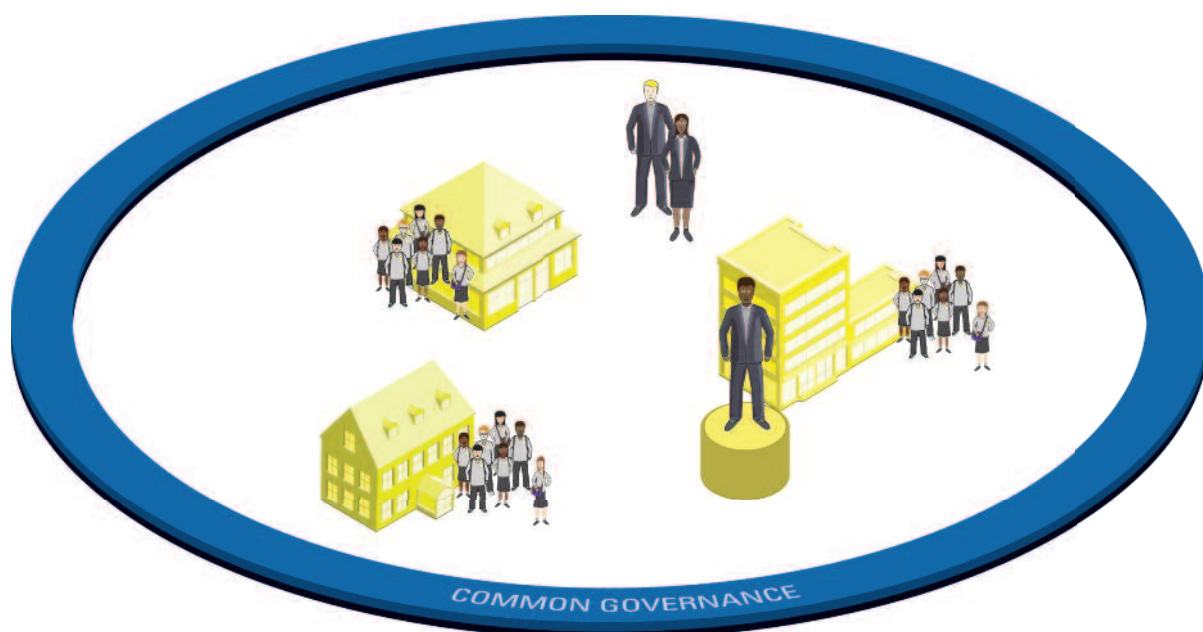


A National College Guide to Federations

Resource



**"We will now make more use of the best headteachers so they can run more than one school,
with better pay, and develop more federations"**

Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system

Contents

Leading new models of leadership

Schools across the country are developing new models of leadership for many reasons, primarily to raise and maintain standards by extending the reach of the best leaders, to secure greater operational efficiencies by working in partnership, and to build sustainability of leadership and small schools.

New models are not just about structural change: they are built on a shared commitment to improving attainment, well-being and life chances for children and young people - and this moral purpose, accompanied by outward-facing vision, is paramount in overcoming barriers to success.

National College research shows that successful leaders make a difference through who they are - their values and attributes- as well as what they do. The importance of their ability to articulate and share their vision and to model the characteristics necessary for effective collaborative working cannot be underestimated in this area of work.

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Introduction

This publication is one of a series of practical guides for school leaders, governors and local authorities who are exploring more flexible approaches to leading schools. The booklet *Introduction to Models of Leadership (National College 2009)* gives a brief introduction to the range of models being used by schools across the country.

New models of leadership are developing rapidly and these guides are only snapshots of the best information available at the time of writing (February 2010). For the very latest information, please visit the National College models of leadership website at www.nationalcollege.org.uk/modelsofleadership, or contact a National College associate.

This guide looks at **federations**.

The term federation has previously been used to describe a variety of collaborative arrangements on a continuum from informal arrangements with no common governance, through soft federations set up under the collaboration regulations, to a formally constituted hard federation of schools with a single governing body.

The term collaboration has now replaced soft federation. Collaborations are dealt with in a separate guide. This guide looks only at hard federations which, in every case, have a single governing body for a number of schools.

The statutory context for federations

The statutory regulations

The statutory context for federations is the *Education Act 2002*, which states "where any schools are federated.....they shall have a single governing body constituted under a single instrument of government. "Under the *School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007* only maintained schools are able to federate under a single governing body.

The 2002 Act also provides for other forms of collaboration in which joint committees of governors oversee specific, identified functions on behalf of the individual governing bodies concerned.

Since 30 August 2004, the following maintained schools have been able to federate: community, foundation and voluntary schools, community and foundation special schools and maintained nursery schools. Federation was initially limited to a maximum of five schools, but the *School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007* removed the upper limit on the number of schools that can federate.

The decision to federate is taken by the governing body, not the local authority, except where a school is in special measures or a warning notice has been served and not complied with or appealed. It is possible for a local authority to use its powers of intervention under the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* to require a governing body to establish a federation.

The *Education and Inspections Act 2006* further recognised federations as new models of leadership and, in 2009, the regulations were amended to require governors of proposed federations to notify the Secretary of State of their proposals (within a week of publishing them) and of their final decision. Notification is made via **school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk**.

