



JOINT GOVERNORS' REPORT AND DECISION REGARDING FEDERATION



A. Background

1. On 22nd January 2021, a “Statement of intent” (see appendix A) was issued proposing the federation of Downland Village Schools Federation (DVSF – comprising Rake and Rogate C of E Primaries) and Compton & Up Marden C of E Primary (CU Primary, having been approved by both governing boards (GBs) on 20th and 21st January respectively. The statement was sent on 25th January to all of the bodies and groups of people required by para 9 (3) of the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended in 2016.
2. The Statement, with further explanation, was sent to all parents and staff, and all bodies and groups were asked to respond to a formal consultation (see below).
3. The Joint Federation Committee (JFC) considered all responses to the consultation and this paper contains its recommendations to the meetings of both GBs on 24th March 2021, which both boards unanimously voted to accept. They therefore decided to go ahead with federating all three schools into the new DVSF, effective on 31st March, when both boards will meet to dissolve themselves, and the new board will meet for the first time.

B. Consultation responses and other feedback

4. Almost all of the consultees that responded to our consultation letter have been entirely favourable (see appendices for a summary of responses). All responses from consultees who consented to them being made public were included in the ZIP file available from all 3 school websites. Remaining responses were summarised for JFC and board members.
5. The federation consultation lasted 6.5 weeks but the first 3 weeks coincided with a separate consultation about the staff restructuring proposals that were part of the federation proposal. Four virtual meetings for staff were held during the staff restructuring consultation period, and all issues raised at these were circulated to all staff, with the governors’ responses. Both boards of governors met on 23rd February to consider the 19 formal responses from staff, and decided to go ahead with the staff restructuring proposals (see separate report). A further two virtual meetings were held for staff from all three schools on 24th February and 10th March.
6. Virtual meetings for parents from DVSF and CU Primary were held on 2nd and 3rd February respectively, and a further meeting for parents from all 3 schools was held on 2nd March. Online surveys for staff and parents from all three schools were launched on 3rd and 4th March respectively.
7. As the appointment of the SLT members could not be announced until 15th March, the staff and parent survey deadlines were extended to noon on the day of the GB meetings (24th March 2021). The responses regarding federation were therefore be analysed just ahead of those meetings and provided by email and verbal report.
8. We have studied the information made available to consultees and, having now studied the initial responses to the consultation, we are satisfied that the information given was comprehensive and easily available, that there was adequate opportunity for consultees to see / discuss / respond to it and that the responses are evidence of overwhelming support for the proposals.

C. Formal decision to federate

9. The JFC therefore recommended to both governing bodies that they go ahead with the formation of the new three-school Downland Village Schools Federation (**DVSF**) on 31st March 2021 with only minor changes to the original statement of intent as follows:
 - a. The number of governors to be increased to 16.
 - b. This reflects a reduction from 8 to 6 co-opted governors - on the advice of DfE and because one DVSF governor no longer felt she could fulfil her duties and resigned;
 - c. It also reflects the addition of two non-existent headteacher posts insisted on by WSCC;
 - d. We have recommended some new wording to formalise an arrangement whereby the three parishes can change the allocation of ex-officio and other foundation governor roles between them.

10. The remaining steps, therefore are:
 - a. 24th March: GBs meet (separately) to consider results and approve / change JFC recommendations
 - b. 25th March: Communicate decision to parents, school community, LA, Diocese and DfE
Login to 'Get information about schools' website and update federation status
Send out press release (agreed in advance with LA press officer) – draft to follow
Agree federation Instrument of Governance with diocese and send to LA to "make"
Confirm with LA and diocese the approval of LA and foundation governors
 - c. 22 – 26th March: Nomination / election period for staff and parent governor elections
Each GB to prepare simple written report explaining how governors have fulfilled their responsibilities (see draft circulated separately)
 - d. 31st March: Federation date – both GBs to meet and dissolve themselves and new GB formed
First 8 governors (EHT, 3 foundation govts, staff gov, 2 parent govts & LA gov) to meet and appoint 6 co-opted govts – ie new GB formed
New GB (all 14) meet to elect chair & vice chair, appoint committees, associate govts etc.
Clerk to inform LA and 'Get information about schools' website
11. The remainder of this paper comprises the recommendations from the JFC regarding the composition of the new DVSF governing board and committees and how it should conduct its first meeting on 31st March. These were only recommendations but the two GBs approved the choice of the first eight governors, and it will be up to these first appointees to the new GB to decide who to appoint as co-opted governors and how to conduct the first meeting.

