

**Consultation on the Federation of  
Beacon Primary School and Barcroft Primary School**

Dear All,

The Governing Boards of Beacon Primary School and Barcroft Primary School have been working closely together throughout 2021. This partnership has proven very effective in terms of the education and support to children attending both schools through the pandemic and in providing support and stability to staff during a period of uncertainty.

Working closely together we have been able to share leadership expertise, staff professional development and teaching good practice across both settings. This has given us the confidence that a continued partnership will be beneficial to both schools in equal measure.

Neither school intends to rush into anything but we do want to provide certainty for pupils, parents/ carers and staff as to what the future holds. Ultimately we feel we are stronger together.

This is early days and no decision has yet been taken to federate. At this stage both Governing Boards have agreed to start a discussion with parents and carers, staff, trade unions and other stakeholders to gather views before making a final decision. Any decision will be based solely on there being benefits for both schools and that we will be equal partners.

We have put together the reasons why we think the two schools joining together as a federation is a good thing. There is a feedback form which we would encourage you to complete with your thoughts on the proposal. There will also be staff and parent/ carer events where you can attend to hear more and ask questions.

The consultation period will run from 08.11.21 until midday on 07.01.22. Please share with us your thoughts, ideas or concerns so we can make a fully informed decision.

The consultation document is available via the school website. Additional paper copies can be obtained via the school office.

The closing date for comments is the 06.12.21

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to hearing from you.

We would encourage you to respond by completing the feedback form or attending an open session on the following dates:

Beacon Primary School – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021

2pm & 5pm

Barcroft Primary School – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

2pm & 5pm

An attendance letter will be sent out prior to these meetings so we can make arrangements for the required numbers.

These meetings are for parents or carers only, we politely ask you to make arrangements for childcare.

Separate dates have been organised for staff and unions.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Trawford  
Chair of Governors  
Beacon Primary School

Phil Cross MBE  
Chair of Governors  
Barcroft Primary School

## **Consultation on Beacon Primary School and Barcroft Primary School joining together to become a federation of two schools**

Beacon Primary School and Barcroft Primary School are undertaking a 6 week consultation to determine whether joining together (federating) is in the best interests of both schools involved.

The consultation will seek the feedback of pupils, parents/carers, staff, and the local community, Trade Unions, the Secretary of State and the Local Authority. This consultation document explains what a federation is, and the benefits it will bring to all the schools involved. There is also a form to complete where you can put forward your views.

The Headteacher at Beacon Primary School has been Interim Headteacher at Barcroft Primary for 6 months. During that time staff across both schools have shared expertise and good practice and have built strong working relationships. It is based on this close working relationship that it is felt that federating is the next natural step.

In addition to receiving the consultation document, drop-in sessions will be organised where questions can be posed and further information gathered about the proposal. We would really appreciate your contribution to the consultation.

Do please complete the form at the back of the consultation pack, and send us your views by the 06.12.21 on our proposal.

### **What is a Hard Federation?**

A Hard Federation is the name given to the way in which two or more schools work more closely together. For us it will mean Beacon Primary School and Barcroft Primary School becoming a federation.

On a day to day basis there will be no changes. Your child will still be taught by the same staff they were taught by before the two schools joined together. A federation isn't the same as acadamisation and staff will still be employed by the local authority. Both schools will continue to be funded separately as is the case now.

The key change will be that there will be one Governing Board responsible for leading both schools. They will have oversight of the quality of leadership and education across the two schools.

A number of schools in Walsall are now federated. Among the benefits are the ability to share leadership expertise and capacity, share staff professional development and reduce costs by buying in bulk. Experience in these schools that have already federated is that they have very much kept their own identity linked to the communities they serve. They still receive their own budget, the same staff will deliver the same teaching and learning on a day to day basis and the school will be led by the same leadership team.

National guidance in regard to federations states that federations are “not just about structural change. It is also about a different mind-set 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”. (NCTL The governance of Federations, 2014). In other words we are not doing this to simply change the way we are structured. We are doing this because we genuinely believe it will sustain education standards and opportunities for staff across both schools.

### **What would be the values of the Federation?**

One thing that has become obvious the more colleagues across Beacon and Barcroft have worked together, is the shared values both school communities have in fostering the love of learning for all pupils and where everybody, pupils and adults alike are respected and encouraged to achieve their potential.