The statutory context for federations

Implications of the statutory regulations

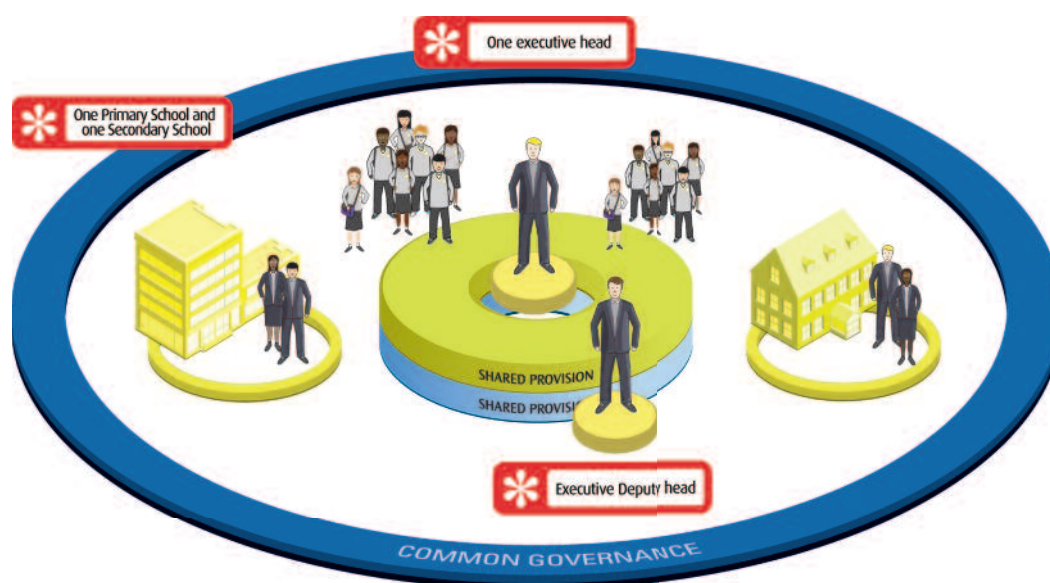
This section aims to explain the legal position of federations of schools, and to describe what is and what is not possible within the current statutory regulations.

Federation will be right for some schools and not for others, but publication of the 2009 white paper *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system* has provided greater impetus from the government to support federation as a new model of leadership:

"Partnership must become central to the organisation of the system."

"More formal arrangements - federations.....are bringing schools together to respond to local challenges or to improve schools."

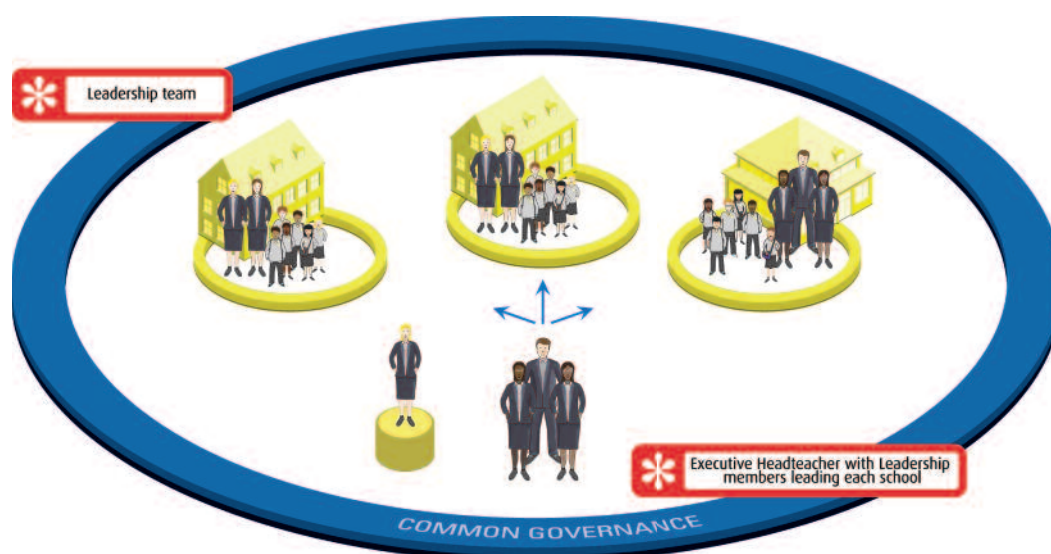
- A federation has a single governing body regardless of how many schools are in the federation.
- The decision to federate is usually determined by the governing bodies of the schools concerned, working within their specific context. The exception is where federation is imposed by a local authority as a structural solution for the purpose of school improvement.
- Since 30 August 2004, all categories of maintained school (including voluntary aided, foundation, trusts, maintained nursery schools and special schools) have been able to federate under one governing body if they wish to. A good example of this is **Wigmore 3-16 Federation**:



The statutory context for federations

Wigmore 3-16 Federation in Herefordshire is a small, high performing federation made up of a primary school and a high school on two sites in a rural area. The federation was established in September 2007 in order to achieve financial benefits and pursue a vision of all-through education. The all-through model supports teaching and learning development and collaborative working across both sites, while also retaining an individual identity for each school. The latest Ofsted inspection showed improvement in all areas and praised the use of resources, the cohesion across phases and the strong family atmosphere throughout the federation.

- The federated governing body receives the delegated budgets for all the schools in the federation, which it then allocates to each individual school, budgets can be used collectively with the agreement of governors.
- Structurally, each school in a federation remains a separate institution and has its own unique school number.
- Voluntary controlled (VC) and voluntary aided (VA) schools can be part of a federation with the support of their diocese. A good example of this is **Short Heath Federation**:



Short Heath Federation, in the West Midlands, is a federation of a nursery, a voluntary controlled (VC) infant school and a junior school. All three schools share a single reconstituted governing body but remain separate schools with their own admissions and their own performance table or school report cards.

- Currently schools in a federation are inspected individually. However, the 2009 white paper proposes more inspection of federations and the awarding of a grade for partnership working. The *2009 Framework for Inspection* suggests that where a school in a federation is being re-inspected, consideration should be given to inspecting the other schools in the federation.
- Since February 2010, where a federation is set up to support improvement in an under performing school, the leading school should have received DCSF accreditation as an Accredited School Provider (ASP) or an Accredited School Group (ASG).

Why develop a federation?

There are many good reasons for forming a federation. Schools are developing federations to help them:

- work together to raise standards
- maintain local provision by sharing resources, staff, expertise and facilities
- find a model of leadership to suit their specific context
- release strategic capacity in the senior leadership team
- create economies of scale and improve the offer to pupils by sharing specialist staff and curriculum expertise
- extend the breadth and quality of provision and respond better to pupils' wider needs
- extend the reach and impact of the strongest school leaders, teachers and governors
- increase opportunities for collaborative and cost-effective professional development
- sustain leadership and governance in small rural schools
- improve the delivery of extended services
- provide funding flexibilities so that they can pool resources - including sharing school business managers (SBMs).

