



CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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## St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools Federation Proposals

### Your questions answered

You will have received a copy of the Federation proposal earlier this week/last week. We are sure that you will have questions about what this will mean for the school, your child and your family. There were some answers to common questions included in that document. These and others are included here.

#### 1. What is a federation?

A federation is formed when two or more schools remain separate in law but are managed together by a single Governing Board. The proposed model therefore maintains St Charles and St Mary's as separate organisations, but with the management of the two schools brought together under the supervision of a single Governing Body. The arrangement would build on the strengths of the two schools.

#### 2. Will the two schools merge?

No. Each school will remain separate and will continue to be run as they are now.

#### 3. Is the plan to close one of the schools?

Not at all. Both schools play an important role in serving their local community and they will continue to do so after federation.

#### 4. What would be different after Federation?

The immediate day-to-day experience for parents and children would change very little. Schools in federations continue to be individual schools with their own character. The names of the schools, school uniform arrangements and identities of St Charles and St Mary's would continue as before. Each school would retain its own budget.

#### 5. What would the admission arrangements for places be?

The admissions policies of both schools would remain unchanged by this proposal.

#### 6. If places in one school are full, will I be forced to enrol my child at the opposite school?

Not at all. Each school will apply their published admissions policies. For Reception, places are allocated by the Local Authority based on your preferences.

#### 7. My child will be transferring to secondary school soon. What will happen when I apply to secondary school if the schools are in Federation?

Nothing will change. Secondary schools will see the school in which your child is enrolled, either St Charles or St Mary's. They will admit children according to their criteria. Being in a federation will not affect applications in any way.

**8. Will my child be forced to attend the other school?**

No. Each child will continue to attend the school in which they are enrolled. They will continue to be taught by their teacher and other staff in the same way as now.

**9. How would the implementation of the proposal affect children?**

There will be very little difference for children day to day, for example, they will continue to have their usual class teacher. There may be opportunities for specialist teachers, such as those in arts or sports, to be shared across the schools.

**10. How would the leadership of the two schools change?**

Ann Slavin would remain Executive Headteacher for both schools but would now report to a single Governing Board rather than two different Boards as at present. The Head of School of St Charles, Tony Lynch, and the rest of the senior leadership team, would continue in their current roles, reporting to Ann Slavin.

**11. If I have a concern about my child, who will I contact?**

Procedures to raise a concern will stay the same. In the first instance, we will ask you to contact your child's class teacher. Additionally, you can contact Mr Lynch and his team at St Charles.

**12. My child has an ECHP. What are the implications for them? Will the staff working with him/her change?**

Nothing will change. Your child will continue to be supported in the same way as now. The people working with them will usually only change if that person leaves or is ill. Mrs Byrne will continue to support children with EHCP in St Charles.

**13. How would the implementation of this proposal affect staff?**

The staffing of the two schools would remain unchanged, though federation would enable some staff to work flexibly across both schools, in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment. If current staff wish to work flexibly across both schools, this will be considered and this option will be included in the terms and conditions of new staff. No current member of staff would be forced to work in the opposite school to which they are contracted to work, without their agreement. Cross-site working is already happening in the form of, for example, liaison between office staff on financial systems and senior teachers on assessment. Federation does provide greater opportunities for advancement and professional development, allowing the Federation to attract and retain the best teachers and school leaders.

**14. Will the school's budget be cut as a result of federation? Will part of the budget go to the other school?**

No. Each school will keep its own budget. A school receives its income from central Government based on the number of children on roll. This will continue to happen. We will not transfer money from one school to another. However, it may be possible to share some functions (such as ordering goods, business support) across both schools to provide a better service and better value for money.

### **15. What would be the timescale for implementation?**

The consultation timeline is detailed on the inside cover of this booklet. The process would take three and a half months in total. If the proposal was approved by both existing Governing Boards following the consultation, it is proposed that the new joint Governing Body would assume responsibility for both schools on 21 January 2021.

### **16. Can a Federation be reversed?**

Federations should be seen as medium to long-term commitments. However, unlike academies, which require a seven-year commitment, it is possible to end a federation at any time. This means that in the unlikely event that federation no longer offers benefits for children's learning and progress, the arrangements can be ended by a vote of the Governing Board.

### **17. What impact would proposals have on OFSTED inspections?**

Schools in a federation are inspected separately and will be given an individual OFSTED report.

### **18. How would the Governing Board change?**

If the separate existing Governing Boards of St Charles and St Mary's agree the federation proposal, they would both be formally dissolved on 21 January 2021 and a new Governing Board would be created on the same day to govern both schools. It is anticipated that the new Governing Board would contain Foundation governors from the existing governing bodies of both schools, and some new members as outlined below. Governors will be co-opted by majority decision on the basis of the knowledge, skills and commitment they are able to bring.

The proposed structure for the new Federation Governing Board is outlined below. It is in line with the 2012 School Constitution and Federation Regulations and will be responsible for governance and management of the two schools.

The governing body can also appoint Associate Members to committees. They will consider doing this to ensure that people with suitable skills including parents from both schools are represented in the governance structure. Associate Members can attend full governing body meetings as observers, but have no voting rights.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> January, the Foundation governors, Local Authority Governor, together with the Executive Headteacher, will appoint the co-opted members of the new Federation Governing Board. The Governors will then elect a Chair and Vice-chair and set in motion the process for electing parent and staff Governors.

The term of office for all governors will be four years.