

# FULHAM CROSS GIRLS' SCHOOL and HENRY COMPTON SCHOOL

Proposal to Create a Federation  
and Adopt Trust School Status



## Consultation report

## **Fulham Cross Girls' school and Henry Compton School**

### **Consultation on the proposal to create a Federation and adopt Trust School status**

#### ***Report on the process and response***

##### **Background**

One of the outcomes of the Fulham Schools' Commission last year was a recommendation to bring together Fulham Cross Girls' School and Henry Compton School. The Governors of both schools have agreed that working together would enable further positive change. They feel stronger collaboration between the two schools would raise standards, promote inclusion, and further develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

The Governing Bodies and the Local Authority are proposing that the two schools join together in a Federation, jointly convert to Foundation School status and adopt a charitable trust to act as a Foundation supporting the schools. The two schools have been in detailed discussions with Roehampton University as a potential Trust partner.

The Federation model would actively seek to maintain the ethos of separate schools, on separate sites, in the lower years and planned sharing of modules at KS4 leading to a merged sixth form. This would be overseen by a joint Governing Body supported by a Trust. There would be opportunities to maintain collaborative arrangements with William Morris Sixth Form, to which a majority of Fulham Cross and Henry Compton students currently transfer at 16 plus. This model would fully maintain single sex teaching up to the end of KS3 on both sites as at present.

The proposals have implications for everyone associated with the school: pupils, parents, teachers and friends of the schools, as well as the wider community. Accordingly, the Governing Bodies of Fulham Cross Girls' and Henry Compton schools called a public consultation in order to canvas what people think of the proposals, providing an opportunity for everyone to comment before a decision is taken on whether or not to proceed.

##### **Consultation**

1. The consultation period began on 1 October 2008 and lasted until 21 November.

The key written vehicle for the consultation was the consultation document (see accompanying weblink). The document was developed to outline the objectives of the proposal and how they could be achieved.

The proposed model maintains Fulham Cross Girls' and Henry Compton as separate schools on their current sites. The management of the two schools

would be brought together under the supervision of a single Governing Body, and a single Principal. This arrangement could build on the strengths of both schools without losing their individual identities. The Federation would be supported by a Trust.

Stakeholders were invited to comment on the proposal at either of the two public meetings arranged, one in each school, or by returning a reply-paid response card, completing the online consultation questionnaire via the Hammersmith & Fulham council and schools' own websites, or by direct response.

All pupils in both schools were given the consultation document, together with a covering letter that drew parents attention to the public meetings and other ways of making their views known. All schools, as partners in the Local Authority, were asked to give their views on the proposals. The schools received copies of the consultation document and were asked to make them available to as wide an audience as possible. The Borough's primary schools undertook a 'pupil post' exercise, ensuring that all Year 6 pupils were given a copy of the document to take home to their parents. Translation provision was arranged with the Community Interpreting, Translating and Access Service so that families with English as a foreign language could be reached effectively. In total 3,500 consultation documents were distributed.

The consultation was publicised with articles and adverts in the Borough's free newspaper *h&f news* (distribution 84,700) and given a high profile on its website.

## **Response to the consultation**

2. The consultation document had a tear-off Freepost questionnaire, on which people were encouraged to respond. The same series of questions was posted on the CitizenSpace Hammersmith & Fulham consultation website. In total, there were 61 of these responses: 13 online and 48 hard copy. 35 other people visited the online consultation but did not complete the questionnaire (though some posted comments, which are included in Appendix A below).
3. In addition to the 61 questionnaire responses, two trades unions responded in more detail:
  - National Union of Teachers (Hammersmith and Fulham Teachers' Association)
  - UNISON (Hammersmith and Fulham Branch)

## **How people responded**

4. Those responding were asked to identify their status and their association, broken down as follows:

- Pupils/students: 10 (8 Fulham Cross; 2 Henry Compton)
  - Parents: 30 (16 Fulham Cross; 14 Henry Compton)
  - Teacher/staff members: 13 (5 Fulham Cross; 8 Henry Compton)
  - Governors: 2 (both Fulham Cross)
  - Others: 6
  - Unions: 2
5. Overall results of the online and hand written questionnaire responses are as follows:

