



Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: Consultation regarding the formation of a hard federation

As you are aware, there has been a 'Soft Federation' between Bellenden Primary School in Peckham and Pilgrims' Way Primary school off the Old Kent Road since September 2016. Mr. Doey is the Executive Head covering both schools and each school has its own Head of School. At the autumn term Governing Body meetings at both schools it was proposed to consider firming up arrangements and forming a hard federation. Both governing bodies voted unanimously in favour to move towards a hard federation. This letter is to set out the reasons why the schools wish to form a commitment that last beyond twelve months.

Schools work best where there is a committed and skilled staff team who have a shared understanding of what it is they are trying to achieve. As community schools there is such a shared understanding. Pupils are put at the heart of what the schools do and although the importance of academic success is recognised, the staff of both schools look to develop the whole child. The curriculum on offer to the children at both schools is rich and varied. Primary schools are successful where leaders know the needs of the community they serve; where there is a shared understanding of what the school stands for; its ethos, its mission, its traditions. A school can only be good if it is able to attract and retain staff who believe in what it stands for.

The current situation, added to the current demand for places, has led to one of the largest teacher recruitment dilemmas the country has seen. New figures reveal that nationally there are five thousand fewer trainee teachers starting this year, across all phases of education, alongside 500,000 extra pupils due to attend schools over the next five years. Nowhere in the country is there a greater staffing crisis than in Inner London. The high cost of housing in London has led to young teachers being unable to establish roots in the communities in which they work. This has resulted in it being even more difficult to attract talent, nurture it and look towards succession planning when their staff are unable to afford to live in reasonable travelling distance.

Both schools have enjoyed recent success. Pilgrims' Way has gone from strength to strength since its last Ofsted Inspection in June 2015 and the profile of the teaching as well as the leadership at the last Local Authority led Teaching and Learning Review suggests at least good but with aspects of outstanding. Bellenden Primary School is a successful school in terms of academic achievement and there is the further excitement with the move to a new bespoke site in February 2018.

In order to be successful takes a lot of hard work on the part of the committed staff team. Staff at both schools have benefited from the links that have been developed over the last year, and to move to a hard federation ensures that both staff teams can continue to share ideas, swap best practice and support each other in order to pursue even better opportunities for the children in the future.

The Governing Body of each school is currently consulting on the proposal and we wish to conclude this process by 8th December 2018, in order that responses may be considered, with a view for any change being put into effect for the beginning of the winter term in January 2018. Any responses to this consultation can be directed to the Executive Headteacher at either school.

Included with this letter is a consultation document outlining questions parents may have and an events timeline one of which is an opportunity for parents to visit the other school.

A copy of this letter and the consultation document can also be found on the websites for both schools.

Yours sincerely,

Juliette Young

Chair of Governors

Pilgrims' Way School

Patrick Voss

Chair of Governors

Bellenden Primary School