

St Helen's & St Mary's Primary Schools' Partnership

Federation Proposal

April 2022

St Helen's and St Mary's Primary School Partnership
Growing together, pursuing life in all its fullness

**Partnership for
Excellence**
Collaborating at all levels,
building capacity for leadership
and striving for excellence.

**Partnership for
Enjoyment**
Enriching our learning and
experiences, fostering
enjoyment.

**Partnership for
Exploration**
Continuously improving,
innovating and exploring.

**Partnership for
Achievement**
Working together to raise
outcomes, keeping children's
achievement at the very
centre.



The journey so far...



June 2019

- Partnership established



Nov 2020

- Initial Governor review of the Partnership
- Engagement with stakeholders
- **Decision to continue**



Jan – March 2022

- Departure of Executive Headteacher, prompted second Governor review of the Partnership
- Review extended to a wider look at the steps for the future by:
 - consulting the Local Authority, the Diocese, staff and parents/carers from both schools
 - reviewing the current national Department for Education guidance to understand the picture of school leadership and its strategic direction in the coming years



- Working together navigating one of the biggest challenges for a generation - the Covid-19 pandemic
- Sharing support structures and resources
- Development of close relationships across leadership teams and schools

What next?



During the in-depth review, it became clear that there were a few options for the two schools. A very succinct summary:

| Options | Key consideration |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Staying as a Partnership | Presents significant risk to being able to recruit an appropriate Executive Head Teacher (as anecdotal evidence has demonstrated) |
| Returning to separate schools | Would undo the progress and improvement made in efficiencies and positive learning outcomes across the schools, also unlikely to attract the desired quality of Executive Head for either school |
| Becoming a Federation* | Ability to continue on the joint journey the schools have embarked upon, building on the benefits already realised, and also providing an attractive prospect for a high quality Executive Head |
| Joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT)* | Risks losing the individuality of the schools, with a more business-like approach |

*Federation/MAT appears to be the DfE strategic direction in the coming years.

Our recommendation.



After consideration of all the available information, the governing bodies of St. Helen's and St. Mary's voted to **start a formal consultation on forming a Federation between our two schools.**

Our proposal is outlined in the following pages, along with the background on why we entered a Partnership in the first place, how you can ask questions, and give your views as part of the consultation.

What is a Federation?



A federation is defined in law as two or more maintained schools operating under the governance of a single governing body, most often led by one executive leader.

The schools will:

- retain their own:
 - Voluntary Aided (VA) / Voluntary Controlled (VC) status,
 - independent budgets,
 - Department for Education (DfE) numbers and
 - admissions authorities
- keep their own identities - including their existing uniforms
- continue to have independent Ofsted and SIAMs inspections
- continue to develop a shared understanding of Christian Ethos and vision

How is this different to our Partnership?



It is actually very similar to our Partnership in many ways, **the principles remain the same.**

These are the key differences:

| | Partnership | Federation |
|------------|---|---|
| Governance | A separate Governing Board per school | A shared Governing Board |
| Admissions | St. Helen's – Local Authority St. Mary's – St. Mary's Governing body | St. Helen's – Local Authority St. Mary's – Federation Governing body |
| Staff | Staff employed by: St. Helen's – Local Authority (VC) St. Mary's – St. Mary's Governing body (VA) | Staff employed by: St. Helen's – Local Authority (VC) St. Mary's – Federation Governing body (VA) |

VC = Voluntary controlled

VA = Voluntary aided

The principles and these key differences are explained in more detail later.

Federation.



Why federate?



'The creation and membership of a federation is not just about structural change. It is also about a different mindset where the governors and school leaders share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the federation, as opposed to just a single school, through a school-led system of raising standards and driving improvement.'

National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) 2014

Why federate?



Federations have the following advantages:

1. Better, broader offer for pupils – both curricular & extra-curricular
2. More opportunity to employ specialist staff
3. More continuous professional development for staff
4. Better recruitment, succession planning & retention of staff
5. Moderating and benchmarking: same systems of assessment, data and finances
6. Learning from each other
7. More capacity for innovation
8. Efficiencies – joint services
9. Stronger governance (especially with well federated structures)

These benefits result in improved outcomes for pupils.

The Federation will be successful for children if...