- ***Do you agree with the proposal to Federate the two schools?***

Definitely agree: 24  
 Tend to agree: 15  
 Tend to disagree: 5  
 Definitely disagree: 16  
 No view expressed: 1

- ***Do you agree with the proposed structure of the Governing Body?***

Definitely agree: 22  
 Tend to agree: 22  
 Tend to disagree: 3  
 Definitely disagree: 13  
 No view expressed: 1

- ***Do you agree with our proposed approach to staffing issues?***

Definitely agree: 25  
 Tend to agree: 23  
 Tend to disagree: 3  
 Definitely disagree: 9  
 No view expressed: 1

- ***Do you agree that the Trust School idea should be explored further?***

Definitely agree: 20  
 Tend to agree: 17  
 Tend to disagree: 3  
 Definitely disagree: 11  
 No view expressed: 11

The sample size was relatively small, but reaction to all proposals was broadly favourable. Support for the proposals (aggregating ‘definitely agree’ and ‘tend to agree’) outweighed opposition (‘definitely disagree’ and ‘tend to’) in ratios ranging from almost 2:1 for Federation, to 4:1 for the approach to staffing issues. Notably, 11 respondents, all parents, expressed no view about the proposal to explore Trust status.

- 39 agreed with the proposal to Federate, 21 disagreed, one expressed no view.

- 44 agreed with the proposed structure of the Governing Body, 16 disagreed, one expressed no view.
- 48 agreed with the proposed approach to staffing issues, 12 disagreed, one expressed no view.
- 37 agreed that the Trust idea should be explored, 13 disagreed, 11 expressed no view.

As demonstrated by the stakeholder analysis that follows, adverse reaction came almost entirely from some Fulham Cross parents and pupils who expressed concerns that the proposals would compromise provision of single sex education for girls.

### **Pupils/students**

6. 10 responses were received from pupils: eight Fulham Cross; two Henry Compton.

The majority agreed with the proposals, though four Fulham Cross pupils ‘definitely disagreed’ with them. Their comments showed that they opposed the plans because they had chosen single sex education and saw this to be endangered by the plans.

### **Parents**

7. 30 responses were received from parents of pupils at the schools: 16 Fulham Cross; 14 Henry Compton. The figures below show clear support from Henry Compton (HC) parents, but some opposition from the Fulham Cross (FC) parents who responded.

*Do you agree with the proposal to Federate the two schools?*

Definitely agree: 10 HC; 2 FC

Tend to agree: 2 HC; 4 FC

Tend to disagree: 1 FC

Definitely disagree: 1 HC; 9 FC

No view expressed: 1

*Do you agree with the proposed structure of the Governing Body?*

Definitely agree: 7 HC; 3 FC

Tend to agree: 6 HC; 3 FC

Tend to disagree: 3 FC

Definitely disagree: 1 HC; 6 FC

No view expressed: 1

*Do you agree with our proposed approach to staffing issues?*

Definitely agree: 9 HC; 3 FC

Tend to agree: 4 HC; 6 FC

Tend to disagree: 1 FC

Definitely disagree: 1 HC; 5 FC

No view expressed: 1

*Do you agree that the Trust School idea should be explored further?*

Definitely agree: 1 HC; 5 FC

Tend to agree: 1 HC; 4 FC

Tend to disagree: 0

Definitely disagree: 1 HC; 7 FC

No view expressed: 11

Only one Henry Compton parent expressed outright disagreement with the plans, the remainder were very supportive. Some of the Fulham Cross parents were in general agreement, but a core group of 10 expressed complete disagreement with the proposals.

This comment sums up the perceived benefits: "I think it is a good idea because all pupils will have access to a wider and more diverse curriculum. A sixth form will provide continuity for many pupils and ensure 11 - 19 education for pupils who attend the federated schools."

One Fulham Cross parent's comment sums up the concerns about Federation - the desire to retain the choice between single and mixed sex education, with options not necessarily limited to faith-based schools: "Yes, providing they remain distinct and single-sex schools and don't get amalgamated over the years. As we are the only two single-sex schools that accept everyone, please don't mix us in the future."

Those supporting Federation were in general receptive to the other ideas, including Trust status. The reverse was also true, as shown by the comments lodged.

