



Fox/Ashburnham Federation

- Background
- The case for federation
- Structure
- Timetable
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Background

- May 2012 Fox entered into a 'soft' federation with Ashburnham
- This has been immensely successful.
 - Ashburnham's results have improved dramatically.
 - Fox became the highest performing school in the country and went on to consolidate that position.
 - Fox teachers reported increased satisfaction and enhancement to their own class teaching.
- The Governing Body had been looking at future options such as academy conversion, federating or staying as is. The conclusion was that a federation with the right partner would be the most beneficial to Fox's future.
- Meanwhile the Ashburnham relationship had reached a point where the improvement work was done and forming a federation was the best way to enable leadership to plan strategically and realise the benefits of scale.



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The case for federation

- Increase the ability to attract, develop and retain the best teachers
- Motivating and retaining outstanding leadership
- Enrich the Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of children
- Increase efficiencies
- Provide resilience in the face of political change



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Structure

- Executive Headteacher: Paul Cotter
- Assistant Head of Ashburnham: Bella Street
- Assistant Head of Fox: Emma Madden
- One Governing Body:
 - 2 Fox Parent Governors
 - 2 Ashburnham Parent Governors
 - 1 Exec Headteacher
 - 1 Staff Governor
 - 1 LA Governor
 - 8 Co-opted Governor



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|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 19 th January | Publication of consultation document and start of 6-week consultation period |
| 2 nd March | End of consultation period |
| March | Governing Bodies of Ashburnham and Fox separately consider consultation feedback and decide whether to proceed. |
| May | If the decision is made to go ahead the Governing Bodies meet to appoint the new Governing Body. |
| September | New Federation would take effect and first joint meeting of GB |



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SURVEY QUESTIONS

Why can't Fox simply remain as a stand alone school?

It can. However, we are proposing a course of action that we think is more in line with Fox's ethos and goals, which is to extend outstanding teaching and learning to the wider community and to improve the teaching at Fox through collaboration, cooperation and the benefits of scale.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Why not continue the relationship as it is?

The contract at Ashburnham has come to its end so it is a natural time to think about how best to structure the relationship in the future to gain the greatest benefit.

A federation provides leadership and Governors with certainty about the future enabling them to plan in ways that will get the most benefit. It also makes the lines of responsibility and accountability much more stronger and more transparent.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Why now?

A natural break has occurred with the contract at Ashburnham coming to an end.

More importantly, Ashburnham has reached some important performance milestones which mean that the hard work of school improvement is mostly done and a federation can be embarked upon as a relationship of equals.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

What would be different?

The immediate day-to-day experience for parents and children would change very little. Schools in federations continue to be individual schools with their own character. The names of the schools, school uniform arrangements and identities of Ashburnham and Fox would continue as before. Each school would retain its own budget.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Can a federation be reversed?

Federations should be seen as medium to long-term commitments. However, unlike academies, which require a seven-year commitment, it is possible to end a federation at any time. This means that in the unlikely event that federation no longer offers benefits for children's learning and progress, the arrangements can be ended by the governing body.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

What would be the impact on staff?

The staffing of the two schools would remain largely unchanged, though federation would enable some staff to work flexibly across both schools, in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Has the Governing Body looked at other Federations?

The government produces very little information about Federations. However we have met with the Chair of an outstanding federation East London from which we've taken a lot of advice on structure and organisation.

There are also some excellent studies that have been done recently on the effectiveness of Federations. In particular the National College of School Leaders recently published 'A Study of the Impact of School Federation on Student Outcomes', which had very positive results.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Why choose Ashburnham to Federate with?

Fox has already invested a large amount of time on school improvement at Ashburnham during which it has built strong relationships. Many of the staff at Ashburnham have come from Fox or been trained there. For these reasons it is by far the most logical partner.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

How will Governor time be managed?

There is a lot of duplication of work and procedure across the Governing Bodies so we can already see where there will be immense time savings.

The GB will continue to look for ways to work more efficiently such as taking advantage of ways to resolve issues outside of meetings, approval of policy documents over email and making better use of technology to disseminate information.

We will assess the committee structure regularly to be sure we have the right model.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Is there government pressure to make this choice?

Government focus continues to be on Academy conversion but RBKC has been very supportive of Fox and its ability to make informed choices for its own future.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

How can this be managed in parallel with the building project?

The bulk of the work at Ashburnham has been done so it will take up less, rather than more, of the leadership time. The management of the building project resides with the Borough who have an excellent team in place to manage it.

The building project and federation are also delegated to different groups within the Governing Body.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Is there a risk that this could cause management to 'take their eye off the ball' at Fox and thus see standards slip?

No. During the time when enormous work was being done to raise standards at Ashburnham, Fox became the highest achieving school in the country. It maintained that position during the second year.

The GB and school leadership spends a large amount of time assessing children, coaching teachers and monitoring teaching to ensure that teaching and learning at Fox is outstanding. Performance management and appraisal is linked directly to the performance of Fox children.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Is there a financial incentive?

The very lowest consideration in this decision has been the financial incentive. The number one priority of the Fox Governing Body has always been how federation will improve outcomes for children at Fox.

However, we anticipate that there will be certain economies of scale and sharing of resources that will enable some financial benefit. There has been no financial incentive offered to Fox by the Borough or the DfE.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

How will the success of the Federation be monitored?

The GB will continue to monitor student progress through assessment data. They will also be talking to teachers informally as much as possible and will also conduct an anonymous survey to understand if there has been any impact on their morale and work load. We will also survey children and talk to them as part of the school council visit. The FSA will continue to survey parents from time to time and feed that back. Parents are always welcome to email the GB directly.