

Proposal to Federate

Steam Mills Primary School and Woodside Primary School

A successful partnership has grown over the past eighteen months, in which we have seen Steam Mills and Woodside schools retain their unique identities and the children continue to make very good progress in their learning. Even through the challenges of the pandemic, the determined leadership of our Executive Headteacher, Deputy and Assistant Headteachers and the hard work and commitment of all our staff at both schools has provided stability and has maintained high standards of provision. The support of parents and the wider school community is valued and the Governing Boards of both schools have decided to consult with staff, parents and carers about the next step to consolidate our successful partnership, by proposing to federate Steam Mills Primary School and Woodside School.

This is your opportunity to let us know what you think about the proposal.

This paper contains:

- A definition of the term 'Federation'.
- An outline of the proposal.
- A response form for you to complete and return.

Please see the accompanying FAQs

We are holding the following consultation drop-in sessions for parents/carers and any other interested parties to have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have and to speak to governors and staff about the proposed federation.

Consultation Drop-In	
Wednesday 10 th November between 6pm and 6:45pm via Zoom	Monday 22 nd November between 6pm and 6:45pm via Zoom

You are welcome to attend either of the above sessions; details will be on newsletters closer to the time. If you do not have access to a laptop, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

The governing boards of Steam Mills Primary School and Woodside Primary School have decided that they want to federate from Friday 18th March 2022, to be known as The Steam Mills and Woodside Federation. This was a decision reached by both governing boards after several meetings with the Local Education Authority to discuss the federation and Governing Board meetings on 1st July 2021 of Steam Mills Primary School and 5th July 2021 of Woodside Primary School. The decision of both Governing Boards is supported by the Local Education Authority.

What is a Federation?

A Federation is where two or more schools share a governing board.

- Both schools will remain independent; they will not merge into one school.
- Pupils will not change schools.
- The names of the schools will not change, nor will the uniforms.
- Admission arrangements will not change for either school.
- Both schools will continue to receive individual budgets.
- Both schools will continue to serve their respective communities and retain their catchment areas.

What will happen to the current Governing Boards?

If federation goes ahead, both governing boards will be dissolved, and a single governing board will be formed. In accordance with legislation the governing board will consist of 15 governors comprising of:

Governor	No.	Details
Staff Governor	1	
Parent Governors	2	Elected across both schools (not ring fenced)
LA Governor	1	
Headteacher	1	
Co-opted Governors	10	
Total	15	

The Federation's aim is to ensure that the unique identity, visions and values of both schools and their communities, are maintained.

The success of our partnership over the past eighteen months is due in a large part to the similar values, aims and attitudes of both thriving small schools, which we have used to form our vision for the Federation.

Vision for the Federation

At the Federated schools of Steam Mills and Woodside we nurture a love of life, love of learning and mutual respect. We aim to provide a stimulating and challenging environment where everyone is happy, valued and every voice is heard. We want children to leave our schools equipped with the skills to become valued and responsible members of the community.

What are the benefits for our children?

- The opportunity to secure the highest possible standard of education for our children by combining the skills, knowledge and expertise of both staffs to improve the quality of teaching and learning for our children.
- A wider range of learning opportunities can be offered by sharing facilities, resources and teacher expertise.
- Enhanced learning provision through joint educational visits, visitors, workshops and resources.
- To extend the opportunities available to all pupils so that they can access the benefits of a larger school within a small school setting.

Proposed Staffing Arrangements

The terms and conditions of current staff in both schools would remain the same and could not be changed without agreement. It would be at the discretion of the Federated Governing Board to make new appointments, teaching and non-teaching, to the Federation or to individual schools. One of the benefits of schools wishing to federate is that it is possible to deploy new staff across the Federation. Federation provides the opportunity to work at either school within the federation with agreement.

How will Federation benefit our staff?

- To provide a challenging and rewarding environment in which to grow professionally, giving opportunities that might not otherwise exist in the current small school setting.
- Staff will be able to share knowledge and expertise over a wider colleague base and share best practice across both schools; broadening skills and dialogue across the range of curriculum areas.
- Maximise the sharing of resources across both schools to enlarge the range of resources for all staff to use in their teaching.
- Reduction of workload by sharing planning, curriculum leadership etc. across the two school staffs.

What are the benefits to parents and the local community?

- To secure the schools as vibrant and innovative centres of learning within their local communities, helping to protect the future of both schools and villages in which they lie.
- Provide increased opportunities for a quality education for every child.

The next step...

This document is the start of a six-week consultation period on the proposal to federate which will close on 13th December 2021. The consultation process is a statutory part of the procedure for forming a federation between the two schools governed by regulation and the governing boards of the schools proposing to federate must consult with:

- Gloucestershire Local Authority (FAO Head of Education)
- Staff paid to work at the schools
- Parents/carers of registered pupils at the schools
- Any other persons the governing bodies consider appropriate

A letter will be sent to the Secretary of State within one week of publication of this document informing of the start of consultation by the governing boards of Steam Mills Primary School and Woodside Primary School on Federation.

