

THE FEDERATION OF BEDLINOG COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND TRELEWIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Consultation Document

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What are we proposing?

As you will be aware, Bedlinog Community Primary School and Trelewis Primary School have been working closely since November 2018 as part of an 'informal' arrangement. Our proposal is to establish a formal School Federation between Bedlinog Community Primary School and Trelewis Primary School by 20th April 2020, under the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014.



- **What does the term 'Federation' mean?**

The term 'Federation' describes *'...a formal and legal agreement by which schools involved work together in formal partnership under a **single** governing body.'* Over the past 2 and a half terms, both schools have been operating under an informal federation and the proposal is to make this a formal federation which means that the current arrangements would become permanent, and a single Governing Body established, securing future school improvement. A federation is **not** an 'amalgamation' which is creating one single school. All schools within the federation function as their own, individual school, committed to securing the best possible education for its pupils, with a single Governing Body overseeing the work of the schools.



- **What will the Federation be called?**

Both schools have been working under a name called the 'Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership'. The proposed name for the Federation will remain as the 'Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership', however both schools will keep their current individual names; **'Bedlinog community Primary School'** and **'Trelewis Primary School'**. The Taff Bargoed Learning Partnership will be a school based partnership that is made up of two schools who share the same high expectations, values and belief that all children, regardless of where they are from, should be able to access the very best education; providing them with experiences and opportunities that allow them to reach their full potential.



Why has this decision been made?

We recognise that high quality and effective teaching and learning can only be achieved through hardworking and dedicated practitioners working together, sharing practice, resources and expertise, in order to extend and enrich the teaching and learning experiences of pupils based in our schools.

By working in this federation, there are many aspects that schools can share with each other. We value the benefits that school to school working contributes to the education of our Pupils and believe that, for both schools involved, working in this way will continue to bring about improved standards for all pupils. We also value the vast ranges of expertise and experience that exist within both schools and that, in order to develop practice in both schools, it is vital that this is shared. There continue to be a number of areas that the school already work jointly on, in order to secure an effective and consistent approach, and ensure efficient use of time and resource.

Both schools within the federation are only 2.9 miles apart.

- **At Bedlinog Community Primary School...**

With the support of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's education department, Governors at both schools voluntarily agreed to explore the possibility of working in an 'informal' federation, which has now been in place since November 2018. Over the last 2 terms an Executive Head Teacher has been in place at Bedlinog Community Primary School and has led the school through various school improvement activities, including a recent ESTYN Inspection, from which there were many positive aspects identified in moving the school forward. Numbers applying to the school are improving and staff have had the opportunity to work with staff from Trelewis in sharing training and resources to support Pupils in both schools.



- **At Trelewis Primary School...**

Trelewis Primary school continues to perform well and is in a position where standards remain at a high level, also having in place a successful Estyn inspection which identified the strengths of the school. As with Bedlinog Community Primary School, staff at the school are also provided with opportunities to share resources and training and have done so over the last 2 terms. For the last 2 years, Trelewis Primary School has been categorised as a green school for its ongoing work. The school does have an ongoing issue with demands for capacity, and admissions are having an increasingly difficult job in allocating places to pupils at the school.



- ***What work has been done so far between the schools?***

Both schools have worked on a collaborative basis since November 2018 with Mr Ryan Morgan the substantive Headteacher of Trelewis Primary School acting as Executive Head Teacher of both Bedlinog community Primary School and Trelewis Primary School. This arrangement continues to impact positively on both schools and will remain in place until formal federation is in place on Monday 20th April 2020.



By entering into a Federation, the two schools can continue to work together to utilise their strengths to improve standards across the federation and together address areas of ongoing development. Further information on both schools – pupil numbers, their attainment and achievement can be found at Appendix A.

The following pages have more detailed information to explain the arrangements for the Federation, as well as the Federation process.

1. What is a Federation?

A federation is a formal and legal agreement by which schools involved work together in formal partnership under a single governing body.

