



# Consultation on the proposed federation of Germander Park, Downs Barn and Southwood Schools

## What is this consultation proposing?

The governing boards of Germander Park School, Downs Barn School and Southwood School are writing to you to tell you about the start of a consultation process to create a federation between our three schools.

Downs Barn School and Southwood School form the Boulevard Primary Partnership and have been successfully federated for a number of years. We believe that a federation of the three schools would be very positive and will build upon our collaboration to date. However, before we consider it any further, we would like to tell you about it, and find out your views. All three schools were judged 'Good' by Ofsted in their last inspection.

## The proposal

In brief, the proposal is to formally federate the three schools, starting in January 2022. A federation is where all three schools work very closely together under one governing board, while retaining their own identity.

The schools would share an executive headteacher, have one governing board and each school would have a deputy headteacher.

The role of the single governing board would be to:

- define a shared vision and strategic direction for the schools
- ensure proper management of financial resources and
- hold the executive headteacher to account for the educational performance of the schools.

The governing boards at Germander Park School would federate with the governing board from the Boulevard Primary Partnership. There would be a total of 14 governors, of which there would be:

- 3 parent governors
- 1 elected staff governor
- 1 executive headteacher
- 1 local authority nominated governor
- 6 co-opted governors
- 2 partnership governors

## This would mean that:

- All three schools would keep their names and individual identities, existing as separate schools, on separate sites;
- All three schools would continue to be registered separately with Ofsted, and retain their existing judgements;
- All three schools would continue to have their own separate budgets;
- The governing board would set the strategic vision across the schools and ensure educational and financial accountability;
- All three schools would work in very close partnership for the benefit of all the children;
- Existing staff contracts would not change as a result of the federation;
- Admission arrangements for the three schools would not be affected;
- A shared vision, values and ethos of the schools would be developed which would be safeguarded by the federation.

## We believe that this is a good idea because:

- It will provide a strong future for the schools by securing strong leadership;
- Education and the curriculum will be seamless from when children start school to when the children leave for their secondary school. This should improve educational attainment and outcomes;

- Children in all three schools will benefit from common values and vision continuing these from their infant education into their junior education;
- Standards will be improved through sharing best practice and development of subject and year group specialism;
- It will mean that best practice, facilities and expertise will be shared between the three schools;
- It will provide more opportunities for shared costs and efficiencies, meaning that there is more money available for high quality teaching and learning;
- It will provide benefits in terms of head/staff retention recruitment, and development.

#### **What would the community benefits of federating all three schools be?**

- The parents and carers will have the security of knowing that their children will have a good education throughout their school journey;
- The parents and carers of children at all three schools share the same community, so will benefit from school events and experiences;
- INSET days, term dates and parent's evenings will be coordinated across the three schools, benefitting the parents and carers;
- There is a Children's Centre at Germander Park School, so this will enable greater links with the community and all three schools;
- Links with Big Local Conniburrow will be even stronger as they support both schools in Conniburrow;

#### **Admission Authorities**

Germander Park School and Southwood School are foundation schools and are responsible for their own admissions. Downs Barn School is a community school, the local authority, Milton Keynes Council is the admissions authority.

#### **Next Steps**

**This consultation will end on 24 October 2021** and, after this time, we will jointly consider any responses to the proposal and each governing board will decide whether to proceed or not. If it is decided that the proposal should go ahead, the new arrangements would start in January 2022.

#### **How can I find out more and contribute to this consultation?**

The schools have arranged drop-in sessions for people to find out more and give their views. These will take place at:

- **Downs Barn School – 28 September 2021, at 3pm and 6:30pm**
- **Southwood School – 29 September 2021, at 3:15pm and 6:30pm**
- **Germander Park School – 30 September 2021, at 3pm and 6:30pm**

These are open to anyone to attend.

Staff sessions will be held at:

- **Downs Barn School, 21 September at 3:30pm**
- **Southwood School, 22 September at 3:45pm**
- **Germander Park School, 23 September at 3:30pm**

This consultation seeks views from parents, carers and staff and any other interested parties. We are keen to hear as many views as possible about this proposal. Please go online and complete the web form at: <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/consultations>

If you are unable to access the online form you may respond by email to: [Sufficiencyandaccess@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:Sufficiencyandaccess@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

Or in writing to Education Sufficiency, Milton Keynes Council, Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ or by telephone to 01908 253008