
- Member of staff at Firle Church of England School
- Volunteer at Laughton Community Primary Schools/Firle Church of England*
- Parish Councillor of /Laughton/ Firle *
- District Councillor for Laughton/ Firle*
- County Councillor
- MP for the constituency
- Headteacher in Ashdown Alliance
- Director of Children's Services, ESCC, or representative
- Director of Education , Diocese of Chichester
- The Secretary of State via email
- Other (Please specify)

*(please delete as appropriate)

Ideas / Comments / Concerns /:

Signed..... (Respondent)