

Carlton & Faceby CE VA Primary School
Bilsdale Midcable Chop Gate CE VC Primary School

1st February 2018

Dear Parents and Friends,

The Governors would like to share something with you that we are considering for our two small, rural primary schools, in order to continue to improve the education opportunities for all our pupils.

In 2004, Carlton & Faceby and Bilsdale Midcable Chop Gate formed a Collaboration and since then we have shared a Headteacher, enjoyed the benefits of collaborated Fridays, trips, and events, and shared resources across the two schools.

A Collaboration is an agreement between schools to work together in order to provide the best possible opportunities for the children. Both schools are greatly benefiting from this partnership, and at every stage of development, we have received your support. At the same time, each school still retains its own identity and uniqueness.

As Governors, we need to have a really strategic view. We are constantly looking at what is happening with school funding and organisation, not only in North Yorkshire, but in the country as a whole. Funding for all schools is uncertain and we need to build the resilience of each school and improve sustainability.

We are considering a proposal to move our Collaboration onto a more secure footing, by forming a Federation.

A Federation is a more *formal* arrangement where two or more schools work together to raise standards and are governed by **one** governing board. They remain legally separate schools with their own funding, buildings, and admissions policy. The make-up of a federation Governing Board would be such that it represents all schools and communities in the Federation.

Forming a Federation would enable the governors to create opportunities and efficiencies so we can continue to improve the quality and breadth of education. However, forming a Federation will not automatically secure the future of our two schools, but will help us to prepare for future predicted challenges in education, and afford us the best chance of securing both schools.

We feel that the key benefits of a Federation would be:

- To be able to maintain and improve the highest quality educational provision for our pupils at a time of challenge for small schools
- To provide even greater opportunities to share management, administration, and governing board responsibility
- To enable a single Governing Board to provide an efficient and accountable mechanism for the two schools to combine resourcing, purchasing, IT systems and staff which would enable the executive headteacher to focus on the key role of leading and managing the schools. This in itself will offer value for money and thus help the schools to remain viable.
- To retain and recruit high quality staff, especially the Executive Headteacher, which can be very difficult in small rural schools. A federation can present a more attractive proposition to potential staff as well as supporting existing staff in developing their skills (e.g. through joint professional development) and offering better career opportunities.

It is important to point out that forming a Federation is a strategic decision, largely around governance and administration. It is not the same as amalgamating the schools into one or structural changes to the organisation of classes or staffing across the schools. Structural changes are not anticipated at the present time.

As yet, nothing has been decided. We are very keen to know how you, as parents, feel about this proposal. There could be some immediate questions that you would like to ask us, so we invite you to email us (details below) at any time. Please see the attached Consultation Document as well.

There will also be a 6-week consultation period from 1st February 2018 to 21st March 2018, during which time we will be holding an Open Forum for everyone to attend, so we can discuss this with you and answer questions. You are invited to attend whichever Open Forum is most convenient. They will be held on

Tuesday 20th February 2018

4.30pm Bilsdale Midcable Chop Gate School

6.30pm Carlton & Faceby School

We really do welcome your thoughts and questions, and will keep you well informed in the coming weeks and months.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs K McDonald

Executive Headteacher
Collaborated Schools

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