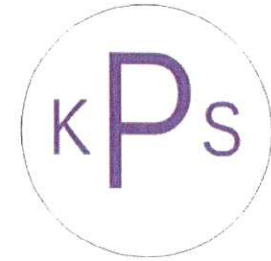


Bessemer Grange Primary School

Dylways, London, SE5 8HP

4 February 2019



Keyworth Primary School

Faunce Street SE17 3TR

Federation Consultation

The Governors of Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School would like to formally propose that both schools enter into a hard federation. At this point we would like to consult children, parents, carers, staff and the wider community about the proposal. This consultation will also be sent to the Local Authority and the Secretary of State for Education.

The formal process is prescribed in the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 which state that:

“The governing bodies proposing to federate must jointly consider any responses to the proposals and each governing body must determine whether—

- (a) to proceed with the proposals for federation as published;*
- (b) to proceed with the proposals for federation with such modifications as the governing body consider appropriate; or*
- (c) not to proceed with the proposals for federation.*

The modifications referred to in (b) may not include a change in the identity of the governing bodies proposing to federate.”

What is a hard federation?

A hard federation is a formal agreement between two or more schools to work together on a permanent basis. The partnership of the schools is led and managed under the direction of a single Governing Body including representatives of each school in that hard federation.

Consultation process

The Governors of both schools have considered the proposal to federate in some depth, but both sets of Governors understand that children, parents, carers, staff and the wider community may have some questions, comments or views which they would like to put to the Governors.

The Governors would like to ensure that everyone is able to access this document and understand the proposal; if you need support with accessing this document please make the school office aware and it will endeavor to ensure you are all able to contribute to the consultation.

You can contribute to the process by:

1. Attending one of the open meetings at your school where you will be able to meet with Governors and members of the Senior Leadership Team to talk through the proposal;
2. Attending a drop-in session at your school to discuss the proposal with Governors and members of the Senior Leadership Team;
3. Writing a letter to the Governors to put forward questions and comments – you can send the letter to either school and mark it to “The Chair of Governors”; and/or
4. Writing an email to the Governors to put forward questions and comments – you can send the email to consultation@bessemergrange.southwark.sch.uk or consultation@keyworth.southwark.sch.uk

The open meetings and drop-in sessions will be held on the following dates:

Consultation Method	Date and Time
Open meeting (Bessemer Grange Primary School)	11 th February 2019 at 6.30pm
Open meeting (Keyworth Primary School)	12 th February 2019 at 9.00am
Drop-in session (Bessemer Grange Primary School)	25 th February 2019 at 9.00am
Drop-in session (Keyworth Primary School)	25 th February 2019 at 9.00am

Please note that all responses must be submitted **no later than 18th March 2019 at 3.30pm.**

The Governing Bodies of each of Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School will meet together on 18th March 2019 to consider all the responses received as part of this consultation process and come to a formal decision about whether or how the hard federation should proceed.

If the decision is to proceed (with or without any modifications to the proposals), the current plan is for the hard federation to start on 23rd April 2019. This will be the date of the establishment of the new federation Governing Body, with the existing separate Governing Bodies at each school dissolving at midnight on the previous day. This decision on whether to form a hard federation must be taken separately by each Governing Body. Once it has been made, the outcome will be communicated in writing to all children, parents, carers and staff.

Background

Over the last 3 years Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School have been working in collaboration through a soft federation. The Governors of both schools have agreed that to formalize this relationship into a hard federation would further strengthen both schools, increase impact and generate significant and sustained effect on learning and development.

The decision by Governors of both Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School to propose formal federation was informed by the facts below:

- the collaboration since September 2015 has been very successful and, to enable this collaboration to continue, it must be moved to a more permanent arrangement;
- both schools are Community Schools within the same Local Authority (Southwark);
- both schools are of similar size and facing shrinking budgets;
- both schools wish to maintain their current status as individual schools and do not want to be part of a Multi Academy Trust;
- both schools currently have a 'Good' Ofsted grading which means they are federating on a similar basis;
- the advice the Governors have received from the Local Authority and from other federations suggest that academic achievement should be enhanced in the schools working in a hard federation;
- the Senior Leadership Team structure for both schools would be expected to become stronger and increasingly effective given in a hard federation;
- by sharing resources, provision in both schools could be improved, particularly for arts, music, languages, sport and special educational needs and disabilities provision – this would result from the schools sharing good practice; each school learning from the other;
- a hard federation is an attractive option for teachers and support staff looking for a new challenge while providing wider opportunities for professional development for the staff of each school - these improved opportunities could help with recruitment and retention of staff;
- both schools can build on established shared approaches to classroom practice, such as marking and assessment, to allow staff across both schools to collaborate effectively - this would help improve and maintain standards in both schools; and
- the pooling of operational services such as IT and payroll will allow for significant cost savings for both schools.

