



Consultation about whether to establish The Ecclesia Federation

Bishop Winnington-Ingram CofE Primary School and Holy Trinity CofE Primary School have been working in partnership since 2023. The two Governing Bodies want to hear your views about their proposal to jointly form a federation, which would be called The Ecclesia Federation. This document provides more detail about why this is being proposed and how to respond. The consultation ends on 15 July 2025.

The two schools also work in partnership with St Mary's CofE Primary School Norwood Green. St Mary's is an academy school and so cannot join a federation; if the federation is formed the three schools would continue to work in close partnership which would be referred to as The Ecclesia Partnership.

What is being proposed?

This consultation is about a proposal to establish a Federation that would involve Bishop Winnington-Ingram CofE Primary School and Holy Trinity CofE Primary School. Both schools are Church of England schools, owned by the Church, supported by the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS), and maintained as voluntary-aided schools by Hillingdon Council.

Annex 1 provides summary information about the proposed federation, and Annex 2 provides the proposed vision for the federation.

In May 2025 each Governing Body gave in-principle approval for the federation and approved undertaking this consultation. The responses from this consultation will inform the final decision of each Governing Body.

Why is this being proposed?

The Governing Bodies believe that being part of a partnership since 2023 – rather than operating as stand-alone schools – has provided benefits to each of the schools involved. In particular the Governing Bodies believe that strong partnerships are more likely to consistently achieve success than small stand-alone schools because:

- Strong partnerships have a larger number of staff working for them than individual small schools. This means that there is greater collective expertise and capacity to ensure, for example, that our curriculum and resources are high quality.
- Curriculum planning and development takes place across the partnership, which both improves its quality (as more people are involved) and reduces workload for individual teachers significantly. As our schools are one class per year, the partnership ensures that class teachers have year-group colleagues in other schools to plan and work with.

- Working across schools helps us retain and develop staff, and makes us attractive for future staff when we need to recruit.
- Our middle and senior leaders value the partnership because we have a highly effective culture that they helped to shape and that provides opportunities for them to grow and so we develop our leaders of the future.
- Working collaboratively enables us to be more financially efficient than small, individual schools.

The partnership has more capacity, expertise, and sustainability than individual one-form entry schools. This enables us to be more effective. The greater scale also allows us to offer more opportunities for staff development and progression, so helping us retain staff and also be attractive to new staff if we need to recruit.

Turning our partnership into a federation provides a secure, longer term spiritual and academic community for our pupils and staff, enabling them to flourish.

In summary, establishing The Ecclesia Federation:

1. Reflects the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) policy for partnerships between maintained schools that intend to continue for the long-term to be secured as a federation;
2. Secures the existing partnership, enabling collective, strategic, effective planning;
3. Secures leadership capacity and structures for the schools, improving succession planning;
4. Embeds the financial benefits that have been accrued through partnership, in particular in relation to leadership structures and financial planning / management;
5. Enables governance and leadership to both operate across the federation, improving collaboration and collective responsibility; and
6. Does not preclude future changes, such as schools joining or leaving the federation.

What is a Federation?

A federation is two or more local authority maintained schools operating under the governance of a single governing body. Each federated school is treated as an individual school, meaning it:

- keeps its existing DfE category and does not gain, lose, or change its religious character through being part of a federation;
- continues to have its admissions determined by the appropriate admission authority;
- will receive individual funding; and
- is inspected individually by OFSTED.

In all respects other than governance, the partnership already operates in a similar style to a federation – i.e. a shared vision / culture / ethos, shared executive leadership, consistency of policies and procedures, aligned school business systems and approaches.

St Mary's CofE Primary School Norwood Green is also part of our partnership. It is an academy school and so is unable to join a federation. It is considered unlikely that the Diocese or the DfE would allow BWI and HT to join St Mary's in a three school multi-academy trust as it would still be viewed as too small. If the federation is formed it would continue to work in close partnership with St Mary's to the benefit of all three schools, and the broader partnership would be known as The Ecclesia Partnership.

What would the implications be for pupils and their families?

On a day-to-day basis pupils and families would notice no difference. This is because the partnership already has a consistent approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, and has already developed and adopted consistent policies and practices in areas such as behaviour, attendance, and special educational needs. These would continue into the federation. The ethos and expectations would remain as they are now.

There is already a partnership leadership team, consisting of Mrs Blake as Executive Headteacher and a Head of School for each school. This would continue into the federation.

