

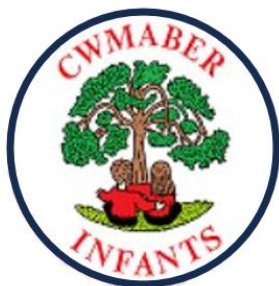
Establish a Federation of School Governing Bodies Proposal Report

Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School



Formal Consultation Period : 2nd September 2024 – 1st October 2024

This document has been published in line with the Statutory requirements of the Welsh Government's Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014.



FOREWORD

The federation of schools is a legal process enabling between two and six schools to work together through a formal structure by sharing a governing body that will make decisions in the best interests of all the schools, staff and learners in that federation.

Schools in a federation are able to work together sharing good practice, expertise and resources for the benefit of all schools in the federation with the overall aim of raising standards.

The governing bodies of Cwmaber Infant School and Cwmaber Junior School have met individually and jointly with the local authority to promote a formal federation involving the 2 schools.

Both schools' governing bodies have worked collaboratively over the last couple of years and this is continuing to impact positively upon both schools.

Whilst both schools will continue to have their own individual identity with regards to name, culture, ethos and continue to manage their own budgets, this process involves establishing a single governing body to govern the two schools.

What is this booklet about?

The local Authority is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education. Having effective leaders in its schools is considered central to this and is a challenge facing councils across Wales.

As such this Proposal Report sets out the case for a change to the leadership and governance arrangements at Cwmaber Infant School and Cwmaber Junior school.

Both governing bodies are proposing this formal federation development and this document has been prepared jointly by the governing bodies and the local authority to provide information to allow you to make an informed decision as regards the proposal.

We look forward to receiving your views on the proposal.



John Taylor

Chair of Governors

Cwmaber Infant School &
Cwmaber Junior School



Keri Cole

Chief Education Officer

Caerphilly County Borough
Council

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This document is available in Welsh and English. Information can also be made available in other formats, languages and in hard copy on request.

Please contact us on 01443 864817 / 21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk to arrange this.

Alternatively, hard copies are also available from:

Cwmaber Infant School

Bryngelli Terrace
Abertridwr

02920 830248

CwmaberInfant@sch.caerphilly.gov.uk

Cwmaber Junior School

Brynhafod Road
Abertridwr

02920 832231

CwmaberJunior@sch.caerphilly.gov.uk

Federation

What is a Federation?

The federation of schools is a legal process which enables schools (between two and six) to work together through a formal structured process by sharing a governing body that will make decisions in the best interest of all the schools, staff and pupils in that federation.

The existing governing bodies will be dissolved and replaced by a new, single governing body with strategic oversight of both schools.

The aim of the Federation is for the schools to work in partnership to:

- develop the excellent shared practice that guarantees outstanding experiences and increased opportunities for pupils and staff
- develop the common goals and reflective approaches to teaching and learning that will ensure that both school communities benefit from a quality education.

What makes a successful Federation?

To be successful, federation needs to be based on a commitment to work as a group of schools and a willingness to do things differently for the added benefit of all learners, their well-being and achievements. A shared vision that fosters trust and cooperation throughout the school community is essential. Experience from schools that have federated demonstrates that the development of all the schools and their communities within the federation and the sharing of best practice can help drive up standards and improve outcomes for learners.

Schools that federate remain in their school communities and keep their individual identity. The individual schools' name, character, school uniform and ethos remain unchanged. Schools in a federation maintain their own delegated budget but are able to explore the advantages of sharing resources including facilities, IT, staff, and school buildings.

The membership of a governing body for a federation of schools is almost identical to the membership of an ordinary governing body with all stakeholders being represented although there is more flexibility in the proportions of representation of each category of governor. This means that a governing body of a federation can choose a constitution and membership that suits their particular circumstances as long as they have 15 to 27 governors and adhere to the requirements set out in the regulations. Embedding the concept of federation and engaging staff at all levels is critical to the success of the federation. The role of the senior staff in the federating schools will be to explain the possible benefits to staff, which could include the opportunity to improve professional learning opportunities and development for teachers and to improve their subject expertise to broaden and enrich curriculum provision for all learners. Schools will also

need to demonstrate a willingness to see the potential and benefits of a formal partnership, recognising that the partnership will strengthen characteristics and qualities of individual schools within the federation.

What are the challenges of Federation?