Vision and objectives of the hard federation of Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School

The vision of the Governors of both schools is to establish a strong and permanent collaboration for the benefit of all children, families, staff and the wider communities both schools serve. Both schools are working together with a shared vision for success, enhancing outcomes and developing strong leadership.

The hard federation is specifically designed to ensure that both schools retain their individual identity and distinct culture, continuing to engage and support their children, families and local communities. The Governors believe that a hard federation would secure this identity for each school for the future.

Children are at the heart of all that is done at both Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School. Below are the core principles underlining the current work done and upon which the hard federation would build:

- a commitment to ensuring that all children at both schools are provided with high quality learning experiences – all children having access to a broad and balanced curriculum taught by good and outstanding qualified teachers;
- both schools will continue working to providing a positive, safe, and stimulating environment where children can learn;
- each school will continue to value diversity and enable children to celebrate their differences and achieve great things by working together;
- learning should be enjoyable, allowing children to achieve their potential and helping them become lifelong learners who are ready and able to grasp opportunities;
- staff in the hard federation should be lifelong learners as well – always looking for ways to develop their skills for their own benefit and for the children they work with;
- both schools will continue to promote the emotional, moral, spiritual, and physical development of the children at the schools; and
- working in partnership with outside agencies and local communities to ensure ongoing development and learning.

How the hard federation would work

Some key details about the hard federation:

- Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School would remain as two separate schools but would be run by one Executive Head Teacher supported by a joint Senior Leadership Team with oversight being provided by a joint Governing Body.
- Each school would maintain its own budget based on the needs of the children in each separate school but, for some operational and staffing elements, the schools will pool resources to make efficiencies and savings where available.
- Each school would maintain its own admissions policy and in accordance with Southwark's procedures.
- There would be a shared school policies and procedures across both schools (with minor differences where needed).

How is this different from the current soft federation of Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School?

The proposal is that the hard federation would strengthen the position from the existing soft federation by providing:

- a single Governing Body for the hard federation which would have strategic overview of both schools from Nursery to Year 6;
- the opportunity for both schools to engage in longer term planning;
- the permanent appointment of an Executive Head Teacher overseeing the work of the hard federation;
- the permanent appointments of Heads of School managing the day-to-day running of each school and other Senior Leadership Team members for each school; and
- opportunities for extending the current arrangements for sharing staffing, expertise, resourcing and administration.

What are the risks for each school?

There are risks involved in any change. Set out below are some of the risks which the Governors have considered – none of the risks below are completely new; all have been tested and mitigated already to some extent:

- the schools struggle to form a cohesive Governing Body covering the interests of both schools and maintaining the ethos and key attributes of one or both schools (note that each school would have places to provide equal representation of staff and parents on the joint Governing Body);
- the hard federation does not build strong local connections and does not meet community needs;
- there is a difference of culture in the two schools which stifles or prevents effective cooperation;
- the leadership changes in the future and this changes the nature of the hard federation (note that this is also true if a new head teacher is appointed to any type of school);
- the financial economies of scale do not materialise (note that this would not leave either school worse off than where it stands currently); and
- one school receives more attention from the Executive Head Teacher than the other (note that it is the Governing Body's role to hold the Executive Head Teacher to account for her actions and effectiveness and to ensure she is spending the appropriate time at each school depending on the needs of the schools at any time).

What is the proposed structure of the single Governing Body?

The hard federation would have one joint Governing Body with governance responsibility and accountability for both Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School.

The proposed size of the Governing Body of the hard federation is 14. This is in line with current recommendations for Governing Body size and follows certain statutory requirements for the composition of the Governing Body. The proposed new Governing Body would comprise:

Type of Governor	Total
Executive Headteacher	1

Elected Parent Governor – Bessemer Grange Primary School	1
Elected Parent Governor – Keyworth Primary School*	1
Local Authority nominated Governor	1
Elected Staff Member Governor – Bessemer Grange Primary School*	1
Elected Staff Member Governor – Keyworth Primary School*	1
Co-opted Governors	8
Total	14

*Note that one of the Staff Member Governors and one of the Parent Governors would be, for the purposes of composition of the Governing Body, considered a Co-opted Governor.

