

**Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Infant & Nursery School**

**Ss Alban and Stephen Catholic Junior School**

16<sup>th</sup> May 2018

Dear Parent, Carer and/or Member of Staff

**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED FEDERATION OF SS ALBAN & STEPHEN CATHOLIC INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL AND SS ALBAN & STEPHEN CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL**

The Governing Bodies of the two schools have recently informed you of their proposal to form a Federation between the two schools. The schools have previously worked closely together and the formalisation of this through federation is, we believe, in the interests of the children and staff of both schools.

The Governing Boards at each school are today beginning a consultation process with parents, staff and other stakeholders (such as Hertfordshire County Council) on the formation of a federation between the schools - a federation that would be led by a single Board of Governors.

The **Consultation Paper** that accompanies this letter sets out to address three items:

- A. The nature of the consultation process and the ways in which you can contribute to it
- B. Governance arrangements under the Federation
- C. Recommendation of the two Governing Boards and rationale

The consultation process begins on 16th May 2018 and closes on 28th June 2018 at midnight.

There are a number of ways in which you can participate and there will be opportunities for you to learn more about the governing boards' proposal in face-to-face sessions at the two schools.

We look forward to your engagement in this consultation which is important to the future development of our two schools.

If you are having difficulty with the language in this consultation letter, please let us know and we will provide additional help.

Yours sincerely

David Miveld

Chair of Governors

Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Infant & Nursery School

Declan Jacob

Chair of Governors

Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Junior School

# CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED FEDERATION OF SS ALBAN & STEPHEN CATHOLIC INFANT & NURSERY SCHOOL AND SS ALBAN & STEPHEN CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

## **A. THE NATURE OF THIS CONSULTATION PROCESS AND WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE**

### **SUMMARY**

- As part of any move to a federation, the Governing Boards at each of our schools are required to seek your views on any recommendation or proposal.
- The Governing Boards are also required to consult with other stakeholders, including the Local Authority, Hertfordshire County Council.
- After these consultations, the two Governing Boards are required to come to a decision. They are not bound by the responses of any one group – for instance, parents or staff - but they are required to demonstrate that they have taken these views into account. For this reason, it is important that you respond.
- If either or both of the Governing Boards feel that there is insufficient support for the formation of a federation, other alternatives will be sought.

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

#### **1. WHEN DOES THE CONSULTATION PROCESS BEGIN AND WHEN DOES IT FINISH?**

This consultation process opens on 16th May 2018 and closes on 28th June 2018.

#### **2. HOW CAN I RESPOND?**

##### **Parents and Carers:**

There are three ways in which you can make your views known:

- By raising your comments or queries at scheduled face-to-face meetings (see below)
- By e-mailing your comments or queries to [governors@ssasinfants.herts.sch.uk](mailto:governors@ssasinfants.herts.sch.uk), (note - this is the joint email address for both schools for the purposes of this consultation paper)
- By dropping your comments or queries into the Governor Boxes situated in the foyers of both schools

Two parent meetings have been scheduled to enable parents and carers to meet with school and governing board representatives to discuss the federation proposal. The dates and venues are detailed below and both are open to parents and carers with children at either school:

Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Infant & Nursery School      Fri 25th May, 10am – 11am

Ss Alban & Stephen Catholic Junior School                      Thurs 7th June, 7pm – 8pm

##### **Staff**

- Staff will be consulted via regular staff meetings at their respective schools. In addition, meetings specifically dedicated to this proposal are scheduled for the staff of both schools on 5<sup>th</sup> June.
- Staff are welcome to consult their trade unions and professional associations should they have concerns and queries. Staff can also invite them to the meeting above and we would ask that you inform the Infant School Headteacher or the Acting Junior School Headteacher if they will be attending.

##### **Children**

- The federation process will feature in school assemblies and other aspects of school life during the consultation period.

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### **3. HOW WILL A DECISION BE REACHED?**

- The two Governing Boards are responsible for making the final decision. However, Governors are required to take account of the responses to this consultation process, and we shall do so.
- Once this consultation process is complete, a report setting out the consultation findings will be presented to a joint meeting of the Governing Boards of our two schools.
- Each Governing Board will then meet on its own to decide whether or not it supports the formation of a federation.
- Both Governing Boards have to independently agree to the formation of a federation for it to be created.
- As well as consulting with parents and staff we are required to consult with the Local Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, the Diocese of Westminster and to gain the approval of the Secretary of State for Education.

### **4. COMMUNICATION OF OUTCOME**

- Once a decision has been reached, all relevant stakeholders will be informed.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you have questions about the proposed federation that we have not addressed here or the process outlined in this document, please contact the Governing Boards at [governors@ssasinants.herts.sch.uk](mailto:governors@ssasinants.herts.sch.uk)

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## **B. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE FEDERATION**

The role of the Governing Board is twofold:

1. To set, in collaboration with the Executive Headteacher (currently being recruited), the strategic direction and vision of the school federation;
2. To hold the Senior Leadership Team, including the Executive Headteacher, to account for the achievement of any objectives set.