The key points of the Federation between two schools would be -

- Bedlinog Community Primary School & Trelewis Primary School are not “merging” - each school will keep their individual identity, name, character, uniform, staff and maintain their own delegated budget but will be able to explore the advantages of sharing resources.
- Existing governing bodies will be dissolved and replaced with a single governing body with strategic oversight over both schools and responsibility for the work, standards and outcomes for both schools.
- Each school will have its own Estyn inspections and categorisation process.
- The Federation cannot require existing staff to work across both schools, although they can if they choose to. New staff can be appointed to work across the schools.
- It is proposed that a single executive headteacher will be appointed to manage the Federation.

Further information on federations can be found at Appendix B.

2. Benefits of the Federation

- Working together efficiently and sustainably to raise standards, improve services and increase opportunities for pupils and staff.
- Sustaining and strengthening provision for our children’s faith educational journey in a primary school setting.
- Promotes the welfare of the children by offering broader learning, faith and social experiences for children.
- Strong leadership using focused leadership and management structures, allowing school based leaders to focus on teaching, learning and raising standards.
- Attractive recruitment and retention of staff by providing a range of professional development and career pathways for staff across the Federation.
- New opportunities for staff to work together, increasing motivation, reducing workload and isolation through shared planning and activities.
- Opportunities to share resources, particularly for sport, arts and music.
- Economies of scale and streamlining of management and administration procedures can be achieved enabling more funding to be spent directly on the children, against a background of tightening budgets.

3. Keys to a successful federation

- Both schools and the governing body will agree to work together for the benefit of ALL pupils across the two schools.
- Shared vision and purpose of what needs to be done and how to improve attainment and achievement at all levels.
- Building of trust between all parties and communities is fundamental.
- All involved as equal partners
- Sense of ownership by both schools.
- Good communication with parents, staff and pupils over the changes brought by federation

4. Challenges of Federating

- . Building trust between governors and school communities.
- . Ensuring full commitment from all schools involved.
- . Developing a shared vision for the school.
- . Need to ensure clear leadership structures.
- . Potential increased workload for governors and school leaders during the establishing of the federation and first year.

5. What will federating mean for your school and child?

The governing bodies of both schools believe that federation provides the best method to support pupils, staff, communities of Bedlinog and Trelewis.

Both schools are already engaged in an informal federation working arrangement however this is temporary and not sustainable for either school long term. Formalising arrangements through a federation will provide stability, greater opportunities for pupils and staff, improve standards and pupil achievements and also secure ongoing quality education for both school communities.

The Federation of both schools **will not** lead to any significant changes for either parents or pupils and both schools will continue as currently organised.

- . Although both schools will share a governing body, they will remain as two separate schools and retain their current names.
- . Pupils will be taught at the same schools by the same staff.
- . An executive headteacher will be appointed who will have responsibility for both schools and divide their time between both sites.
- . When the Executive Headteacher is not on site, a deputy will be responsible for site management but the Executive head teacher will be on hand to go from one school to the other if required.
- . There will be no changes to school uniform, colours or badges.

6. The Federation Process

The Welsh Government issued guidance to schools on the federation process. These guidelines list the following procedures that need to be followed:

- Step 1:** The governing bodies of both schools declare an interest in the possibility of federation, seek guidance from the Local Authority / Diocesan Authority, hold discussions and agree to consider the federation option, notify staff and trade unions, establish a working group and agree a commencement date for the federation.
- Step 2:** Prepare a consultation document, agree a governance structure, a name for the federation, consider staffing structure and long term developments of the federation structure and discuss financial and human resources related matters.
- Step 3:** Consult with pupils, parents, staff, trade unions, governors and any other relevant parties to gather their views on the federation option.
- Step 4:** School leaders, the local authority and governing body to start considering and defining leaders' roles, prepare a proposed staffing structure and job descriptions for any new posts.

- Step 5:** Prepare a report to consider responses and comments received during the consultation period.
- Step 6:** Individual governing bodies to meet to finally decide on whether or not to proceed with the federation.
- Step 7:** Appoint and elect a new single governing body and implement the new staffing structure.

