

From the Governing Bodies of
Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School and Caldecote VC Lower School

Consultation on a

Proposal to Federate

Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School

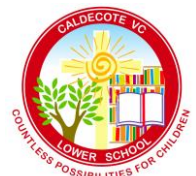
and

Caldecote VC Lower School

Consultation Period

25th April to 13th June 2016

Please give us your views on our proposal by 13th June
on the attached response form



Consultation on Proposal to Federate

1. Introduction

The Governing Bodies of Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School and Caldecote VC Lower School have voted in favour of proceeding to public consultation on a resolution to establish a 'hard federation' between the two schools with effect from 1st September 2016.

This document is part of a statutory consultation process designed to seek the views of everybody with an interest in the schools. The results of this consultation will inform the two governing bodies' final decision on whether to proceed with a 'hard federation'.

2. Background

Edward Peake Middle School and Caldecote Lower School have been in collaboration since September 2015, sharing a headteacher but without any change in the governance structure. There has been close co-operation between the two schools and also with Northhill Lower School, which is in a 'soft federation' with Edward Peake Middle School. Northhill Lower School is not part of this consultation and will not be part of the 'hard federation' but will continue its current position.

All three schools are part of the Biggleswade Community Union of Schools (BCUS) which exists to promote a coherent 0-19 curriculum and experience for the children of Biggleswade and its community. Member schools are committed to working together to support the needs of pupils throughout their school lives, developing good links for smooth transition.

Edward Peake Middle School is the designated feeder middle school for both Caldecote and Northhill Lower Schools with pupils transferring to Edward Peake at the start of Year 5. Because of this there are already close links between the schools however Governors believe greater benefits for pupils and their families can be achieved through a federated arrangement.

The closer relationship between Edward Peake and Caldecote schools was established because Caldecote's headteacher was on long term sick leave and the school needed interim leadership. This has been provided by Mrs. Mandy Reddick, an experienced Headteacher, who has introduced improvements, which are successfully used at Edward Peake and Northhill, and Caldecote Lower has moved forward in many ways during a short period of time.

Already we have broadened and enriched the curriculum for pupils at Caldecote with the introduction of Big Maths and Big Writing to improve the teaching of numeracy and literacy; subject leaders have been appointed to give more distributed leadership; computerised data collection and tracking has been introduced; and safeguarding practices have been strengthened with the appointment of a second Designated Safeguarding Lead and full implementation of the Single Central Record and Safer Recruitment.

Edward Peake has also provided administrative support to Caldecote and joint training sessions have been held with both Edward Peake and Northhill staff.

The ethos of the schools is closely aligned, with them being church schools with Values-based education at their heart, and the co-operation between the schools, even over a short period of time has shown the advantages of working together.

The Governing Bodies of both schools believe even more can be achieved through a more formal partnership and believe a hard federation will make it easier for the two schools to work more closely together, providing continued strong leadership and supporting excellence at both schools.

3. Our Proposal

To establish a 'hard federation' between Edward Peake and Caldecote Schools

A hard federation would:

- Continue to provide an environment that is in the best interests of the children at both schools
- Be a formalisation of the current collaboration on a permanent basis
- Mean that existing staff keep the same terms and conditions (with new contracts for new staff only)
- Have one Federation Headteacher for both schools and also for Northhill
- Have a Head of School on site at Caldecote full time, with a half-time teaching timetable
- Create a single governing body across both schools
- Provide individual budgets for each school

It will **not** mean a merger of the two schools. Both schools would keep their own names and identities under the umbrella of the federation, which would be known as The Peake Church Federation. The schools would also keep their own admissions criteria; have separate pupil attainment data and separate Ofsted inspections.

Mrs Mandy Reddick is already Federation Headteacher of the 'soft federation' between Edward Peake and Northhill schools and that role would be widened to include Caldecote. The Federation Headteacher would continue to be supported in school leadership by the senior leadership and staff at all three schools, with the addition of the Head of School at Caldecote.

There would be a single governing body for Edward Peake and Caldecote and we propose a federated governing body of 18 governors, as follows:

- 4 Parent Governors (2 from Edward Peake and 2 from Caldecote)
- 4 Staff Governors
- 4 Foundation Governors (2 from Biggleswade Parish and 2 from Caldecote, including both Vicars ex officio)
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 5 Co-opted Governors

4. Statement from Mrs. Reddick, Federation Headteacher

Our aim for the federation is to offer the best education to the children of our communities. We believe that by taking a holistic view of children's education, social, emotional and spiritual needs from the ages of 4 to 13, we can plan and deliver a first class education which helps each child thrive and achieve.

Education will continue to be provided on both sites, in Biggleswade and Caldecote, with a view to continuing to ensure that the curriculum, learning environment and teaching, focus on the specific needs of the children at both schools equally.

We believe that federation will bring significant education benefits for children:

- The schools share a Christian ethos and offer Values-based education, both of which nurture and inspire children
- The curricula can be designed to ensure a seamless transition between the schools whilst building on children's knowledge, skills and experience in an incremental way
- There would be consistency in teaching strategies and methodologies between the two schools
- A tracking system would be in place across the two schools so that children's progress can be closely monitored and action taken quickly to support or extend them, especially at the stage of transition
- We can continue to develop the highest standards at both schools

We can build a stronger partnership with parents because we can get to know, support and work with them and their children over nine years. School calendars will be co-ordinated, school websites linked and the two schools will have similar ways of involving and communicating with parents and sharing information about their children's progress.

A federation will enable us to continue to recruit and retain the best teachers, offering them experience across the full primary age range with the increased opportunities for career development and management responsibilities that a federated school will offer.

There will also be opportunity for increased efficiencies through economies of scale, for example, in the negotiation of commercial contracts and when we need to buy in special expertise. We can also share and deploy resources between both schools, which will enhance our educational provision.

Finally, a single governing body will be able to take a strategic view of the needs of both schools, allocate finance and resources where they will bring the greatest benefits and ensure that governors' professional expertise can be shared between both schools.

5. What happens next?

This period of consultation last for seven weeks from 18th April to 6th June 2016. In addition to consulting parents, staff and children, we are also required to consult others, including the Local Authority, the Diocese, our MP, neighbouring schools and relevant unions.

During that time, we will hold meetings and collect written responses. Meetings with staff and parents will be as follows:

Staff Consultation Meeting

Monday 9th May 2016 4:15pm Edward Peake Middle School

Parent Consultation Meeting

Thursday 12th May 2016 6:30pm Caldecote VC Lower School

All the responses will be summarised and collated as a basis for a report to be considered by the two Governing Bodies in June. On the basis of that report, both Governing Bodies will vote on whether to proceed with federation.

We will keep parents informed of progress through each school's newsletters and the websites.

These proposals are made with the full support of both Governing Bodies, the Federation Headteacher, the Diocesan Board of Education and Central Bedfordshire Council. We hope you will agree that the proposals represent a great opportunity to strengthen educational provision in this part of Bedfordshire.

On behalf of the Governing Bodies:

Clare Neish
Chairman
Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School

Madeline Russell
Chairman
Caldecote VC Lower School

18th April 2016