

Proposal to federate Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin

Consultation Document



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Cyngor **Sir Gâr**
Carmarthenshire
County Council



School Modernisation Section

Sara Griffiths, Modernisation Team Manager

If you require this information in large print, Braille or on audiotape please contact the Department for Education & Children

Email: DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01267 246476

Foreword

Carmarthenshire County Council has a statutory responsibility for the planning of school provision, a legal responsibility to review the number and type of schools it has in its area and whether or not it is making the best use of the resources and facilities to deliver the opportunities that learners deserve.

In line with Welsh Government's policy objective of promoting collaboration between all parts of the education system to improve outcomes, Carmarthenshire County Council's School Federation Strategy acknowledges that new ways of working are required to ensure sustainability, improve learner attainment and share best practice.

Schools have been able to federate since 2010 using the process set out in The Federation of Maintained Schools and Miscellaneous Amendment (Wales) Regulations 2010. The Federation process of maintained schools in Wales replaced the 2010 Federation Regulations on 22nd May 2014, and in addition, provided Local Authorities with the power to federate schools. The current guidance sets out how Local Authorities, in addition to governing bodies can federate schools and how federations may be proposed, established and constituted.

In order to support Carmarthenshire's Federation Strategy and national objectives of ensuring sustainable learning environments; improving learner outcomes; and enhancing the benefits that pupils receive through their educational setting, this consultation document sets out the proposal with regards to establishing a federation between **Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin.**

Consultation will follow the guidelines established by the Welsh Government as set out in the [Federation process of maintained schools in Wales – Guidance for governing bodies and local authorities](#) and will involve identified interested parties. The information set out in this document is intended to clarify the proposals for your school and support the consultation process.



Director of Education and Children's Services

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Introduction

In Carmarthenshire we strive to provide our learners with the best possible education experience. One way of ensuring that all schools are able to provide the highest quality learning for the pupils of Carmarthenshire is through collaborative working. School federation is considered the principal initiative for achieving formal partnership working between schools to improve performance. As such, the purpose of this Consultation Document is to outline the Local Authority's proposal for establishing a formal federation between **Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin.**

What is a Federation?

The term 'federation' describes a formal and legal agreement where more than one school, and no more than six, share governance arrangements and have a single governing body.

Key features of a federation can be summarised as:

- Establishing a single governing body with strategic oversight of all schools within the Federation;
- Each school retains its name, category, budget, staff and remains in its community;
- Each school has its own Estyn inspection, although these can be co-ordinated to occur at the same time.
- The Governing Body of a federation can use budget, resources and staff across the federation to improve its education provision for all pupils.

Conditions for a successful Federation

A successful federation will allow pupils to access a broader curriculum to enrich their experiences and provide a high-quality education to help raise their attainment.

Key to a successful federation is clear leadership and management structures required for establishing a shared vision and a common purpose of what needs to be done to improve attainment.

A successful federation requires a commitment of time and resources from all schools involved to sustain and develop the federation. Schools should demonstrate a willingness to work as a group and to do things differently for the benefit of pupils.

The federation system should create a sense of shared identity between schools and ensure any changes relating to Federation are effectively communicated to all parents and staff.

Details of schools subject to Federation proposal

		Ysgol Gynradd Llangain,	Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan,	Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin,
School Location		Llangain, Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA33 5AE	Llansteffan, Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA33 5LN	Bancyfelin, Caerfyrddin, Sir Gaerfyrddin SA33 5ND
Age Range		3-11	4-11	4-11
School Category (Community [C], Voluntary Aided [VA], Voluntary Controlled [VC])		Community	Community	Community
Language Category		Welsh Medium	Welsh Medium	Welsh Medium
Number of registered Pupils (January 2020)	Nursery	5	1	1
	Reception – Y.6	36	34	38
	Total	41	35	39
Number of pupils previously on the register	January 2019	36	40	43
	January 2018	31	37	35
	January 2017	32	32	40
	January 2016	25	34	41
	January 2015	27	32	34
Pupil Projections	January 2021	44	33	41
	January 2022	43	34	42
	January 2023	49	36	39
	January 2024	53	33	39
	January 2025	55	34	42
	January 2026	51	34	41
Capacity (Inc Nursery)		61	62	64

