

Consultation document for the proposed federation of Rollesby Primary School with Caister Infant and Junior Schools, known as Caister Primary Federation

The governing bodies of the above schools have resolved to seek federation through a shared, strategic vision of the schools' future.



Contents

Consultation process.....	3
Background	3
What is a Federation?	4
How would this be different to the Partnership currently in place between Rollesby and Caister? .	4
Aims of Federation of Rollesby Primary School and Caister Primary Federation.....	5
What are the benefits for both federations?	5
What are the risks for both federations?	6
How similar or different are the three schools?.....	6
The Governing Board	7
What is the proposed Senior Leadership structure?	8
How would it affect staff?.....	8
Is there a risk that one of the schools would lose out in this arrangement?	8
Would the schools keep their name and identity?.....	8
Would the uniform policy remain the same?	8
Would the admissions arrangements remain the same?.....	8
Would pupils be registered to the Federation or a single school?.....	8
Would parents and staff be equally represented from both federations on the.....	9
Governing Board?	9
Would each school keep its own budget?	9
Would the amount each school receives be affected by the Federation?	9
Would the Federation combine their SATs results?	9
Would the Federation be inspected by Ofsted?.....	9
Would one school take the lead over the other?.....	9
Would the Federation meet the different needs of the communities?	9
How do I contribute?	9
How can I find out more?	9
What do you think?	10



Consultation process

The consultation process for the federation of Rollesby Primary School and Caister Primary Federation will start on Monday 13th September 2021. It will end strictly on Friday 22nd October 2021 at 3.30pm. The process is prescribed in the The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012. These state that:

The governing bodies proposing to federate must jointly consider any responses to the proposals and each governing body must determine whether:

(a) to proceed with the proposals for federation as published;

(b) to proceed with the proposals for federation with such modifications as the governing body consider appropriate; or

(c) not to proceed with the proposals for federation. The modifications referred to in (b) may not include a change in the identity of the governing bodies proposing to federate.

The Governing Boards of both schools will meet on Thursday 4th November to consider all the responses received as part of this consultation process and come to a formal decision about whether or how the Federation should proceed.

If the decision is to proceed (with or without any modifications to the proposals for federation), the current proposal is for the Federation to start on 1st January 2022. This will be the date of the establishment of the new Governing Board, with existing Governing Boards at both schools disbanding on 31st December 2021.

This decision of whether to form a Federation is the sole responsibility of the Governing Boards. Once it has been made, the outcome will be communicated in writing to all parents and staff.

In the event that it is decided that the Federation should not go ahead, the partnership will be dissolved, and it will cease to take effect from that date. In that event, the governors of Rollesby Primary School will be look for alternative leadership arrangements.

Background

Governors of Rollesby Primary School began exploring partnerships options in autumn 2020. These included joining a multi-academy trust and federating with nearby schools. In January 2021, the headteacher at Rollesby began a period of absence and the Executive Headteacher of Caister Primary Federation, which comprises Caister Infant and Junior Schools and the Specialist Resource Base, Jonathan Rice, was asked to support the school.

When it became clear that the absence would be lengthy, Mr Rice was invited to become Interim Headteacher at Rollesby alongside his main role as Executive Headteacher of Caister Primary Federation. An informal partnership agreement was drawn up and the schools began to work more closely together.

The headteacher at Rollesby left the school in April 2021. The following month, Rollesby Governing Board, having considered a range of options and heard from potential partners included federations and multi-academy trusts, voted to pursue the option of federating with Caister Primary Federation. Following the success of the partnership, governors at Caister Primary Federation have also voted to pursue federation with Rollesby.

What is a Federation?

A Federation is a formal agreement between two or more schools to work together on a permanent basis. The federation of two or more schools is led and managed under the direction of a single Governing Body which can but doesn't have to include representatives of both schools. However, each of the schools in the Federation receives their own school budget at source but can decide to combine budgets should it be economically advantageous to do so. Each school also receives separate Ofsted inspection reports and has separately published results.

Rollesby is a Foundation School and both Caister schools are community schools. Therefore, there will be two governors on the new board with specific responsibility for the foundation status of Rollesby Primary School.

It is possible for a Federation to be dissolved if the single Governing Body decides it is in the interest of the children to do so.

How would this be different to the Partnership currently in place between Rollesby and Caister?

A Partnership is a temporary arrangement while a Federation is permanent. One of the drawbacks of Partnership is that its temporary nature does not allow permanent contracts to be issued to some staff and can deter new staff from joining, owing to the uncertainty of the future leadership. The proposal for the Federation would strengthen the existing Partnership in the following ways:

- One joint Governing Body for the Federation would have a strategic overview of all three schools
- The opportunity for longer term planning.
- A permanent appointment of an Executive Head overseeing the work of the whole Federation.
- Permanent appointments of Heads of School managing the day-to-day running of each school and other Leadership Team members for all three schools.
- Opportunities for extending the current arrangements for sharing staffing, expertise, resourcing and administration.
- Economies of scale would maximise value for money for all three schools in areas such as services, contracts and resourcing.

