



Jessop Stockwell Federation
Lead Headteacher: Ms A.Parker

Thursday 8th July 2021

JSF Bonneville consultation response governors letter

Dear Parents, Carers, Pupils and Staff,

We wrote to you in April to set out our plan for the future of our schools and to seek your views on the way forward. Our proposal was to create a new, three-school Federation of Bonneville Primary School with the Jessop Stockwell Federation and Children's Centre. The model we outlined would consolidate the temporary partnership between our schools that has been in place since April 2019.

We would like to thank everyone who took time to read the plan and all those who submitted comments during the consultation. The governors of both JS Federation and Bonneville have considered all the responses carefully. Many comments were detailed and lengthy, and clearly the result of serious engagement with the proposals. This has given us extremely helpful insights into the views of parents in our school communities and has shaped our discussion and decisions.

Some responses raised understandable concerns about what change might mean, while others were enthusiastic about the opportunities that a new federation would bring for children and staff.

Governors at JS Federation and Bonneville met and discussed the responses to the consultation. After further consideration, we have decided to move ahead with the proposal to form a new, permanent federation, putting our two-year partnership onto a solid footing for the future. This arrangement will come into effect on 1 October 2021. Andrea Parker, currently Lead Head Teacher across all three schools, will have the new title of Executive Head Teacher for the federation, formalising her current role providing strategic leadership support to the two heads of school at Stockwell and Jessop.

Nothing radical will change when the federation is formed. Stockwell, Jessop and Bonneville are happy and successful schools already, with their own identities and characters, which we want to preserve.

In response to the consultation, we have decided to adjust our plans to take account of some concerns that were raised. One of the worries that was expressed related to the possibility that the schools could lose their sense of individual identity through forming a federation. Another concern was that the schools would be better able to serve children if they went back to being individual institutions, or remained as they are. A third issue was a worry that there would not be enough representation from parent governors on the new governing board.

We have decided to make two important changes to the structure of the proposed new governing body to address these concerns. Firstly, all governor positions from across the schools will be carried forward onto the new board, so there is no reduction of the overall input from any school in decision making at the highest level. This will remain the case while the new arrangement settles down. Over time, the size of the board is expected to reduce as such a large governing body will be unnecessary when the culture of working has been fully embedded.

Secondly, our proposal outlined that there would be two elected parent governors on the new board, as that is the statutory maximum, regardless of the number of schools in a Federation. However, given we can co-opt additional governors onto the board, we will seek to ensure that at least one governor who is also a parent or

carer is represented from each of the three schools. This will ensure that a parental voice from each school is represented on a permanent basis and no school will lose out.

On the broader point about the risk to the schools' identities, we want to make it clear that we share the view that each school is unique and should retain its own character, staff, and leadership within the federation.

When we were finalising our decision, the governors of JS Federation and Bonneville had one key priority in mind: how best to guarantee and improve the quality of education our schools provide for children for the long term.

We believe the evidence of the past two years of our partnership clearly shows the difference that embedding and spreading excellent leadership and high quality ideas can make.

The collaboration across our schools has had a positive impact on the quality of the curriculum as well as on the attainment of pupils. Stockwell has faced particularly acute challenges in recent years. In 2017, Key Stage 2 results were annulled, and the community and the local authority had lost confidence in the school.

By 2019, Stockwell was transformed. Attainment levels in maths, reading and writing are all above national expectations, with the progress children make now significantly higher than expected in all three subjects. That's down to the efforts of teachers, pupils and parents at Stockwell, but also due to the impact of the three-school collaboration in bringing focus and support to teaching and learning so that pupils ultimately have the best chance of success.

As a result of the three schools working in partnership, staff have gained opportunities to develop their experience and skills and to move into more senior roles, with newly appointed middle-leaders recruited from within the schools. As the reputation of our partnership spreads, we have also seen an increase in highly qualified candidates applying to work in our schools.

Grouping together for the long term means we can be more efficient when structuring our staff, managing contracts and sharing resources. For example, Jessop has benefited from improved financial controls and oversight since the partnership was formed. At a time when funding for education is under increasing pressure, being strategic about making the most of our resources will continue to be vital.

With this in mind, the broader context in which schools are operating is not something that we can responsibly ignore. Changes in the population in Lambeth and in London more widely mean the number of children needing school places is falling, and so is the funding available for education.

Our current, three-school partnership arrangement was always structured to be temporary. But central government and the local authority are both now actively encouraging schools to group together on a permanent basis. If we wait, the risk is that we could be forced to join a chain of schools potentially against our wishes in the future. Instead, we believe consolidating our existing, successful partnership into a federation now, is the best way to keep control of our destiny.

With our fate in our own hands, we will be in the strongest position to take decisions in the best interests of the children in our schools. Our ambition is to use our strong new federation to build on what we have already achieved together and to provide an outstanding education for all our pupils in the future.

We will be in touch again soon with more news on this and other developments. In the meantime, Andrea Parker will be available to attend parent forums to answer questions, along with governors whenever possible, and we will soon circulate a video presentation on the federation plans, too.

With best wishes and thanks again,

JS Federation Governing Board



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