Under a federation, a single, newly appointed Governing Board would be established and would be responsible for both of the schools in the Federation.

Having a single Board of Governors delivers advantages for both schools; it would ensure that the two schools move forward together with a shared vision for our children.

If the recommendation to form a federation is accepted, the existing Governing Boards will begin the process of establishing a new single Board of Governors for the Federation.

It is proposed that the new Board of Governors would be constituted with 16 members as set out in the table below:

<b>Category of Governor</b>	<b>Number of Governors on Board</b>
Executive Head	1
Staff Governor	1 from across the Federation
Parent Governors	2 from across the Federation
Local Authority Governor	1 (who cannot be employed at either school)
Co-opted Governors	2 – can be staff, parent or community
Foundation Governors	9 (of whom no more than 2 shall, at the time of their appointment, be eligible for election or appointment as parent governors)

The members of the new Federation’s Board of Governors would be appointed with due regard to:

- Best practice, current thinking and existing regulations in school and federation governance;
- The need to ensure that parents and staff at each school, and the local community, are appropriately represented;
- The skills and experience of the individuals concerned – retaining the right to co-opt governors is a way of ensuring that the Governing Board has a broad and appropriate mix of skills and experience across the group;
- Their commitment to education, and the success of the children at both schools, whatever their professional, parental or community background.

It should also be noted that:

- The new Board of Governors may differ in size from the envisaged number of 16 in the first instance because it is proposed that those who are currently members of either Governing Board would be offered the option of being an Associate Member, who are not full governors, but are brought onto a governing board for their expertise or experience.

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- Any vacancies that arise for the position of Parent Governors or Staff Governors would be filled following an election in which all parents across the Federation, or staff across the Federation would have a vote;
- Foundation governors would be appointed as per instructions from the Diocese of Westminster;
- The new Board of Governors would be encouraged to actively explore how to best engage the voice of our children in the governance and leadership of their schools;
- The new Board of Governors, whatever its formal constitution, would also be expected to give expression to the voice of other stakeholders.

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### **C. THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE GOVERNING BOARDS**

The Governing Boards at Ss Alban and Stephen Catholic Infant & Nursery and Ss Alban and Stephen Catholic Junior School recommend that they:

#### **FORM A FEDERATION WITH A SINGLE BOARD OF GOVERNORS FROM 1st January 2019**

##### **BACKGROUND AND VISION**

Both Governing Boards feel that the interests of both schools' children and staff are best served by creating a clear line of governance for the incoming Executive Headteacher, thus progressing to a federation would be the next logical step. We believe the benefits of Federation are as follows:

- One clear line of governance for the Executive Headteacher
- Closer working links between the two schools
- Sharing of best practices between schools
- Opportunities for staff development

Both Governing Boards believe that a federation offers the opportunity for a genuinely shared vision and educational philosophy across both schools, one that translates into a positive and joined-up experience for all of our children in both our school communities.

In this context, we are committed to achieving excellence through collaboration between our two vibrant and successful schools. We want to value, nurture and further develop the strengths and identities of both schools, whilst working together to enhance outcomes for our children. Our aim is to maintain outstanding provision and deliver excellent progress and achievement - and cherished and memorable educational experiences.

We want to continue to give every child in our care the opportunity to fulfil his or her potential as a confident, informed, sociable and well-rounded individual, ready for the next stage of their personal, developmental and educational journey, and for the world beyond. We believe this can be achieved more effectively by our schools working closely together, led by an Executive Headteacher.

In short, we believe that evolving into a federation, with one Board of Governors, is in the interests of children, parents and carers, and teaching and support staff. It would provide a shared strategic direction, strengthen ties between both schools and enable shared approaches to assessment and curriculum.

##### **THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE SHOULD A FEDERATION BE ESTABLISHED**

Should a federation be established between our two schools:

- Each school would retain its existing character and identity, with uniforms continuing to remain unique to each school, with individual badges and colour schemes, with children remaining at their existing school sites for classes and lessons
- Admissions arrangements to both schools would remain the same (and Hertfordshire County Council would continue to be the Admissions Authority for each school). Parents would still be required to make a separate application to the Junior school for Year three admissions.

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- The schools would retain individual budgets and keep their own clear audit trails for all income and expenditure
- The schools would be inspected as separate schools by the schools' inspectorate, Ofsted
- The key arrangements for existing staff will continue as per current Terms and Conditions (new employees would be contracted to the Federation).

In this context, Governors do not believe that a federation would have a negative impact on arrangements that are popular with children, teachers, parents and carers, and which work well at present.