Further impetus for federation comes from the 2009 white paper *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system*, which states that the DCSF will:

- require governing bodies to consider shared leadership and governance before appointing a new headteacher
- reduce barriers to schools and other partners pooling funds and resources to achieve better value for money
- ensure greater recognition of partnership working by Ofsted, and more co-ordinated inspections for federations and trusts
- work towards a single or common school improvement partner (SIP) for federations or shared trusts
- look at how the self-evaluation form can be developed to reflect federation
- fund a national support programme for schools' local authorities and governing bodies to explore and implement new models of leadership and governance in areas of particular challenge eg rural, primary and faith schools.

In addition, majority federations are one of the routes through which an accredited provider will lead improvement as a result of local authority intervention, to ensure long-term improvement in an underperforming school.

The DCSF aims to further reduce barriers to partnership working by:

- providing funding flexibilities so that schools in federations can pool resources – including sharing school business managers (SBMs)
- ensuring Ofsted inspections recognise schools that take on system leadership roles to improve provision and outcomes for children beyond their own gates
- financially rewarding headteachers and school leaders who play a wider system role

www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem

Why develop a federation?

Three research reports from Manchester University support federation as a viable model of leadership.

In the first report *Emerging Patterns of School Leadership (April 2009)*, personalities - often headteachers - are seen as the critical element in new models of leadership. However, in the more recent second report *Emerging patterns of school leadership 2: a deeper understanding (October 2009)*, the research team reports a distinct change in emphasis:

"The source of staff confidence is now shifting from personalities and people to the structures that have been put in place. This will further strengthen the new arrangements and is likely to improve their chances of remaining in place in the long term."

The same report also states:

"Emerging evidence suggests that collaboration underpinned by clearly defined purposes and formal supporting structures is most likely to be sustainable and have a positive impact on student outcomes."

The most recent research undertaken by Manchester University on behalf of the National College, *The impact of federations on student outcomes (October 2009)* compares findings from 528 schools within 50 local authorities. Half of the schools in the report are grouped into 122 federations and half use the traditional single school, single headteacher, single governing body model of school leadership. The report finds:

"There is evidence of impact on overall performance, in that while federation and comparator schools perform similarly at baseline, federation is positively related to performance in the years following federation."

Also:

"There is evidence to suggest that impact is strongest in performance federations." Performance federations include both low and high performing schools working together to raise standards.

The study stresses however that:

".....strong levels of trust and confidence must be developed in order for schools to make the formal and binding commitments that federation requires."

Clearly some of the key drivers for more collaborative working, which inevitably includes considering whether to federate, are the 2009 white paper *Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system, the subsequent implementation plan (November 2009)* and *Securing our future: using our resources well - a discussion paper on the better use of resources in schools (November 2009)* published by the DCSF.

The DCSF paper accepts that federations should always be driven by local need and circumstances and the first priority must always be whether they will improve outcomes for children, but it also makes the point that the government wants to explore ways in which federations can be encouraged, and increased collaboration can be facilitated.

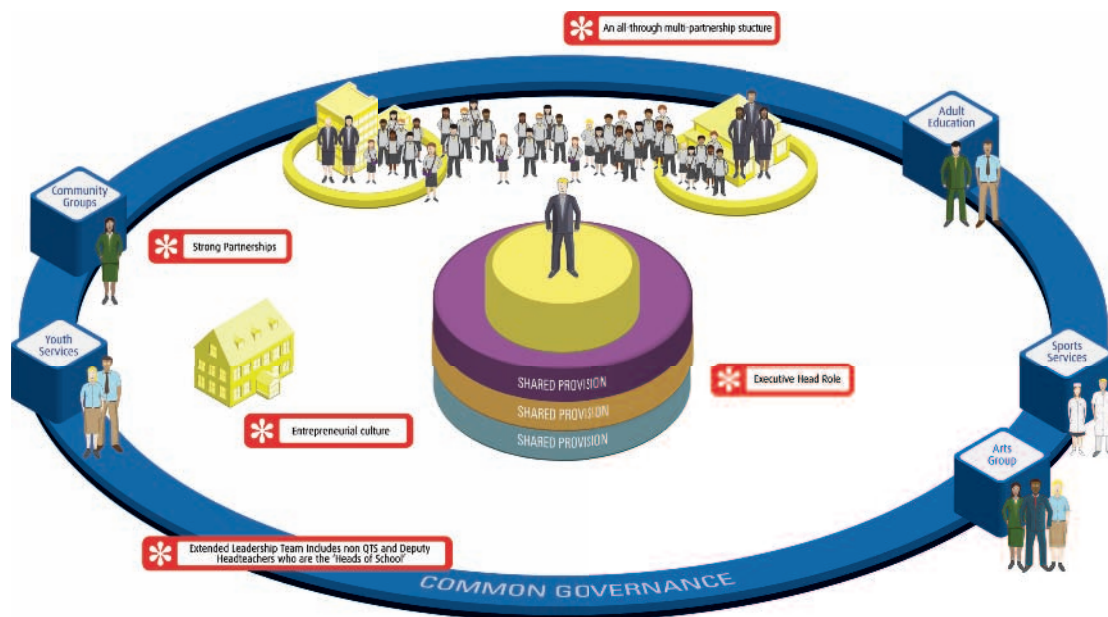
Why develop a federation?

In addition, the paper recognises that opportunities for greater efficiency exist in federation. It cites the Audit Commission report *Valuable Lessons (2009)*:

“While there may be increased costs through federation – for example increased travel and integration of computer systems – there can also be significant cost savings, for example by:

- making a broader curriculum more cost effective
- making joint appointments
- achieving economies of scale, for example by aggregating purchasing
- saving on planning and administrative time.”

