



Consultation on the proposed federation of Castlethorpe First School with the Village Schools Federation

What is this consultation proposing?

The governing boards of Castlethorpe First School and the schools within the Village Schools Federation are writing to you to tell you about the start of a consultation process to formalise the beneficial working relationships that already exist between the schools.

The Village Schools Federation was formed in September 2017 and includes the following schools:

- Newton Blossomville C of E School
- North Crawley C of E School
- Sherington C of E School
- Stoke Goldington C of E First School
- St Andrew's C of E School

The governing boards believe that including Castlethorpe First School, a village school, in the federation 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 schools were judged 'Outstanding' or 'Good' by Ofsted in their last inspection.

The proposal

In brief, the proposal is to formally federate Castlethorpe First School with the Village Schools Federation, starting in September 2022. A federation is where all schools work very closely together under one governing board, while retaining their own identity and budget.

There will be a staffing structure that will reflect the needs of the new federation across all six schools. Usually, there is one shared executive headteacher, a shared deputy headteacher, and a dedicated lead teacher in place for each school.

In order to reflect this model, a new shared deputy headteacher is planned for the federation.

There are no planned staff changes for Castlethorpe First School.

The governing board of Castlethorpe First School would join the Village Schools Federation and become one governing board. There would be a total of 16 governors, of which there would be:

- 6 x parent governors (1 from each school)
- 1 x elected staff governor
- 1 x Headteacher
- 1 x local authority nominated governor
- 3 x foundation governors (appointed by the Oxford Diocese)
- 4 x co-opted governors to be selected based on skills and experience.

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
- hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the schools.

This would mean that:

- The schools would keep their names and individual identities - existing as separate schools, on separate sites
- The schools would continue to be registered separately with Ofsted, and retain their existing high quality judgements
- The church schools would maintain their individual Christian ethos and values and continue to be subject to Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMs)
- The governing board would set the strategic vision across all the schools and ensure educational and financial accountability
- The schools would continue to have their own separate budgets
- The schools would work in very close partnership for the benefit of all the children
- Admission arrangements for the schools would not be affected.

We believe that this is a good idea because it will:

- Secure the future of all our village schools
- Provide a strong future for the schools by securing strong leadership
- Provide a consistently high quality education provision for your children
- Mean that the sharing of best practice, facilities and expertise will be enhanced between the schools, thereby offering a consistent educational experience for children
- Provide opportunities for pupils to widen their educational, personal, social and moral experiences
- Provide more opportunities for shared costs and efficiencies, meaning that there is more money available in the schools for high quality teaching, learning and resources
- Provide benefits for staff in terms of professional development, retention and collaborating with others.

The five schools currently in the existing federation have already experienced these benefits.

Admissions authorities

As the church schools are voluntary controlled schools and Castlethorpe First School is a community school, the local authority, Milton Keynes Council, will remain the admissions authority.

Next Steps

This consultation will begin on 6 June 2022 and will end on 17 July 2022. After this time, we will jointly consider any responses to the proposal and the governing board of the Village Schools Federation and of Castlethorpe First School will decide whether to proceed or not. If it is decided that the proposal should go ahead, the new arrangements would start in September 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:

- **Castlethorpe First School – Friday 10 June 2022, 8.30am to 9.15am**
- **Castlethorpe First School – Monday 13 June 2022, 6.00pm to 7.00pm**
- **Sherington C of E School – Wednesday 15 June 2022, 3.00pm to 4.00pm**

These are open to anyone to attend.

Staff sessions will be held at:

- **Castlethorpe First School – Thursday 9 June 2022, 3.15pm to 3.45pm**
- **Sherington C of E School – Monday 13 June 2022, 3.15pm to 3.45pm**

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

Or in writing to Education Sufficiency, Milton Keynes Council, Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