### **Teachers/staff members**

8. 13 responses were received: five from Fulham Cross colleagues; eight from Henry Compton. Again, the reaction was favourable, as demonstrated below, with only two or three of the 13 respondents disagreeing with proposals. Interestingly, there was no disagreement with the approach to staffing issues.

*Do you agree with the proposal to Federate the two schools?*

Definitely agree: 1 FC; 6 HC

Tend to agree: 2 FC; 1 HC

Tend to disagree: 2 FC

Definitely disagree: 1 HC

*Do you agree with the proposed structure of the Governing Body?*

Definitely agree: 1 FC; 5 HC

Tend to agree: 2 FC; 3 HC

Tend to disagree: 0

Definitely disagree: 2 FC

*Do you agree with our proposed approach to staffing issues?*

Definitely agree: 1 FC; 6 HC

Tend to agree: 4 FC; 2 HC

Tend to disagree: 0

Definitely disagree: 0

*Do you agree that the Trust School idea should be explored further?*

Definitely agree: 1 FC; 6 HC

Tend to agree: 3 FC; 2 HC

Tend to disagree: 1 FC;

Definitely disagree: 0

Several expressed the view that the partnership would be beneficial:

"I think that it is a positive step for community education." Similarly: "Strong points of both schools will benefit all." One stated pragmatically: "Seems necessary in order to receive BSF funding."

The reservations expressed concerned the potential unwieldiness of a large school operating under one Headteacher and Governing Body, plus issues directly related to staff terms and conditions: "Opportunities for CPD and sharing good practice are welcome but I do feel that more needs to be done to reassure staff that jobs will remain as they are."

## **Governors**

9. Two responses were received from Fulham Cross governors, both 'definitely agreeing' with the proposals.

## **Others**

10. Six responses were received from 'others', ie respondents not directly associated with the school communities. These were broadly favourable, though two disagreed with the Federation proposal. One, from a local primary Headteacher, 'definitely agreed' with each of the proposals.

## **Unions**

11. Two trades unions responded in detail. The responses are summarised here.

- National Union of Teachers (Hammersmith and Fulham Teachers' Association)

The response stated that the NUT believes the Federation model to be sound and recognises the advantages of Federation: consolidating the future of both institutions; widening opportunities for education within a single sex framework; offering more opportunities for professional development; creating economies of scale that could release resources to enable students to be better supported.

The response observed that single sex teaching is an issue based on strongly held values and beliefs and pointed to parts of the consultation document that

the NUT perceived to show a lack of commitment to that ideal and to indicate that the pupils choosing to remain in single sex education, and the staff committed to its delivery, could be disadvantaged. Questions were also raised about the precise model of delivery and organisation envisaged for sixth form arrangements.

It was felt that no evidence was provided that Trust status would enhance the ability of the schools to deliver high quality education. Also that there was a lack of clarity about who would run the school and be accountable. The suggested model of a Governing Body on which one teacher represents the staff of two schools was felt to be inadequate and the response suggested that an interim period with one member of staff from each school would be the minimum requirement.

The NUT feel that the Federation should be up and running before further changes are introduced and there should be staff and union representation at every stage. An assurance was sought that the reorganisation would not involve redundancies or any loss of status for staff currently holding posts of responsibilities.

- UNISON (Hammersmith and Fulham Branch)

The UNISON response stated that the union agrees with and supports the response from the NUT and made some additional points.

UNISON supports the proposal to create a Federated school, saying that this would offer security to both schools and further enhance the education provided and opportunities for career development for staff. The response expressed opposition, however, to adoption of Trust School status, asserting that the move would bring no additional benefits to those achieved by Federation, but would reduce democratic accountability.

Reservations were expressed about the implications for support staff. Assurances were sought that there would be no redundancies and no changes in terms and conditions in the future without the agreement of the unions.

## **Conclusion**

12. The proposals outlined in the consultation document were well received. There was a strong measure of support for Federation and for exploring Trust status, with clear recognition of the advantages that stronger collaboration between the two schools would generate. Concerns were mainly about how the structure would work in practice and whether the integrity and independence of the schools could be maintained, particularly the present single sex ethos.