- Outcomes are improved/high for all
- Our shared school ethos is strengthened and developed
- Wider opportunities and enrichment lead to increased pupil enjoyment
- An enriched and innovative curriculum motivates and inspires pupils
- The best staff are recruited and retained
- Attendance is high
- Pupils are engaged and behaviour is positive



The Federation will be successful for staff if...

- There are opportunities for their growth and development
- Sharing of practice leads to continual improvement in teaching and learning
- Strong and supportive communities of learning are developed
- There are opportunities for staff who are interested to work in the other school, gaining experiences and adding capacity and strength
- Workloads can be streamlined and shared
- By sharing costs, we can access more high quality professional development than we could individually



The Federation will be successful for Leadership and Governance if...

- It is strengthened through joint working which secures/improves capacity and succession planning
- It provides opportunities for leaders and governors to work together, learn from each other, and support and challenge each other
- Leadership roles are clearly defined and improve capacity for strategic development, and the day to day running of the schools is also improved
- Shared costs result in improved access/outcomes for children/staff



The Federation will be successful for our Communities if...

- Parents/carers and children are proud to attend
- Parents/carers and children continue to recognise their school's unique character, ethos and culture and can see it developing further
- Children's learning is enriched and developed through the work of the federation
- Leadership is strengthened, visible and parents/carers are clear on who to speak to about any questions or concerns
- Both schools continue to be an integral part of the communities that they serve





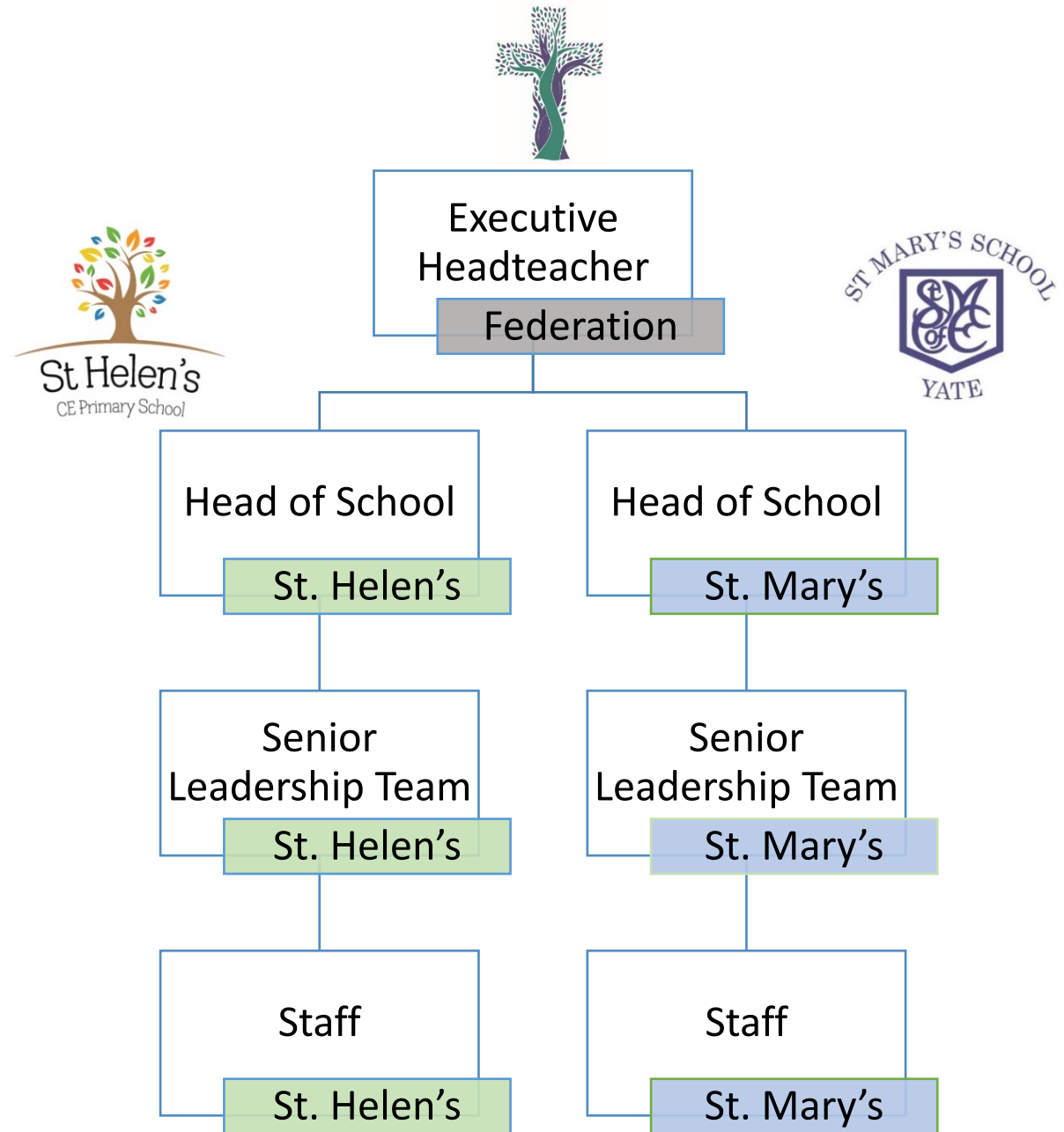
Admissions.