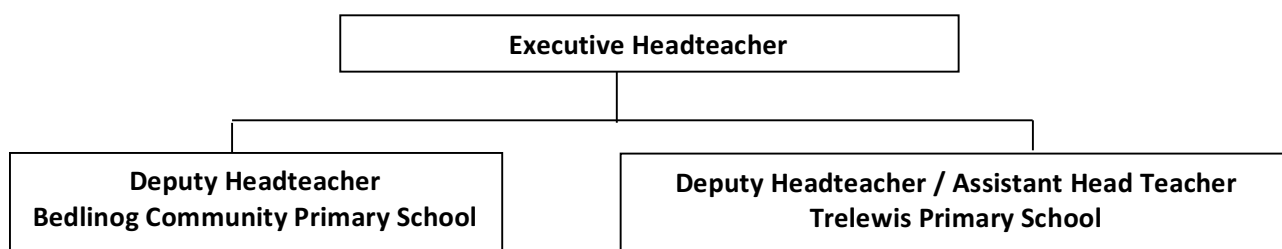
7. Proposed Composition of the Governing Body

In accordance with the Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 it is proposed the composition of federated governing body would be as follows:

Governor Category	Options	Governing Body Proposal
Parent	At least two parent governors will be elected or appointed to represent the interests of all parents of registered pupils at all the schools in federation	4 (2 from each school)
Teacher (Elected)	One but no more than two teacher governors	2 (1 from each school)
Staff (Elected)	At least one but no more than two staff governors	2 (1 from each school)
Local Authority (Appointed)	At least two but no more than four LA governors	4
Additional Community Governors	One additional community governor where the federation includes a school, situated within a community council area.	1 (Bedlinog & Trelewis community Council)
Headteacher	The head or the acting head of the federation if one is appointed, or the head or acting head of every school in the federation unless those persons have resigned as a governor.	1
Federation/community (Appointed)	The persons who are entitled to appoint such number of foundation governors as outnumber all the other governors listed above provided they do not exceed a maximum total of 27 governors.	4 (2 from each school community)

8. Leadership & Structure/ Staffing

The following leadership structure of the new federated school is proposed:



Current projections indicate that the present staffing arrangements can be maintained in both schools. However, the staffing arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis, in line with all schools, to ensure that they meet curricular and financial requirements.

9. Admission Arrangements

As no school will close as part of this federation process, admission to one school or the other will continue to comply with the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Admissions Policy. Parents/Carers will still be required to apply for places at individual schools, and will not apply for a place at the federation. This will still be down to Parents' choice.

10. What happens at the end of the consultation period?

At the end of the consultation period, the Working Group, with the assistance of the Local Authority, will prepare a report on the consultation.

The report will then be presented to each governing body at a joint meeting of both governing bodies where a decision on whether to continue with the federation proposals will be made.

11. Proposed Timetable

01 October 2019 – 19 November 2019 (6 weeks)	. Consultation period (to include stakeholder meetings)
Bedlinog & Trelewis Joint GB Meeting – 28/11/2019	. Governing bodies meet to consider responses and make a decision on whether to federate.
By 9 th December 2019	. Inform stakeholders of outcome. . Request that Local Authority approve the Instrument of Government for new federated governing body. . Election / appointment of governors to the new governing body.
20 th April 2020	. Federation commences.

12. FAQ's

Appendix B provides a selection of frequently asked questions and the responses.

Appendix A – School Information

Bedlinog Community Primary School is an English Medium, 3-11 Primary School

The school characteristics (2019) are as follows:

Reference Number	675 2054
Number on Roll (Incl. Non Statutory)	91 pupils
School budget per pupil	£4491.00
Free School Meals (FSM) – (Jan 2019)	31.1%
Pupil Teacher Ratio	25.4
Attendance 2018/19	95.01%
Pupils achieving the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI)	75.0%
Pupils achieving the expected level in the core subjects at Key Stage 2 (CSI)	88.9%

Categorisation	2016	2017	2018
Colour	Yellow	Amber	Amber

Trelewis Primary School is an English Medium, 3-11 Primary School

The school characteristics (2019) are as follows:

