

Consultation document for the proposed Federation of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School with the Federation of Spixworth Schools.

The Governing Boards of the above schools have resolved to seek Federation through a shared, strategic vision of the schools' future.



The Federation

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The Federation

Welcome

Parents, Carers, and community stakeholders,

We are issuing this document which sets out the intention to federate Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools beginning 1st September 2024. The schools have been working in an informal partnership since the beginning of the summer term and this interim arrangement with Ms Jordan as Executive Headteacher has worked very well. The Governors are proposing to formalise this arrangement with a Federation.

The paper explains what a Federation is, the reasons for the change, benefits, potential risks, as well as the consultation processes. If you would like the document in any different format, please contact one of the schools.

This is an important matter, therefore the Governing Boards of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools are seeking the views of stakeholders, families, staff, and the wider community before committing to federate. Page 14 details drop-in meeting dates, alongside a feedback form on page 15 which can be returned to the school offices.

The schools and Governing Boards are supported by Norfolk County Council to ensure that the Federation Regulations are being followed during this consultation and Federation process.

At this stage we have not identified a name for the new Federation – if you have any ideas you would like us to consider please add to the consultation response form.

We hope you find the information in this document helpful, however, if you have any questions about this consultation, please contact:

Jill Starling, The Clerk to the Governing Board, Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School.
clerk@sparhawk.school

We look forward to receiving your views on this consultation.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Colison Smith and Joanne Thompson

Chairs of The Governing Boards of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and The Federation of Spixworth Schools.

The Federation

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 Board.

Each of the schools in the Federation receives their own school budget at source. Each school also receives separate Ofsted inspections and has separately published reports.

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

Why are our schools considering Federation and consulting with stakeholders?

The Governors decision to consult to federate ensures that our schools remain at the heart of the community, that they remain sustainable and financially viable. The day to day running of the schools remains unchanged. The difference is in the collaborative opportunities for the staff and children – as well as continuing to ensure that our schools are attractive places to work and develop a career.

Being part of something larger can support the recruitment of good quality staff. The shared training opportunities and support for staff at all levels, will allow for career development opportunities and improve the retention of talented staff members.

The access to a wider group of professionals will enhance every child's learning and school experience within the Federation. Parents and pupils will experience no immediate impact from a decision to federate but will, in time, benefit from the links that will exist between the schools.

Background

Governors of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School began exploring collaborative options in January 2024. In April 2024 Ms Heidi Jordan took on the role of Executive Headteacher at Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School in an interim leadership support role for the Summer term 2024.

Since the partnership the Governing Boards have formed a shared Joint Working Committee attended by the Executive Headteacher and Governors from all the schools which has met regularly to review the arrangements and consider a range of formal collaborative arrangements.

All schools began to see the benefits of the collaborative partnership arrangement and Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School Governing Board voted to pursue the option of formally federating with the Federation of Spixworth Schools. Governors at the Federation of

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Spixworth Schools have also voted to pursue Federation with Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School.

As Governing Boards, we have spent time considering the options available to determine the future leadership and direction of the schools within the wider educational landscape, including the [Schools Bill](#).

Why move to a Federation now?

When making the decision on whether to consult on federating together, it came down to a desire to continue to grow the schools with the full support of the Federation.

Aims of the Federation of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools

Children are at the heart of all that we do in all our schools. There are close similarities between the 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 the 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. Children will be encouraged to see learning as fun and inspiring.
- Individual schools will continue to be at the heart of their community which promote inclusion for all.
- The schools will continue working to provide a positive, safe, secure and stimulating environment where children can learn. The environment will be nurturing, caring and friendly where discipline promotes high standard of behaviour, which is firm, fair and consistent.
- Continue to be schools and communities that value diversity and enable children to celebrate their individuality and achieve great things by working together and mutual respect.
- Learning should be enjoyable, allowing children to achieve their potential and helping them become lifelong learners who are ready and able to grasp opportunities.
- The schools will provide a secure environment from which pupils can explore, challenge themselves, take risks and build resilience.
- 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. Engaging with families and fostering strong relationships with parents and carers.
- 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.

The Federation

- The Federation will work to embed a shared vision and appropriate Federation name which embodies all that is important to the schools.

What are the benefits for the schools federating?

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 across the Federation set by the Governing Board and Senior Leadership teams of the 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 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 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 schools to collaborate effectively, thus improving and maintaining standards.
- There is the opportunity to extend extra-curricular provision, using shared resources and expertise, e.g., shared travel costs to attend events
- Shared safeguarding practices and procedures would contribute to keeping children safe.
- Support services could be provided across all schools, 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, pastoral staff or IT services, could be shared across the schools.

What are the potential risks for the schools?

There are risks involved in any change. Many of the potential risks to federation can be found in any organisational or structural change.

- The schools struggle to form a cohesive Governing Board covering the interests of all schools

The Federation

- 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.
- The financial economies of scale do not materialise.
- Federation leadership is not distributed across schools effectively.
- If one school receives an Inadequate Ofsted Judgement; Ofsted judgements may determine the future direction of one school in terms of academisation. For example, national policy is for schools who are judged inadequate to academise.

