

Consultation Open – 8th November 2018

Proposal for Lonesome Primary School to join the Singlegate and William Morris Federation

What is proposed?

The Governing Body of Lonesome Primary School and the Governing Body of the Singlegate and William Morris (SWM) Federation (The Federation) are proposing forming a new Federation together.

The SWM Federation was established in 2011 by Singlegate and William Morris schools, which came together to raise standards, promote inclusion, find new ways of approaching teaching and learning and build capacity between schools within a structured framework. Lonesome Primary has been working in collaboration with the Federation for a year and both governing bodies now believe creating a new, expanded Federation, incorporating all three schools is the right next step.

All schools within the new Federation will continue to be individual and separate schools, with admissions to each school determined separately by Merton Council. All the schools will retain their individual identity and character but will be able to develop a complementary, shared ethos based on high achievement and educational excellence.

Why is change proposed?

It is a challenging time for schools – budgets are being squeezed and it is becoming harder to attract and retain skilled staff, especially as the cost of living in London increases.

Lonesome Primary School has been through a period of instability over the past two years. A new Headteacher was appointed in September 2017, after 18 months without a permanent head. There has been a positive impact on standards throughout the school, partly because of a successful partnership with the SWM Federation. The Heads of all three schools, and the Executive Head of the Federation, have been working together to improve standards.

Many schools in London are experiencing a drop in pupil numbers, and there are currently 69 spaces at Lonesome. This is having an impact on the budget and there is a real need to restructure and find efficiencies to avoid becoming a vulnerable school.

The Federation of Singlegate and William Morris Primary Schools has been in operation now for seven years, following a challenging period for William Morris. The partnership between the schools has resulted in improved outcomes for all children, high quality professional development for staff, improved systems and strategies for recruitment and retention, and distributed leadership opportunities for Senior Leaders and Governors. The

Federation resulted in William Morris moving from 'Special Measures' to 'Good' in under a year, with Singlegate retaining its Outstanding status. The attainment and progress of all children year on year has increased at both schools, as has attendance.

The financial challenges all schools are facing is having an impact on the Federation. There has been an emphasis on careful budgeting in the last couple of years, and more efficiencies are needed to ensure the schools don't go into deficit.

From a teaching, learning and financial perspective, the Federation has been positive for both schools. It is clear that Lonesome Primary would benefit from joining a new Federation, and all three schools will be able to work together to improve standards, pool resources and strive for excellence.

Benefits include:

- **Improved opportunities for children** - including a wider and richer curriculum, improved behaviour, attainment and a greater enjoyment of school.
- **Leadership capacity** - leaders have the opportunity to learn together, with an established support system for leaders.
- **One strategic vision** - which drives achievement and improvement across the schools. Schools learning together improve the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes.
- **Opportunities for staff** – better opportunities for recruitment and retention of staff across the schools, sharing of good practice and expertise, joint planning and assessment, richer professional development and training, better recruitment and retention through improved career progression and opportunities to work across a range of schools and in a range of contexts.
- **Purchasing power, cost savings and efficiencies** – sharing of contracts, resources, streamlining administrative functions, shared HR functions including pay arrangements, savings on maintenance contracts, purchasing and supplies which makes more efficient use of squeezed budgets.
- **Strengthened governance** – experienced Governing Body overseeing improving standards, sharing good practice and high expectation of achievement for all children.

The Proposal

The proposal is for Lonesome Primary School to join Singlegate and William Morris Primary Schools in creating a new Federation. The process will include:

- Disbanding the current governing bodies
- Creating a new federated Governing Body to oversee all three schools
- Appointing Mrs Bull, current Executive Headteacher of the Federation, to the role of Chief Executive of the new Federation, providing high-level leadership for all the schools in the Federation
- Each school will have a Head of School – Mrs Hart at Singlegate, Mrs Van Manen at William Morris and Ms Revell at Lonesome

- The Heads of School will each be supported by a senior leadership team
- The continuation of a separate budget for each school, overseen and managed centrally by the new Federation
- The admission authority for each school will continue to be the London Borough of Merton

The new federated Governing Body

The Federation will have a single Governing Body which will include representation from teachers, parents and the community of the three schools. The proposed structure of the Federated Governing Body will be:

- Three parent Governors (one from each school in the Federation)
- Three staff Governors (one from each school in the Federation)
- One Local Authority Governor
- The Chief Executive of the Federation
- Seven co-opted Governors (representing the communities of the three schools and providing skills and experience to the Governing Body)
- Three Heads of School who will become associate governors – able to take part in discussions but without voting rights

The new Federation will have a new name to reflect the three schools and the communities they serve.

