

Proposal for the Governing Bodies of Mellers Primary and Nottingham Nursery Schools to become a Federation

The Governing Bodies are consulting all key stakeholders on this proposal over a 6-week period, **from 2nd November to 13th December 2021**.

Governors wish to hear your views and the details of how you can submit them are at the end of this document.

Federation proposal background

The Governing Bodies of both Nottingham Nursery and Mellers Primary Schools are consulting on a proposal to form a federation between the two schools, in order to capitalise on the educational, financial, and resource benefits that such an arrangement would bring. There would be many advantages to both schools via such an arrangement and, most importantly, for the benefit of all the children at the two schools.

A federation is a governance structure which provides a firm but flexible basis for closer school-to-school partnership working. It enables schools to share resources, best practice, facilities and expertise. Schools in a federation retain separate identities, continue to receive full individual budgets and retain existing admission arrangements. The main change is that federated schools operate under the governance of a single, shared governing body and can therefore make strategic and budgetary decisions in the interests of both schools.

The federated governing body will aim to build on the strengths of both schools and to achieve benefits for all pupils across the entire Nursery and Primary phase.

Since spring 2019, Mellers Primary School and The Nottingham Nursery School have been working closely together to benefit from shared leadership. This arrangement has worked very well and the schools have both benefited from the collaboration and shared early years expertise.

Discussion around the sustainability of The Nottingham Nursery, including different models for consideration has been ongoing for some time. The Nursery is highly regarded in terms of provision and its importance to the local community. However, maintained nurseries are facing particular challenges, and decisions around Early Years funding has proved to be extremely challenging.

The Local Authority has worked closely with Mellers Primary School leadership and with the lead governors of both schools, to review the staffing structure and to identify a solution since the resignation of the previous Head of The Nottingham Nursery School.

We are now at a point, after establishing some interim stability and funding, to move forward. However, we are facing uncertain times with demographic changes and the impact on Early Years provision. This further promotes a rationale for the long-term benefits of federation, while retaining the unique offer of both schools in the community they serve. The Local Authority recognise this as a positive step to providing excellence from both schools.

Following the successful informal collaboration over the past two years+, we now feel the time is right to formalise the arrangement and make the move to a Federation. The Governing Bodies are in agreement that this formal Federation would further support both schools as they move forward, and provide our children with better and wider opportunities.

Our governing bodies feel that there will be the following particular benefits to this federation:

- Shared vision, ethos and priorities
- Strong collaboration with shared accountability to a wider education community
- Shared and strengthened leadership capacity with an Executive Head to set the strategic direction of both schools, with additional senior leadership support from within each school.
- The opportunity to develop and benefit the nursery phase across both schools
- Transition benefits for pupils from the nursery to the primary phase
- Shared staff expertise across both schools to tackle challenges together
- Increased staff development opportunities
- Improved staff retention and recruitment
- Economies of scale and collective purchasing through shared business management can help us to manage shrinking budgets
- Flexible budgeting with improved financial sustainability
- Driving school improvement and improved outcomes for pupils
- Governors can come together to share strategic thinking, to combine skills and support each other in challenging times

The shared vision of the federation

The federation of Mellers Primary School and The Nottingham Nursery School provides our community with the highest quality provision for children from birth to age 11. This joint approach focuses on the very best practice in the development of the whole child, as they progress seamlessly through their early school years, resulting in outstanding achievement before they move to the secondary setting.

During their time in the federation, children will develop a love for learning fostered by curiosity, creativity and independence, building active, resilient and aspirational learners. Supported by strong leadership and a committed staff team the federation has a clear focus on serving the needs of local communities, families and children.

Staffing

All staff will continue to be employed by the Local Authority and contracts of employment will remain. Shared leadership capacity is currently in place at Nottingham Nursery, provided by a member of the Mellers leadership team. If the Federation proposal is agreed, this arrangement will continue with the added benefit of shared and strengthened leadership of the Executive Head to set the strategic direction of both schools.

Constitution of the new Governing Body

In constituting the new Governing Body, we will ensure there will be representation of governors from both schools.

- It is proposed that there will be 15 governors on the governing body of the federation
- The proposed number of governors for each category of governor will be as follows:

Category of governor	Number in each category
Staff	2
Parent	4
Executive Head Teacher	1
Head of School	1
Co-opted	6
Local Authority	1

Budget

Each school continues to receive its own budget. The total allocated budget could be used across both schools but the Federation decides how this will work and if any elements of the budget will be pooled.

School status

The status of the federated schools will remain as individual maintained schools, but with a shared governing body and Executive Head Teacher, with Nottingham City Council remaining as the admissions authority.

Inspection

Ofsted recognises that schools are involved in different partnership arrangements. The scheduling of inspections may be adjusted to facilitate a co-ordinated inspection. However, Ofsted will consider the date of the previous inspection for each school in the federation, together with other local information, which may initially make it inappropriate for federated schools to be inspected at the same time.

Consultation process and what happens next?

The Governing Bodies are **consulting all key stakeholders** on this proposal over a 6 week period, **from 2nd November to 13th December 2021**.

The senior teams and governors of both schools, and Nottingham City Local Authority are fully behind the proposal to federate. We need your feedback to ensure our wider community is fully engaged with the process and have the opportunity to consider the benefits of more formal collaboration. This is a proposal to enhance our children's school experience and attainment through shared resources and experiences, which your feedback can influence.

This proposal document is being circulated to all parents, carers and staff of both schools, other stakeholders and the Secretary of State for Education.

Interested parties are invited to send comments by email to:
lucy.juby@nottinghamcity.gov.uk by 13th December 2021.

Please specify whether you agree with the proposal to federate (yes, no or don't know) and any further comments you wish to add.

Any queries can also be directed to this email address and if you wish to request a phone call or email response for more information please specify.

The governing bodies will meet individually by mid-January 2022 to consider the consultation responses and to make a final decision on the proposal to federate. If agreed, it is proposed that the federation will be in place from 1st February 2022.