



Alfred Sutton Primary School and Redlands Primary School Proposal to Federate

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1 Executive Summary

This document sets out proposals for the creation of a federation consisting of Alfred Sutton and Redlands Primary Schools to be known as the East Reading Federation (“ERF”).

Alfred Sutton and Redlands primary schools are two local authority maintained primary schools serving communities in east Reading with complementary approaches to educating children to ensure all realise their potential. The Governing Boards (GBs) in both schools have, quite separately, considered their future options in the light of ongoing financial pressures, uncertain demographics, professional and support staff availability, and local authority support. Options identified include the status quo, in other words remaining as stand-alone local authority maintained primary schools, or perhaps joining an existing academy, or maybe establishing or joining a federation of other schools.

Both GBs set up working parties pre Covid to research and analyse potential future options. The Redlands GB concluded that the budget does not support remaining a standalone one form entry primary school and the ‘Requires Improvement’ Ofsted judgment in December 2022 provided a new sense of urgency. Alfred Sutton does not have the same financial pressures, or Ofsted grading, however the desire to improve the quality of education for all East Reading children coupled with the desire to maintain control of their own destiny, and need to retain staff, have concluded that federating with another local school makes good educational and financial sense.

2 Background

Alfred Sutton Primary School is an inclusive, vibrant, and thriving primary school characterised by a vigorous belief in the limitless potential of young people and everyone in the school takes an active approach to ensuring that potential is realised. Parents and carers trust the school to educate pupils to become successful, confident, and resilient life-long learners and the GB and senior leadership team sees this trust as a great privilege.

Redlands recognises it takes a village to educate a child and sees the school as the centre of the local ‘village’ community. Redlands subscribes to ‘Values Education’ based on a shared set of core universal values of Community, Kindness, Communication and Creativity present throughout the curriculum and school life.



3 What is a Federation?

A federation involves two or more schools coming together under one governing board. It allows greater collaboration and sharing of resources to the benefit of all students although budgets remain separate and each school has a separate Ofsted judgement.

4 Why have Alfred Sutton and Redlands decided to federate?

The fundamental reason for federating is to improve the quality of education for children in East Reading.

Redlands and Alfred Sutton Schools are the two local authority maintained primary school serving the families of East Reading. They have many similarities including demographic of children; numbers of SEND children and staff at both schools understand the children and the local area and its needs. There are differences too – adopting a federation model allows greater control to maintain these different characteristics which, research indicates, are more likely to be lost within a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) – especially a large, well-established one.

Alfred Sutton is a three-form entry school different in character from Redlands one-form entry provision offering families a choice. Children from both schools have friends in the other setting and often belong to the same after-school activities and clubs as there is considerable ‘cross over’ between the two school communities.

Alfred Sutton committed to supporting Redlands from the summer term in 2023 through the loan of senior staff who have both added capacity and enabled the building of mutual trust and understanding. The Redlands GB appointed Robert Howell and Laura Kerr as interim Executive Headteacher and Interim Head of School respectively in August 2023. In the light of need to develop common approaches to curriculum development and recognising the need for additional leadership capacity at Redlands three Deputy Headteachers were appointed in May 2024 who now work across both schools.

4.1 The advantages of federation

There are many reasons why schools may want to work together in a federation. Alfred Sutton and Redlands have worked collaboratively since the start of the 2023 summer term and in a less formal way prior to this, and this has enabled Redlands to provide better opportunities for their children. Both Governing Boards anticipate the following particular benefits to federation:



- a curriculum that works across both schools enabling children to smoothly transition to the next stage of their learning and enabling specialist teachers to work together across both schools.
- strong collaboration with shared accountability leads to better progress and attainment for children, helping both schools to meet rising expectations.
- leaders and teachers share thinking and planning to spread expertise and tackle challenges together.
- governors can come together to share strategic thinking, to combine skills and support each other in challenging times.
- working together can enable both schools to find different solutions to recruitment challenges, retain staff by providing new opportunities, and plan succession more effectively.
- richer curricular and extra-curricular activities can be provided by working together, as well as pastoral care, guidance and support for children.
- shared professional development will be arranged, led by staff from both schools as well as external providers.
- economies of scale and collective purchasing can help both schools cope better with financial pressure.

In simple terms both governing boards and both senior leadership teams believe a federation will improve the quality of education available to children in East Reading.

4.2 The Vision for the Federation

Our vision is simple: a powerful collaboration between two unique schools, uniting their strengths and ultimately leading to a federation that sets new standards in education.

Alfred Sutton and Redlands are dedicated to providing unparalleled opportunities and a superior educational journey to every student in our care. With our highly committed staff and distinctive identities, we aim to create a vibrant learning environment that fosters holistic growth, cultivates talents, and unlocks the full potential of each pupil in our shared community.

Through collaboration, we can preserve and celebrate the unique identities of both schools whilst ensuring their future viability and sustained development. By merging our resources and expertise, we aspire to create a centre of excellence in East Reading where students thrive and staff are retained and committed to a journey of continuous improvement.



By championing inclusion, developing innovative teaching methods and delivering a broad range of academic and extracurricular programs, the federation will ensure that every pupil receives an outstanding education that prepares them for the challenges of the future. We will empower our students to become confident, compassionate, and resilient individuals, equipped with the skills and knowledge to succeed in an ever-changing world.

5 The Governing Board

On federation both the existing GBs dissolve and a single new governing body comes into being. The recommended governing body will include:

- One Executive Headteacher
- Up to two Heads of School from across the federation
- One Local Authority Governor
- One Staff Governor
- Two Parent Governors
- Nine Co-opted Governors

5.1 Statutory Regulations

The following statutory regulations will be implemented when constituting the federation governing board:

- The School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 allows for at least 2 parent governors but no allowance to stipulate from which school.
- The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 only allows for 1 staff governor and no allowance to stipulate from which school.
- The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 introduced the category of co-opted governors, the total number of co-opted governors who are eligible to be elected as staff governors must not exceed one third of the total membership of the governing body.



6 Staffing Arrangements

Broadly staffing arrangements won't change.

The Redlands GB appointed an interim Executive Headteacher (EHT) and a Head of School (HOS) from the end of Term 6, 2023, both from Alfred Sutton. Once federated the GB will appoint an EHT who will lead both schools across the federation. Three Deputy headteacher appointments were made towards the end of the summer term in 2024 responsible for specific phases across both schools in preparation for federation.

Contracts of employment will not change however for people who join after the federation takes effect will be with the federation, rather than individual schools, allowing for flexible staffing arrangements.

7 Admissions Authority

The admissions authority remains Reading Local Authority

8 Consultation Process

The regulations require schools to consult with staff and parents, and to communicate their intentions with other member of the school communities, before proceeding to federate. The regulations stipulate the format of this consultation proposal document. The logistical arrangements are notified on the school websites and are available, in hard copy, from both school offices for those that require them.

9 Conclusion

The proposed East Reading Federation of Alfred Sutton and Redlands Primary Schools will improve the quality of education for all children in East Reading providing a combination of styles and approaches based on research led best practice. The federation proposal is approved by both schools' governing boards.