D. Composition of new GB

12. As both Hannah Pasfield (Rogate parent) and Sarah O'Malley (ex-Rake vice-chair) have chosen not to continue, the JFC recommended changing the statement of intent to alter the GB to 16 members as follows:
 - a. HT: The executive headteacher is an automatic member. WSCC is insisting we have 3 places for HTs (one for each school) but only one will be filled – our MP is following up on this issue.
 - b. By law, there can be only one other staff governor as well as the EHT, and we have agreed that both federation deputy headteachers should decline nomination, but they would be on the local committees (see below) and be associates on the main GB. The staff governor has to be elected by all staff of both schools after the nomination period following the GB meetings on 17 March, but we suggest that Susie McAuley declines her nomination and – if it is agreeable to them – the other staff also stand back and leave CU Primary's staff governor, Richard Christmas, as the only nomination.
 - c. Foundation: The diocese has already agreed to the proposal to appoint the rectors of Rake and Rogate and one other foundation governor, and has agreed that the initial extra appointee would be Carolyn Costello of Compton. DVSF's current foundation governor, Margaret Farwell can be co-opted. The amended statement of intent, though, (see C9d above) will allow for this to be switched between the parishes.
 - d. LA governor: WSCC has already approved Kate O'Kelly remaining in this role (we await written confirmation).
 - e. Parent governors: we are only allowed two, to be elected by all parents of all 3 schools (ie not one chosen by each set of parents). Hannah Pasfield has resigned from DVSF but Jeremy Cogman plans to seek nomination again. We recommend that Sarah Hill of CU Primary also seeks nomination and we encourage parents to elect these two. Ed Platt, CU Primary's other parent governor, could then be appointed to one of the co-opted posts. We recommend seeking two Rogate parents and at least one parent each from Rake and CU Primary to be appointed to their local school committees and as associate members of the new GB. These 8 governors would then form the initial new GB and would appoint the 6 co-opted governors.
13. Co-opted governors: Under the revised statement of intent, 6 co-opted governors should be appointed by the initial 8 governors selected as above. Guidance and best practice suggests that the remaining places should be filled initially by existing governors from the 2 schools (to ensure maximum continuity and school knowledge) and that the selection should be on the basis of their commitment to take on the work involved in bedding down the federation and on required skills and experience, not on a strict quota per school (although a near balance initially can help achieve acceptability at both schools) or any other basis.

We have done a review of skills, training and experience (see list of appendices) and recommend the following to fill the 6 co-opted places on the new GB:

Vicky Elms

Chris Hawker

Ed Platt

Margaret Farwell

Rita Harrison-Roach

Neil Ryder

It will be up to the new DVSF GB to elect its chair(s) and vice-chair(s) but we recommend that the JFC asks all governors for nominations ahead of the GB meetings on 31st March.