The proposed date for the launch of the new Federation is **1st April 2019**.

Representation Period

Written representations and comments about the proposals may be sent to the Governing Bodies by Friday 21st December 2018 at the following addresses:

Janet Smith, Chair of Governors, Lonesome Primary School

Email: lonesome@lonesome.merton.sch.uk – please put ‘Federation’ in the subject line

Address: Lonesome Primary School, Grove Rd, Mitcham, CR4 1SD

Rachel Stern, Chair of Governors, Singlegate and William Morris Federation

Email: school@singlegate.merton.sch.uk or office@williammorris.merton.sch.uk - please put ‘Federation’ in the subject line

Address: Singlegate Primary School, South Gardens, London, SW19 2NT or William Morris Primary School, Recreation Way, Mitcham, CR4 1PJ

Governors and senior leaders will be available to discuss the proposals at the following times:

Lonesome Primary School

Date: **Monday 26th November 2018**

Time: **9.00 am**

Singlegate Primary School

Date: **Monday 19th November 2018**

Time: **8.30 am**

William Morris Primary School

Date: **Friday 23rd November 2018**

Time: **9.00 am**

What is the next stage?

Following the representation period , the two governing bodies which are proposing to federate will jointly consider the responses received, before each Governing Body determines whether it wishes to proceed with the proposal.

DATE OF PUBLICATION OF PROPOSALS: 8 NOVEMBER 2018

New Federation – Q&A

Q – Does this mean my child’s school will have fewer resources?

A – As budgets get tighter there is more need to share and make better use of resources. The experience of the Singlegate and William Morris Federation has been that we can achieve economies of scale by buying in bulk, negotiating better contracts and streamlining the use of resources. Creating a bigger Federation, which will have centrally managed budgets, will allow us to do this on a bigger scale and will benefit all of the children in all three schools.

Q – Who will be the headteacher of my child’s school?

A – Mrs Bull will be the Chief Executive of the Federation and will hold the legal responsibility for all three schools. The Head of School for your child’s school will be your child’s Headteacher, overseeing teaching and learning in the school and managing the senior leadership team. Mrs Bull will support all three Heads of School, and they will work together to achieve excellence across the Federation.

Q - Will there be a change of uniform?

A – There will be no change in uniform. All three schools will keep their own unique identity and name.

Q – Will children go on school trips together?

A – There will be lots of opportunities for children from across the Federation to meet and learn with each other. This may include trips together, joint sporting events and competitions and visiting the other schools. The experience of Singlegate and William Morris is this is an exciting opportunity for the children and expands their horizons.

Q – Are other schools doing things like this?

A – There have been a lot of changes in the way education is managed and delivered in the last 10 years. Some schools have joined Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) and others have become free schools. Lonsome, Singlegate and William Morris are still maintained by Merton, and this won’t change. But as budgets get tighter and support from the Local Authority changes, schools have found that working together, pooling resources and expertise, has significant benefits.

Q – Will this be a successful school propping up struggling schools in the Federation?

A – The experience of forming the Singlegate and William Morris Federation is that both schools benefitted from working in partnership. William Morris was able to move quickly from ‘Special Measures’ to being judged ‘Good’, and progress and attainment have improved year-on-year. Singlegate has retained its ‘Outstanding’ status, while going through a period of rapid growth, and results for children continue to improve.

Teachers and leaders find working together across the Federation stimulating and rewarding, there are a lot of joint initiatives which are only possible because of the Federation. This is crucial at a time when the recruitment and retention of teachers is very challenging. We know that teachers like working within a successful Federation, and it provides new challenges and development opportunities which wouldn't be possible in other schools.

Children benefit from closer links with the other school, and activities from sports days, spelling competitions to trips are more enjoyable because they are done in partnership. There is also a bit of natural competition between the schools.

Creating a new Federation is not about 'propping up' a struggling school, it's about working together in a bigger creative learning community, helping, challenging and supporting each other.

Q – Is this something Merton wants to happen?

A – Merton is very supportive of this move as they see how powerful schools working closely can be. They are encouraging more links between schools and there are currently a number of schools considering creating Federations.

Q – Will leadership be diluted if there is one governing body for 3 schools?

A – As part of this proposal, both governing bodies have considered leadership capacity for all of the schools. This proposal will result in more leadership capacity within each school, as they will have a Head of School, supported by a Chief Executive, and they will be able to work together as a bigger team. The governing bodies are confident that this new structure will benefit all of the schools; and be an opportunity to share excellent practice and improve outcomes for children.

If you have any more questions please contact the Chair of Governors for your school or come along to one of the consultation coffee mornings where we will be happy to discuss any concerns you have:

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