## **Fulham Cross Girls' school and Henry Compton School**

### **Consultation on the proposal to create a Federation and adopt Trust School status**

#### **Report on the process and response**

#### **Appendix A**

#### **Comments**

Comments are represented in full, whether lodged on the CitizenSpace website or transcribed from hard copy responses. Where possible they are attributed, e.g. *FC parent*, though some were posted anonymously on the CitizenSpace website.

#### ***Do you have any comments on the proposal to Federate the two schools?***

1. Both schools are making considerable progress and face unique challenges which demand separate governing bodies and headteacher. The students at Fulham Cross quite rightly have a growing sense of pride about their school community and identity - how will the federation impact this? Whilst I appreciate that the demands of the 14-19 curriculum demand joint collaboration I think this would happen despite the federation, as all schools will have to work alongside each other to deliver this. *(FC member of staff)*
2. I think it is a good idea and will give children better schools
3. I think both schools are doing well on their own, but I understand the need to extend the 14-19 curriculum. however I feel one governing body and head teacher for both schools will not work as I've seen it before where it didn't.
4. I think that it is a positive step for community education
5. I think it is a good idea because all pupils will have access to a wider and more diverse curriculum. A sixth form will provide continuity for many pupils and ensure 11 - 19 education for pupils who attend the federated schools.
6. I think that it is a positive step for community education. *(HC member of staff)*
7. I think it is a good idea and will give children better schools. *(HC member of staff)*
8. I think it is a good idea because all pupils will have access to a wider and more diverse curriculum. A sixth form will provide continuity for many pupils and ensure 11 - 19 education for pupils who attend the federated schools. *(HC member of staff)*
9. I think both schools are doing well on their own, but I understand the need to extend the 14-19 curriculum. however I feel one governing body and head teacher for both schools will not work as I've seen it before where it didn't. *(FC parent)*
10. Should stay single sex for academic reasons. *(HC parent)*
11. Seems necessary in order to receive BSF funding. *(FC member of staff)*
12. Strong points of both schools will benefit all. *(HC member of staff)*
13. Really don't mind. *(FC pupil)*
14. I think it will help us learn certain subjects. *(FC pupil)*
15. If people wanted to go to a mixed school they would - students have come to Fulham Cross because it is a GIRLS school. *(FC pupil)*
16. I think that the two schools should remain separate. *(FC pupil)*

17. They should stay totally separate as girls school has achieved excellent results. *(FC pupil)*
18. There are several issues, one of them mix. *(FC pupil)*
19. Separate school for girls was the reason. *(FC pupil)*
20. Yes, providing they remain distinct and do not get amalgamated over the years. As we are the only 2 single sex schools that accept everyone, please don't mix us in the future. *(FC pupil)*
21. If the school is separated so that Fulham Cross stays as one school. *(Other)*

***Do you have any comments on the proposed structure of the Governing Body?***

1. Each school should retain its governing bodies and headteacher to respond to the needs of the children they represent. Having a headteacher leading two sites will do much to disrupt the community feeling of Fulham Cross. Why doesn't each school retain its own governing body with opportunities for both governing bodies to collaborate?
2. Can it change to have more community governors?
3. I feel that there should be more staff governors and I'm not sure how it's going to work with one governing body discussing all the issues at both of the schools. I feel governors should be closer involved but how they are going to do that spread across two schools on two sites I don't know.
4. It is a good structure. *(FC pupil)*
5. No, I don't think it will be any better than now. *(FC pupil)*
6. If everything stays under control. *(Other)*

***Do you have any comments on our proposed approach to staffing issues?***

1. Opportunities for CPD and sharing good practice are welcome but I do feel that more needs to be done to reassure staff that jobs will remain as they are.
2. More staff needed. *(HC pupil)*
3. Some good teachers will lose their jobs. *(FC pupil)*
4. Yes, providing the schools are not used simply to train staff. *(Other)*
5. If teachers carry on with the same job it will be good. *(Other)*

***Do you have any comments about the Trust School idea being explored further?***

1. The trust people must not run the schools - the teachers must.
2. I think the Trust idea should not be used. *(FC pupil)*
3. Trust is only good if the schools are single sex. *(FC pupil)*
4. Yes, providing the schools retain their own independence and integrity. *(Other)*
5. If right and good decisions are made it will be good. *(Other)*