

13th October 2020

Proposal for the Dissolution of the Federation of Mill Hill Primary School and Woodcroft Primary School

Your school governors are thinking about ending the federation between Mill Hill Primary School and Woodcroft Primary School. This letter explains our reasoning and what it will mean for you. Please take the time to read this letter and let us know any thoughts or concerns we haven't covered.

What is a Federation?

A federation is a group of schools (2 or more) which have a single governing body. The federation's aim is to improve governance, hold leaders to account more effectively, pool resources and offer a wider curriculum.

For some time, our school federation was a benefit. When the schools started on the federation journey some years ago, as is normal with federations, there was an Executive Head overseeing both schools.

For a number of years, Woodcroft and Mill Hill schools have been without an executive head and each school has its own head teacher. Although the schools work closely together, as they are similar in size, location and somewhat in operation, we have recognised that they have grown into schools with differing needs and visions.

Why change?

As a governing body, we are responsible for a number of areas. These include:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding Leaders to account.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school.

Our meetings are 2 hours long and this may mean that the schools are not able to share everything that is needed. It also means that, as governors, we are unable to hold the leaders to account as effectively as we would be able to if we focused on one school.

Why now?

At this time both schools are rated as "Good" by Ofsted, with strong leadership. As a governing body, we feel we would be more able to monitor and more effectively hold leaders to account if we focus on each school separately.

The benefits of holding leaders to account more stringently would potentially have a positive impact on the children's education.

What will happen?

Your governing body has started the process with this consultation letter. Having reviewed any comments, a final decision will be taken on 3rd November 2020. If this is all agreed, the governing body will be dissolved. A new governing body, consisting of existing and new governors, will be appointed in each school. In essence, the visible changes will be minimal as the changes in governing body will mostly happen behind the scenes.

Why are we looking at this idea and why do we think it will benefit both schools?

Benefits of a Federation	Mitigation against dissolution of the Federation
Ability for Headteachers to collaborate and support each other	Collaboration could continue informally
Ability for other staff (Admin/teaching staff) to collaborate and share ideas	Collaboration could continue informally
Benefits of shared production of school policies and prospectus	Both schools have already adopted the HCC model operating policies.
Avoids the workload associated with the transition process and the creation of new Governing Bodies in the short term	Longer term benefit of each Governing Body able to focus upon one school

Potential advantages to dissolution:

- Governors may be easier to recruit with reduced workload and a commitment to one school.
- More effective use of time for all involved.
- There is potential to improve school performance/accelerate improvement because existing governance and processes would be improved.
- Both school administration functions already run independently. Policies, Budget and Staff Contracts will not be difficult to separate.
- The schools are 3 miles apart with different catchment areas and different communities, so there is little benefit in the close link of a federation.



Questions and Answers

Q: How will this impact my child?

A: Your child will not be affected by this change as there will be no staffing changes, so their teacher and class staff stay the same.

Q: Will it impact class activity?

A: No, all class activity is planned at a school level and not included in any Federation working.

Q: Will the schools still be able to collaborate?

A: Absolutely, yes. The schools both see the benefits in working together in some aspects and this won't change. The schools already work with other schools in the area without the need to be federated.

Q: How does this impact the finances/budgets?

A: There is little or no effect to the finances/budgets of each school. There is very little shared resource between the schools.

Q: What is the impact to staff?

A: There is no impact to staff as all contracts are with Hampshire County Council.

Q: Will any staff contracts be changing?

A: No

Q: Will there be any changes to the school day?

A: No.

Q: Will there be any changes to the school uniform?

A: No, both schools have kept their identity; any changes will be decided by the school.

Q: Will there be any changes to the website?

A: The websites will be updated to show they are no longer part of a federation and any documents will be changed.

Do you have any comments or questions? Please contact us by noon on the 2nd November 2020. We value your feedback on this proposal and welcome any comments. Contact us by email on: federation@millhillandwoodcroft.co.uk or contact the school office directly.