The Governing Body may wish to invite additional associate members onto the Governing Body as required to ensure the Governing Body has the necessary skills and expertise to undertake its role.

Each Head of School will be invited to attend meetings of the governing body and committees. The Governing Body may appoint Associate Members to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise. The Governing Body would accord Associate Members limited voting rights on committees.

A skills audit of the existing Governors of Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School would be carried out to inform appointments to the new Governing Body and to ensure that it is representative of both schools and both communities.

What is the proposed Senior Leadership structure?

There would be an Executive Head Teacher leading the hard federation on a strategic level and working with a Senior Leadership Team depending on the requirements of each school at any time. There would be a Head of School and key senior staff based in each of Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School who would manage those schools on an operational, day-to-day basis. While assigned to one school, those senior staff would be expected to work across both schools where appropriate and where expertise and strengths can be shared. The Governing Body and the Local Authority will work closely together, as they have in the past three years, to ensure that the Senior Leadership Team is appropriately supported.

The structure of the leadership teams in the two schools is currently slightly different, based on the needs of each school. There is currently no proposal to change this.

Staffing

Staffing numbers would remain at the current levels across both schools and there will be no contract changes as a result of the hard federation. It is not anticipated that staff members would experience significant change in their day to day work.

The Governors believe a new venture such as this is an attractive option for teachers and support staff looking for a new challenge while providing welcome professional development opportunities for the staff of each school. As a hard federation, the schools could continue to recruit extremely well, attracting high-impact and talented staff with the added benefit of opportunities to work across both schools.

Timeline

Activity	Date
Consultation begins	4th February 2019
Consultation ends	18 th March 2019
Governors discussion on responses to consultation and decision made whether to proceed with hard federation	18 th March 2019
If a hard federation is agreed, the hard federation would be formed	23 rd April 2019
First meeting of the hard federation's Governing Body	24 th April 2019

Frequently asked questions

Is there a risk that one of the schools would lose out in this arrangement?

No. The aim of the hard federation is for the schools to work together in a full and equal partnership to continue to grow stronger together. The structure of the hard federation will enable staff members' time and the benefits delivered by the hard federation to be appropriately and fairly shared across both schools. The single combined Governing Body would ensure each school's interests were fully and equally represented and would be better placed to serve the strategic development of both schools. It is proposed that there will be an equal number of places reserved for parent and staff representation on the Governing Body from each school.

Would each school keep its name and identity?

Yes. Each school will keep its own name and identity.

Would the uniform policy of each school remain the same?

Yes. Each school will maintain its own policy regarding uniform.

Would the admissions arrangements in each school remain the same?

Yes. Southwark's admissions policy will continue to apply to both schools.

Would pupils be registered to the hard federation or a single school?

Pupils will be on roll at a single school – either Bessemer Grange Primary School or Keyworth Primary School.

Would parents and staff be equally represented from both schools on the Governing Body?

Yes. The proposal is that the Governing Body includes one Staff Member Governor from each school and one Parent Governor from each school.

Would each school keep its own budget?

Yes. Each school will receive its own funding, manage separate budgets and keep separate records of its accounts. The two schools will share costs or combine purchasing if this means that they will be able to get better value for money.

Would the amount of money each school receives be affected by the hard federation?

No. All school budgets are worked out using a formula based on pupil numbers for the individual school.

Would the hard federation combine the two school's SATs results?

No. Results will continue to be attributed to the individual schools – either Bessemer Grange Primary School or Keyworth Primary School.

Would the hard federation be inspected by Ofsted?

No. Each school will continue to have separate Ofsted inspections and be graded separately.

Would one school take the lead over the other?

No. The schools will continue to collaborate and work together as equal partners.

Would the hard federation meet the different needs of the two communities served by Bessemer Grange Primary School and Keyworth Primary School?

Yes. As each school will have its own Head of School, key staff and safeguarding team, the differing needs of each of the Bessemer Grange and Keyworth communities would continue to be met. The Governing Body will have responsibility for both schools and would ensure that the two communities were represented. There would continue to be separate parent, pupil and staff voice.