

Collaboration Governance Getting Started

Below are some frequently asked questions that leaders, staff, governors and the wider school community might use as a starting point when exploring issues in relation to collaborative working or an alternative leadership model.

Why are we considering this way of working?

Has it arisen due to any of the following:

- Standards are very high and we can share effective working practice or standards are not as good as neighbouring schools despite some effective teaching.
- The current headteacher is leaving and there will be a vacancy to fill.
- The current headteacher or another member of the leadership team has indicated they will be leaving in the next two or three years and this is part of succession planning.
- The vacancy for the position of headteacher has not been filled and there have now been several adverts or an acting headteacher is in post.
- Pupil numbers are continuing to drop and predicted numbers for the next few years are low.
- The size of the school is making it difficult to provide the full range of curriculum opportunities to a high level.
- The nature of the building and site make it difficult to expand and improve provision and facilities.
- The school is already working closely with neighbouring schools on curriculum planning and delivery.
- There is strong staff expertise which could be shared with others.
- There are concerns over workload and time pressures on the headteacher due to administration requirements and the role of business manager is being considered.

Is there a headship vacancy or future vacancy planned?

Questions to consider include:

- Do we want to advertise for a new headteacher for this school and do we want to do this as soon as the vacancy arises?
- Do we want to have an acting headteacher in the short term so that we can consider longer term alternative arrangements?
- Do we want to continue with acting headteacher arrangements (for those posts already with an acting headteacher) for the remainder of the academic year/next academic year and then readvertise?
- Do we want to look at other ways to secure leadership?

What other ways are there of securing leadership?

- Joining with another school that already has an experienced headteacher in post.
- Joining with one or more schools locally which are also looking for a headteacher and advertising for a headteacher together.

- Joining with a group of schools, one or some of whom have a headteacher and some without, and sharing leadership across the group.
- Joining with a school with a headteacher but which is not geographically close.
- Joining with a secondary school.

Are there site, staffing or curriculum issues to be considered?

Questions to consider include:

- What do we currently do with other local schools in terms of curriculum planning, delivery and assessment for learning opportunities?
- Could we formalise some of these aspects?
- Do we fully understand the expertise of current staff? Are we making full use of all their skills and experience?
- Do we have current staff who, with training, could undertake the aspects of the curriculum that are hard to cover, i.e. music, languages?
- Have we undertaken a thorough audit of our facilities and costed improvements?
- Could we sell or swap any expertise on a 'friendly' basis with other local schools?
- How would sharing expertise support learning in our school? How would we measure success?

Are you considering more formal collaborative working or joint arrangements with another local school(s)?

The following questions could be explored prior to committing to any joint arrangements:

- What types of arrangements are there?
- How will any joint arrangement support good quality learning within the schools?
- How will the arrangement improve standards?
- How would staffing requirements be organised if we want a joint headship?
- How might this be different according to the number of schools involved?
- How would the headteacher's time be allocated: pro rata, pupil numbers, need of each school?
- Can we fund alternative arrangements?
- How would alternative arrangements benefit all staff, i.e. staff development, strengthening expertise, utilising underused skills and experience etc?
- Would staff contracts need to be amended if they work across several schools?
- How might a joint arrangement make the best use of each school site?
- How might the schools involved in the arrangement manage the imbalance of pupil numbers if one exists, e.g. all Key Stage 1 children on one site?
- Would there continue to be a governing body in each school?
- If so how would this work in practice?
- If a joint governing body was established would this mean a reduction in governors? How would this be organised?
- How long would these arrangements be for?

- If one school wanted to leave the arrangement how would this work, particularly if staff have been working across more than one school?
- Would there be one budget or would each school keep their own current budget allocation?
- If savings were required due to a drop in pupil numbers in one school or across the schools how might this be achieved?
- What would the parental view of the joint arrangements be?

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If you can read this but know someone who can't, please contact us on 01743 254556 so we can provide this information in a more suitable format.