The current individual school name, school uniform, timings of the school day, and school term dates would all continue if the federation is formed.

Establishing the federation is about securing the existing partnership so that it can plan with confidence for the future. In all areas besides governance, the partnership already operates like a federation.

How would the federation be governed?

A new Federation Governing Body would replace the two existing Governing Bodies (which would automatically cease on the date that the federation becomes operational). The Federation Governing Body would have the same responsibilities for both schools as the current Governing Body has for each school now. Annex 1 includes the proposed structure of the Federation Governing Body and the process for appointing the governors.

Governors from all schools within The Ecclesia Partnership would also continue to work together through a shared committee; this continues the arrangements that already exist.

How would the federation be led? What are the staffing implications?

Mrs Blake would continue to be the Executive Headteacher leading both schools. The Head of School would continue at each school.

Staff at each school would remain at that school, with their employment transferred from their current Governing Body to the Federation Governing Body through a TUPE process (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations). TUPE has the effect of transferring all of an employee's contractual terms and conditions – i.e. salary, allowances, annual leave, working hours etc. There would be no restructure, redundancies, or financial detriment for any staff as a result of forming the federation.

What could happen in the future?

If the federation is formed, it would continue to work in close partnership with St Mary's CofE Primary School Norwood Green through The Ecclesia Partnership, and other schools may join the partnership.

There are mechanisms whereby other local authority schools could seek to join the federation (which would legally mean ending the federation that is currently being proposed and forming a new larger federation), or whereby the schools could choose to end the federation and return to having separate Governing Bodies. It is also possible for a local authority or the Governing Body to propose the closure of a school within a federation.

What other options are available?

Other options available to each Governing Body are:

- To continue with the current arrangements – this option is not compatible with LDBS guidance that encourages formalisation of partnerships if they are intended to be long-term. This could precipitate the end of the partnership.
- To end the partnership and act as separate schools – this is not considered to be in pupils' best interests due to the educational success of the schools and its positive impact upon the financial position of each school.
- Establish a multi-academy trust, or join a multi-academy trust, instead of a federation – it is considered unlikely that the three schools (BWI, HT, and St Mary's) would be allowed to be a multi academy trust of three schools and at this stage the schools do not wish to join a larger multi academy trust. Forming the federation would not prevent the schools deciding in the future to join a multi academy trust if that is considered appropriate in the future.

Who are we consulting?

We are consulting staff, parents and carers, local authorities, London Diocesan Board for Schools, our Parochial Church Councils, Hillingdon Deanery, our ward councillors and MPs, trade unions, associated professionals, and other interested parties. Any individual or organisation is welcome to respond to the consultation.

How to have your say

You are welcome to share any comments or questions with us by:

- Completing the online feedback form that is available [here](#) or from the website of each school; or
- Completing a paper copy of the feedback form, available from either school office; or
- Writing to the Executive Headteacher, Rachel Blake, at the postal address of either school.

The consultation ends on 15 July 2025.

What happens after the consultation?

All responses to the consultation will be carefully considered by each Governing Body before they each independently make a decision about whether they wish to form The Ecclesia Federation.

If both Governing Bodies decide to form the federation, we would notify all staff and parents / carers as well as other organisations as required by the Department for Education. The Federation Governing Body would be established during September / October 2025, alongside the TUPE process for the transfer of staff to the federation, ready for the federation to become operational on 1 November 2025.

If either Governing Body decides not to form the federation, Governors would need to consider the most appropriate next steps for the partnership.

Annex 1: Summary information regarding the proposed federation

The following table summarises key information about the proposed federation.

Proposed name of the federation	The Ecclesia Federation
Schools proposed to be within the federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bishop Winnington-Ingram CofE Primary School; and • Holy Trinity CofE Primary School.
Proposed date for the federation to become operational	1 November 2025
Proposed composition of the Federation Governing Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Headteacher (who is the legal Headteacher of each school proposing the federation); • Two parent governors elected by parents from across all the schools; • One staff governor elected by staff from across all the schools; • One governor nominated by the local authority; and • Eight foundation governors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 appointed by London Diocesan Board for Schools; ○ 1 appointed by Hillingdon Deanery Synod; ○ 1 appointed by Harrow Deanery Synod; ○ 1 appointed by the PCC of St Martin's, Ruislip; ○ 1 appointed by the PCC of Holy Trinity, Northwood; ○ Vicar of St Martin's, Ruislip (ex-officio); and ○ Vicar of Holy Trinity, Northwood (ex-officio). • Total number of Governors: 13
Employer of staff	All employees of the each current Governing Body who would be employed on the date that the federation becomes operational would transfer their employment to the Federation Governing Body through a process governed by the TUPE regulations. All staff employed after the federation is operational would be employed by the Federation Governing Body.
Admissions authority	The Federation Governing Body would become the admissions authority for each of the schools within the federation (this role is currently held by each Governing Body as a Voluntary Aided school), and would determine the admissions policy (including over-subscription criteria) for each school.