For Beacon our values are based on:

**B**e the best  
**E**veryone achieves  
**A**mbitious for all children  
**C**aring, Creative & Challenging  
**O**pportunity for all to succeed  
**N**urturing

Our motto is '*Lighting the way to a brighter future*'

For Barcroft our aim is to develop happy, well-rounded confident individuals who achieve their potential as a result of a wealth of experiences.

Core to both school's values is the partnership that exists between staff, parents/ carers and the wider community to enable children attending both schools to fulfil their full potential. We want children to grow in self-confidence, personal resilience and become well rounded adults with the skills to achieve whatever they want in life.

Were we to federate then both school communities will work together to renew a shared vision for the federation built on the ideals well established in both schools.

## **What will it mean in practice?**

In practice it will mean that:

- Both schools will retain their own name and identity as now.
- Beacon and Barcroft are proud to be at the heart of their local communities. We wouldn't do anything to change that.
- There will be no change in current staffing levels, the way classes are organised or the curriculum offer as a result of working as a Federation. You'll have the same staff teaching your child as at the start of the year. Over time the federation will generate career opportunities that will hopefully mean staff will stay in the federation rather than want to move on elsewhere.
- Each school will continue to receive its own budget in full.
- The Federation may employ new staff, with a specific Federation role under a Federation contract. That will be explicit at the point the job is advertised.
- Existing staff won't be forced to work at the other school, but may wish to take up career development opportunities if they so choose.
- There will be no change to the schools admissions criteria. Those children entitled to go to the school before federating will be able to go to the school after it federates.
- Both schools will continue to have their own Ofsted inspection.
- The reporting of standards will remain separate for each school.

## **Why are we making this proposal?**

There are two main drivers to us wanting to federate at this time. These are:

- The last year has highlighted how closely aligned the vision and direction of both schools are in working towards achieving the best for the children and adults in our school community. There have been numerous examples of how the two schools working together have achieved much more than they would have done on their own.
- The pandemic has affected every school in the country. The past 2 years have been an intense period for school leaders, staff and the whole community. The two schools working more closely together has provided extra leadership capacity and support across the two staff teams which has proved invaluable.
- Barcroft has had its challenges over the past year. The joint working across the two schools has been received positively by all stakeholders. We want to build on the good work and sharing of good practice to the benefit of both settings.

## **What are the benefits?**

The main benefits are:

- A shared commitment to ensuring the very best development and education for pupils regardless of their unique needs.
- The coming together of both settings strengthens leadership capacity and career opportunities for staff in both settings.
- The Federation provides strength in numbers and support at a time when external agencies are reducing support due to budget constraints.
- There will be greater development opportunities for staff, for example, shared training and a broadening of understanding and experience through collaboration with each other.
- The opportunity to attract future experienced Headteachers and senior leaders. Leading a school can be a lonely job and has the pandemic has proven, a highly pressured role. Being part of a family of schools provides breadth of support and also career pathways that create the leaders of the future.
- Where possible, maximise the efficient use of resources to the benefit of the curriculum.
- Less bureaucracy, under a federated structure with one Governing Board leading the Federation but with autonomy for each school and the respective leadership teams to meet the needs of their local communities.

## **What will it mean for the children?**

On a day to day basis there will be no change in school routine or the provision of education at either Beacon or Barcroft Primary schools. However there will be opportunities to share expertise across both schools, which will give access to a much larger pool of knowledge and the chance to share specialist expertise across the schools which will ultimately benefit pupils. They will benefit from having access to more opportunities for good quality learning.

There will be greater opportunity to use school resources and budgets more effectively with regard to the purchasing of goods and services which both directly and indirectly impact on the lives of the pupils.

## **What will it mean for staff?**

Day to day management of both schools will continue as it is now. However, there will be opportunities for closer working between staff. This co-operation will create greater development opportunities and career routes within the Federation.

Mr Drew has been Interim Head at Barcroft for 6 months. This proposal would secure his ongoing leadership of both settings into the future as Executive Head for both schools.

Both schools would remain maintained (local authority) schools with staff remaining on their current terms and conditions. Whilst there may be career opportunities for staff in the future, staff will still be contracted to work at their existing school. Any request to work at the other school would only be through discussion and agreement with the staff member concerned.

### **Will staffing change?**

No, the staffing arrangements currently in place at both Barcroft and Beacon will remain unchanged.

It is important to state that there will be no redundancies as a result of moving to a Federation.