Capacity (Excl Nursery)	54	56	56
Cost per pupil	£4,547	£4,733	£4,520
School Budget (2020/21)	£182,000	£166,000	£176,000
Estyn Inspection Result	ESTYN	ESTYN	ESTYN
Building Condition Category	A	B	C

Building Condition Grade:

Grade A	Good. Performing as intended and operating efficiently
Grade B	Satisfactory. Performing as intended and operating efficiently
Grade C	Poor. Exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended
Grade D	Bad. Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure

Background and Drivers for change

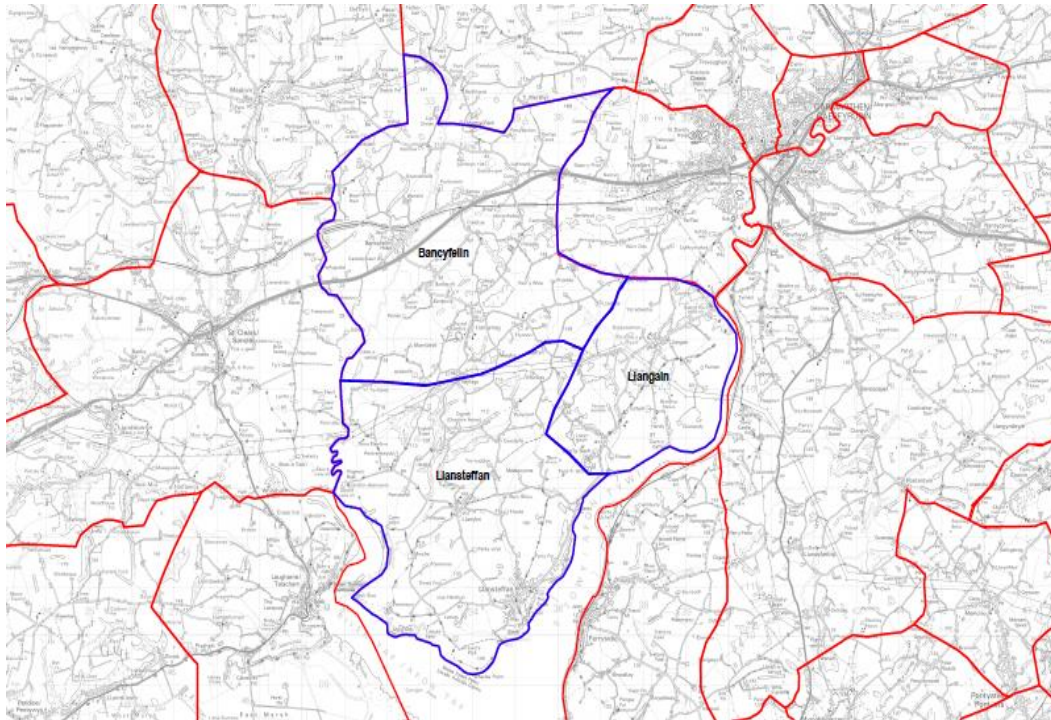
Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Llangain have shared a Headteacher since April 2013 and since September 2016 Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin, Ysgol Gynradd Llangain and Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan have shared the same Headteacher.

They have worked collaboratively through the following:

- Shared administrative support
- Shared Headteacher
- KS2 pupils come together once a week for P.E. and Music lessons, thus sharing teacher expertise.
- Long term and Medium term planning is done across the three schools with teachers mapping out skills and activities.
- Monitoring of standards and provision takes place across the three schools
- Shared INSET training.
- Shared staff meetings
- Shared school trips.
- Shared workshops- e.g. Welsh Whisperer, history workshops- Mewn Cymeriad.

The extensive and continuing collaboration between the three schools demonstrates good working relationships which will act as a solid foundation for the federation.

Location of Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin



The three schools are located within a radius of only 9.4 miles apart.

Llangain and Llansteffan are 4.5 miles apart, travel time approx. 9 minutes

Llangain and Bancyfelin are 5.5 miles apart, travel time approx. 12 minutes

Llansteffan and Bancyfelin are 9.4 miles apart, travel time approx. 21 minutes

By entering into a federation, the three schools can work together under shared leadership to utilise their strengths to improve standards across the federation and together address areas in need of improvement. By federating under one governing body, the climate of trust, openness and willingness to work together that already exists can be further enhanced. This collaborative approach remains in place and continues to impact positively on the three schools.