Reference Number	675 2231
Number on Roll (incl. Non-Statutory)	245 pupils
School budget per pupil	£3736.00
Free School Meals (FSM) – (Jan 2019)	13.1%
Pupil Teacher Ratio	27.8
Attendance 2018/19	94.27%
Pupils achieving the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI)	76.7%
Pupils achieving the expected level in the core subjects at Key Stage 2 (CSI)	100%

Categorisation	2016	2017	2018
Colour	Yellow	Green	Green

Appendix B – Federation General Information (FAQs)

What is a Federation?

- A federation is a legal governance structure that enables between two and six schools to share a single governing body.
- The decision to enter a federation agreement is taken wither by the schools governing bodies concerned or by the local authority.
- Every school that is in a federation remains open in its community and retains its budget, character, school uniform, its admissions arrangements and individual ethos, and will receive an Estyn Inspection.

What about the role of the Headteacher?

- Where a federation is established, a single headteacher would be expected to serve both schools, but the headteacher is expected to have an office at both schools in order to equitably allocate time between both schools.

What benefits do pupils gain from federation?

Federation provides many benefits:

- Consultation to gain access to specialist teaching, team sports and broader curriculum specialisation.
- Continue to share good practices, preparation materials and resources.
- Continue to provide special social opportunities for pupils.
- Continue to plan special opportunities for the pupils when bridging.
- Continue to develop, share and nurture knowledge and skills.
- Schools that enter a federation agreement remain in their communities and retain their individual identity.
- Add to the overall benefit, wellbeing and achievement of all pupils.

How will the federation arrangements work?

- There will be very few changes to the schools day to day arrangements as is presently. The governing body and the headteacher will decide on the federation structure and implementation. These individuals are best placed to ensure that the federation's actions and arrangements tie in with each of the school's requirements.

Will the governors or the Local Authority listen to the parents views during consultations on the federation proposal?

- Yes. The governors and Local Authority are required to seek the views of parents, staff, the unions and the pupils, and they will have an opportunity to provide written comments. Once all the comments have been received, the governors must consider the points raised and make a decision having considered the responses received.

Will the teachers and pupils move from school to school?

- Neither the current staff nor the pupils will be expected to travel from one school to another.

Is entering a federation arrangement a money saving exercise?

- No, it has to do with combining the schools resources in order to continue to maintain excellent performance and standards of achievement and achieve more for the children's benefit, e.g. sharing training and resources, staff expertise.

Will entering a federation arrangement lead to a school receiving less funding from the Local Authority?

- No, federation will not impact on how an individual schools budget is calculated - both schools will continue to have their own budgets, based on registered pupil numbers at the school plus any other factors. However, schools could combine or share their budgets. For instance, if the schools wished to appoint a full time staff member, or upgrade sports equipment, every school could contribute part of the cost out of its budget.

What are the financial benefits of federation?

- A federation can improve the schools capacity to achieve higher standards. Here are some of the benefits:
 - Share the cost of purchase of goods and facilities, including expensive resources
 - Purchase in a manner that takes advantage of economies of scale and avoid duplication; and
 - Provide more opportunities e.g. release the headteacher to participate in strategy planning across the federation.
 - Allow for shared training and CP opportunities

Are parent governors elected by the parents from their school only or by parents from every school in the federation?

- Each school has to have at least one parent governor elected by the parents at that schools (or appointed by the governing body if there is no parent standing for election), but a school is not allowed to have more than two parent governors.
- If it is decided that each school should have one parent governor, and if there is not a parent standing for election at a specific school, or if there is only one standing, the federated governing body can appoint a parent governor.

What evidence do you have that federations are a success?

- A Welsh Government document and Estyn review paper contains several case studies that outline how those schools have gained from the federation process. An Ofsted Report was published in England in 2011 'Leadership of more than one school - an evaluation of the impact of federated schools'. The report stated, 'at every federation visited, the federation of the schools was a factor that contributed of the improvement'.