A good example is **Canterbury Campus**:

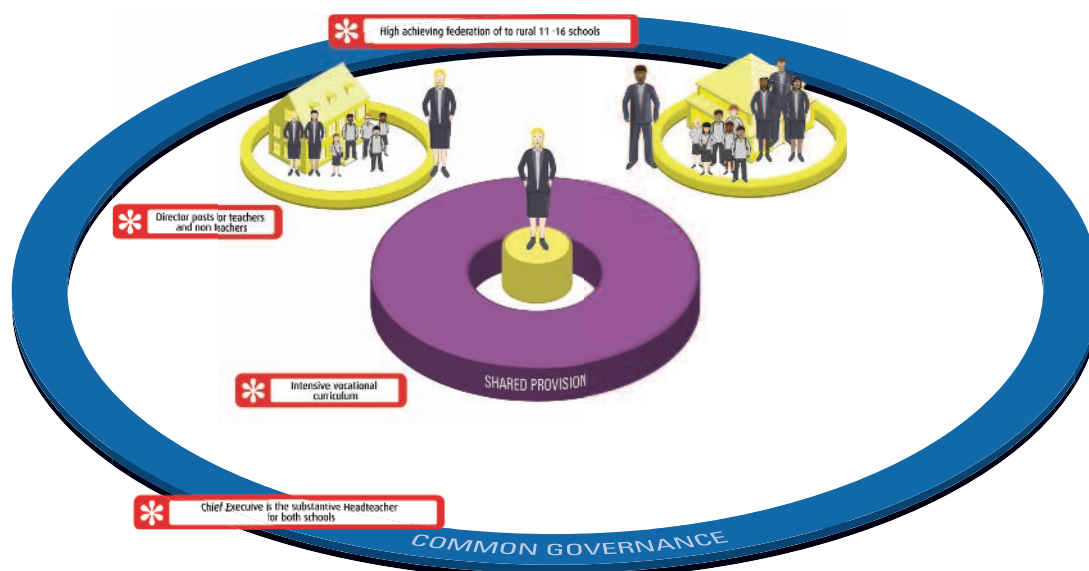


As the thriving Canterbury Campus federation, Canterbury High School and Beauherne Primary School, Canterbury, have built strong links with statutory and voluntary bodies and have developed excellent facilities for pupils and adults in the wider community. In 2008, more than 90 per cent of pupils achieved at least five A*-C grades at GCSE, while the primary school has benefited from additional resources and economies of scale. The federation has developed a wide range of professional development opportunities that span the educational phases, and the secondary school has benefited particularly from primary phase methodology and pedagogy, including insight into children's emotional and cognitive development.

Why develop a federation?

Advantages and disadvantages of federations

There are many advantages associated with federations, but the most successful are those built on existing strong relationships between schools who share a robust vision for improving outcomes for children and young people. Indeed, the National College's models of leadership toolkit stresses that a shared vision is an important foundation for a relationship as formal as a federation. A good example is the **Durham Federation**:



The Durham Federation in the north east of the country was formed in 2005. The governing bodies of both schools were fully committed to formalising their relationship through federation in order to provide long-term sustainability for two small rural secondary schools. Both schools and their pupils have benefited from the federation and standards have improved dramatically.

Formalising existing strong partnerships can substantially boost – be it directly or indirectly - work to secure better outcomes for learners:

- The vision at the heart of a federation is most likely to be school improvement and raising standards. By federating, schools can support each other and share accountability.
- Federations can help build sustainability of leadership and governance for small schools in rural communities.
- Schools that are geographically close can often pool resources to boost their curriculum offer, enabling children and young people to access subjects and areas of experience that might not be viable in a single school. Shared professional development has been a significant benefit for most federations who are more able to bring larger numbers of staff together to share ideas and even reduce workloads.

Why develop a federation?

- The expertise of individual members of staff, such as advanced skills teachers (ASTs) can be shared across all schools within a federation.
- Performance federations and those with executive headteachers have the potential to develop leadership capacity by creating opportunities for senior and middle leaders to step-up in a safe environment. Headteachers in federations often talk about "growing their own leaders".
- Because federations are tailored to their local context, share a strong vision and boost leadership capacity, they are often better able to manage the extended services agenda, the all-through schools agenda and the inclusion agenda.
- Federations are likely to develop new shared roles within their structures, such as school business managers (SBMs) who can centralise purchasing arrangements to achieve economies of scale.
- The shared accountability of federation structures can help improve the work-life balance of headteachers, making headship more attractive and offering aspiring heads a supportive environment for development.
- Having a single governing body enables school leaders to share accountability with governors for outcomes and to collaborate to identify new and more effective ways of working.

The disadvantages of federation often emerge when federation is enforced as a solution to a problem rather than being a commitment to a shared vision based on a solid existing relationship.

The implications of this are likely to be:

- Where a federation is not the model of choice, communities, staff or pupils may not have a sense of commitment to the new organisation, which can have a detrimental impact on the potential success of the federation.
- Lack of commitment can result in people losing their focus on standards and wasting energy grieving the loss of individual organisations and their previous identities. The consultation that is a statutory requirement for forming a federation can however, if handled well, mitigate some fears. Consultation needs to be full and frank, giving all stakeholders a chance to question the proposals and feel their views are being heard. Schools and their governors who are 'encouraged' to federate often have suspicions about the consequences of federation, so it is important to quash these to avoid a build up of negativity that could potentially erode the benefits of federation.
- Internally, one of the important issues for federations is to think through the newly-created roles and responsibilities and model the new dynamics so that they can be fully understood before the federation is formalised.
- Collaboration of any kind requires commitment rather than compliance. When that collaboration is as formal as federation, the ability of senior leaders to model collaborative behaviours is essential to the success of the new model.

Step-by-Step guide to forming a federation

This section describes in detail what to do to form a federation. It is a combination of good practice and statutory requirement. The guide is accompanied by a process diagram and can be used as a checklist for schools as they go through the federation process. This process does not apply to federations set up for the purposes of school improvement as a result of local authority intervention.

Step 1: Before taking the decision to federate

- The initiative should come from the headteacher(s) and governors.
- Make time to explore the initiative through internal discussion, visits to existing federations and conversations with the local authority or diocese (if appropriate) and with all the governing bodies concerned.

TIP - The more open and honest discussion is at this time, the fewer hurdles there will be later on in the process.

- Make staff and professional associations aware that discussions are taking place at the earliest opportunity and tell them about the implications for all schools.

TIP - The more discussions staff are involved in the better. Objections are less likely later on if staff concerns have been taken on board at the start of the process.