Aims of Federation of Rollesby Primary School and Caister Primary Federation

Children are at the heart of all that we do in each of the three schools. There are close similarities between the three sets of values and we share many of the same key drivers. Below are the core principles underlying the work we do now and upon which the Federation would build:

- A commitment to ensuring that children at Federation schools are provided with high quality learning experiences. They will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum taught by qualified, good and outstanding teachers.
- The schools will continue working to provide a positive, safe, and stimulating environment where children can learn.
- Continue to be schools and communities that value diversity and enable children to celebrate their differences and achieve great things by working together
- Learning should be enjoyable, allowing children to achieve their potential and helping them become lifelong learners who are ready and able to grasp opportunities.
- Staff in the Federation should be lifelong learners too, always looking for ways to develop their skills for their own benefit and for the children they work with.
- The schools will continue to promote the emotional, moral, spiritual, and physical development of the children at the school.
- We will work in partnership with outside agencies and our communities to ensure ongoing development and learning.
- We will retain the unique characters of each of the schools in the federation and work hard to serve the individual needs of each community.

What are the benefits for each of the schools?

The relationship that has developed between the Governing Boards of Rollesby Primary School and Caister Primary Federation has enabled us to move forward successfully. The intention is that the Federation would enable the schools to work closely together on efficient systems and practices while also maintaining each school's unique ethos and identity. These are the benefits we believe federation would bring:

- There can be a single shared vision, and equality of provision and expectations set by the Governing Board and Senior Leadership teams of the three schools.
- The impact of other federations suggests academic achievement should be enhanced in the schools working within a Federation.
- The capacity and effectiveness of the Senior Leadership Team structure across all three schools would be enhanced. For instance, there would be improved capacity of the schools' leadership in the event of illness or leavers by having a larger leadership team, with a shared knowledge of each school.
- Expertise among the staff can be shared across all three schools. We have many skilled practitioners with highly developed knowledge and expertise in their fields.
- By sharing resources, provision could be improved for children, particularly for arts, music, languages, sport and special educational needs and disabilities provision. This would result from the schools sharing good practice, each school learning from the other.

- The Federation can provide wider opportunities for professional development and progression for the staff of each school, helping with the recruitment and retention.
- The schools can build on established shared approaches to classroom practice, such as marking and assessment, to allow staff across all three schools to collaborate effectively, thus improving and maintaining standards
- There is the opportunity to extend extra-curricular provision, using shared resources and expertise, eg use of the minibus for sports tournaments.
- Shared safeguarding practices and procedures would contribute to keeping children safe.
- Support services could be provided across all three schools, thus creating economies of scale and saving money which can be spent on the children instead. Services such as catering and cleaning could be provided in-house, saving on costly contracts; staff such as caretakers or pastoral staff of IT services, could be shared across the schools.

What are the risks for each of the schools?

There are risks involved in any change. None of the risks below are completely new. All have been tested already to some extent.

- The schools struggle to form a cohesive Governing Board covering the interests of all three schools
- The Federation does not build strong local connections and does not meet the communities' needs.
- There is a difference of culture among the schools which stifles or prevents effective co-operation.
- The leadership changes in the future and this changes the nature of the Federation. (this is also true if a new Headteacher is appointed to any type of school).
- The financial economies of scale do not materialise
- One school receives more attention from the Executive Headteacher than the other.

NB It is the Governing Board's job to hold the Executive Headteacher to account for their actions and effectiveness and ensure they are spending the appropriate time at each school depending on the needs of the schools at any one time.




How similar or different are the three schools?

Caister Infant and Junior Schools are three-form entry school serving the same community. Cohorts of children generally pass through both schools. Rollesby Primary School is a much smaller rural primary school, with around 20 children in each year group. Classes are therefore taught in mixed-age groups.

A Specialist Resource Base for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs is attached to the Caister schools.

Children who have attended Caister Junior School generally move on to Caister Academy. Children from Rollesby generally move on to Flegg High Ormiston Academy.

However, the communities are similar in many ways. They share a socio-economic and ethnic profile, and many of the schools' priorities for the children are shared.

School	School Type	Postcode	Total Pupils	SEN	EAL	Disadvantaged
 Caister Infant with Nursery School	Infant	NR30 5ET	323	58	18	77
 Caister Junior School	Junior	NR30 5ET	350	109	30	117
 Rollesby Primary School	Primary	NR29 5EH	174	31	3	16
Overall	3 Schools					

The Governing Board

A new Governing Board will be formed as follows:

Total membership of the governing board of a federation must be no fewer than seven governors.