The Proposal

The proposal set out in this Consultation Document is to establish a formal federation between Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin.

If the proposal is approved, the federation will commence on 1st September 2021.

If implemented, a single governing body with a new composition (The Federation Governing Body) would replace the three existing governing bodies.

The proposed name of the federation would be “The Federation of Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin”. If approved the federated governing body will be entitled to formalise a name for the federation.

What does Federation mean for our school?

As Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin Primary Schools share the same Headteacher and the three schools’ governing bodies have worked collaboratively over the last few years which is continuing to impact positively upon the schools, the Local Authority now intends to propose a formal federation between the three schools.

Whilst each school will continue to have its own individual identity with regards to name, culture, ethos and continue to manage their own budgets, this process involves establishing a single governing body to govern the three schools.

Proposed composition of the new single Governing Body

The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 state that a federated governing body must consist of no fewer than 15 governors and no more than 27 governors. [The maximum number of governors on a federation of two schools is 18 and three schools is 20.]

The table below notes the numbers from each category allowed by regulations for the federation of community schools and Carmarthenshire County Council's recommendation for the new federation Governing Body.

Governor Category	Number allowed by the regulations	Local Authority Proposal (Maximum)
Parent Governors	For each federated school at least 1 but no more than 2 parent governors elected or appointed to represent the interests of registered pupils at that school	6
Teacher Governors	At least 1 but no more than 2	2
Staff Governors	At least 1 but no more than 2	2
Local Authority Governors	At least 2 but no more than 4	4
Community Governors	At least 2 but no more than 4	4
Headteacher(s)	The head or acting head of the federation, if one is appointed or the headteacher or acting headteacher of each school in the federation unless those persons resign as a governor	1
Additional Community Governor (Community Council representative)	1 (If a school serves an area for which there are two or more community councils, the governing body may seek nominations from one or more of those councils)	1
Total		20

Excess Governors

By establishing a single governing body, Governors may be concerned that the restrictions on numbers means they will not be able to include all the persons they would like to. This expertise and manpower need not be lost to the governing body and could be utilised through committees.

Much of the discussion and work is carried out at committee level leaving the governing body to focus on its strategic role. This is especially relevant in a federation where a governing body will have responsibility for the management of more than one school. In order to do this successfully the governors will need a supportive and reliable committee structure consisting of governors and perhaps non governors who have drive and the relevant expertise and knowledge to make decisions and report back. Using former governors from each of the schools in this way will also help a new governing body of a federation to work together more easily.

A governing body can appoint non governor members to attend full governing body meetings or to serve on one or more governing body committees. The definition of a non governor member is wide and people who want to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise (for instance finance) can be appointed as a non governor member.

Non governor members are not governors and they are not recorded in the instrument of government. Non governor members may not vote at full governing body meetings, but can be given a vote at committee meetings, where the governing body has agreed this when establishing the terms of reference of the committee in question.

Leadership and Staffing

Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin currently share the same headteacher.

Should the proposal to federate be implemented the schools will move to be managed by one Executive Headteacher.

The federated governing body will be responsible for the performance management of the Executive Headteacher.

Whilst no changes to staffing are proposed the federated Governing body will be able to review the staffing arrangements with the staff at each establishment.

Admission Arrangements

The admission arrangements for each school will remain unchanged. Parents will apply for a place for their child at the school of their choice, not at the Federation, as each school in the federation is a separate school. The County Council is the Admission Authority for each school.

The School Admissions Unit,
Department for Education & Children
Building 2
St David's Park
Carmarthen,
SA31 3HB
Tel: 01267 246449
Email: admissions@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

The Federation Process

In line with Welsh Government's "Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales for Governing Bodies and Local Education Authorities" guidelines, Carmarthenshire County Council's federation process is outlined below:

Step 1: The Local Authority holds early discussions with the schools identified for federation and general agreement reached to explore federation options.

Step 2: The Local Authority prepares a Consultation Document to seek the views of stakeholders.

Step 3: Proposals are published, and the Local Authority seeks the views of stakeholders.