- Give quality time to establishing the vision for the federation and involving as many key stakeholders as possible.
- Think early on about leadership and governance structures. It will avoid misunderstanding and confusion later on.
- Look at the entire process and recognise the timelines and commitments implicit in moving to the next step.

Step 2: After the decision to federate has been made, but before formal consultation

- Make sure there is an on-going dialogue with all interested parties so that once the consultation process is launched there are no surprises.
- Set up a joint governance committee (this is not a legal requirement, but is good practice) that includes at least one governor from each of the schools in the potential federation.
- Task this committee with planning and managing the formal consultation process and keeping all parties informed about of progress by:
 - presenting a report on the proposal to federate as an agenda item at a meeting of each full governing body. This may need to be re-drawn in the light of the response
 - designing a new governance structure for the federation
 - deciding (in consultation with stakeholders) a name for the federation
 - drawing up a leadership structure that identifies key roles and responsibilities and gives careful thought to all the implications of the changes
 - engaging in discussions with the local authority, diocese, or both, identifying any human resources issues emerging from the work of the joint committee, and seeking appropriate advice and guidance to resolve these issues
 - examining the financial implications of federating. While each school will continue to receive its own budget, the federation will have to consider the extent to which funds will be pooled
 - planning a strategy and a timeline for conducting the formal consultation
 - deciding, if schools are from more than one local authority, which local authority will make the instrument of government of the federation.

Step-by-Step guide to forming a federation

Step 3: The formal consultation

- By this stage, the joint governance committee must have prepared and agreed a formal proposal for consultation and had it approved in its entirety by all the governing bodies concerned. The proposal should have been customised for each school.

TIP - The proposal needs to be written primarily with an audience of parents and staff in mind. It should be in plain English and explain what is required of those who are being consulted. In schools where languages other than English are spoken, translation should be provided so that all parents feel included and valued in this consultation.

- The proposal must contain:
 - the names and agreement of the all the governing bodies with which each school wishes to federate
 - details of the proposed size of the federation's governing body. The number of governors must be no fewer than nine and no more than 29, excluding sponsor governors and any additional governors. Headteacher governors must be included whether or not they have chosen to act as a governor. The proportion of governors can be rounded up or down to a whole number as long as it is no greater than 29. The exact proportion of governors and sponsor governors for different categories of schools federating together can be found in the *School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007*, available at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/federations/regulations
 - details of the proposed proportion of governors from each stakeholder group - staff, parents, local authority etc, any group that would be represented on the single governing body of a school of a certain category must be represented on the governing body of a federation.
 - details of the proposed staffing arrangements. These should explain the arrangements proposed for headteachers ie will there be one for each school or an executive headteacher with responsibility for more than one school? Unless there are staff vacancies in the schools concerned, or any member of staff has agreed to a variation in their working arrangements, the schools should assume that they will federate with their existing staffing arrangements.

TIP - Staff in community and voluntary controlled schools are employed by the local authority, but in foundation and voluntary aided schools the employer will become the federation's governing body.

- the identity of the admissions authority for the schools within the proposed federation.
- the date, not less than six weeks after the publication of the consultation proposal, by which written representations must be returned to the governing body – and the address to which they should be sent.
- Send the consultation proposal to all headteachers, staff, parents, the local authority, the diocese (if appropriate) and foundation governors or trustees of any school that has a foundation. The list of potential other stakeholders is as extensive as the schools proposing to federate wish it to be.

TIP - The wider the consultation is, the more likely it is that communities will feel engaged.

- Since September 2009 governing bodies have also been required to send a copy of the consultation proposal to the Secretary of State, via www.school.organistaion@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk, within one week of its publication.
- Organise consultation events where governors can explain their vision for a federation and answer questions from interested parties.

Step-by-Step guide to forming a federation

- Arrange a formal meeting to present the proposal to the professional associations representing all staff. If the associations want to follow this up with meetings with their members, embrace this as an opportunity to know exactly how staff feel and address any concerns. The joint committee or, if one hasn't been formed, the governing bodies of the school's that are forming the federation, should prepare a draft Instrument of Government for Federated Governing Bodies for submission to the local authority prior to the formation of the federation. This is the document that records the name of the federation and the constitution of its governing body. A model instrument is available online as Appendix 1 of the *Guidance on the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007* at www.governornet.co.uk
- This instrument must be checked for compliance with the statutory requirements and approved by the local authority even though the outcome of the consultation is not yet known.

TIP - A local authority can only decline to make a new instrument of government if the draft instrument does not comply with all the applicable statutory provisions.

- As soon as it is approved, the local authority must provide a copy of the instrument of government, or a consolidated version where there has been a variation, to each member of the governing body.

Step 4: After the formal consultation process

- Once the closing date for consultation has passed, the joint committee collates the responses in a report submitted to each of the schools' governing bodies.
- The governing bodies meet together to consider the responses collectively before meeting again separately to decide whether or not they wish to proceed with forming a federation. The governing bodies should then come back together again and share their views.

TIP - The process can be moved forward quickly and efficiently by bringing all the governing bodies together in one location where they can meet in different meeting rooms.

- The next steps depend entirely on what each governing body decides.

If one or more of the governing bodies decide that they do not wish to proceed, the other schools who still want to pursue federation must go back to the drawing board and produce another proposal for consultation.

If all the governing bodies still wish to proceed, they have to:

- Give notice to the local authority and inform all stakeholders by sending letters to parents, carers, the diocese (if relevant), staff and professional associations, and any others subject to the consultation.
- The governing bodies must also notify the Secretary of State of their decision on the proposals via www.school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk
- Schools that plan to federate should retain the joint committee as it can facilitate the next step effectively.

Step 5: Incorporation of the new governing body for the federation

- On the federation date, the governing bodies of the schools becoming federated are dissolved and the governing body of the federation is incorporated. This involves the individual governing bodies discharging their former responsibilities. To do this:
 - each school prepares a written report explaining how governors have fulfilled their responsibilities. This does not need to be a large document. A paragraph summary such as that contained within a headteachers' end of year report is sufficient.

Step-by-Step guide to forming a federation

- each school prepares an inventory of its assets for the new governing body.
- any land and property held by the schools' governing bodies before federation is transferred to the federated governing body.
- all rights and liabilities that existed immediately before the federation date are also transferred to the federation governing body.