How will the board mitigate the potential risks listed above?

In order to manage these risks, the amalgamated board will meet regularly to review the progress of the Federation. It is the Governing Board's job to hold the Executive Headteacher to account and review the effectiveness of the Federation on the outcomes for pupils.

- The board will meet regularly and review arrangements, seeking external support from the Local Authority should challenges arise that cannot be resolved locally.
- The composition of the board will endeavour to include members from all schools using a skills matrix. All board members will be subject to a Code of Conduct which members sign-up to, requiring members to act as a corporate board.
- Future recruitment will seek to publicise a post which looks for either experience or a desire to take on the role of Executive Headteacher to a Federation.
- The board maintains the right to review and whilst they will do all they can to ensure the success of the federation, it is possible for the board to initiate a statutory process to dissolve. Regular monitoring of safeguarding, progress, attainment, workload, wellbeing etc will take place to ensure the Federation remains effective.
- Regular monitoring will take place to ensure that the Executive Headteacher's time is split fairly between the schools. The boards are aware that from time to time more hours will be required in one school than another as matters arise. The board will seek to establish an average and work with the headteacher to reach an equilibrium.
- If as the result of an inadequate judgement from Ofsted, academisation is the destination for one school within the Federation, the Governing Board could consider de-federation or joining the academy together.

How similar or different are the schools?

The children attending the schools come from varying catchments, but the schools are and always have been within the same education cluster so have worked together previously. There is a range of teacher subject expertise across the schools, which will only help to further develop our schools and strengthen the federation and the education the children receive.

The Federation

	Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School	The Federation of Spixworth Schools	
Executive Headteacher	Ms Heidi Jordan	Ms Heidi Jordan	
Website	Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School	Federation of Spixworth Schools	
Cluster	The Sprowston Cluster	The Sprowston Cluster	
Age Range	3-7	Infant 4-7	Junior 7-11
Status	Community School	Community School	
Role January 2024	201	Infant 118	Junior 146
Nursery	42		
YrR	58	38	
Yr1	55	45	
Yr2	45	35	
Yr3	1		38
Yr4			43
Yr5			31
Yr6			34
Total	201	118	146
Planned admissions 2023/24	60	Infant 45	Junior 45
Planned admissions 2024/25	60	Infant 45	Junior 45
Ofsted Grading	Outstanding	Good	Good
DfE Performance Information	GLD 67% Phonics 88%	GLD 79% Phonics 82%	KS2 Reading 69% KS2 Writing 72% KS2 Maths 81%
SEND Information	18%	7%	18%

The Federation

Consultation process

The consultation process for the Federation of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools will start on Tuesday 4th June 2024 and be open for six school weeks as detailed in the table below. It will end strictly on Tuesday 16th July 2024.

Consultation Week	Date	Event
Week 1 w/b	Tuesday 4th June 2024	Consultation Opens
Week 2 w/b	Tuesday 11 th June 2024	
Week 3 w/b	Tuesday 18 th June 2024	Consultation meetings (see page 14 for more details)
Week 4 w/b	Tuesday 25 th June 2024	
Week 5 w/b	Tuesday 2 nd July 2024	
Week 6 w/b	Tuesday 9th July 2024	Consultation Closes Tuesday 16th July @ 3pm
	Tuesday 16 th July 2024 @ 6pm	Governing boards will meet to review the consultation responses and vote on the decision to federate.
	Wednesday 17 th July 2024	At the latest by this date, stakeholders will be informed of the outcome of the consultation voting decision by email letter

What will happen after this consultation closes?

The Governing Boards of the schools are very keen to hear all views and will meet on Tuesday 16th July 2024 at Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School after the consultation has ended, 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.

The Governing Boards of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools will meet to consider the views gathered from the consultation. They will then decide in separate Governing Board meetings whether to proceed with the proposal.

The Federation

If the Governing Boards decide to proceed, the intention will be for Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools to form a Federation on 1st September 2024.

After considering everyone's views, if the Governing Board of one or all of the schools decides not to federate, the existing partnership between Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools will end. The Governing Boards of the schools would need to consider other options going forward.

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 September 2024. This will be the date of the establishment of the new Governing Board, with existing Governing Boards at the schools disbanding on 31st August 2024.

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 by Wednesday 17th July 2024.

The Governing Board

The Federation's Governing Board members will be selected for their skills, expertise and understanding they bring to benefit the strategic development of the Federation of schools to secure the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

In doing so, the Governing Board will look to secure a membership which has a balance of knowledge and regular interaction with each of the schools. The shared governance structure of a Federation will allow the schools to:

- work together efficiently and sustainably to raise standards, improve services and increase opportunities for pupils and staff;
- monitor performance across the schools, alongside honest conversations with heads of school about any differences;
- compare curriculum interventions across the schools and promote good practice quickly;
- share resources, staff, expertise and facilities.