The Admissions Authority for each school would be:

- The Local Authority, for admissions to St. Helen's;
- The Governing Body of the Federation, for admissions to St. Mary's.

Admissions policies will be updated in line with local guidance from the Local Authority and the Diocese, as required.

Leadership structure.



Staff contracts (1)



At the outset of the federation the terms and conditions of existing staff contracts will remain the same as their current permanent contracts and will not be changed without agreement.

- Staff of St. Mary's would be employed by the governing body of the federation (VA school). This will require compliance with the rules relating to TUPE - Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) as there is a change of employer, i.e. from the GB of St. Mary's to the GB of the federation.
- Staff of St. Helen's would continue to be employed by the Local Authority (VC school).
- The executive headteacher will be employed by the Federation.

Staff contracts (2)

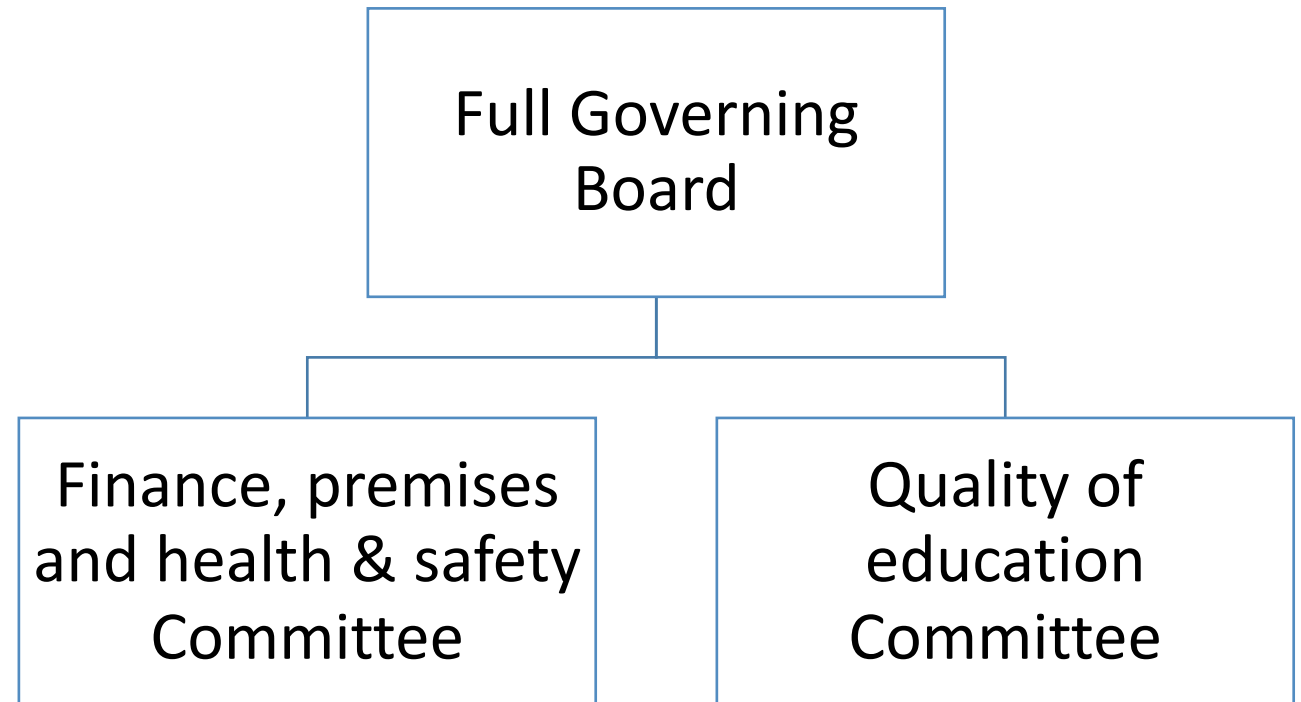


- It may be possible to deploy staff across the Federation. Through agreement a member of staff could work at the other school, either through a secondment or via a separate contract.
- New contracts (for new starters or promoted posts) would have a mobility clause within them. This doesn't mean that staff would automatically work at either location but gives the management team flexibility if needed. Any requests to work at the other location would be given with reasonable notice (unless there are exceptional circumstances).



Governance.

Our proposed governance structure



Working parties to be formed as and when needed.

Instrument of Government (1)



- **The Federation of St. Helen's and St. Mary's** will consist of St Helen's CE VC Primary School in Alveston and St Mary's CE VA Primary School in Yate.
- The schools are both maintained primary schools.
- The Head of School for each school will be an associate member of the governing board (governors who can be part of discussion and conversation but with no voting rights). Other associate members will be included as required.
- The term of office for Local Authority, parent, staff and co-opted governors will be 4 years.
- The aim will be to have 1 parent governor from each community at the commencement of the federation. When a vacancy goes unfilled, the place will be opened up to parents of either school.
- There will be 1 staff governor, but the governing body may choose to elect a staff member from the school who doesn't have one into a co-opted governor position.
- The instrument of government comes into effect on **1st January 2023**.

Instrument of Government (2)



- Traditionally, VA schools require a majority of foundation governors (appointed by the Diocese, but can also be parents) within their governing body, whereas VC schools require up to ¼ of governors as foundation governors.