E. Board committees

14. The JFC agreed a proposal from the DVSF chair and executive headteacher that the current DVSF local school forums should be converted into full committees of the GB, and that a new one should be formed for CU Primary. These local school committees should: reassure parents that the individuality of the schools is to be retained; look after functions (like safeguarding and premises) that are to a greater or lesser degree specific to the setting; to provide a forum for local parents, staff and community to give focussed feedback to the GB (which could otherwise lose its local sensitivity); supplement the skills and experience of the governors; take on some monitoring responsibilities (to be discussed by the new GB); and provide a training / sampling experience for potential future governors. These local committees should include: the head of school; one of the chairs / vice-chairs, the local rector, a parent at the appropriate school who is on the GB; the chair of the PTA; and possibly a member of the local community. One or more additional parents (up to one per year group) might be invited as guests of some sort, so that this becomes the parent forum too. We would not recommend the voting membership of these committees being allowed to get too big, however, as members of full board committees automatically become (non-voting) associate members of the federation GB and can attend FGB meetings. Full federation governors should be allowed to attend local school committee meetings as observers. Compton also needs to appoint 2-3 members to be part of its community hall group.
15. The JFC recommended keeping Trish as chair of the HTPM panel, with one member each from the original Rogate and CU Primary GBs – probably both chairs or vice-chairs, but never to include staff or parent governors.
16. It also recommended that all other responsibilities of the GB are retained by the DVSF GB, not delegated to standing committees, with each non-staff governor agreeing to take on the lead or support role for at least one of these roles. The 2-3 governors covering each area could meet as committees if they wish but without delegated powers, unless the new GB decides otherwise. Where there are specific peak workloads for these roles (eg annual budget, annual SIP review, H&S audit, etc), the governors responsible for them would then form a working party to do this work and report back formally to the GB.
17. It will be an initial task for the new DVSF GB to define and allocate these responsibilities but our initial suggestions are as follows:
 - a. Strategy and governance
 - b. Christian ethos
 - c. Safeguarding and pupil welfare
 - d. Staffing, staff welfare and pay
 - e. Curriculum and learning
 - f. IT and assessment / progress
 - g. Finance (inc pupil and sports premium grants)
 - h. Premises and H&S (delegated to local school committees but with a full governor as lead)
 - i. Marketing and comms
18. Chairmanship of the other statutory committees like exclusions, appeals and complaints should be part of the relevant governor roles but membership of these committees should be decided as required by circumstances when they are needed.
19. Each governor could also agree to take on a monitoring role for a subject or area across all 3 schools, with members of the local school committees joining in this effort. These responsibilities should be on the agenda of the first FGB meeting of the summer term.

F. First meeting of the new GB

20. There appear to be no laid-down requirement for the first meeting of the new board, so the JFC recommended the following agenda items to begin the meeting:
 1. Welcome and apologies [clerk chairs meeting until item 4]
 2. Appointment of co-opted governors
 3. Election of chair and vice-chair of new GB
 4. Approval / amendment of code of conduct
 5. HT report (including first impressions from Compton)
 6. Allocation of main governor responsibilities (monitoring roles to be decided at next meeting)
 7. Adoption of DVSF policies for all three schools pending detailed review
 8. Adoption of DVSF systems – TTG and MS 365Agreement of dates for FGB meetings for the summer term

G. Decisions by the boards of governors

21. Meeting separately on 24th March, both boards of governors agreed the recommendations from the JFC and voted unanimously to go ahead with federation. Both boards will meet on 31st March to agree final reports (drafts at appendices C and D) and to vote to dissolve themselves. The new board of governors will then meet immediately afterwards.

Appendices:

- A. Statement of intent (original with proposed changes shown)*
- B. Summary of consultation responses*
- C. Draft closure report for DVSF board of governors*
- D. Draft closure report for CU Primary board of governors*

Appendix A: Formal “Statement of intent”

Compton & Up Marden Church of England Primary School (“CU Primary”) and Downland Village Schools Federation (“DVSF”) propose to join together to create an enlarged *Downland Village Schools Federation*.