Step 4: School leaders, the Local Authority and Governing Bodies start scoping leadership roles and staffing structures.

Step 5: The Local Authority prepares a Consultation Report providing a summary of the responses received and the Local Authority's comments and publishes on its website.

Step 6: The Local Authority makes a final decision on whether to federate or not and publishes the decision on its website and notifies stakeholders.

If a decision is made to federate:

Step 7: Single governing body meets, and professional processes are aligned.

Step 8: Headteacher builds overview of federation effectiveness.

Step 9: Wider opportunities of professional development for all staff implemented.

The full details to each step can be found in the [Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales](#) guidance document.

The Consultation Process

The consultation on this proposal will follow guidelines established by the Welsh Government as stated in the [Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales](#)

Who will be consulted?

This document will be sent to the following interested parties:

Staff (Headteacher, Teaching and Ancillary)	Pupils at each of the schools subject to the proposals
Governors and Parents / Guardians of all schools subject to the proposals	All relevant teaching and support staff unions
Local Members	Community Council

The Consultation Period

The consultation period for this proposal starts on Monday 22nd February 2021 and ends on Sunday 4th April 2021. Consultees can submit their views in favour of or against a proposal.

Considering your views

During the consultation period you can ask questions and express your views by writing a letter to the address below or by completing an online survey using the following link: [SNAP SURVEY](#)

Letters should be sent to the following address by no later than Sunday 4th April 2021 to: Mr Gareth Morgans, Director of Education and Children's Services, Building 2, St David's Park, Jobs Well Road, Carmarthen, SA31 3HB or Email to: DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk.

Drop in Session

Due to the ongoing implications of the Coronavirus pandemic the drop-in session will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams on 16th March 2021 at 4:30pm for a period of two hours. However, if this is not suitable for you, we are able to offer alternative means of communication such as email or telephone call.

Should you wish to attend the virtual drop-in session please contact Mr Roger Bowen on DECMEP@carmarthenshire.gov.uk to register your interest by 12th March 2021.

Consultation with Pupils

There will be an opportunity for the pupils of **Ysgol Gynradd Llangain, Ysgol Gynradd Llansteffan and Ysgol Gynradd Bancyfelin** to participate in the consultation process.

The information gathered from the consultation with pupils will form part of the consultation report which will be submitted to the Executive Board Member for Education & Children's Services for consideration following the consultation period.

Consultation Report

Following the consultation period a consultation report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website. Hard copies of the report will also be available on request. The report will summarise the observations raised by consultees and provide Carmarthenshire County Council's response to these observations. The report will also contain details of consultation undertaken with the pupils.

Determination of Proposal

The Executive Board Member for Education & Children's Services will determine the proposal. They may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposal with modifications. In doing so, they will take into account the consultation report and any observations that were received.

Decision Notice

Following determination of proposals all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.

Proposed Timeline

22nd February 2021	6 week consultation period commences through the issue of this consultation document to identified and other interested parties.	
4th April 2021	Closing date for views on the proposal to be received by the Department for Education & Children's services and 6 week consultation period ends.	
17th May 2021	A consultation report will be presented to the Executive Board Member for Education & Children's Services for a decision on whether or not to proceed with the proposal to federate.	
	Yes A Governing Body will be established and arrangements finalised	No The 3 schools remain as separate schools
18th May 2021	Following determination of the proposal all interested parties will be informed and advised of the availability of the decision which will be published electronically on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.	
1st September 2021	Implementation of the federation, if approved.	

Advantages and Disadvantages of Federation

Advantages of Federation

- Consistency of teaching and learning methodology especially cross-phase.
- Reduced transitional dips in pupil performance.
- Streamlining of policies and structures.
- Sharing of good practice, preparation materials and resources.
- Widens curriculum choice and options for students as schools come together to provide access to each other's courses and facilities, leading to improvements to the quality of learning for staff and pupils.
- Enhanced opportunities for staff professional development.
- Increased opportunity for middle management development.
- Schools have options to choose a senior leadership structure to suit their circumstances leading to easier recruitment of staff and headteachers particularly if there have been difficulties.
- Opportunities for school leadership beyond a single school.
- Opportunities for the creation of new roles that can be shared across schools
- Improved social opportunities for pupils.
- Opportunities to maximise resources and professional expertise particularly where there are financial difficulties or low pupil numbers and achieve financial efficiencies from economies of scale.
- Builds knowledge – some schools are too small to be self-sufficient as effective learning institutions for the staff who teach in them.
- Adds capacity and supports efficiency by providing an economy of scale for undertaking key activities.
- Promotes the broader welfare of students by offering potential for bringing together pastoral, health, careers, youth and other services to meet their all-round needs.
- Support for schools in difficulty. Schools with strengths can contribute to the learning of others.

