



**SHERE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) INFANT SCHOOL and
NURSERY
and
CLANDON CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL FOR FEDERATION

CONSULTATION PERIOD

18th December 2020 to 12th February 2021

The Governing Bodies of Shere Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Infant School and Nursery (Shere) and Clandon Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School (Clandon) invite and encourage you to become involved in the consultation process of our proposal to federate Shere and Clandon Schools as The Newlands Church of England School Federation with effect from 19th April 2021.

The Governing Bodies of Shere and Clandon Schools are consulting widely with parents, staff, the local community and other stakeholders on their 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. It also describes how you can make your views known. This document should be read in conjunction with the Formal Proposal to Federate and Instrument of Government.

The consultation has the support of the Governing Bodies of both schools, Surrey County Council and the Diocese of Guildford.

COLLABORATION

The two schools have collaborated since September 2019, meaning there has been one shared Headteacher and one shared Business Manager supported by two separate Governing Bodies. In recent times, the two Governing Bodies have progressively shared expertise, training and experience by meeting together to discuss shared issues and values, national initiatives, safeguarding practices and the development of policies. A Committee already exists to jointly serve both schools.

It has been very clear throughout the period of collaboration that each school can benefit from the other but retain its individual distinctiveness within its own community. This has been, and remains, of paramount importance to each school.

WHAT IS FEDERATION?

The Governing Body of each school has judged it is the right time to move from a collaboration to a Federation. This involves a change in governance from two separate Governing Bodies to one shared Governing Body with responsibility for both schools. In the proposed Federation, the two schools will remain legally separate schools each with their own allocated budget, premises and policy for admissions and will continue to share one Headteacher and Business Manager. Shere and Clandon Schools will each retain their own identity, and also be subject to separate inspection e.g. by OFSTED and SIAMS. A new Instrument of Government, a legal document that all Governing Bodies have, has been drafted for the new Governing Body.

It is important to understand that neither school will close nor is this an amalgamation of the two schools, but a formal and legal means of sharing the leadership and some of the resources of the two schools for mutual benefit.

WHY FEDERATE?

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 recent 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 an all-through primary was made for similar reasons.

Both of the Governing Bodies of Shere and Clandon Schools believe in small rural schools and their importance in providing excellent centres of learning at the heart of the local community and are committed to providing high quality education from the ages of 2yrs to 11yrs. 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 future of our schools. We have looked at many options including Federation and Multi Academy Trusts. What has become clear is that doing nothing is not an option.

As we have considered federating, it is clear that there are advantages for the two schools to federate under one Governing Body. Following the resignation of Clandon's Headteacher, this cooperation has been taken one step closer with the schools sharing a Headteacher since September 2019.

The Governing Bodies through a joint working group have sought advice from other schools who have entered a similar process. We have consulted with the Local Authority 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.

The partnership will enjoy shared benefits including:

- Remaining viable on separate sites, sharing management systems, resources and governance responsibilities to create long-term sustainability.
- Shared expertise and efficient working of a joint Governing Body.
- Financial economies of scale and value for money, e.g. through joint purchasing.
- Promotion of time-saving, efficient practices across both schools whilst not compromising quality, personal relationships and effective communication.
- Teaching staff able to share best ideas, knowledge, research and training opportunities to ensure further development of high standards across a broad and balanced curriculum.
- A Headship role across both schools that is secure, sustainable and an attractive proposition to potential future candidates. This is particularly important for small rural primary schools, like ours, which often struggle to appoint quality Headteachers.
- Career development opportunities for all staff through joint staffing structures across both schools in subject leadership.
- Extra capacity to offer a broad, balanced curriculum to children from both schools, sharing resources whilst using fully the skills of all staff.
- Further joint working together of children and staff, bringing positive benefits to all.

Federation formally acknowledges these benefits, demonstrating a strategic commitment through the establishment of joint governance to continue to have the interests of all children at the heart of everything we do whilst recognising and valuing the individual nature of each school.

As we have already said, federation is not about closure or termination, quite the opposite. Federation can help small rural schools such as ours to remain sustainable and viable on separate sites.

The importance of this proposal and the necessity for action at this time is summed up by the experience of our shared Headteacher Mrs Voller:

“I have always said that no school can be an island however, during my time in education small schools like ours are increasingly at risk of isolation. The support that was previously offered by the Local Authority has drastically reduced and services once provided to schools at no charge, now come with an associated cost. The same is true of support

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

from the Diocese. Small schools cannot afford these charges and are therefore left without support.

Historically our schools belonged to informal networks of other local schools, but these too are fading away as most schools, by necessity, join federations or academy chains and the funding that supported such partnerships disappears.