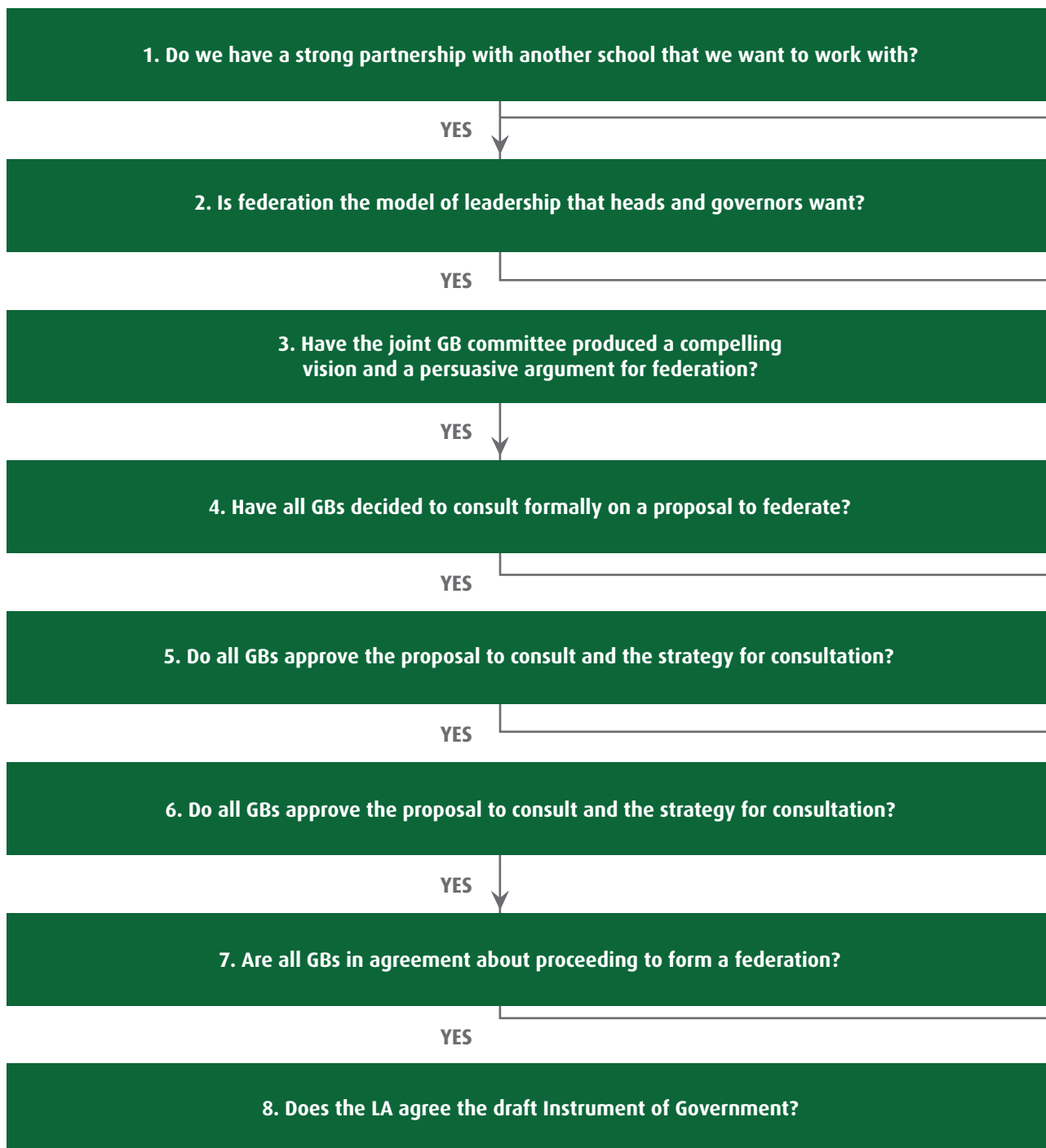
TIP - Seek legal advice at this stage from the local authority.

- a clerk to the federation's newly incorporated governing body, either alone or in support of the joint committee, organises the election of staff and parent governors.
 - all parents and staff receive the same letter asking for nominations etc, but it comes from their own school. The election process is conducted in line with guidance available from any local authority. For detailed guidance on the different categories of governor, the eligibility criteria and the position of the new governing body in appointing them see *Categories of Governor, (Part 3 of the Federation Regulations), Guidance on the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007*.
 - the local authority supplies a copy of the Instrument of Government to every member of the federation governing body.
- Once the new governing body is in place there is a lot to do before the new federation opens. Any outstanding decisions from the work undertaken by the joint governance committee (in step 2) are made.
 - Governors committees are agreed and the membership decided.
 - Performance management governors are identified for the headteacher(s).
 - Work with human resources on new contracts is completed in readiness for September.
 - Financial projections are made, based on any decision to pool budgets.
 - Work begins on key areas for school and federation improvement.
 - The agenda for the first meeting of the newly constituted governing body is drawn up.

TIP - A recommended first agenda from Devon County Council Federation's toolkit is:

1. Clerk opens the meeting
2. Appointment of community governors
3. Election of chair and vice chair
4. Declaration of pecuniary Interests
5. Agree a model code of conduct
6. Agree committee structure and membership
7. Agree appointment of performance management governors
8. Discharge reports and inventories presented for each school
9. School improvement priorities for each school
10. Dates of meetings for the forthcoming year.

The process flowchart



The process flowchart



The process flowchart



FAQs

What is a federation?

A federation is a group of two or more schools with a single governing body. A federation is formally constituted using statutory regulations. The statutory context for federations is the *Education Act 2002*, which states "where any schools are federated....they shall have a single governing body constituted under a single instrument of government".

What kinds of school can federate?

Since 30 August 2004, maintained schools, including voluntary aided, foundation, trusts, maintained nursery schools and special schools, have been able to federate. Federation was initially limited to a maximum of five schools, but the *School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007* removed the upper limit on the number of schools that can federate.