A new Governing Board will be formed, consisting of **10** governors 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:

The Federation

Category of governor	Number	Method of selection
The Executive Headteacher	One	Appointed due to the nature of the role
Parent Governors	Two	Elected
Staff Governors	Two	Elected
Local Authority Governors	One	Nominated by Norfolk County Council, appointed by the governing board
Co-Opted Governors	Four	Appointed by the governing board and selected for the skills, expertise and understanding they bring to benefit the strategic development of the Federation of schools.

The Heads of School would become associate members of the Governing Board. Governors would reserve the right to appoint other associate members to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise. Associate members 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.

The Federation

Frequently Asked Questions

How will the federation benefit my child's education?

Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools are all happy, stimulating caring schools and this will not change.

Many of the benefits are listed on page 6 of this document. The teachers will remain the same and the pupils will continue to learn each day at the school site as they do now. Most will not notice this change at all. This said, pupils already benefit indirectly from the links that our leaders and staff have established, and we want these links to be maintained.

The schools will continue their close involvements with their local communities and community groups.

There will be opportunities for pupils at one school to collaborate with pupils and staff at the other schools within the Federation. This will be in addition to, and not instead of, the connections that already exist.

The Federation may share staff, but pupils will be taught at the school they are on roll for and will not need to travel between sites. There may be occasions where pupils will visit the other schools for special shared events or activities such as team sports.

Is this a step towards academisation?

No. In a Federation, schools remain LA maintained. We believe that a Federation of maintained schools is the best way for the schools to work together to provide the best outcomes for our pupils.

The Federation

What is the proposed Senior Leadership structure?

An Executive Headteacher would lead the Federation on a strategic level with Heads of School in each school.

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 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 schools.

Would the schools keep their name and identity?

Yes. Each school would keep its own name and identity. Once the Federation is created, the board will work to establish a name for the Federation which embodies all that is important to the schools.

Would the uniform policy remain the same?

Yes. All 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 the 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 all schools on the Governing Board?

Not necessarily. All governors would serve all schools and the board would make sure each school is fairly represented in any strategic decision making. The new Governing Board will be an amalgamation of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools boards. Any persons interested in joining the new Federation Board, should contact their school for more information.

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.

The Federation

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 Headteacher would strategically lead the schools.

Is this a permanent change?

If the proposal to federate is accepted, the Governing Board will review the arrangement in approximately 18 months' time. Federation is a permanent change which follows a statutory process. In the unlikely event that federation is not working, it is however possible to follow a standard process to de-federate.

How do I contribute?

We are very keen to hear your views about this proposal. We would therefore be grateful if you would return the attached form (page 15) before the final date of consultation to the school offices of Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools. The Governing Boards will then consider the responses to the consultation.

How can I find out more? Drop in session dates

There will be three open meetings for parents during the consultation period. In the spirit of partnership parents/carers/community members are welcome to attend any session. No pre-booking is required. You are welcome to attend any session regardless of the school your child attends.

	Venue	Who?	Date	Time	Address
1	Sparhawk Infant School	All welcome	Tuesday 18 th June 2024	2.15 p.m. to 3 p.m.	Sparhawk Avenue, Sprowston, Norwich, NR7 8BU
2	Via Microsoft Teams	All welcome	Thursday 20 th June 2024	6 p.m. – 6.45 p.m.	<u>Please press Ctrl and click the link below</u> Join the meeting now
3	Woodland View Junior School	All welcome	Thursday 20 th June 2024	2.30 to 3.15 p.m.	Ivy Road, Spixworth, Norwich, NR10 3PY

The Federation

Feedback from the responses will be collated so governors of each of the schools can consider every response submitted. Thank you for taking part in the consultation and sharing your views.

The Federation

What do you think? Response Form

Please complete this form and return it by **Tuesday 16th July** to one of the following:

Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School office- marked for the attention of the Clerk to the Governors

Spixworth Infant School office- marked for the attention of the Clerk to the Governors

Woodland View Junior School office- marked for the attention of the Clerk to the Governors

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 Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and the Federation of Spixworth Schools?

Yes No (Please tick one box)

Comments:

Suggested name for new Federation:

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 School
- Member of staff at School
- Local resident
- Parent/Carer of a child at another local school (please specify)
- Other (please specify)

Please make any submissions strictly by Tuesday 16th July. No submissions will be accepted after this time.

The Federation

Glossary

Here are some of the words you may have found in this consultation document in the context of Federation Consultation:

Code of Conduct	An agreement signed by all governors which states how members agree to behaviour in the interests of the pupils and schools they are representing
Consultation	To gather the views of stakeholders to help inform a decision over a 6 week timescale
Executive Headteacher	A headteacher responsible for the management of more than one school
Federation	Two or more Local Authority maintained schools operating under the governance of a single governing board
Joint Working Committee	A group of governors from both schools that work collaboratively to prepare the information needed for consultation and review the progress of any partnership working
Local Authority	Local government that is responsible for delivering services for its residents, including education. Norfolk County Council is the Local Authority for Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School and The Federation of Spixworth Schools.