



Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are writing to inform you that, following discussions between the Governing Bodies of Castle Lower, Hazeldene Lower and Newnham Middle Schools, we are proposing what we believe is an exciting and unique federation between the three schools.

This federation will be composed of two parts: a 'hard' federation between Castle Lower School and Newnham Middle School; and a 'soft' federation with Hazeldene Lower School. This would mean that Castle and Newnham would become one school and Hazeldene would become a primary school and work alongside them with pupils entering the combined school in Year 7. All three schools would remain on their respective sites with any changes to admissions coming into effect in 2017.

The intention behind the federation is to offer pupils and parents the opportunity of a 'through school' operating from Reception through to Year 11 (ages 4 – 16).

Our vision is for an outstanding, local, all-through school that:

1. Builds on the strengths, shared ethos and values of the three schools.
2. Delivers consistent and coordinated teaching and learning approaches and practices from ages 4 to 16.
3. Operates on a stable and sustainable base. The local school system in recent years - through the continuation of both two-tier (primary, secondary) and three-tier (lower, middle, upper) schools, and the proliferation of new school types (academies, free schools) - has created a lot of uncertainty and instability. Federating enables the federated schools to take greater control over the educational environment and provide a truly stable school offer to children in the local community.
4. Provides continuity of education from Reception through to Year 11, for all pupils by minimising the transitions between schools that characterise the current three and two tier system, and that can be unhelpful to pupil progress.
5. Provides staff with greater opportunity to share best practice in the development of top-quality teaching.
6. Offers opportunities for resource sharing to enrich all years of the school, for example sports facilities and equipment, music, teaching technologies and materials.

Following on from this letter there will be a full statutory consultation process which will commence in June of this year. This process will be comprised of documents giving greater detail of the proposal and meetings at the respective schools for you to share your views and ask further questions.

We believe this to be a very exciting proposal for the future of children's education in this part of Bedford. We hope that you share our enthusiasm for the project and we look forward to hearing your views in the coming months.

Yours Sincerely

Mr T. Barwood  
Chair at Castle

Mr D. Wood  
Chair at Newnham

Mrs V. Cromwell  
Chair at Hazeldene