The governing board of a federation must include the following:

- 2 Parents from across the schools in the Federation
- The Executive Headteacher
- 1 staff governor
- 1 LA governor
- 2 Foundation governors
- 7 Co-opted governors

The Heads of Schools would become Associate Governors of the Governing Board. Governors would reserve the right to appoint other Associate Governors to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise. Associate Governors will not be included in the Constitution or Instrument of Government and have no voting rights in meetings. A skills audit of existing and potential Governors would be carried out to ensure the new Governing Board is as strong as it can be.

What is the proposed Senior Leadership structure?

An Executive Headteacher would lead the Federation on a strategic level. A Head of School would lead each of the three schools on an operational level, managing day to day affairs. And providing the main point of contact for parents. The Central Service Unit will manage all services provided to the three schools, including safeguarding and pastoral care, administration, finance, attendance, premises management, IT and catering. This unit would be managed by the Head of Central Services. The Federation Senior Leadership Team would be made up of the Executive Headteacher, the three Heads of School, the Lead Teacher of the SRB, and the Head of Central Services.

How would it affect staff?

It is not anticipated that many staff members would experience significant change in their day to day work. Governors believe a new venture such as this is an attractive option for teachers and support staff looking for a new challenge while providing welcome professional development opportunities for the staff of each school. As a Federation, the schools could continue to recruit well, attracting high-impact, talented staff with access to opportunities to work across the schools. There will be no changes to the conditions of service for existing staff.

Is there a risk that one of the schools would lose out in this arrangement?

No. The aim of the Federation is for the schools to work together in a full and equal partnership to continue to grow stronger together, while protecting the unique character and individual identity of each of the three schools. The structure of the Federation will enable the benefits to be appropriately and fairly shared across schools. The single combined Governing Board would ensure each school's interests were fully and equally represented and would be best placed to serve the strategic development of the three schools.

Would the schools keep their name and identity?

Yes. Each school would keep its own name and identity but there would be a separate name for the Federation.

Would the uniform policy remain the same?

Yes. All three schools would maintain their own policy regarding uniform. There are no plans to change them.

Would the admissions arrangements remain the same?

Yes. Norfolk's admissions policy would continue to apply to all three schools. This can be found on our websites.

Would pupils be registered to the Federation or a single school?

Pupils would be on roll at a single school.

Would parents and staff be equally represented from each of the schools on the Governing Board?

Not necessarily. This would be dependent upon the skills audit. But it would be beneficial to have representation from each of the schools to enable the Board to understand local contextual issues.

Would each school keep its own budget?

Each school would continue to receive its own funding and have its own budget. Each school would make a proportionate contribution to the central services unit, which would in turn allow each school to benefit from economies of scale.

Would the amount each school receives be affected by the Federation?

No. All school budgets are worked out using a formula based on pupil numbers for the individual school.

Would the Federation combine their SATs results?

No. Results would continue to be attributed to the individual schools.

Would the Federation be inspected by Ofsted?

No. Each school would have separate Ofsted inspections and be graded separately.

Would one school take the lead over the other?

No. The schools would continue to collaborate and work together as equal partners. The Executive Head would strategically lead all three schools.

Would the Federation meet the different needs of the communities?

Yes. As each school would have their own Head of School, each community's differing needs would be separately met. There would continue to be separate parent, pupil and staff voices.

How do I contribute?

We are very keen to hear your views about this proposal. We should therefore be grateful if you would either return the attached form before the final date of consultation **OR** by [completing the consultation survey here](#).

The Governing Boards will then consider the responses to the consultation.

How can I find out more?

There will be four open meetings for parents/carers during the consultation period:

At Rollesby: Tuesday 5th October 2021 at 10am and 6.30pm

At Caister: Tuesday 12th October 2021 at 10am and 6.30pm

In the spirit of partnership, parents/carers are welcome to attend any session.

You can have your say by [completing the consultation survey here](#).

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What do you think?

Please complete this form and return it by **3.30pm Friday 22nd October 2021** to one of the following:

- Rollesby Primary School office
- Caister Infant School office
- Caister Junior School office

All responses should be signed (anonymous responses will not be considered) and will remain confidential to the Clerk who will report to the Governing Boards.

Do you support the proposal to federate Rollesby Primary School and Caister Primary Federation?

Yes No (Please tick one box)

Comments:

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Signed:

Please tick one box that you feel most appropriately represents your interest in this matter:

- Parent/Carer of a child at Rollesby Primary School
- Parent/Carer of a child at Caister Primary Federation
- Member of staff at Rollesby Primary School
- Member of staff at Caister Primary Federation
- Local resident
- Parent/Carer of a child at another local school (*please specify*).....
- Other (please specify)

Please make any submissions strictly by 3.30pm on Friday 22nd October 2021.

No submissions will be accepted after this time