



Redlands and Alfred Sutton Primary Schools

Proposal to Federate 2025

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

Last updated 10th October 2024

We recognise that change can be concerning and that the proposal for Redlands Primary and Alfred Sutton Primary schools to form a Federation will raise lots of questions from a number of different stakeholders in our two schools:

- **our children and their families;**
- **from the staff that work in the two schools as well from our governors,**
- **local authority partners and**
- **the local community and other services.**

We have compiled this list of Frequently Asked Questions which we hope will be useful to answer some of these questions.

Should you have a question that is not listed here, or need more information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

You can use the federation response form on the website or you can email your comments or questions to:

federationadmin@alfredsutton.reading.sch.uk

or

federationadmin@redlands.reading.sch.uk

There is no statutory government blueprint for federations. Each one is tailored to suit the needs of the different schools and communities. A successful federation will allow the children to access a broader curriculum to enrich their experiences and provide a high-quality education to help raise their attainment.

There are a number of possible questions answered below. This document is divided into groups of general questions and then questions that might most concern parents or staff or questions on the future operation of the schools. Please look through all questions but do not hesitate to ask if you can't find an answer or need more information.

Background and General Questions

	Question	Answer
Q1	What is a federation?	<p>A federation is an arrangement where two or more maintained schools share a single governing body. Schools federate under section 24 of the Education Act 2002.</p> <p>Schools in federations continue to be individual schools, keeping their existing category, character and legal identity, but have their governance provided by the same single board. Both schools remain under local authority control and do not become academies or free schools as a result of federation.</p>
Q2	Why are you investigating the possibility of a school federation?	The driving idea behind this federation is to ensure the best possible outcomes for all pupils at both schools. It would enable us to make the best use of staff and resources within and across both schools, to the benefit of all children.
Q3	What does a 'consultation' mean? Has the decision already been made?	No decision has been made in relation to the federation of Alfred Sutton and Redlands. At the moment this is just a proposal, and it can be progressed or amended. This consultation is just the first stage in the democratic and statutory process, and all opinions will be carefully considered.
Q4	What are the next stages in the process?	<p>Following the consultation period of at least six weeks, both Governing Boards will review all the opinions and information gathered during this process, and will use this as a basis to make a decision whether to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proceed with the proposal to federate as published • proceed after making modifications that the governing board considers appropriate • decide not to proceed to federate
Q5	What would be the benefits of federation?	<p>Federations can increase capacity within the schools in the federation to achieve higher standards. The benefits are explained in the consultation document but they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes for pupils due to collaboration and shared expertise • More consistency in teaching and learning and stronger staff/pupil relationships due to improved staff retention • Financial benefits due to economies of scale and cost sharing opportunities. It is a more cost-effective way of increasing the

		<p>opportunity for specialist teaching.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The possibility to extend after school curricular activities and out of hours clubs • Saving on curriculum and strategic planning and administrative time.
Q6	How successful are federations?	There is an increasing number of examples of federated school arrangements, both locally within the Reading area and nationally. With regard to the curriculum, within each school a federated approach to learning will allow us to share the physical resources, specialist teaching and leadership aptitudes across the federation.
Q7	What is the difference between the current informal partnership and a formal federation?	A formal governance federation is a legal agreement between schools, where they share a governing board and where the governing board and committees with delegated powers take decisions on behalf of both schools, even though each school retains its own budget share. In the current informal partnership agreement, each school has retained its own governing board and decision making remains within each school.
Q8	Why do we need the current situation to change?	The informal agreement cannot continue indefinitely. There is a lot of duplication of work for the leadership team and across both governing boards, and only limited costs can be shared. A formal federation would allow much more sharing of costs, knowledge and expertise, and would significantly cut the workload for the Executive Headteacher and leadership team, allowing them more time to focus on the pupils' teaching and learning.
Q9	Who do I speak to if I have questions about this proposal?	If you wish to send your formal comments, or have questions not answered in this document there are number of ways to get in touch with us. You can use the federation response form in the federation section of the website of each school or you can email questions to us using the email addresses on the front of this document.
Q10	What will the federation mean in terms of each schools' vision, aims and values?	We will preserve each school's individual identity whilst working to align our aims and values to ensure a more consistent experience for all our stakeholders across the Federation.
Q11	How will the outcome of the consultation be communicated?	All stakeholders will be informed about the outcome of the consultation in a written report.
Q12	Is it the intention to keep the different ethos of each school unchanged?	Our vision is to maintain as much individual identity across the two sites as possible – consulting with all stakeholders before making decisions, particularly those that are a huge part of a school's culture.