- Supports school improvement by enabling schools to draw on the resources of other schools to tackle problems, share expertise, raise expectations and address the needs of particular groups of pupils.
- Better work-life balance where the headteacher has a very high level of teaching commitment.
- Possible easier recruitment of governors with fewer governor vacancies.

Disadvantages of Federation

- Increased workload for governors during inception and first year.
- Potential loss of experienced governors.
- Initial mistrust amongst governors, parents and staff – time needed for federation to bed down.
- Single headteacher not sharing time fairly amongst schools.

Case Study

Schools have been able to federate since 2010 using the process set out in The Federation of Maintained Schools and Miscellaneous Amendment (Wales) Regulations 2010 ('the 2010 Federation Regulations'). Since this time several successful Governing Body led federations have been formed in Carmarthenshire.

In 2014 The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014 ('the 2014 regulations') made under the Education (Wales) Measure 2011 revoke and replace the 2010 Federation Regulations and, provide Local Authorities with a mechanism to federate schools.

The Governing Body led federation of 'Ysgolion Carwe, Gwynfryn and Ponthenri' below is included as an example of how federation within Carmarthenshire supports closer collaboration and promotes closer working relationships between schools to improve outcomes.



The Governors of Ysgol Carwe, Ysgol Gwynfryn and Ysgol Ponthenri officially agreed to federate from 6th October 2012 following the retirement of the Ysgol Gwynfryn Headteacher.

On establishing the federation, the Headteacher noted the importance of recognising that the partnership between the schools strengthens rather than threatens the characteristics and qualities of individual schools within the Federation which is a common concern among pupils and parents.

The success of the federation, due to the excellent collaboration between the schools, enriched the education experience of local children. The collaboration between the three schools through federation has enabled pupils to have the experiences of a large school within a small local community school. These include participation in Urdd competitions, Christmas concerts, sports day, and school trips.

Schools within the federation have also experienced many advantages including:

- Sharing good practice
- Broadening pupil experiences
- Sharing expertise
- Sharing workload
- Developing a leadership team
- Safeguarding jobs
- Budget flexibility

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are several key questions that stakeholders may have regarding Federation. The responses provided are those contained within the Welsh Government (WG) guidance for the [Federation Process of Maintained Schools in Wales](#)

For a list of wider questions and responses please see the WG Guidance.

What is a Federation?
Federation is used to describe a 'formal partnership' of schools (between two and six) and is a legal and formal agreement where schools share a single governing body.
Why should schools Federate?
Working together through a single governing body structure enables schools to raise standards and maintain local education provision by sharing resources, staff, expertise, and facilities and sharing best practice. A single governing body also provides an effective and accountable mechanism for schools to pool resources, including staff and budgets, release capacity in the senior management team and gain economies of scale and efficiencies.
Why has federation suddenly become an option for your school?
There are many reasons why schools of all sizes and type wish to federate or the LA wishes to federate them. Sharing resources such as budgets, teachers and teaching expertise, school leadership and facilities and learning from one another and sharing good practice are just some of the triggers for federation. For some schools, working more closely in a federation can mean sharing heavy workloads amongst the staff whilst allowing schools to continue to provide a wide curriculum that offers real choices and options for pupils, that smaller schools cannot provide with fewer staff. Federation can also offer career opportunities for staff not normally available to them, for example working in another school in the federation. This can help aid the recruitment of new highly qualified teachers to the school. Some schools also face difficulties recruiting good headteachers and federation allows schools to adopt more creative solutions to leadership appointments.
What advantages does Federation offer pupils?
Federation can bring many benefits, but these will vary depending on the focus and purpose of the federation. Generally, though federation should offer opportunities for pupils of all ages and abilities to meet and work as part of a larger group, which can be particularly beneficial to older, more able, pupils in small schools. Other benefits include pupils being able to access specialist teaching, more sustained and structured social and educational opportunities, team sports, wider curriculum expertise and a wider choice of after curricular or out of school activities and clubs.
How is Federation going to work?
Federations will work in different ways. How a federation is structured and operates will be decided by the governing body and headteachers or single headteacher (and the diocese where faith schools are included). These people are best placed to ensure the federation workings and arrangements match the needs of all the schools involved. Every federation should have a detailed action plan and agreed staffing structure which provides the framework for more detailed planning and the day to day organisation and management of the schools.