1. Governance: DVSF will be governed by a single governing board comprising 16 governors as follows:
 - a. Three headteachers
Required by WSCC legal team - only one governor post will be filled (by the executive headteacher)
 - b. One (but not more than one*) staff governor, elected by the combined staff of all three schools.
Any school not represented by a voting staff governor will be represented by an associate member.
 - c. Two (but not more than two*) parent governors, elected by the combined parents of all three schools.
Any school not represented by a parent governor will be represented by a co-opted governor or an associate member.
 - d. Three foundation governors – two ex-officio (parish priests / rectors) and one other from the third parish.
The make up of the foundation governors on the federated board will be reviewed at the end of the term of office of the foundation governor or if one of the parishes enters into interregnum, providing an opportunity for these roles to be reviewed and potentially switched between parishes – with the instrument of government revised to reflect any agreed changes. All three incumbents or priests in charge will be members of the appropriate local school committees and will therefore be associate members of the board of governors.
 - e. One (but not more than one*) local authority governor nominated by WSCC for the new GB to appoint.
LA to confirm Kate O’Kelly (WSCC and CDC councillor) to retain this position
 - f. Six co-opted governors, to be nominated by the JSDC and appointed by the initial governing board comprising those listed above. (NB: total no employed by the school cannot exceed 1/3*)
*** Legal requirements – not at our discretion**
2. Staffing arrangements
 - a. Senior leadership team (SLT):
 - The SLT will consist of one executive headteacher (EHT) with two deputies across the federation;
 - The EHT will be legal headteacher of all 3 schools;
 - The CU Primary headteacher (HT) has since left the school and the two DVSF heads of school (HoS) will fill the 2 deputy posts;
 - All three SLT members will therefore have duties across the federation (to be agreed by the new federation GB and SLT);
 - The EHT will become head of school at CU Primary and both deputies will retain their existing HoS positions at Rake and Rogate, so that all 3 schools have a specific SLT member that parents see as HoS and day-to-day HT;
 - All three schools should have a senior teacher nominated (and known by parents) to be in charge if no SLT members are on site.
 - b. Business manager and inclusion / SEN co-ordinator: The aim will be for the business management role to be merged across all the schools, but there are various ways this could work and these decisions will be made when the new EHT and GB are in place – if necessary, involving further staff consultation. The current DVSF SENco will take over the same role at CU Primary and review needs there.
 - c. Other staff: The aim should be that all future staff contracts will include provisions for working across all 3 schools. There are no plans for any other changes of staff. The new federation board, when appointed, may consider asking some or all staff to move to contracts including provisions for working across all 3 schools, but this will be entirely voluntary.
3. The admission authority for the schools will remain as West Sussex County Council (WSCC)
4. The six-week consultation period started on 25th January and ended on 12th March, although the staff and parent surveys, which formed part of the consultation, were extended - when the SLT appointments were announced - to 24th March.
5. Federation date: If approved DVSF will start operating from the federation date of **31st March 2021**.

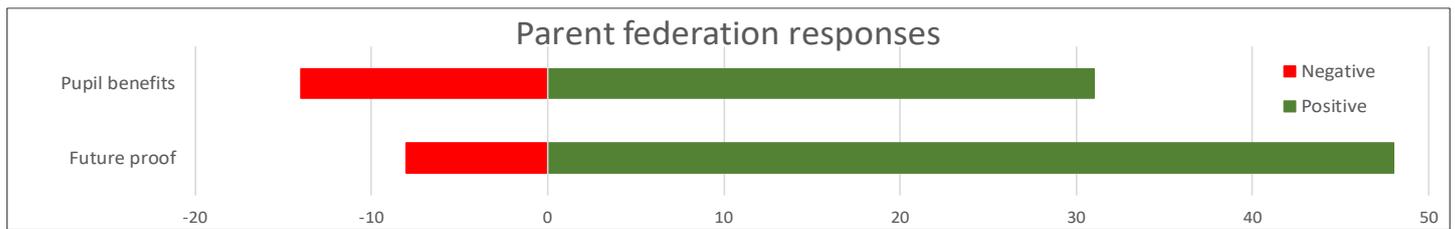
Appendix B: Summary of consultation responses

Consultation invitations

1. As part of the federation consultation, invitations to respond were sent to:
 - Parents of all three schools
 - Staff of all three schools
 - WSCC education department
 - Diocese of Chichester education department
 - PCCs of all three church parishes
 - Civil parish councils in all three civil parishes (on behalf of the local communities)
 - Chairs of governors of all schools in both locality groups (Rother Valley and Bourne localities)
 - Education unions (list provided by WSCC)
 - Governors and staff were also encouraged to suggest other representatives of local communities (mainly around CU Primary as the new federation candidate)

Summary of staff and parent surveys

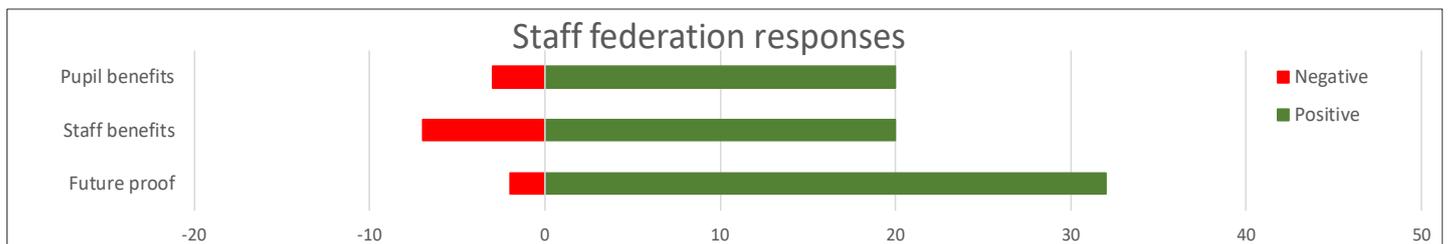
2. Staff and parents were asked to fill in online surveys which covered a wide range of issues and these will be fully analysed for review by the new GB in the summer term. However, the surveys included the following questions:
 - Federation will improve what my school can offer its pupils (both surveys)
 - Federation is a great way to “future-proof” small schools like ours (both surveys)
 - Federation will improve staff working conditions and opportunities (staff survey only)
3. Parent survey results for these questions are summarised below:



