



## **Consultation Document: A Proposal for Federation Between Goring and Stoke Row Church of England Primary Schools**

Dear Parents, Staff and Wider Community,

We are writing to share with you an important proposal and to invite your views.

The Governing Bodies of Goring Church of England Primary School and Stoke Row Church of England Primary School have explored the idea of forming a Federation between our two schools. This would be a formal partnership starting on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

After much thought and discussion, both Governing Bodies have voted unanimously to proceed towards becoming a Federation. We are now entering a period of consultation, during which we would welcome your views prior to making a final decision. The consultation will run from Monday 2nd June to Friday 11th July 2025.

### **What Is a Federation?**

A Federation is a formal, long-term partnership between two or more schools. In our case, it would mean that Goring and Stoke Row CE Primary Schools would be led by one shared Governing Body and continue to be overseen by our Executive Headteacher, Mrs. Wheatcroft.

Importantly:

- Both schools would keep their own identity, uniform, and school site.
- Each school would continue to receive its own budget and be inspected separately by Ofsted.
- Children would still attend the same school as they do now, with the staff remaining unchanged.

## **Why Are We Considering a Federation?**

Over the past year, our schools have been working closely together through a Collaboration, with Mrs. Wheatcroft as Executive Headteacher. This has already brought benefits for both schools, such as shared training, better support for staff, and financial savings.

We believe that moving from Collaboration to Federation will make these benefits long-term and even stronger.

A Federation would help us to:

- Keep our small, rural schools strong and sustainable.
- Share expertise and staff where helpful.
- Make better use of resources.
- Continue attracting and keeping talented staff.
- Offer opportunities to pupils through shared activities and events.

## **What Would Change (and What Wouldn't)?**

**What stays the same:**

- Your child will continue attending their current school.
- The schools will keep their own names, uniforms, and ethos.
- The caring, supportive environment will remain.
- Both schools will keep their strong links to their local churches and communities.
- Each school will continue to manage their own budget independently, with no plans to merge finances.
- Money raised through fundraising by FOSRS, will continue to go to Stoke Row School.
- Money raised through fundraising by Goring PTFA will continue to go to Goring School.

**What would change:**

- There would be a single Governing Body overseeing both schools.
- Some behind-the-scenes roles and support services might be shared to save money.
- Staff may have opportunities to work across both schools if this benefits pupils.

## **What Are the Benefits for Children and Staff?**

- Children could have more opportunities to take part in joint events and share resources (e.g. sports equipment, minibuses).
- Staff would benefit from more professional development and the chance to learn from each other.
- It would make both schools more financially sustainable in the long term and more resilient to challenges faced by schools in village settings.
- It would help us continue to offer a high-quality education to all pupils.
- Over the course of time, as and when staff decide to move on, the opportunity to work across two federated schools may be especially attractive to potential replacements.

## **Are There Any Risks?**

As with any change, there are some potential risks. However, we believe these are low and can be managed. For example:

- Making sure that one Governing Body represents both schools – we will make sure governors come from both school communities.
- Ensuring the Executive Headteacher's time is shared between both schools – we already monitor this closely.
- Keeping each school's unique character – this is very important to us and will not be lost.

If, in future, a Federation no longer works for both schools, it can be ended through a formal process.

## **Why Now?**

We started our Collaboration in January 2024, and it has gone well. Rather than continue as a non-binding arrangement, we believe now is the right time to take the next step and make it permanent.

Staying as a Collaboration limits how closely we can work together and stops us from sharing some staff roles across both schools. Federation gives us more flexibility and strengthens our partnership.

## **How Similar Are the Two Schools?**

- Both are small, friendly, Church of England primary schools. They are located within 7 miles of each other.
- Both serve families from local villages and surrounding areas.
- Both have a mix of age groups in some classes and a strong focus on values, care, and community.
- Goring has 170 pupils in 6 classes; Stoke Row has 55 pupils in 3 classes.
- Staff at both schools bring a wide range of skills and experience – something that can benefit both communities.

## **What Will the New Governing Body Look Like?**

If the Federation goes ahead, there will be a new Governing Body made up of:

- The Executive Headteacher
- Elected parents (2)
- Elected staff member (1)
- Local authority governor (1)
- Foundation governors (7) selected for their skills and connection to our schools and churches

Governors will be chosen for their experience and dedication to supporting both schools and making sure they continue to thrive.

## Your Views Matter – How to Take Part in the Consultation

We want to hear your thoughts. The consultation runs from:

Monday 2nd June to Friday 11th July 2025.

During this time, we will hold events such as drop-in meetings where you can ask questions and share your views. (See table below)

After the consultation ends, the Governing Bodies of both schools will meet in the week of 14th July 2025 to review all the feedback and make a final decision.

You will be informed of the outcome by Monday 21st July 2025.

Consultation Week Beginning	Event
2 <sup>nd</sup> June	9am, Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> June - Consultation Opens
9 <sup>th</sup> June	3.30pm, Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> June – Presentation and Q and A session for Stoke Row Staff  3.30pm, Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> June – Presentation and Q and A session for Goring Staff
16 <sup>th</sup> June	2.30pm, Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> June – Presentation and Q and A session for parents and the wider community of Goring  2.45pm, Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> June – Presentation and Q and A session for parents and the wider community of Stoke Row. (Please note the scheduled celebration assembly will be at the earlier time of 2.15pm)
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	
30 <sup>th</sup> June	
7 <sup>th</sup> July	3pm, Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> July - Consultation Closes
14 <sup>th</sup> July	The Governing Bodies will meet to review the consultation responses and vote on the decision to federate.
21 <sup>st</sup> July	All Stakeholders will be informed of the outcome.

## How to Share Your Feedback

You can:

- Attend a question-and-answer session
- Submit your comments in writing to:  
Goring Primary School: The Clerk to the Governing Board, Jill Kirby,  
clerk@goring.oxon.sch.uk  
Stoke Row Primary School: The Clerk to the Governing Board, Eleanor Connolly,  
clerk@stoke-row.oxon.sch.uk

## In Summary

We believe that forming a Federation between Goring and Stoke Row CE Primary Schools is the best way to:

- Secure the long-term future of both schools
- Offer the best possible education and experiences for our children
- Support and develop our dedicated staff
- Build on the success of our current partnership

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal. Your views are very important to us.

Warm regards,

**The Governing Bodies of Goring and Stoke Row CE Primary Schools**

June 2025