A response slip is attached to this document. Please complete and place in the box at each school or send to the clerk to the governors at either school:

clerktogovs@steammills.gloucs.sch.uk or clerktogovs@woodside.gloucs.sch.uk

Closing date for the return of the response forms is 13th December 2021

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Steam Mills Primary School and Woodside Primary School

Consultation Response Form

Please give us your views on the proposal for the federation. If you have any questions, please include them in the comments box.

Name (optional).....

Comments :

(Please use the other side of this sheet if required)

Please tick the boxes that apply. I am :

	Steam Mills	Woodside
A parent/carer of a child or children at one of the schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A governor of one of the schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A member of staff at one of the schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A parent of a pre school child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some other link to one of the schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Someone else with an interest – please give details	<input type="text"/>	

Please tick below in the appropriate box.

I support the federation	I do not support the federation	I am undecided
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please complete the form and place in the box at either school, or return by post or email by 13th December 2021

Clerk to the Governors
Steam Mills Primary School
Steam Mills
Cinderford
Glos
GL14 3JD

Clerk to the Governors
Woodside Primary School
Denehurst
Ruardean
Glos
GL17 9XP

clerktogovs@steammills.gloucs.sch.uk

clerktogovs@woodside.gloucs.sch.uk

Steam Mills and Woodside Federation – Frequently Asked Questions.

What is a Federation?

A Federation is a partnership between two schools sharing one Executive Headteacher where the Governing Boards of each individual school are dissolved and one Governing Board is formed to oversee both schools.

What is the role of the Governing Board?

The Governing Board is legally required to:

- *Ensure the school is a safe environment for all stakeholders and complies with Government and Local Authority Health and Safety and Safeguarding Legislation and Guidelines.*
- *Ensure that the school budget is not in deficit, takes measures to ensure that best value is obtained in the spending of school funds and has financial measures in place to monitor and approve spending.*
- *Approves and reviews school policies.*
- *Ensure that the school provides a broad and balanced national curriculum in line with national legislation and guidelines.*
- *Provides a performance management structure for the Executive Headteacher and staff.*
- *Approve the appointment of staff.*

The Governing Board is also responsible for the monitoring of the short-term operation of the school and, in conjunction with the Executive Headteacher, the long-term strategic planning of the school.

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for the operational management of the school, including staffing matters, and the implementation of national and school policies, guidelines and legal requirements

Why are the Governors of both schools proposing a Federation?

- *To improve the learning experience and educational opportunities for the children of both schools by combining the knowledge and skills of both staffs.*
- *To increase the opportunity for both sets of staff to work collaboratively to improve their knowledge and skills.*

- *To provide a clear management structure for the Executive Headteacher and staff to work within.*
- *To share the best practice of both schools for the benefit of the children.*
- *To help ensure the long-term viability of both schools.*

Does this mean that we will be part of an academy?

No, Steam Mills and Woodside will remain as local authority, maintained community schools, operating under the control and guidelines of Gloucestershire County Council Education Department.

Will Mrs Davis be based at one school full time?

No, Mrs Davis will continue to share her time equally between the schools.

Will the name of the school change?

No. The names of both schools will stay the same.

Will the school uniforms change?

No. The school uniform and colours will remain the same.

Will existing staff have to move between the schools?

No. This has been discussed by governors with the HR Department at Shire Hall and existing staff will continue working under their current terms and conditions and will not have to move between schools.

What will be the status of new staff joining after Federation?

New staff will be employed by the Federation and could be deployed where the Executive Headteacher identifies need in either school.

Will the school budgets be merged together into one budget?

No. Each school will retain their own budget and the Governing Board of the Federation will be legally responsible for both budgets.

Will School Policies be identical for both schools?

Yes and No. Legally required policies, such as Health and Safety, Data Protection etc. will probably be the same for each school, whereas curriculum- based policies eg. Homework Policy and curriculum subject policies, which are compiled after staff and Executive Headteacher discussions, will be school specific, as the needs of each school will tend to be different.

Will Admissions Arrangements for both schools change?

No. The Admissions Arrangements for each school will remain the same.

Will both schools teach exactly the same curricular?

Both schools currently teach very similar content as both follow the National Curriculum and have embedded good practice from local and National initiatives. All schools are able to design their programmes of delivery and therefore science and the foundation subjects are taught in a different order, according to a two-year rolling programme. Each school will continue with their current rolling programmes and overarching topics, so that there is no disruption to the children's learning.

Will there be a joint Ofsted inspection?

No, the schools will retain their separate DfE identities and be inspected separately.

What will be the main difference if the schools federate?

The main difference will be at Governor level, where the two existing separate Governing Boards will dissolve, and one Governing Board will be formed.