



Formal Proposal

Consultation Document

The Governing Bodies of Marlbrook Primary Teaching School, Little Dewchurch CE Primary School and St Martin's Primary School propose to form a hard federation of the three schools, hopefully with effect from 1st November 2021.

CONSULTATION PERIOD:

Beginning of school Friday 23rd July 2021 until midday on Thursday 21st October 2021.

Consultation Circulation List

- Parents and carers of children registered at Marlbrook Primary Teaching School
- Parents and carers of children registered at Little Dewchurch CE Primary School
- Parents and carers of children registered at St Martin's Primary School
- All staff at the three schools
- Governing Bodies and clerk to Governors at all three schools
- Alison Naylor, Head of Improvement and Achievement, Herefordshire
- Ceri Morgan, Assistant Director for Education, Development and Skills
- Andrew Teale, Diocesan Director of Education
- Parochial Church Council of Little Dewchurch
- Church wardens of Little Dewchurch
- Jesse Norman MP, Member of Parliament for Hereford & South Herefordshire
- Rt Hon. Gavin Williamson MP, Secretary of State for Education
- Parish Councils related to each school
- County Councillors

This formal proposal was published on Thursday 22nd July 2021.
It follows consideration of the proposal by all three Governing Bodies.

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1. Introduction

One of the key roles for all Governing Bodies is to set the strategic direction of the schools that they have responsibility for.

The current educational drive to create a self-improving school system is based on the premise that schools will work with, learn from, and support one another to develop solutions to the challenges and opportunities they may face.

This document outlines the proposal for Marlbrook Primary Teaching School, Little Dewchurch CE Primary School and St Martin's Primary School to formalise their federation.

A period of consultation has been agreed for all stakeholders to comment on this proposal via the attached response form.

2. Current Educational Climate

At present there are many opportunities in the world of education but there are also challenges.

An enforced scaling back of local authority's support means that schools are seeking local leadership solutions and are focusing on more self-improvement - as we already have.

Increased accountability is leading to challenges for Governing Bodies in providing effective support and challenge to maintain and improve educational standards, whilst ensuring support for senior leaders in dealing with finance, business and estate issues.

Schools are reflecting on how to deal with real cuts in funding and rising costs whilst delivering improved outcomes for children.

There is a continuing national problem of recruitment of quality leaders and staff to small schools.

3. What is a hard federation?

Under the Education Act of 2002, schools and local authorities can propose that schools can join to form a hard federation.

This is a group of two or more schools with a single Governing Body. The schools can combine their Governing Bodies into just one body for the federation.

The creation and membership of a federation is not just about structural change. It is a chance to continue our commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children in our federation through a school-led system.

So, in essence, it is what we are already doing but with an enduring formal structure.

4. Is hard federation irreversible?

It is possible for schools to withdraw from a hard federation with Governing Bodies following an agreed process, as set out in the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Why are the Governing Bodies considering hard federation?

All three schools currently work together and have since 2016. This partnership, a 'soft federation,' has seen educational improvements for children across all schools.

All schools have a shared vision to ensure that educational excellence is maintained and developed as time moves on.

They share an ambition to improve opportunities, provide best value, be sustainable, high performing and at the centre of their communities. They also hold a shared belief in the importance of continually developing and retaining high quality staff to provide the very best education for our children.

Hard federation will, we believe, enhance the future of our three schools.

6. Admissions to the federation

Admissions to each school would continue under the current arrangements, as published on our websites.

Parents and carers would continue to apply for a school place of their choice, as now, through Herefordshire and other Local Authorities.

If your child is of school age already and is moving school, applications would continue as now, directly to the school of your choice.

7. What would stay the same?

- Each school would keep its own identity and name
- Each school would continue to be taught on its own school site
- Each school would have its own badge
- Each school would have its own DFE number
- Each school would have its own inspection by Ofsted and SIAMS
- Admission arrangements would remain separate, as at present
- Existing members of staff would continue to be employed as now
- Each school would receive its own budget
- The leadership structure of the schools would remain as it is now:
Executive Headteacher (Marlbrook, St Martin's, Little Dewchurch)
Two Executive Deputy Headteachers (all schools)
Head of School (Little Dewchurch)
2 x Head of School (St Martin's)
- Each school would hold a special place within its own community

8. What would change?

The Governing Body would be a single, newly appointed Governing Body with responsibility for the federation as a whole.