Number responding multiplied by 1-5 score given (strong negative = -2; negative = -1; positive = +1; strong positive = +2)

Not surprisingly, parents at Rogate were more in favour of federation on both measures than at Rake but both sets of parents were favourable overall. Even at Compton, only one parent gave a negative reaction and the other 13 were strongly in favour.

4. Staff survey results were as follows:



5. Staff at all three schools were favourable overall, with SLT and teachers most strongly positive and office staff less so.

Email and letter responses summary

6. Respondees were asked if their responses could be made public and, if they consented, the responses are included on the federation information page linked to all three school websites. Remaining responses were reviewed by governors and all response emails / letters were assessed on a scale of 1 (strong objection) to 5 (strong support) as follows.
7. Individual stakeholders: 45 emails / letters of response were received from individual stakeholders. Of these:
- 31 Strongly support the proposal
 - 10 Support the proposal
 - 1 is neutral
 - 2 Disagree with the proposal
 - 1 Strongly disagree with the proposal.

37 of the responses are still shown on our websites; we did not get permission to include the other 8.

8. Groups / Official bodies: There were 15 emails / letters of response. Of these:
- 6 Strongly support the proposal
 - 8 Support the proposal
 - 1 is neutral
 - 0 Disagree with the proposal
 - 0 Strongly disagree with the proposal

All of these are shown on the website.



Appendix C: Draft closure report for DVSF board of governors

FINAL REPORT BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

31st March 2021

In accordance with the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended in 2016), we the governors of the Downland Village Schools Federation (DVSF) have today agreed to dissolve our governing body in order to create a new Downland Village Schools Federation incorporating Rake C of E Primary School, Rogate C of E Primary School, and Compton and Up Marden C of E Primary School (CU).

As of today, in accordance with para 13 (1) of the regulations:

- the governing bodies of DVSF and CU are dissolved;
- a new board of governors of the DVSF is incorporated;
- all land and property which, immediately before the federation date, was held by our governing body transfers to, and by virtue of the Regulations vests in, the new board of governors of the DVSF; and
- all rights and liabilities subsisting immediately before the federation date which were acquired or incurred by our governing body are transferred to the board of governors of the new DVSF.

In accordance with para 27 (1) of the regulations, all minutes and papers of our governing body have been made available to the new board of governors of the DVSF. We have ensured that financial reports for the previous year, the updated budget for the current financial year and an updated three-year budget are ready for review by the new board of governors and WSCC Schools Finance, who have agreed that we can discuss deficit recovery plans early in the summer term.

To the best of our ability, we have diligently followed the regulations, and all other regulations and guidelines in reaching the decision to form the new DVSF with the three schools, and the steps we have followed in doing so are fully documented in our minutes and other governor files, held by the clerk for the new DVSF governing body. Our Local Authority (WSCC) and the Diocese of Chichester have been fully involved in the process and have had full membership of the joint federation committee which has co-ordinated the process. We have also made a number of recommendations to help the new DVSF board of governors with its initial steps and we wish the new governors well as they take over our responsibilities.



Appendix D: Draft closure report for Compton & Up Marden board of governors

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31st March 2021

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To the best of our ability, we have diligently followed the regulations, and all other regulations and guidelines in reaching the decision to form the new DVSF with the three schools, and the steps we have followed in doing so are fully documented in our minutes and other governor files, held by the clerk for the new DVSF governing body. Our Local Authority (WSCC) and the Diocese of Chichester have been fully involved in the process and have had full membership of the joint federation committee which has co-ordinated the process. We have also made a number of recommendations to help the new DVSF board of governors with its initial steps and we wish the new governors well as they take over our responsibilities.