More informal collaborative arrangements can be created between maintained schools and schools not maintained by local education authorities such as city technology colleges, academies and independent schools (and further education institutions), but they cannot share a single governing body and so cannot be federations. Maintained special schools can federate with other maintained special schools, or with any mixture of maintained schools.

Who needs to know if you have agreed to form a federation?

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 recognised federations as new models of leadership and, in 2009, the regulations were amended to require governors of proposed federations to notify the Secretary of State of their proposals (within a week of publishing them) and of their final decision. Notification is made via www.school.organisation@dcsf.gsi.gov.uk.

What are the likely conditions for a successful federation?

Ideally schools who are thinking about federation will already have a strong and established relationship with one another. Federation requires the commitment of all parties: governors need to agree that it is the best way forward and staff, pupils and parents will want to understand the benefits. The schools federating also need to develop a shared vision. All of these things are much easier if a good working relationship already exists.

Is it easier to appoint an executive headteacher than a headteacher of a single institution?

There is certainly growing interest in executive headteacher positions from experienced leaders looking for a new challenge, but it is not yet clear whether it is easier for schools to recruit for these roles.

How can a federation overcome culture differences associated with federating schools from differing backgrounds, such as faith and community schools?

Collaboration must not be forced or created, but driven by a shared vision. All parties must be fully engaged and proactive about overcoming barriers. There are a number of tools (including *the Models of Leadership Toolkit*) on the National College's models of leadership website that can help schools establish a clear mandate and priorities around collaboration. There's also an associated online community that can help in this respect.

FAQs

Will schools lose their individual character as part of a federation?

Schools in federations continue to be individual schools, and admission to each school continues to be determined by the appropriate admission authority (the local authority in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, the federated governing body in the case of foundation and voluntary aided schools). Schools also keep their existing category and character, and in particular do not gain, lose or change their religious character through membership of a federation.

What are the benefits or disadvantages of pooling budgets?

Pooled resources give schools much greater buying power – and thus influence with suppliers. They can allow the schools to achieve economies of scale and afford new services beyond the reach of a single school. The federated governing body receives the delegated budgets for all the schools in the federation, which it can then allocate to each individual school, or budgets can be used collectively with the agreement of governors. The federated governing body has control over how much is put into a shared pot for joint provision. Each school must remain financially viable, so care must be taken that any shared commitments - especially long-term - are realistic and there is no over commitment.

Will schools in a federation be inspected separately or jointly with one report published?

Schools in a federation are inspected separately and have their own self-evaluation forms (SEFs), but it is appropriate to ask Ofsted to inspect the schools in a federation at the same time in order to form a rounded picture of the federation's work.

Ofsted is increasingly aware of, and interested in, the role that federations and collaborations play in improving standards and it has asked inspection providers to use the same team when inspecting schools in a federation. Some federations do produce a joint SEF and use colour coding to indicate which sections apply to the individual schools.

Currently, the government publishes performance information for schools individually, but the *September 2009 Framework for Inspection* creates the opportunity for a federation to be inspected as a whole and makes distinct reference to assessing the impact of partnership.

Can a federation be time-limited?

Federations are seen as medium to long-term commitments. They should not be entered into as a quick fix. It is possible however for schools to withdraw from a federation. The protocol for de-federation is described in the FAQ that follows. The amount of effort involved would be significant.

If a federation of three schools has three head teachers (rather than an executive head and three institution leaders) and one teacher leaves, can the two remaining heads lead the federation?

Depending on the circumstances, yes. The governors must be confident that the work of the federation and the responsibilities across the group of schools are effectively distributed. Every school must still have a nominated leader, but there is no reason why an individual cannot lead more than one school.

FAQs

Can a school leave a federation?

The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2007 include procedures for a school to leave a federation. According to the regulations, the following procedures must be followed.

- A written request must be given to the federation's governing body signed by either:
 - two or more governors
 - one fifth of parents of registered pupils at the federated school
 - two fifths of staff paid to work at the federated school
 - the local authority
 - the trustees of the federated school, or
 - a body entitled to appoint foundation governors onto the governing body of a federation.
- Within one week, the federation's governing body must then give notice of the request to:
 - all relevant local authorities
 - the headteacher of the federation and each headteacher of a federated school
 - any trustees of a trust relating to the federated school (in the case of a voluntary controlled school with a religious foundation or a voluntary aided school with a trust)
 - the appropriate diocesan authority (in the case of a Church of England or Roman Catholic school)
 - the appropriate religious body (in the case of all other faith schools)
 - all staff paid to work at the federated school
 - every person known to be a parent of a registered pupil at the federated school about which the request has been made, and
 - anyone else the federation's governing body feels it is appropriate to notify.
- In not less than 14 days the governing body must formally consider the request and any responses from all those notified of the request. This must be a formal item of business on its meeting agenda and the governing body has to decide if:
 - the school in question should leave the federation, and on what date
 - the federation should be dissolved, and if so when, or
 - the federated school should not leave the federation.
 - the governing body must give notice of the decision, within one week, to everyone it notified of the request.

FAQs

Can schools in different local authorities federate?

Technically yes, but if the schools wishing to federate are in more than one local authority area, they must agree between them which local authority should make the instrument of government for the federation.

Federations appear to be used solely when a school is in difficulties. Are there any examples of federations being established as part of a strategic plan?

Federation is a tool for positive improvement for all schools, whether they are high performing or in difficulty. Federation is a way of formalising existing collaboration and providing a foundation for activities. A number of performance federations have been established, in which high and low performing schools work together to raise standards, research shows that both schools benefit from the arrangement. The most consistently successful federations are those where the schools involved have come to the well thought out decision that federation is right for them. There are also instances of local authorities (Devon, for example) working with schools to establish federations as part of their joint strategic planning.

What are the benefits for primary federations in isolated rural communities?

Small, isolated schools in rural locations can be limited in the breadth of resources and services they can offer. By working together, they can provide a wider range of services, including specialist teaching staff, ancillary support staff, transport links, greater professional development and working jointly with partners. Federations have also attracted executive heads to schools experiencing difficulty recruiting headteachers. In addition, rural schools can use a federation as the basis for a more fundamental reorganisation, such as moving pupils to different sites based on their age.