I believe wholeheartedly that small village schools offer the very best education to small children. However, I have come to accept that the model of a small school, is not the model supported by government. If small schools are to survive, we must work together to form partnerships that offer safety in numbers and the kind of support that ensures our schools thrive now and in the future.

I believe that federation is the best option to safeguard Clandon and Shere for this and future generations of children. I simply don't believe in a one size fits all model of education, that is the way of many academy chains. To my mind federation is preferable to an academy chain as each school retains its autonomy, ethos and policies. I have no desire to be dictated to by a CEO and wish to continue to run and develop both schools, with the community and for the benefit of the community.

When the opportunity to lead Clandon alongside Shere came up it was too good to miss. It provided both schools with a well-matched ally, both small and rural and both full of potential. Over the past fifteen months it has been a privilege to lead both Clandon and Shere Schools, in fact I am not sure how we would have managed the challenges of 2020 without each other. It is this strong partnership that will allow both schools to remain at the heart of our villages for generations to come."

HOW WILL THE FEDERATION BE ORGANISED?

Shere and Clandon Schools will remain separate schools. Their names will remain the same. Each school will have its own admissions policy and each school will retain its own uniform, logo and colours.

Both schools are church schools and a Christian ethos will remain at the heart of each.

Each school will continue to be funded separately, with budgets largely dependent on pupil numbers, as they are now. However, federation will allow efficiency savings through joint financial and strategic planning.

As under the collaboration, one Headteacher will lead both schools, sharing time between them. Under the current collaboration the leadership team has been enhanced by a senior teacher being appointed at each school as well as a nursery manager at Shere – an arrangement that will continue at the start of federation. The Headteacher and the staff will work in close partnership with the governors to manage all aspects of both schools, but in particular to achieve excellent teaching and learning at both schools.

A new, single Governing Body will be created. There will be 14 governors in total, being representative of both schools and made up of the following categories:

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

Staff will transfer under TUPE² to a new employment contract with the new Governing Body under the direction of the Headteacher. Current staff will continue to work within their own schools but may be requested to work across either (or both) school(s) if there is a requirement in the future. However, future appointees will be asked to work at either (or both) school(s) as part of their contract. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, will continue to benefit from shared training opportunities and open, professional dialogue in sharing best practice.

The current Governing Bodies of Shere and Clandon School, with the support of Surrey County Council Education Department and the Diocese of Guildford, have given considerable thought to this proposal. We are now asking parents, staff and our communities to consider the proposal document and to share their views with us.

Please also read the supplementary document '***Frequently asked questions regarding the proposed Federation***' for more information.

NEXT STEPS

You are invited to register for one of two webinars – public meetings would have been the preference but COVID rules do not allow. Parents of children attending the schools, parents of pre-school children and members of the community are welcome to register for one of the webinars by emailing Newlandsconsultation2020@gmail.com

8pm on 8th and 9th February 2021

The Governing Bodies of each school will meet early in March 2021 to consider the responses from the webinars and any written contributions received. Each Governing Body will meet separately to decide whether to proceed. The final decision will be announced shortly afterwards.

If it is decided not to federate, then the schools will remain working in collaboration under the present arrangements whilst the Governors consider other options. If it is decided that federation will take place, then a meeting will be held between the Governors of the two schools to finalise detailed arrangements so that the federation can begin on 19th April 2021. Parents and members of the community will be kept informed throughout this process.

² Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006

HOW TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

You may register for a webinar, but we would also welcome written responses. If you wish to make a written response please complete the attached response sheet (please ensure you include all of the information requested on the response sheet) and return it in an envelope marked **FEDERATION PROPOSAL** and addressed 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

Alternatively, you can e-mail either of the Chairs of Governors using the email address:

Newlandsconsultation2020@gmail.com

The closing date for responses is 12th February 2021

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

James Culmer, Chair of Governors
Clandon CE (VA) Primary School

Marsha Walton, Chair of Governors
Shere CE (VA) Infant School and
Nursery

YOUR VIEWS ON THE PROPOSAL TO FEDERATE SHERE CE (VA) INFANT SCHOOL and NURSERY AND CLANDON CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Please briefly write your observations and/or suggestions in this box:

CLOSING DATE FOR THIS CONSULTATION IS 12th February 2021

Please indicate your interest in either school by ticking the appropriate box below:

Parent/carer of child registered at Shere:

Parent/carer of child registered at Clandon:

Parent of pre-school child:

Member of Shere staff:

Member of Clandon staff:

Other (please state):

You are not required to complete the personal information below. However, it would be helpful to the Governing Bodies if you do so.

Name:

Email Address:

Address:

Postcode:

Date:

N.B. Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation may be accessed by members of the public.