Questions that children and parents might ask.

	Question	Answer
Q13	Why would this be good for my child?	<p>The aim for both schools would be to continue to provide an excellent education which allows each pupil to realise their potential. The federation would provide greater opportunities for the sharing of good practice to enable both schools to excel.</p> <p>Federation will allow schools to more easily:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extend the breadth and quality of provision• respond to pupils' wider needs• widen opportunities for staff professional development deliver greater value for money
Q14	To which site would my child go to school?	Pupils would continue to go to school on their present respective school site.
Q15	Would we need to buy new uniform?	No. Uniform policies in each school remain unchanged.
Q16	What working links between the two schools have already been established and seen benefits?	Currently both headship teams meet on a regular basis to discuss upcoming events and share best practices. There is currently a successful partnership model in place that has given staff in both schools opportunities for career development.
Q17	What effect does Federation have on school admissions?	School admissions would continue to be processed centrally by RBC, with each school maintaining its own admissions list, so admissions would be unaffected by this change. Children currently on roll will continue to be on roll in their current school.

Questions that Staff might ask.

	Question	Answer
Q18	What would happen to the staff at Redlands and Alfred Sutton?	We are consulting with staff at both schools but the proposal would be to continue to provide high quality education as at present. Staff levels would not be expected to change significantly following the federation. We believe the proposed federation would continue to provide staff with excellent opportunities to share good practice and expertise.

Q19	As a staff member in one of the schools, will I be forced to work at the other, partner school?	Current staff are employed by the individual schools and their posts are designated at those schools. No member of staff will be forced to work in the partner school. If, in the future, staff would like to work at the partner school and there is an opportunity available the Executive Team will try to accommodate those wishes.
Q20	Will employment contracts be changed to reflect the federation?	Current contracts are with either Redlands or Alfred Sutton Primary School. These contracts will not be changed. New contracts for staff joining after Federation, should it take place, will be with the Federation, that is both Redlands and Alfred Sutton Primary Schools. New contracts will be issued for new employees and those current staff who change role or hours.
Q21	Beyond being asked to work at the other school can staff request to work in the other school?	Yes, the Executive Head will consider the request of an individual member of staff. The staffing structure will be decided based on the needs of the children and the operational requirements of both schools.
Q22	What opportunities will there be for staff development?	Teachers, support staff, school leaders and governors have added expertise in working alongside colleagues to improve provision and outcomes for pupils. Shared continuous professional development and training will enhance the learning experience and offer for children. It will open up opportunities for staff development and leadership opportunities across both settings.
Q23	Will there be more opportunity for teachers and support staff across both schools to work collaboratively?	Staff in both schools have already been working together to plan the curriculum and share expert knowledge and experience to improve outcomes for all children.

Questions about resources

	Question	Answer
Q24	Is this just a money saving exercise?	No. The proposal is driven foremost by the desire to develop school standards by sharing expertise and best practice across both schools. Government funding for education remains challenging and Federation would allow both schools to make the most of the funding they receive.
Q25	How would the schools be funded?	The way in which an individual school's budget is calculated is not affected by federation - each school in the federation will continue to receive its

		own budget from the LA based on the number of registered pupils at the school plus any other factors (such as SEND funding, for example).
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Questions about the operation of Federated schools

	Question	Answer
Q26	How does federation sustain school standards and support and improve achievement?	One of the advantages of a federation is that it can prevent schools getting into difficulty through greater scrutiny, challenge and support. The strong leadership and teaching excellence that can be shared would enable both schools to continue to improve on their already good performance.
Q27	How would the schools be inspected by Ofsted?	Both schools would continue to be inspected separately and listed separately in performance tables.
Q28	What difference would parents see in terms of the operation of the school?	Parents will not see any change in the day to day operation of the schools.

What to do if your question is not answered here.

- You can raise your comments or questions at scheduled face to face meetings which will take place on **Monday November 11th at Redlands School at 9am and at Alfred Sutton at 3.15pm the same day.** You can attend either meeting regardless of which school your child attends.
- You can email your comments or questions to federationadmin@alfredsutton.reading.sch.uk or federationadmin@redlands.reading.sch.uk
- You can write your comments or questions and either post them or drop them into either school office. Address these to the Headteacher and clearly mark them Federation Questions.
- By completing the federation response form available on the website of each school.