Some of the challenges to taking forward a Federation are as follows:

- Building trust between governors and school communities
- Need to ensure full commitment from all schools involved
- Need to develop and agree a shared vision for the school
- Need to ensure clear governance and leadership structures
- Need to ensure sufficient time for all parties to be at ease with the proposed changes
- All partners should feel equally valued
- Increasing the workload of governors, particularly during inception and first year of establishing a Federation
- Potential loss of experienced governors
- Operational issues - increased workload for a single headteacher
- Estyn inspections – currently, Estyn inspects each school within a Federation separately

For a Federation to succeed, it is imperative that trust is developed between the governors and individual school communities. It also requires full commitment from the schools involved and a shared vision for the development of the Federation.

Due to the successful informal collaboration already established between both schools the majority of the challenges identified in have already been successfully addressed.

Legislation

The legislative framework for federation of schools is provided by the Education Act 2002, the Education (Wales) Measure 2011 and the 2014 Regulations. These set out how a federated school governing body should be formed, how schools may join or leave a federation and how a federation may be dissolved.

The governing bodies of Cwmaber Infant School and Cwmaber Junior School, together with Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Local Authority) proposes to use the powers granted to it by the [Federation of Maintained Schools \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#)

Establishing a Federation proposed by Governing Bodies

(in conjunction with the Local Authority)

Governing bodies who decide to federate must do so following a prescribed process set out in the 2014 Regulations after seeking the views of parents, carers, staff, learners, the local authority, all school staff unions, all foundation governors (if applicable), diocesan authorities or any other appropriate religious body (if applicable) and anyone else in the school community.

In discussing and making decisions as to whether they pursue federation it is crucial that governing bodies:

- consider in depth the benefits and risks of establishing a federation in relation to the impact on children and young people’s achievements and the quality of education in and across the schools involved in the discussions
- seek and consider information about each school involved in the discussions, particularly in relation to school performance, funding, facilities and buildings, so that decisions are taken openly and on the basis of sound evidence
- ensure that local authorities are kept informed of and involved in developments
- ensure the process of seeking views and decision-making process complies with the 2014 Regulations

The Proposal

What are we proposing?

- **To establish the Federation of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School.**

The proposed name of the Federation is *‘The Federation of Cwmaber Infants and Cwmaber Junior Schools’*.

If the proposal is accepted, the Federation will come into being on the first day of the new school term in January 2025, albeit it is proposed to further develop joint working over the coming months.

The governing bodies of both Cwmaber Infant School and Cwmaber Junior School have consulted with the local authority (Caerphilly County Borough Council) and all are in support of the proposal.

Background Information

Both schools have worked on a collaborative basis since September 2020.

This collaborative approach remains in place and continues to impact positively on both schools.

Table 1: School Characteristics (2023)		
	Cwmaber Infant School	Cwmaber Junior School
School Type	Community School	Community School
Age Range	Infants 3 - 7	Junior 7 - 11
Gender Mix	Mixed	Mixed
Language	English medium	English medium
Location	Abertridwr, Caerphilly	Abertridwr, Caerphilly
Capacity	136	149

Admission Number	30	30
Pupils on Roll, 2023 *	118	116
Free School Meals *	35.6%	31.3%
Pupil Teacher Ratio *	24.1	24.7
% Attendance during year *	94.7%	92.8%
WG Category	Green	Green
Estyn	Good	Good

*Figures reflect those published on the [My Local School website](#)

The two schools are located only 0.2 miles apart.

Both schools share the same Head Teacher.

By entering into a federation, the two schools can work together under shared leadership to utilise their strengths to improve standards across the federation and together address areas in need of improvement.

By federating under one governing body, the climate of trust, openness and willingness to work together that already exists can be further enhanced.

What will be the impact of the proposals

- ✓ There will be a single governing body with strategic oversight of both schools within the federation.
- ✓ Each school retains its name, category, budget, Head Teacher, staff, uniform and remains in its community.
- ✓ Each school will have its own Estyn inspection, though increasingly these are co-ordinated to happen at the same time for all schools within the federation to minimise stress and disruption.
- ✓ The governing body of a federation can continue to use resources and staff across the federation to improve the educational outcomes for all pupils.
- ✓ An audit trail must be kept and separate accounts produced for each school in the federation.
- ✓ The Federated governing body cannot require existing staff to work across both schools, but they can negotiate with the school's staff unions over whether flexible contracts can be introduced.
- ✓ New staff can be appointed to work across schools in the federation.
- ✓ There will be no change to the existing age category, language medium or catchment arrangements for either school.

As only the Governance of the school's will be impacted as a result of this proposal, there is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment in this instance.

Admission Arrangements

The admission arrangements for each school will remain unchanged. The Local Authority is the admissions authority for each school. Parents will apply for a place for their child at the school of their choice, not at the Federation, as each school in the federation is a separate school. If the child is not given a place in the school they choose,

a separate application will have to be made to attend a different school. This is the case even if the second school applied for is the other school in the federation.