How will pupil admission applications to the school work?

- Admissions will not be impacted - parents will continue to make an application for each school separately.

Why should schools enter a federation agreement?

- Collaboration through a single governing body enables schools to maintain local education provision standards through sharing resources, staff, specialisation and facilities, as well as their good practices. The single governing body will be an effective framework and will be accountable for combining the schools resources, including the staff budgets, free up the senior manager's time, utilise economies of scale and improve efficiency.

Will my school lose its identity through entering a federation?

- Schools in a federation agreement will not lose their identity although they will share a single governing body. The schools retain their separate legal status and have their own budgetary allocations and each individual school will receive an Estyn Inspection. The schools will also remain in

their community and retain their character, their name, their ethos and own school uniform. Although each school has its own individual budget and is accountable for it, the single governing body provides an opportunity to use budgets that are shared amongst the schools in the federation. Federation works on the basis that each school has its own particular strengths and benefits, whether in facilities, staff or resources.

What arrangements are in place for inspection of federal schools?

- Estyn document 'When will the next school inspection be held?' provides federal school inspection guidelines. Education Regulations (School Inspections) (Wales) 2016 requires Estyn to inspect maintained schools every six years (although the Welsh Government is currently considering extending this to seven) and prepare an individual report for every school. This would also be suitable for schools in the federation. Estyn cannot delay a school inspection for longer than six years (or seven) since the last inspection but can hold inspections in a manner that ensures that schools in a federation can be inspected during the same term, especially when the schools have the same headteacher. Estyn would also consider applications from a governing body or Local Authority to inspect schools during the same term. Estyn would also try and ensure that the membership of the inspection teams in a federation would overlap.
- It is worth noting that with Trelewis Primary being inspected in 2018 and Bedlinog Community Primary being inspected in 2019, it is unlikely that either school will be inspected for some time, as neither school is in monitoring. It is also worth noting that the informal federation was already in place during the Estyn inspection at Bedlinog Community Primary School and this was highlighted as a strength.

What happens to staff in a Federation? Will their Conditions of Service change?

- In a federation, every staff member would be employed on the same conditions of service as the current ones and by the same employer. Whoever the current staff employer is will be the new employer under the contract of employment.
- There are no expectations that staff, currently employed in both schools would be requested to a new single contract under the federation.
- Joint strategy and financial planning work should lead to being able to better safeguard post during any period of combined squeeze and that best use can be made of specialist staff, recognising that every support and teaching staff possess specialist skills and knowledge. Staff could learn from each other within a co-ordinated approach to ensure professional learning communities.
- Schools governing body can appoint future new staff members to work at every school in the federation.

Can time limitations be imposed on a federation?

- Federation should be considered as a long term commitment. The governing bodies will have given detailed consideration to the benefits and risk associated with establishing a federation, including its impact on children and young people's achievement. A federation would establish strategic and implemented schemes to ensure the schools sustainability and development. Such schemes would be middle term and long term. However, 2014 Federation Regulations allows individual schools to leave a federation, and provides for the termination of a federation. If schools who were included in a federation established by governing bodies decided to leave the federation, then a written application should be agreed to when the federal governing body submit a proposal.

What are the advantages and associated risks of establishing a federation?

- Belonging to a federation gives schools several advantages including learning and broader social experiences for children leading to improving pupils performance. Schools will be able to share resources, best practice, facilities and specialisation. Greater emphasis can be placed on strategic

leadership and management structures and staff will acquire new collaboration opportunities. Duplication of effort can be avoided and an opportunity provided to promote better economies of scale. The following are amongst the potential challenges / risks when establishing a federation:

- Need to build trust between the governors and school communities.
- Ensure that both schools involved are fully committed.
- Need to implement and develop the plans and shared vision for the school.
- Clear leadership structures are essential.
- Need to ensure sufficient time for every member to feel comfortable about the proposed changes.

Matters may arise involving governors, headteacher and staff who work between schools that relate to relationships and trust. The governing body should be aware of the potential risks and prepare strategies and implementation measures to ameliorate them.

