

Stewart Headlam, Swansea and Hague Federation Consultation

Frequently Asked Questions Summary

Organisational Questions

Question	Response
Will there be an increased workload for staff/governors?	Initially there may be some extra work whilst we move to new systems. We hope by working together we will reduce duplication and increase efficiency
How will you mitigate against the primaries becoming more secondary like in their approach as often happens when joining with older age bracket organisations?	The Primary Committee and Secondary Committee have equal status to make sure this does not happen
Will there be OFSTED Reports for each school?	Yes each school in the federation is inspected separately
Might the school lose their individuality?	Schools will maintain their own values, ethos, curriculum and uniform. We are seeking to improve co-operation not to merge into one school.
Might children get taught by teachers who have not been trained to teach their age phase?	Although there will be opportunities for teachers to work in different phases this will only be done when it would be beneficial for children, and if teachers have had training to support them. Governors would want to encourage experts teachers and TAs to support in their own school, but also to help make sure outstanding practice is developed in every curriculum area for all children.
Will the teachers from Swanlea want to visit H & SH?	Yes - they already do this, especially to support children's transition and H and SH teachers will want to visit Swanlea, this can be really helpful - for example sometimes children stop joining their handwriting when they move to secondary school - their old year 6 teachers knows immediately they see their work whether individual standards have been maintained!

Organisational Questions (2)

Question	Response
Will we do activities together?	Opportunities for different age groups to work together will be part of future planning but the schools' main curriculum will continue as it is now - with age appropriate provision and clear progression through the year groups. There will be opportunities to do things together - such as Christmas Performances.
Will the schools have the same calendars as each other?	The schools do try to have the same calendars know, but this should be even stronger in future. The Federation Governing Body would approve the Holiday dates for the 3 schools.
Will children at Hague and Stewart Headlam have to go to Swanlea?	No. The same admissions preference systems will still apply at key transition point - Nursery to Reception, Primary to Secondary, Secondary to Post 16.
Will children from Hague/Stewart Headlam get priority for Swanlea?	No we are local authority schools so the admissions priorities will remain - Looked After Children, Children with SEND, Siblings and then proximity to school. Overall parents feel continuing to use the Local Authority admissions criteria is fairest.
Might other schools want to join?	All the schools in the E! area work in Partnership. Several schools are interested in this new model. If other schools do want to join there would always be a public consultation.
Is this a first step towards academisation.	No, governors are clear that all 3 schools will continue to be Local Authority Schools.
How will the federation be monitored	The Governing Body and the Local Authority will review the effectiveness of the federation. There will be regular feedback on progress to (and from) staff and parents.

Finance Questions

Questions	Response
Will the schools still have separate budgets	Yes the schools are required to maintain separate budgets. Government funding is for each child in their particular school. Surplus belong to the individual schools. Only the Local Authority Schools Forum can move surplus funding.
Might richer schools end up subsidising the others?	This is not possible because schools are not allowed to move their budget to other schools.
Will there be increased funding for the schools?	Funding in schools is decided by Central Government. It is determined by the number of pupils in each school. If there are fewer pupils there is less money.
Are all 3 schools financially viable?	Yes, but money is tighter than ever before. We hope that by being part of this exciting Federation our schools will be even more popular so that they remain financially viable. We also hope that by working together we can be more financially efficient.
Is there a risk that if all schools are under funded the 3 sites would become too many?	As long as school numbers remain strong there is no reason for this to happen - but we cannot be certain what the future might bring. We believe federating now increases our chances of managing our resources well for our community.
Might changes lead to job redundancy, change of workplace; having to move to another school, cuts on budgets.	Federation will help us manage in a financially efficient way. We cannot be certain of the impact of demographic change or government funding for our schools. Governors believe the schools would be more resilient together
What sorts of resources could be shared	We could reduce costs through bulk purchasing. Primary schools could access sports and science facilities at Swanlea. We could share access to libraries, staff and children are our most valuable assets and there may be opportunities to work together across phases (for example Xmas shows, English classes for parents, after school and school holiday activities)

Governance Questions

Question	Response
Will merging reduce the standard or importance of the school governing body?	We don't believe so. Governors are looking at a governance structure which maintains the focus on individual schools, but also allows for strategic planning across schools.
Does each school maintain its status?	Yes each school in the federation remains a school with the same DFE number as previously.
Might the school lose their individuality? Will Swansea have less say in its own affairs?	Schools will maintain their own values, ethos, curriculum and uniform. We are seeking to improve co-operation not to merge into one school. Swansea will maintain a termly School Committee, and Hague and Stewart Headlam Schools will hold a termly Primary Schools Committee.
Will this mean there are more Governing Body meetings and more bureaucracy?	Initially this is likely to make sure information from all 3 schools is properly considered. Overtime the governance structure is likely to become more streamlined. By developing a termly structure paperwork each term can be built on, rather than new papers for every meeting.
Is this a new model or have other schools done the same?	There are other federations in Tower Hamlets (Stewart Headlam and Hague are already federated together) and Hackney. The cross-phase model would be new to Tower Hamlets but 3-19 schools exist elsewhere and so do 3-19 Federations. Examples of 3-19 Federations: Embark Federation in Derbyshire, The Federation of Tiverton Schools in Devon, The Federated Schools of the Upper Afan Valley and The Cwlwm Federation in Wales are all examples.
Can schools leave a Federation	Yes they can do but there has to be a full consultation before they leave.
How is a Federation different from an Academy	The schools in a federation are equal partners, and can keep their Local Authority Status if they wish. Schools wishing to become academies now have to join a Multi-Academy Trust, which has a hierarchical structure, receives funding direct from Central Government and is not part of the Local Authority family of schools.