

Shere Church of England Infant (VA) School and Nursery and Clandon Church of England
Primary (VA) School Federation Proposal



Proposal to Federate

Shere Church of England Infant (VA) School and
Nursery

Clandon Church of England Primary (VA) School
as the Newlands Church of England School Federation

on

19th April 2021

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1 Federation of Shere Church of England Infant (VA) School and Nursery and Clandon Church of England Primary (VA) School

The proposal is that the Governing Bodies of Shere Church of England Infant (VA) School and Nursery and Clandon Church of England Primary (VA) school agree to federate as the Newlands Church of England School Federation as set out in accordance with The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

The term 'Federation' describes a formal and legal structure where schools come together to work in partnership under one Governing Body. Each school's individual Governing Body would be dissolved and replaced by a single over-arching Governing Body accountable for our two schools and setting the strategic direction for the group.

The Governing Bodies of both schools will consult parents, staff, the local community and other stakeholders on this proposal to change how the two schools are led and managed. This document describes what federation would mean to both schools, how this would differ from the current collaboration and, most importantly, what the impact would be on the children of each school.

2 Background

In the current political and financial climate, it is becoming increasingly difficult for small rural communities to keep their village school unless they work in some form of partnership with other schools. The pressure on Governing Bodies and Headteachers to find ways to sustain small rural schools has been unrelenting in recent years and your Governing Bodies have had to be proactive and inventive in securing the future of our two schools.

The development of the governor led Nursery at Shere has been one example of such action. This was undertaken to enhance the service provided to the local community whilst also supporting the future of the school through promoting it as a destination of choice for parents of young learners through familiarity with the school character and ethos. At Clandon a decision to convert from an infant school to a primary was made for similar reasons.

The Governing Bodies of Shere Church of England (VA) Infant School and Nursery (Shere) and Clandon Church of England (VA) Primary School (Clandon) believe in small rural schools: the important contribution they make in providing excellent centres of learning at the heart of the local communities, the sense of community responsibility engendered in young people educated near their home, the close links forged between church, school and families and the commitment to providing high quality education from the ages of 2 to 11 years old. As near neighbours we have been in discussion together, and independently, over the last two years to explore how we can work together to sustain the financial future of our schools. We have

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looked at many options including Federation and Multi Academy Trusts. What has become clear is that doing nothing is not an option.

During our consideration of federating, it has become clear that there are advantages for the two schools to federate under one Governing Body and following the resignation of Clandon's Headteacher, this cooperation has taken one step closer with both schools now temporarily sharing a Headteacher and Business Manager.

The Governing Bodies through a joint working group have sought advice from other schools who have entered a similar process. We have consulted with Surrey County Council as the Local Authority (LA) and the Diocese of Guildford and have the support of both to take this forward. Both Governing Bodies have voted unanimously to formally pursue federation and commence the formal process of consultation and decision making laid down by statute¹. All Foundation Governors have provided written confirmation that they approve the arrangements for continuing to the formal consultation stage. The trustees of the two sites and the relevant Parochial Parish Councils have been similarly consulted and given their consent.

3 Size and constitution of Governing Body

It is proposed the new Governing Body will be constituted as follows:

Headteacher

Ex-Officio Foundation governor (Rector of East and West Clandon)

Ex-Officio Foundation governor (Rector of Shere, Peaslake and Gomshall)

One Local Authority governor

One staff governor

Two parent governors (one from each school)

Three Foundation governors (Guildford Diocese appointment)

Two Foundation governors (one from East and one from West Clandon PCC appointments)

Two Foundation governors (Shere and Peaslake PCC appointments)

This gives a Governing Body of 14 members with a majority of Foundation governors 9 to 5.

This composition has been proposed cognisant of the fact that the size and composition of every Federation must be constituted in accordance with the regulations.²

The total membership of the Governing Body must be no fewer than seven governors and must include the following:

(a) one parent governor elected or appointed in accordance with regulation 14 in respect of each school in the Federation;

¹ The School Governance (Federation) (England) Regulations 2012

² The School Governance (Federation) (England) Regulations 2012

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- (b) the Headteacher of each federated school unless any such Headteacher resigns the office of governor in accordance with regulation 19 of the Constitution Regulations 2012;
- (c) one staff governor; and
- (d) one Local Authority governor.

In addition, the Governing Body of a Federation comprising only voluntary aided schools, which is the case here, must also include such number of Foundation governors as to outnumber all the other governors by two.³

4 Staffing the Schools within the Federation

4.1 General

In general, it is envisaged that staff contracts will be unchanged by the process of federation.

The provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (“TUPE”) apply where there is a change of employer. In Voluntary Aided schools, as is the case here, TUPE will apply as staff will cease to be employed by the school Governing Body (which will be dissolved) and they will enter into new employment contracts with the Governing Body of the Federation. The TUPE regulations include an obligation to consult the relevant staff unions about such a change of employer and we will be doing this through this consultation process.

In practice this means that staff will transfer on their existing terms and conditions to the new federated Governing Body under TUPE. It should be noted that there would be a greater opportunity for staff to work and achieve professional development under these new arrangements, however, we expect this to be achieved through individual negotiations.

4.2 Leadership structures

It is intended that an integral part of the federation process is that there would be one Headteacher across the two schools. Shere and Clandon schools are geographically very close which enables the Headteacher to attend either school as and when necessary. In addition, there would be a senior teacher appointed at each school to be the day to day point of contact with parents and staff. Thus, the final decision to federate will be informed by 18 months or more of experience of operating this leadership structure on a temporary basis.

5 Federation Date

³ The School Governance (Federation) (England) Regulations 2012 regulation 22 (5)

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On 19th April 2021 both existing Shere and Clandon Governing Bodies will cease to exist when the new Federation Governing Body will form and meet for the first time.

6 Admissions authorities

The admissions authority for each school remains the same. Each school will have its own independent admissions policy.

7 Consultation process and dates

The Legislation defines the categories of persons that need to be informed regarding the proposal and requires that there be a minimum six-week consultation period after the publication of the Federation proposal in order for representations to be made.

The Newlands Church of England School Federation proposal will be formally published in week beginning 14th December 2020

The Consultation Period will commence on Friday 18th December 2020 and close on Friday 12th February 2021

There will be a Federation Information Pack consisting of this proposal together with an outline of the process timetable and FAQ sheets tailored to particular interest groups e.g. staff, parents, community groups and education authorities.

There will be virtual public meetings held on the following dates and places for parents:

8pm on 8th and 9th February 2021

Written representations marked **FEDERATION PROPOSAL** may be sent to:

Fiona McGowan, PA to the Headteacher at either

Shere CE Infant (VA) School and Nursery
Gomshall Lane, Shere, Guildford, Surrey, GU5 9HB

Or

Clandon CE Primary (VA) School
The Street, West Clandon, Surrey, GU4 7ST

Or emailed to:

Newlandsconsultation2020@gmail.com

8 Relevant information

8.1 Advantages of Federating

Our schools have many things in common and the differences are complimentary.

- Both schools are Church of England and Voluntary Aided.
- They are similar in size (pupil numbers) and both have a rural community profile.
- Our schools share a common Christian ethos and values.
- A complimentary difference is that Shere school comprises a governor led nursery and infant school whereas Clandon is a primary school.
- The schools will remain separate, each with their own admissions policies, but the new Federation will have as a priority to seek to capitalise on the opportunities the new arrangement presents. For example, for pupils who will benefit from learning for a longer period in a smaller setting following the same Christian and teaching ethos; for staff to benefit from both greater opportunities and exchange of ideas provided by a larger school community; and for both schools to realise the financial benefits of the economy of scale a larger organisation brings.
- By bringing our schools under a unified governance structure, there will be an immediate reduction in the time spent by the leadership team in ensuring that both schools are compliant with all the relevant standards and legislation.
- Much of the governance activity of our schools is currently duplicated. Likewise, as governors are community volunteers, there will be a lesser burden on both communities in sourcing governors with the relevant skills and ensuring they are adequately supported and trained.
- Both schools are Church of England schools under the Diocese of Guildford and the Governing Body will have majority representation from the combined Diocesan and PCC appointed Foundation governors ensuring that the schools will retain their strong Christian ethos and character in a nurturing environment.
- Under Federation staff will be part of a bigger team allowing for specialist skills to be both shared and developed for the future.
- Opportunities exist for each community to combine forces in respect of activities organised by parents and other community volunteers for the benefit of both schools.

8.2 Risks of Federating

All change carries some risk. At this stage we have not identified any particular organisational or financial issues that would need resolution before federation could take place. However, we cannot be certain whether, during the consultation period, there will be any unforeseen changes in policy by the government, the Local Authority or the Diocese that raises issues that will require careful consideration and may delay or halt the process.

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8.3 Financial arrangements

Each school will continue to have separate budgets funded by the Local Authority and each will have separate continuing access to Diocesan Capital funding. The funding arrangements of the Shere Nursery are independent and unaffected by this proposal.

8.4 Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

Each school will be inspected and graded independently by Ofsted and SIAMS.

8.5 Federated Schools Leaving Federations

Federating is not a one-way process. There are procedures under the regulations that allow for schools to leave a Federation. However, this is a serious step to take and would not take place without very careful consideration by the Federation and the authorities concerned.