Annex 2: Proposed vision for The Ecclesia Federation



The Ecclesia Federation would contain some of the schools who collectively form the broader Ecclesia Partnership. The vision for the Federation and the Partnership would be the same.

Our Vision: The Ecclesia Partnership

Ecclesia, means 'a gathering' or an 'assembly of people,' a collective built on strong foundations, just as Jesus shared in Matthew 16:18: "*You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.*" Our schools stand on the firm foundation of our staff, parents, governors, and leaders each a vital part of the whole that enable our children to flourish.

Our vision is inspired and guided by the Diocese of London 2030 Vision, which calls us to be:

- Places where all can flourish – nurturing every child to grow in confidence, curiosity, and compassion.
- Places that enable transformational futures – empowering learners to go forward with courage, equipped for life and leadership in an ever-changing world.
- Deeply Christian communities – rooted in faith and animated by the invitation of Jesus to "*life in all its fullness*" (John 10:10), serving the common good and celebrating the worth of every individual.

Together, as The Ecclesia Partnership, we are greater through collaboration and shared purpose. We are:

- A fellowship of schools where education is a joyful pursuit, relationships are deeply valued, and every child is known, nurtured, and empowered to thrive.
- A partnership where diversity enriches learning, and unity strengthens our schools

As we walk forward, we do so with purpose and expectation, confident that by working together in Christ, we will build something lasting, beautiful, and full of life.

The Ecclesia Partnership

Growing in faith. Overflowing in love. Flourishing together.

Annex 3: Governance of the The Ecclesia Federation

Federation Governing Body

On the date that the federation becomes operational, the existing Governing Body of each of the schools joining the federation would automatically cease and the federation Governing Body would be incorporated.

The composition of a federation Governing Body must comply with Department for Education regulations. The following proposed composition of the federation Governing Body has been agreed with LDBS:

- The Executive Headteacher (who is the legal Headteacher of each school proposing the federation);
- Two parent governors elected by parents from across all the schools;
- One staff governor elected by staff from across all the schools;
- One governor nominated by the local authority; and
- Eight foundation governors:
 - 2 appointed by London Diocesan Board for Schools;
 - 1 appointed by Hillingdon Deanery Synod;
 - 1 appointed by Harrow Deanery Synod;
 - 1 appointed by the PCC of St Martin's, Ruislip;
 - 1 appointed by the PCC of Holy Trinity, Northwood;
 - Vicar of St Martin's, Ruislip (ex-officio); and
 - Vicar of Holy Trinity, Northwood (ex-officio).

Terms of office for all Governors would be four years, with the exception of the Executive Headteacher and the Vicars who would be ex-officio.

This structure would be established in a new Instrument of Government, which would be legally made by Hillingdon Council, who would also nominate the LA Governor.

The Federation Governing Body would be established as a new Governing Body. There is no 'right of transfer' from the existing Governing Bodies. Therefore for the Federation Governing Body:

- The Executive Headteacher would be an ex-officio Governor (Rachel Blake);
- Nominations would be sought for the parent and staff governor roles from the communities of the schools forming the federation, with elections held if required (NB As is currently the case, parent and staff governors do not represent parents or staff, they do bring the perspective of a parent or of a member of staff to the GB);
- The local authority would propose the local authority governor (who would be appointed by the Federation Governing Body); and
- The foundation bodies would each appoint their governors (with the two Vicars as ex-officio roles automatically joining the Governing Body).

The Federation Governing Body would have the same legal responsibilities as each current Governing Body, but for all schools within the federation. The focus when seeking Governors (whether for foundation appointments or via parent or staff nomination) would be to secure individuals with the capacity to undertake the role, a commitment to the federation as a whole and all of the children that it serves, and for the Governing Body collectively to have an appropriate breadth of skills and experience.