

## **Proposal for Basildon C of E (Controlled) Primary School to join the Downland Federation**

The purpose of this document is to commence the formal consultation for Basildon CofE (Controlled) Primary School to join The Downland Federation.

The Downs Secondary School and Compton C of E Primary were recognised as outstanding by Ofsted most recently in June 2013 and March 2013 respectively. They have been federated since August 2012, and have a joint Governing Board. Beedon C of E Primary was judged as good with by Ofsted in November 2021 and joined the Federation in 2016.

The Downland Federation and Basildon CofE Primary have been looking at possible options to Federate over the past few months. The Governing Boards now feel that the timing is right to propose Basildon joining the Federation.

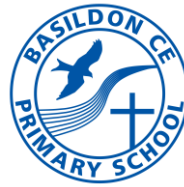
Both Governing Boards have investigated together the option of moving to a Multi Academy Trust, particularly with the government's recent agenda that all schools must become academies or have plans to do so by 2030. It is felt, that to convert to an Academy Trust at this time is not the right choice for our schools, but it is a change that we will continue to plan for, remaining flexible in the light of future Government announcements.

At the recent FGB of Basildon's board of governors, the Headteacher and Co-chair of TDS were invited to present to give further information and the governors voted to put the proposal to join the Federation out to consultation. The Downlands Federation have since given preliminary consent to enter into consultation with all stakeholders. It is the belief of the two boards that this form of collaboration offers the schools the best opportunity to improve the life chances for all our children and vitally allow us to expand our work together.

If successful, Basildon CofE Primary will join The Downland Federation as of the start of the Autumn term 2023. The Governing Boards of Basildon CofE Primary and the existing Downland Federation Board, will cease to exist, and a New Instrument of Government will be drawn up for the new Federation Governing Board. The Federation Governing Board will be the vehicle for fulfilling the governance arrangements of all schools and will be known as the Governing Board of The Downland Federation.

Joining a Federation requires that the schools in the existing Federation and the school that wishes to join the Federation to legally consult for a period of six weeks with parents/carers, staff, existing governors, the Church of England Diocese, trade unions and the Local Authority.

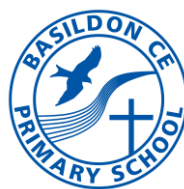
The consultation document explains what a Federation is and the benefits as we see them for all schools.



In addition to receiving the consultation document, meetings have been organised at Basildon on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April at 5.30pm** and at The Downs School on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 5.30pm**, where questions can be posed and further information gathered about the proposal.

Mr Chris Prosser	Executive Headteacher of The Downland Federation
Mr Andy Tow	Chair of Governors of The Downland Federation
Miss Melissa Cliffe	Head of Basildon Primary
Mrs Barbara Hunter	Chair of Governors of Basildon Primary

We would really appreciate your contribution to the Consultation, please send any questions or feedback to [clerkgovernor@thedownsschool.org](mailto:clerkgovernor@thedownsschool.org) . All views/comments on the proposal to enter into a Federation across all four schools must be received by 12 noon on **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May** in order to be included in the review of the consultation.



## Supplementary Information

### What is a Federation?

Federation is the name given to partnership of schools and is a way of bringing schools closer together to collaborate. It means that the schools will work together under a single Governing Board with the opportunity to share resources and expertise across all the schools in the Federation. The schools work together to continue to raise standards and improve learning, teaching and leadership - **It does not mean the schools will merge or amalgamate.**

### Vision

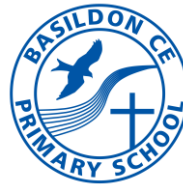
The vision for the Federation is that there will be four distinct schools, each with their own unique character, working together as **'The Downland Federation'**, to achieve the vision: Learning together, learning for life. A seamless education from 2-18. Our schools, each with their own unique character, will work together in a strong, supportive and resilient structure to provide a seamless education from 2-18.

### What will it mean?

- The four schools The Downs, Compton, Beedon and Basildon will remain separate schools under the leadership of an Executive Headteacher
- We will be known collectively as The Downland Federation
- There will be a single, shared vision across all four schools
- A single Governing Board will be responsible for governance and staffing in all the schools
- The three primary schools will retain their current Church of England connection and ethos
- Each school will continue to have its own name, identity and uniform
- There will be no change in current staffing levels or class organisation as a direct result of Federation
- Each school will continue to receive its own individual school budget, and there will be no reduction in budgets as a result of the Federation
- There will be no change to any of the schools' admissions criteria. The Local Authority will continue to be the Admissions Authority for all schools. Admissions arrangements will continue as they are currently – however, those families within the Federation who live outside the designated catchment area of The Downs School, will have higher preference in the admissions criteria than those families outside catchment from other schools.
- Each school will have its own Ofsted inspection
- The reporting of standards will remain separate for each school.

