



Hinstock Primary School
'Tomorrow's Success Begins Today'



Reach for the Stars

14.10.19

Following on from the Federation Q&A meetings which have taken place on Thursday 3rd October at Cheswardine and Tuesday 8th October at Hinstock School, here is a handy breakdown of all those questions raised and some key points which may help you to understand what the Federation means for the school, for you as a parent and for your children.

These FAQs and answers have very kindly been brought together by a parent of a Hinstock pupil who attended the Federation Consultation Meeting at Hinstock and felt this might be useful for all parents. Where there are additional answers from the school I have put these in italics underneath each parental answer.

Why do we need to become a Federation?

As two small rural schools we need to work together as village communities and support each other. Neither village would like to see their school close and by federating the schools we can support each other with a bigger budget, share resources between the schools, build a bigger team of teachers who can support each other and grow a relationship between two amazing schools.

What exactly will happen if we become a Federation?

Put simply, the governing bodies for Hinstock and Cheswardine will join forces to become one combined governing body. They will oversee the budgets for the two schools, make decisions about each school and check in with the Head, Mrs Williams, to ensure she is coping with the workload. There will be representatives from each school to keep things balanced.

The governance of the schools will continue following the National Governor Association Code of Conduct and will scrutinise and challenge practice in each school as well as set the strategic vision for the future of the two schools. The budgets will be managed by a committee from the governing body but each school will maintain its own separate budget going forward.

How does it affect the schools on a day to day basis?

It doesn't really affect anything. Mrs Williams will be on the door at Hinstock some days a week and at Cheswardine the other days of the week. Wherever she is you will be able to contact her if you need to, or you can speak with Mrs Davies-Griffiths at Hinstock as Deputy-Head. The actually running of the schools won't change. They will still be individual schools just with one governing body and one Head.

How will Mrs Williams cope with being Head for two schools? How will it work?

Mrs Williams has already been acting Head for both schools for the past year. She is balancing her workload and has told us she is managing just fine as it is the same job just in two places. She has the support of Miss Davies-Griffiths at Hinstock and is dividing her time between the two schools. Acting as Head for both schools means that she will not undertake any teaching sessions and will simply look after the two schools as Head for both. If you need her for any reason and she is not in your school that day, you can contact her at the other. She is only a telephone call away.

If we did not federate Mrs Williams would be a teaching head and for two days a week she would be in class. This used to work well however the age of emails and instant communication means that her teaching would be constantly interrupted and the children would be better off with a substantive teacher throughout the week rather than a distracted Headteacher for part of the week. Equally whilst teaching Mrs Williams would not be able to answer any parental enquiries quickly. Managing over the whole week means Mrs Williams can focus on the leadership of teaching and learning rather than splitting time between management and actual teaching.

What about our teachers and how do they feel?

The present teachers at Hinstock will teach at Hinstock and the teachers at Cheswardine will teach at Cheswardine. There will be no swapping or losing of teachers. The Federation will not affect your children, their classrooms, teaching environment or the teachers they are used to. Of course, there may be the odd occasion when teachers will need to help each other out at each school but this would be on the very rare occasion.

Of course teachers leave and change at any time as they take up other positions through their careers, but we would always seek to appoint the best candidates to teach in either school. Teachers' feedback to federation has been positive with them recognising that they will not work in year groups alone and therefore it addresses the isolation that teachers can experience in small schools.

And the children? Will they be moved between schools?

No, the children will not be moved between schools. The only time they may visit each other would be for events such as sports events etc which we would let you know about beforehand. We see this as a great opportunity for the children to get to know each other as they are likely to go on to secondary schools together. It will encourage them to interact, improve social skills and develop as young people on those opportunities we do get together.

Will Hinstock provide school meals for Cheswardine?

Yes, currently the meals for Cheswardine are prepared at the Grove school. It will be most cost effective and a great use of Hinstock's resources to be able to provide school meals for the children at Cheswardine.

Will Cheswardine hold sports day? Will we have to take Hinstock children there?

Cheswardine has a wonderful playing field and there may be an opportunity for us to use this from time to time.

Each school would continue with their own individual sports day celebrations at their own sites. Cheswardine does have a fantastic resource and we may be able to hold matches / sporting events there and last year's cross school sports event was great fun, but each school recognises how parents feel about their own sports days and these are set to continue as they are presently. Any combined day would be extra.

What if the Federation doesn't work?

We can leave the Federation at any time and go back to having two governing bodies.

I have more questions?

Speak to us! Speak with the staff at the schools, speak with members of the governing body, speak with members of the PTFA, email queries to the school. We're a friendly bunch and happy to answer any questions.

There are obviously mixed feelings for some of you, but we hope this answers many of your questions and that everyone can see this as a positive move which benefits both schools and your children's education with us.

The federation committee or headteacher would be the first place to ask questions and the form at the back of the proposal can be returned to either school at anytime with the deadline for this being 25.10.19. Staff would probably signpost you to either of these for your questions to be answered fully.

Please remember the deadline for consultation responses is 25.10.19.