9. What would the benefits be?

Children's own schools would continue to retain their own individual identities. They would continue to benefit from a wide range of teaching expertise,

resources, facilities and specialist provision.

Strong and proven leadership and staffing would continue to be utilised for the benefit of the schools and their communities. We believe that children will enjoy greater benefits from future educational developments in a hard federation.

Staff, as now, would have the opportunity to develop professionally and to share best practice. This, coupled with mutual support and wider career opportunities, would aid staff recruitment and retention.

A hard federation provides a sustainable model whilst, most importantly, each school remains at the heart of the communities that they serve.

10. Governance

A hard federation is made up of one Governing Body and a single set of committees covering the three schools. Governing Bodies are expected to focus on providing effective, strategic leadership, holding the head teacher to account, overseeing the financial performance of the schools and making sure that the schools' money is well spent.

This is a demanding task for which all governors need to have, or develop, the relevant skills. All potential governors of a hard federation would complete a skills audit and would be appointed on the basis that they have the skills necessary to contribute towards the effective governance of the federation. It is proposed that the new Governing Body would be constituted with 12 governors.

<i>Category of Governor</i>	<i>Who appoints them?</i>	<i>Number</i>
Executive Headteacher, Head of School (St Martin's), Head of School (Little Dewchurch)	Ex Officio	3
Elected parent governors	Elected by the parents/carers of children on roll One from each school	3
Staff governor	Elected by all staff	1
Co opted	Appointed by the governing body	2
LA Governor	Herefordshire Council	1
Foundation governors	One ex officio One appointed by the PCC/Diocese	2

11. What next?

The Governors would really like to hear your views on this proposal. If you have any comments, please complete your response by midday on **Thursday 21st October 2021**.

Your form should be handed in to the school Reception office, marked 'Hard federation response' and addressed 'For the attention of the Chair of Governors'.

All responses will be considered by governors who will decide whether to proceed or not. We will let you know the outcome as soon as possible.

12. Frequently asked questions

Would the name of the schools change?

No. Each school would keep its own name but there would be a separate overarching name for the Hard Federation.

Would school uniforms change? No. Each school would keep its own current uniform.

Would pupils be registered at the federation or a single school? Pupils would be registered and on roll at their individual school.

Would federated schools combine their pupil results?

No. Results would be attributed to the individual schools as now.

Would the federation be inspected by Ofsted and SIAMS?

No. Each school would have a separate Ofsted and SIAMS and be graded separately.

Would there be any changes in terms and conditions for staff?

No. At the point of transfer to the hard federation the existing terms and

conditions of all staff are protected under The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) arrangements.

Would the schools share a Governing Body? Yes. The previous separate Governing Bodies would be dissolved, and a new single body set up.

Would one school take the lead over the other?

No. The schools would collaborate and work together as equal partners.

What would happen to any PTFAs? PTFAs in place would continue as they do now, linked to the individual school.

Will my child have to go to a different school?

No. Children will remain in the school in which they were registered.

Will the leadership team be spending the same time in each school?

The arrangements would continue as they do presently.

CONFIDENTIAL RESPONSE FORM

This document is in response to the consultation document outlining the proposal to form a hard federation between Marlbrook Primary Teaching School, Little Dewchurch CE Primary School and St Martin's Primary School. All responses will be treated in the strictest of confidence; however, we will not be able to take anonymous comments into consideration. Responses must be received by midday on Thursday 21st October 2021.

You may complete an [online form using this link](#), OR use the form below. If duplicate entries are received, only the first one received will be used.

Name

I am a (please select)

- Parent/carer of a child in Marlbrook Primary Teaching School, Little Dewchurch CE Primary School and St Martin's Primary School
- Member of staff at Marlbrook Primary Teaching School, Little Dewchurch CE Primary School and St Martin's Primary School
- Other interested party (please specify)

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Your response (please select one of the following)

- I support the proposal
- I do not support the proposal
- I am not sure

Please give your reasons for your choice:

Thank you for completing this response form