### What are the benefits?

- A commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the federation.
- Sustainability for all four schools ensuring future provision in all four communities
- A sharing of good practice between schools to develop teaching and learning strategies and develop continuity in the curriculum



- A great opportunity for students to learn from one another through shared learning activities, sport and other enrichment opportunities
- The potential to use education resources efficiently across the four schools – sharing resources will provide improved value for money
- Development opportunities for staff, including shared training and broadening experiences through collaboration with the other schools
- Sustaining and further developing quality leadership across the schools

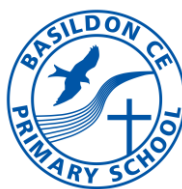
### **What will it mean for pupils?**

We believe the Federation will improve outcomes for all of our children by:

- Ensuring a consistent approach to high quality teaching and learning for all pupils as best practice will be shared between all schools
- Sharing expertise and facilities effectively supports the enrichment of pupils' learning experiences
- The opportunity for combined community and sports activities
- The curriculum will be as rich and varied as it is now at all schools, but emphasis will also be placed on the transition for pupils from primary to secondary school. Irrespective of whether a pupil is moving to The Downs Secondary School or not, the Federation can support a pupil's transition more effectively than a single school, in part by ensuring the curriculum in the primary schools' dovetails with that at The Downs School, so eliminating gaps or overlaps which can otherwise occur
- On a day-to-day basis there will be neither change in routine nor provision in any of the schools
- The Federation will have taught the pupils from age 2, 3 or 4 – 18 years ensuring that when a pupil enters Year 7 their education continues seamlessly, as they are already familiar with secondary surroundings. This will reduce the anxiety that this move often creates.

### **What will Federation mean for the staff?**

- The day-to-day management of each school will remain unchanged
- Staff will continue on the same conditions of service and be contracted to their own school
- The combined size of the schools across the Federation will support in the retention and attraction of high quality staff
- A shared approach to teaching and learning, when appropriate
- Development of continuity and quality by identifying best practice from all schools and sharing it across the Federation
- The newly appointed Director of Primaries will be responsible for the strategic leadership across the three primary schools
- There will be a robust leadership structure in each of the primary schools – reporting directly to the Director of Primaries
- There will be greater opportunities for staff development across all schools providing exciting career progression.



### **Will the staffing change?**

- Mr Chris Prosser will continue to be the Executive Headteacher of The Downland Federation and will have Executive responsibility for the primary schools. He will also continue to be the Headteacher of The Downs School
- As well as an Executive Headteacher, there is also the newly appointed Director of Primaries, Miss Melissa Cliffe, employed by the Federation to work across all of the primary schools in order to help create plans and systems to drive the strategic vision of the Federation forward
- Staff will not be expected to move from one school to another, but we would want some staff to share their specialist knowledge with other schools in the Federation, so that we can share best practice and expertise.

### **What will it mean for parents/carers?**

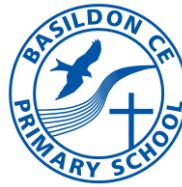
- Continued assurance that your children will receive the best possible education
- A shared vision and ethos, with common approaches
- All primary schools will retain their current Church of England connection and ethos
- The four schools will continue to operate individually
- Parents/carers from all schools will have the opportunity for direct representation on the Federated Governing Board
- All schools will continue to seek ways of improving the level of engagement and support for their parents/carers as usual
- The day-to-day contact arrangements between the individual schools and their parents/carers will not be changed by the Federation, but we will continue to seek ways to improve what we do.

### **What will it mean for the Governing Boards?**

- The Governing Board at Basildon and the current Downland Federation Board will cease to exist as Basildon joins the Federation. The existing Instrument of Government for The Downland Federation will be amended to accommodate input/representation from Basildon CofE Primary School. A revised Instrument of Government for the new board will come into effect which complies with statutory regulations
- Federations have a single Governing Board overseeing the work of all the schools in the Federation. It operates at a strategic level, monitoring, evaluating and holding the Executive Headteacher and other senior leaders to account.

### **What would Federation mean for our local community?**

- Federation would continue to provide a shared, caring ethos, child-centered philosophy and commitment to providing excellent education opportunities in a local setting
- Federating the four schools will improve community links across all schools, strengthened by joint partnership and events
- Opportunities for the local community to become more involved in the work of the Federation would be enhanced



- Federating the four schools shows a commitment to sustainable, yet flexible, primary and secondary provision in the local area.

### What do the Governors think?

- Both Governing boards (the current Downland Federation Board and Basildon's governors), are in favour of the proposal to consult on Federation
- There is a continued commitment to providing excellent, child-centered education opportunities within a shared, caring ethos and it is the belief of the Governing boards that the Federation does this

### What happens now?

- This document is the start of a consultation period on the proposal to Federate
- All written comments will be considered by the Governors and collated for review at separate Full Governing Board meetings of The Downlands Federation and Basildon CofE Primary on Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> June, where each Governing Board will decide whether or not to proceed
- If the decision is to proceed the Governing Boards will inform the Department of Education
- The Governing Boards will formally combine under reconstituted Instrument of Government on or before 1 September 2023.

### How can I find out more information?

- Parent meetings have been arranged to provide parents/carers with an opportunity to speak to the governors of all schools. From The Downland Federation, Mr Chris Prosser - Executive Headteacher, and Mr Andy Tow - Chair of Governors. From Basildon Primary, Mrs Barbara Hunter - Chair of Governors and Miss Melissa Cliffe – Headteacher.
  - In addition, there will be a staff consultation meeting held in each school
  - Your views are very important, please let us know what you think about the proposal together with your wider views. You can do this in a number of ways:
- Attend one of the meetings – at Basildon on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April at 5.30pm** or at The Downs School on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at 5.30pm**
  - By email: [clerkgovernor@thedownsschool.org](mailto:clerkgovernor@thedownsschool.org)