Is there any particular training for executive head teachers?

Yes, the National College's new Head for the Future programme includes a focus on collaboration and different models of school leadership. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust offers a two-year programme for head teachers who have, or are likely to take on, the leadership of schools within a federation or partnership. There are also more general programmes for experienced heads, along with peer support and development provided via the models of leadership online community.

Are all-through schools automatically seen as federations?

No. An all-through (all-age) school setting links the stages of education together in a shared context through collaboration, federation or trust or by the creation of a single school (amalgamation). The five main reasons for growing interest in all-through school settings are:

- personalisation - raising achievement
- pedagogy - sharing expertise across phases
- care and support - achieving the five Every Child Matters outcomes
- community - engagement in learning
- organisation - shared expertise and resources.

Different structures of schools and models of leadership tend to emerge in response to local needs and priorities, and all-through school settings can suit communities that place a priority strong integration between services.

All-through schools can take different forms. Some are federations in which schools share facilities such as a site and support services. Others have formed links by creating a trust and even bringing in other partners.

FAQs

What is the evidence that federations improve standards?

The most significant evidence produced so far is research undertaken by Manchester University on behalf of the National College, which compared findings from 528 schools within 50 local authorities. *The impact of federations on student outcomes (October 2009)* found "evidence of impact on overall performance, in that while federation and comparator schools perform similarly at baseline, federation is positively related to performance in the years following federation." Also: "There is evidence to suggest that impact is strongest in performance federations."

What is an Accredited School Provider (ASP) or an Accredited Schools Group (ASG)?

The accreditation system was launched by the DCSF in February 2010. It states that where a federation is set up, as a result of local authority intervention, to support improvement in an under performing school the leading school should be a DCSF Accredited School Provider (ASP) or an Accredited School Group (ASG). In order to be accredited, ASGs will already be involved in significant partnership working, be able to demonstrate its impact, and have the capacity to undertake further work of this type. ASPs will either be already leading improvement in one or two schools, or have the capacity and expertise to do so. Both should submit their proposals for becoming accredited to the DCSF.

Information on the accreditation system for primary schools

www.dcsf.gov.uk/accredited/downloads/AccreditedGuidancePrim.pdf

Information for the accreditation system for secondary schools

www.dcsf.gov.uk/accredited/downloads/guidance.pdf

Where to go for further information

The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2004
www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/20042042.htm

For further DCSF information on federations
www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/federations

The Education Act 2002
www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_1

The Education and Inspections Act 2006
www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2006/ukpga_20060040_en_1

For more information on Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century schools system
www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem

Emerging Patterns of School Leadership (National College, April 2009)
www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=17175&filename=emerging-patterns-of-school-leadership.pdf

Emerging Patterns of School Leadership 2: a deeper understanding (National College, October 2009)
www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=31002&filename=emerging-patterns-of-school-leadership-2.pdf

The impact of federations on student outcomes (National College, October 2009)
www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=31011&filename=impact-of-federations-on-student-incomes.pdf

For a summary of Achieving More Together: Adding value through Partnership (009) Robert Hill for the Association of School and College Leaders, 2008)
www.ascl.org.uk/mainwebsite/resources/document/amt%20summary.pdf

Securing our future: using our resources well – a discussion paper on the better uses of resources in schools (DCSF, November 2009)
<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/Securing-our-future.pdf>

Devon County Council guidance on Federations: Federation Toolkit:
<http://www.devon.gov.uk/dgs-federationprotocolpdf>

Valuable Lessons (Audit Commission, 2009)
www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/AuditCommissionReports/NationalStudies/valuablelessons30jun2009REP.pdf

Next steps

To find out more about the Models of Leadership you can:

Explore the Models of Leadership website

www.nationalcollege.org.uk/modelsofleadership

Contact the Models of Leadership team

mol@nationalcollege.org.uk

Attend a Models of Leadership event

www.nationalcollege.org.uk/modelsofleadership/events

Use the Models of Leadership toolkit

The National College has developed a toolkit to help you explore the right model of leadership for your context.

You can download the toolkit free at the Models of Leadership website or you can order a hard copy, which includes overlays to help you build a diagram of your model, from

www.nationalcollege.org.uk/publications, price £10.

Look out for further Models of Leadership guides

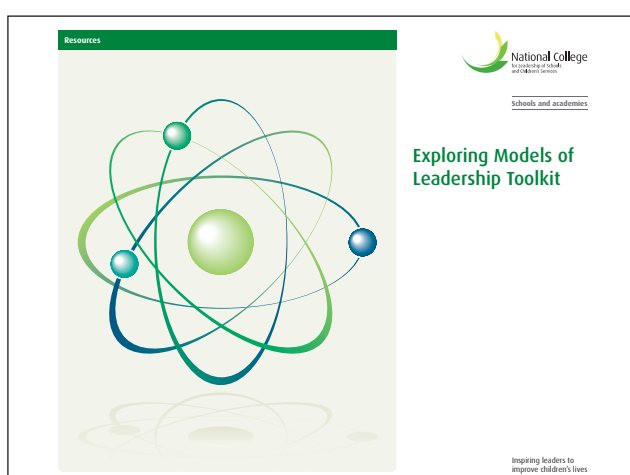
The National College will be publishing guides on each of the main models of leadership:

- 1 Introduction to Models of Leadership
- 2 Shared headship of a single school
- 3 Partnerships and Collaborations
- 4 Federations
- 5 Trusts
- 6 Academies
- 7 All-through schools
- 8 Executive Heads
- 9 Building Schools for Future and the Primary Capital Programme
- 10 School Business Managers
- 11 14-19 Education
- 12 Chains and Franchises
- 13 Local Authorities

The guides will be available for download from the National College website at

www.nationalcollege.org.uk/modelsofleadership

The term 'school' is used in this publication for consistency and denotes any learning setting. Further information about the case study examples mentioned can be found on the Models of Leadership website.



The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services is committed to excellence and dedicated to inclusiveness. We exist to develop and inspire great leaders of schools, early years settings and children's services. We share the same ambition – to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people.

Membership of the National College gives access to unrivalled development and networking opportunities, professional support and leadership resources.

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