



Goodleigh C of E Primary School and Ilfracombe Infant & Nursery School Federation

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3rd July 2023

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff,

De-federation Request Outcome

We are really sorry for the uncertainty, worry and distraction this period has caused you all.

The governors met on Wednesday evening to consider the de-federation request for Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School to leave our federation. All governors used the time from when the consultation period ended at 9.00 am on Tuesday 27th June 2023 to our governors meeting starting at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 28th June 2023 to read every submission received from parents, carers, staff and other interested parties. We are very grateful for all the submissions received which were written with due thought and consideration. We used the meeting time of 2.5 hours to question and deliberate very carefully.

The governing board voted to keep the federation together to maintain stability for our children and our staff and to continue to deliver on our vision.

Submissions from people wishing to maintain the federation of our two schools shared the following:

"There is no doubt that the curriculum offer to pupils and opportunities for learning beyond the classroom have been secured and enhanced at Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School by the federation and its leaders who are very clear this breadth of curriculum must be available to every pupil"

"Leaders work effectively and collaboratively and communication between leaders is strong"

"The quality of leadership in the federation has been judged 'Good' at the most recent Ofsted inspections at both schools in 2019 and 2022"

"I have seen nothing but care and compassion from Claire Grant"

"Claire goes above and beyond"

"I am grateful for the support received both professionally and personally"

"I have been told multiple times how valued I am and through actions as well I feel supported, valued and understood"

"Claire Grant's drive and determination to remove all economic barriers to learning for all children is delivered in a quiet, discreet and sensitive way"

"Having served on the governing board, I know governors share the same passion for both schools with the goal that all pupils, irrespective of their background, reach their full potential"

Five main themes were raised in the consultation from parents/carers who wished Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School to leave the federation. We have heard your concerns and recognise we need to make some changes going forward to ensure that the federation reaches its full potential.

1. Communication/parent engagement/leadership visibility

We will be carrying out a review of our communication strategy as we need to do better to ensure more of you feel engaged and informed with two-way communication. This review will include our newsletters, social media, letters to parents/carers and parent/carer consultations.

The governors will carry out regular Parents/Carers feedback surveys and publish the results on our websites. We value the time and opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in the schools as volunteers and to join the children in activities but we hear that you want more. We will review this theme and update you with our ideas.

We should have done better to update you on the challenges our leadership team faced in 2022/2023 with being short of a Deputy Headteacher at Ilfracombe for two terms and being short of a Head of Teaching and Learning at Goodleigh for two terms. This has impacted the opportunity for our leadership team to be as visible to all parents as they would wish. Our new Deputy Headteacher Kevin Fry starts at Ilfracombe in September which will make a tangible difference. Governors will explain better our leadership structure within the federation to improve understanding of the leadership roles and responsibilities.

2. Staff turnover and bullying culture

The Local Authority have carried out a staff survey over the last two weeks during the consultation period giving all staff the opportunity to feedback in person or via email on staff wellbeing and staff workload. The Local Authority said "I can find no evidence of a negative culture or climate. I have had some comments about a lack of communication but that appears to be where the criticism ends." After the Local Authority's involvement

in reviewing the allegation of a bullying culture, we would like to move forward for the wellbeing of all staff across the federation.

The governors will carry out regular staff surveys and publish the results on our websites.

100% of submissions from staff for this consultation were in favour of keeping the federation together.

3. School playground environment

We appreciate the feedback received and we need to do better to communicate ongoing premises issues with you and to share proactively our plans for the school environment.

4. Governing Board length of service, imbalance of Ilfracombe representation and the integrity of the process of the vote

We hear your feedback about the balance of individual governors and our length of service. We will be reviewing our governing board constitution and seeking new governors from the Ilfracombe community.

Our meeting and vote was observed by a member of the Local Authority on Wednesday 28th June 2023 and our Executive Headteacher and Staff Governor chose to abstain in the vote.

5. Alternative federation with Ilfracombe Juniors

In accordance with The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 this consultation was to only consider the request to de-federate. The governing board has a responsibility to ensure there is a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for both schools in the federation.

We fully appreciate there will be a mixed response to our decision to keep the federation together. We are determined to learn from this and governors are meeting again on 18th July 2023 to develop a strategic time-lined plan to address the common themes. We will be able to share regular updates of progress against this plan and believe you will see a difference.

The governing board remain focussed on delivering our vision for the federation and providing the best education for all children.

Nadine Sampson

Chair of Governors

Goodleigh C of E Primary School and Ilfracombe Infant and Nursery School Federation