Do the teachers and pupils move from school to school?

It would most likely be the school staff who move between schools whilst the children would, for the most part, stay in their registered school. However, there may be opportunities for the children from different schools to work together on projects and special events.

Is federation about financial savings?

No. It is about schools pooling resources to improve performance, raise standards of attainment and achieving more for the children whether that is providing access to opportunities and facilities children would not normally be able to access, or jointly funding, for example, a drama teacher or support teachers.

Does federation mean that our school will receive less money from the LA?

No. The way in which an individual school's budget is calculated is not affected by federation - each school in the federation should continue to receive its own budget based on the number of registered pupils at the school plus any other factors. However, schools will be able to pool or share their budgets. For example, if the schools wished to employ a drama teacher or to purchase or upgrade sports equipment they would each contribute a share of the costs from their budget.

The governing body of a federation should be in a position to take strategic decisions on the deployment of their resources including budgets, staff and facilities. Each school will need to keep a clear audit trail and accounts for their budget spend.

What are the financial benefits of federation?

Federations can increase capacity within the schools in the federation to achieve higher standards.

Some of the benefits include:

- more cost-effective way of increasing the opportunity for specialist teaching (if required), curriculum entitlement and extended after school curricular activities and out of hours clubs
- sharing the costs of purchasing goods and facilities etc.
- purchasing to achieve economies of scale and avoiding duplication
- saving on curriculum and strategic planning and administrative time
- being able to pool funding to award higher salaries and recruit more

Will my school lose its identity through entering a federation?

Schools within a federation will not lose their individual identity though they will share a single governing body. The schools retain their separate legal status and have their own budget allocations and will be subject to their own Estyn Inspection. The schools will also remain in their community and retain their own character, name, ethos and school uniform. Whilst each school receives and must account for its own separate budget, there is scope, through the single governing body, to use pooled budgets across the schools in the federation. Federation works on the basis that all schools have their own particular strength and advantages, whether it is facilities, staff or resources.

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

In a federation, all staff would be employed on the same conditions of service as now and by the same employer. Whoever is the employer of staff will continue to be the employer under the contract of employment. For community, voluntary controlled, community special schools and maintained nursery schools, the LA is the employer under the contract of employment although the governing body of the federation retains responsibility for certain staffing functions i.e. staff grievance, capability, redundancy,

staff disciplinary and dismissal matters and appointments. The governing body is the employer under the contract of employment for staff in voluntary aided and foundation schools.

Combined strategic and financial planning should mean that jobs can be better protected in any combined period of contraction and that specialist staff can be used to best effect, recognising that all support and teaching staff have specialist skills and knowledge. Staff would be able to learn from each other within a coherent approach to deliver professional learning communities that use data and the National Model to focus on school improvements that link to national priorities and their school development plans.

The governing body of a federation would also be able to appoint new staff to work within all schools in the federation. This could include the appointment of a single headteacher with responsibility for all the schools in the federation, or the appointment of a Bursar or person with financial management skills and/or business management skills to oversee the non teaching aspects of the federation business.

Can we change the school name or give the same name to every school in the federation?

One of the key drivers and benefits for federation is that schools do not lose their individuality, name and identity and remain as separate establishments. The names of all the schools in the federation will appear on the new instrument of government as well as the name of the federation. The process for revising the instrument of government and changing details such as the names of the schools is set out in the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005. The LA and the governing body should reach an agreement on the proposed changes. If they cannot the final decision rests with the LA who will want to ensure that any changes are not misleading.

All schools in a federation must retain their individual reference number and budget and it could become quite complex and confusing if all the schools decided to change their name and adopt a single name when they have to account for separate budgets.