Composition of the Governing Body

The regulations stipulate that each federated governing body should have a minimum of 15 Governors and a maximum of 27 with a proposed composition made up as follows for each federated school:

- (a) at least one but no more than two parent governors elected or appointed to represent the interests of parents of registered pupils at that school;
- (b) at least one but no more than two teacher governors;
- (c) at least one but no more than two staff governors;
- (d) at least two but no more than four LA governors;
- (e) at least two but no more than four community governors;
- (f) the head or acting head of the federation, if one is appointed or the headteacher or acting headteacher of each school in the federation unless those persons resign as a governor.

	<u>Recommended</u>
LA appointed	4
Headteacher	1
Teacher	2
Staff	2
Parent Governor	4
Community Governor	5
- appointed by community	4
- appointed by governing body	1
TOTAL	18

The recommended number is derived from the maximum in each category permitted within the regulations in relation to parent and community governors. To accommodate present numbers, it is proposed that any existing governors displaced will be co-opted for the remainder of their term of office. Thereafter numbers can be reduced to align with the Welsh Government Regulations over time.

Consultation Process

It is a statutory requirement to seek the views of stakeholders on federation proposals, whether the federation has been proposed by the respective school governing bodies or the LA.

This document represents the responsibility under The Federation of maintained Schools (Wales) Regulation 2014 to consult with appropriate stakeholders.

The main purpose of this document is to provide information and to gather the views of identified stakeholders.

Who are we consulting with?

The governing bodies and local authority will seek the views of the following stakeholders:

- Pupils, staff, governors and parents/guardians of both schools
- Teaching and support staff associations

The consultation document will also be distributed to the following:

- Local ward members for each school.
- School Councils
- ESTYN
- Catholic Diocesan Board of Education
- Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
- Education Achievement Service
- Any other persons who are considered appropriate

Pupil Voice

The voice of young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and student experience and needs to be at the heart of planning, provision and evaluation.

Young people have a right to act to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, to enrich the decision-making processes, to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and facilitators of change.

Consideration will to be given as to how the learners and school councils receive information.

Consultation Period and Key Dates

The formal consultation process begins on Monday 2nd September 2024

Information will be made available on the Council's website and all documentation is published in Welsh and English.

A hard copy of the proposal will also be available for inspection at all reasonable times at both schools in the proposed federation.

If you would like this information in any other format, for example large print, or help with interpretation in a different language, please contact us on 01443 864817 /

21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk so that the necessary arrangements can be made to provide this service.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is midnight on Tuesday 1st October 2024

The comments received from the consultation process will be reported to the governing bodies and local authority for determination.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to consider any responses received after this date.

Next Steps

Decision Making

Officers have met with all Governing Bodies concerned who have formally agreed to proceed to formal consultation on the proposal. Although the Governing Bodies could proceed in isolation each Governing Body have requested the Local Authority consider the proposal and agree to proceed in partnership with the individual schools.

➤ **Post consultation**

- Governing bodies and local authority to consider responses
- Provide a summary report of responses for each governing body to consider
- Governing bodies and local authority meet to make the final decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal as outlined and make the final decision on nature and timing of Federation

Subject to approval to proceed:

➤ **Implementation**

- Governing bodies and local authority inform stakeholders of decision
- Local Authority in consultation with the governing bodies liaise over the new Instrument of government and election and appointment of new governors
- Consider making arrangements for governor support for the Federating schools in the interim before the joint governing body is in place
- Senior leadership roles and responsibilities formalised
- Joint Committee of governors is established and provides strategic planning and roll out the Federation
- Single governing body meets to elect chair and vice chair
- Calendars and professional processes aligned
- Look at how new technologies can support Federation development

➤ **Evolution**

- Implementing new systems and structures, policies and practice;
- New staff roles operating (Performance Management structure and process);

- School Development Plan targets resources and expertise at raising standards across the Federation;
- Monitoring and review by governing body, staff and the local authority.

Have your say

Your views matter and we want you to tell us what you think about the changes we have proposed in this document. We would like you to consider the information contained within the document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposal. All views are welcomed in support of or opposed to the proposal. This is your chance to ask questions and make comments that will be considered when the Council decides how to proceed.

If you would like to comment on the proposal, you can do this by:

- Completing the [online response form](#) on the Council's website
- Complete a printed response form and return to either school
- Email your comments to the Sustainable Communities for Learning Team at Caerphilly 21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk

Please note that we are only able to receive comments in writing, either via the online form, pro forma or via email. You must include your full name and postal address as part of the information provided.

For further information on how we process the information and your rights please follow this link:

www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/FOI/PrivacyNotices/Privacy-Notice-Consultations-Surveys.aspx