



Consultation

Proposal to establish a hard federation between Houghton Community Nursery School and Mill Hill Nursery School.

Formal Consultation Period:

29th January 2018 to 19th March 2018

The process is prescribed in the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

Dear Interested Party

The Governing Bodies of Houghton Community School and Mill Hill Nursery School have voted in favour of proceeding to public consultation on a resolution to establish a 'hard federation' between the two schools with effect from 1st April 2018.

Please read the following information carefully which is also available at each respective school's website <http://www.houghtonnurseryschool.org.uk/> or <http://www.millhillnursery.org.uk/>. A hard copy can be made available for you to be collected from either school office. Further information on federation can be found in the Frequently Asked Questions attached.

You can make your views known by completing a response form. Response forms for the proposal to establish a 'hard federation' are attached to this document. The consultation will close at midday on Monday 19th March 2018.

Houghton Community and Mill Hill Nurseries have been in a soft federation since September 2017. This 'soft federation' has established a close partnership between the two schools. A move to a hard federation will show a commitment to this close partnership and as a result will continue to provide an environment and learning culture that is in the best interests for the children at both schools. Existing staff will keep the same terms and conditions of employment. There will continue to be one Headteacher for both schools. Each school will continue with receiving and managing its own budget.

There will be one single Governing Body across both schools as follows:-

Parents (at least 1 parent from each school in the federation)	4	Parent governors are elected by parents (or appointed by Governing Body if insufficient people stand for election)
Co-opted** Such numbers as the Governing Body consider necessary	5	Community Governors are appointed by the Governing Body
Staff (1 representing all staff)	1	Staff Governors are elected by staff
Local Authority (1)	1 (f)	Governing Body to consider nominations from the Local Authority
Headteacher	1	

**note – Co-opted Governors can include staff but overall staff cannot exceed one-third of Governing Body total membership.

It will not mean a merger of the two schools and each will retain its own name, keep its own admission criteria; have separate pupil attainment data and separate OFSTED inspections.

The aim for the federation of Houghton Community and Mill Hill Nurseries is to offer an even better quality of education to the children within the communities. School leaders and governors can build on the common ethos between the two schools and shared values. They can adapt and design a curriculum that meets the needs of the pupils which provides them with knowledge and first hand experiences which school leaders believe helps them learn best. School leaders and governors will continue to track children's progress and attainment at each school, and have the highest expectation of standards in both achievement and behaviour.

A federation will enable the schools to continue to recruit and retain the best employees offering them experiences to share ideas and develop best practice with increased opportunity for career development and management responsibilities that a federated school will offer.

There will be opportunities for increased efficiencies through economies of scale by joint purchasing and shared deployed resources, including staff.

Finally, a single Governing Body will be able to take a strategic view of the needs of both schools, and direct resources where they will be of the greatest benefit and ensure that the governors' professional expertise can be shared between both schools.

The period of consultation lasts six weeks. In addition to consulting parents, staff and children, the governors are also required to consult with others including the Local Authority. These proposals are made with the full support of both Governing Bodies, the Headteacher and Sunderland Local Authority. During this time the

responses to the consultation will be collected and collated for consideration by the two Governing Bodies, after which the Governing Bodies will vote on whether to proceed with the federation.

On behalf of the two Governing Bodies:

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HARD FEDERATION – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is a school Governing Body federation?

- Two or more Governing Bodies coming together under a single Governing Body to drive school improvement, share best practice, staff and facilities and make resource savings
- Schools that federate remain as individual legal establishments in their existing communities, with their own budgets, name, character, ethos and identity

2. What are the circumstances in which Governing Bodies might consider federation?

- Grouping small or rural schools together to exploit economies of scale and expertise in management (including governor support), staffing and curriculum issues
- Raising educational standards and school effectiveness by encouraging schools to work together to share ideas and good practice (e.g. on the curriculum, leadership or inclusion issues).

3. What process is to be followed for federation?

- School federation is achieved using the process set out in The School Governance (Federation) (England) Regulations 2012

4. Does a consultation process need to take place?

- The Governing Body must consult for at least 6 weeks on a federation proposal, stating which schools are proposed to be federated, the staffing arrangements and the date the federation will be established;
- Statutory consultees are the maintaining Local Authorities, parents, staff and Headteachers of all the schools in the proposed federation.
- The federation proposal must be available for inspection at all reasonable times at each school in the proposed federation. The proposed federation date must be no less than 125 days after the proposal is published. After the consultation has ended the Governing Bodies must consider the responses received and must decide whether:-
 - to proceed with the proposal
 - to proceed with a modification of the proposal as the Governing Bodies think appropriate or
 - not to federate at all

5. What are the drivers and expected advantages of federation?

- Federated schools remain in their communities
- School improvement to raise standards
- Single policies by sharing best practice
- Sharing resources
- Delivering a broader curriculum giving pupils more choice
- Flexibility in the deployment of staff

6. Which schools can federate?

- Any maintained school
- Cluster of primary schools
- Cross phase schools – secondary and primary or infant and junior
- Under performing schools and stronger schools
- Grouping small or rural schools together
- Voluntary Aided faith based schools and community schools
- Schools in different Local Authority areas

7. What is the role of governors?

- Governing Bodies play an important role in establishing federations.
Governing Bodies need to:-
 - consider all the options
 - identify the drivers for change
 - have a willingness to accept change and working together to bring school improvement
 - understand that the federated Governing Body is responsible for all schools in federation

8. What is the role of Local Authority?

- To have a clear idea of their future school organisation plans and how federation fits in
- To articulate these plans to governors
- To advise and support governors by
 - talking about options and benefits
 - information gathering
 - preparation of the report
 - ensuring compliance with the law
- Recognise that several services will need to be involved to ensure a successful federation:
 - school improvement
 - human resources
 - building and environment
 - finance
 - governor support



Consultation Response Form

Please return this form no later than midday on Monday 19th March 2018 to the sealed box in the School's Office/Reception area.

If you would prefer you may simply e-mail your comments headed 'CONSULTATION' to the Clerk to the Governing Body of Houghton Nursery and Mill Hill Nursery Schools

e-mail governance@wiseacademies.co.uk

Your name: _____

Interest in the schools:

Parent/Carer of a child at Houghton Community Nursery School

Member of staff at Houghton Community Nursery School

Parent/Carer of a child at Mill Hill Nursery School

Member of staff at Mill Hill Nursery School

Other (please specify) _____

Please comment on the proposal – we welcome your views.