### **What will it mean for parent/ carers?**

Both schools will continue to operate as usual and parents/carers will continue to receive the same high level of provision and support. It is anticipated that as the schools co-operate more closely and share good practice there will be greater opportunity for shared learning which in turn will help all pupils. This, together with the retention of quality staff, greater staff development and progression opportunities will ensure a continued high standard of education for the pupils at both schools in the Federation.

The day to day contact arrangements between the schools and parents/carers will not be changed by the Federation, but we will continue to seek ways to improve what we do. If you have queries about your child's education then you will speak to the same staff members after federating as you do now.

### **Will it mean a change to school uniform for the two schools?**

No, both Beacon and Barcroft will retain its individual identity and uniform. Parents and carers won't incur additional costs having to buy new uniform.

## **What will it mean for the Governing Board?**

Were Beacon Primary School and Barcroft Primary School to federate then both Governing Boards will relinquish their responsibilities with one new Governing Board being created. Mr Drew would become Executive Head over both schools. The Chair of Governors at Beacon and Barcroft would agree an arrangement where they would fill the Chair and Vice Chair roles according to experience and capacity.

Were Beacon and Barcroft to federate it is proposed that the new Governing Board would be constituted along the lines of the following:

- 4 Parent Governors (2 from each school);
- 1 Local Authority Governor;
- 1 Staff Governor;
- 1 Executive Headteacher
- 1 Head of school / Deputy Head
- 1 Head of school/ Deputy Head
- 9 Co-opted Governors (1 must be a staff governor from the school not appointed to the staff governor position).

Total number of Governors = 18

The governors will share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the Federation, yet still be able work to improve a single school, where needed.

## **Is there a cost to becoming a Federation?**

No, being in a federation is no more expensive than being a single school. Many federations find over time that savings can be made such as through commissioned joint training across both schools.

## **What does it mean for admissions?**

Admissions to the school will continue to be under the current arrangements and be unaffected by this proposal. Parents and carers will continue to apply for a place at the school of their choice in the usual manner.

## **Can a school leave a federation? Can other schools join?**

It is possible for schools to withdraw from a federation and governing boards must follow a prescribed process, set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012. Additional schools can join a federation and the prescribed process is also set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

## **The news talks about the government wanting all schools to become academies. What is the difference and should we not be looking at acadamising?**

When discussing federating both Governing Boards also considered the merits of acadamisation.

At this stage we feel federating is the better choice. It brings with it the benefits of building resilience and capacity by joining together and sharing leadership and good practice. It doesn't however bring further change in staff contracts for example which is important given all that staff have been through during the pandemic and the challenges faced over recent months.

A school that joins a federation remains a local authority maintained school. A federated school can withdraw from a federation by following a prescribed process.

A school that joins an Academy Trust can't go back to becoming a local authority maintained school. Academy schools are funded directly by the Education Standards Funding Agency (a part of the Department for Education). A Federation school continues to be funded via the local authority.

## **What happens now?**

This document is the start of the consultation period on the proposal to federate. All written comments will be considered by the governors when the consultation period closes on 07.01.22 and they will then decide whether to proceed or not. If the decision taken is to proceed, the schools will inform the Local Authority that they wish to federate and the two Governing Boards will merge to become one. Should the agreement be to federate then it is expected that this will commence from in early 2022. Staff and parents/ carers will be kept informed at each stage.

## **How can I get more information?**

This consultation document can be accessed via the website of both schools, hard copies are also available for both school offices.

For more information please contact Sangeet Hayre via email on

[shayre@beacon.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:shayre@beacon.walsall.sch.uk) or  
[shayre@barcroft.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:shayre@barcroft.walsall.sch.uk)

Your views are important to us so please let us have your comments on the proposal by completing and returning the attached response to the school office

Mr Drew, Senior staff and governors will be on hand at upcoming events in both schools to respond to queries and explain more about what these proposals mean. The dates for these are as follows:

Beacon Primary School – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021

2pm & 5pm

Barcroft Primary School – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021

2pm & 5pm



**Proposal for  
Beacon Primary School and Barcroft Primary School to federate**

Please use this form to add your comments:

Please return your response form to the school office

Your name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

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School

.....

Please indicate which group you belong to by circling the appropriate title:

**Parent**

**Staff Member**

**Other – please specify**

**Rather not say**

.....

Date: .....