- The Diocesan Board of Education has recently agreed that they would support an ‘equality model’ for foundation governance in VA schools, whereby foundation and non-foundation governors are equal in number.
- They specifically would support such a model in our federation of St. Mary’s CE VA and St. Helen’s CE VC Primary Schools.

- **‘The governing board of the Federation of St. Helen’s and St. Mary’s’** could consist of either:

| Foundation Majority Governance Model | Foundation Equality Governance Model |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | 2 parent governors |
| | 2 co-opted governors |
| | 1 Local Authority governor |
| | 1 staff governors |
| | 1 Executive Headteacher |
| 8 foundation governors | 7 foundation governors |
| Total: 15 governors | Total: 14 governors |

Governors are seeking the views of the school communities to inform our decision about which model to pursue.

Our Partnership.



From Partnership to Federation

During the creation of our partnership, principles and opportunities were set out to enable us to achieve the aims in our schools' individual vision statements. Through this work we found real commonality between the schools alongside opportunities to support and add strength to each setting. We would continue to use these principles to underpin a federation.

St. Helen's

Excellence, Enjoyment and Achievement together

St. Mary's

Enjoy, Explore, Excel: Be amazing

St Helen's and St Mary's Primary School Partnership
Growing together, pursuing life in all its fullness





Consultation.

Your opportunity to share your views.

Consultation timeline



| Key dates | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 7th April 2022 | Start of formal consultation on federation proposal. |
| From 25 th April 2022 | Consultation meetings between governors and school communities. Details to be arranged and communicated. |
| 19 th May 2022 | Close of formal consultation and date by which all written representations must be made. |
| 25th and 26 th May 2022 | Full Governing Body meetings to consider all aspects of consultation and vote to formally start federation or not. |
| 3 rd June 2022 | Commencement of Executive Headteacher Recruitment, aiming for a start date of January 2023. |

How to give your views



The governors are keen to hear the views of all members of our school communities – you can get in touch by:

- Attending one of the consultation meetings
- Completing a hard copy of the consultation form (available on your school's website or from your school office) and returning it to your school's office
- Filling in the online survey: <https://forms.gle/ECpBx2PR8tP9FzUa8>
- Emailing your school - for the attention of the governing body:
sthelensprimary@sgmail.org.uk
office@stmarysyate.org.uk

If we receive many similar queries throughout the consultation, we will produce a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document and share it on the school's websites.

All feedback will be considered – THANK YOU!