

We CARE

Welcoming all Community Achievement Respect Encouragement



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Executive Headteacher: Miss Teresa Nicholls

13th April 2026

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing to you jointly as the Chairs of Governors of Youlgrave All Saints' and Biggin C of E Primary Schools to let you know that both governing bodies have begun to explore the possibility of forming a *federation* between our schools.

A federation is a formal partnership in which two or more schools share a single governing body and leadership structure, while each school continues to operate on its own site and maintain its distinctive character and ethos. As Church of England schools, both of our Christian identities and parish links would remain central to who we are.

Our current position of sharing a headteacher between the two schools, as well as some initial collaboration between the schools, has opened up the potential opportunities of a federation. At this stage, we want to assure you that no decisions have been made.

Why we are exploring this

Both governing bodies recognise the increasing challenges faced by small rural schools, including leadership capacity, recruitment, workload, and long-term sustainability. Exploring federation will allow us to consider whether working more closely together could:

- strengthen leadership across both schools,
- support staff development and collaboration,
- improve resilience during staff absence or recruitment difficulties,
- enable further collaboration and financial savings through shared resources,
- enhance curriculum delivery and workload sharing, and
- help secure the long-term sustainability of both schools.

What happens next

The two governing bodies have agreed to form a joint committee with representatives

from each school's governing body, as well as our headteacher, and representatives from both the Diocese of Derby and Derbyshire County Council (LA), to explore the options and develop a proposal. Through this joint committee the governing bodies will gather information and evaluate the potential benefits and risks, seek advice from governance, HR and legal specialists through the Local Authority and the Diocese, and hold a full and open consultation in which all staff, parents, carers, and stakeholders will have the opportunity to share their views.

Your perspective will be essential in shaping any future decisions.

Your roles:

We know that you may naturally feel uncertain about what this could mean. At this stage:

- there are no foreseeable changes to our current staffing arrangements at either school,
- contracts, pay, and conditions will remain unchanged,
- we will consult with HR at Derbyshire County Council to ensure appropriate processes are followed.

Please be assured that our priority is to ensure both schools remain positive, supportive places to work and learn.

The intent of this letter is to advise you of the launch of the consultation. The following pages advise on the various details such as the timeline, how to access the federation proposal, how to get more information and how to respond should you wish to. Please feel free to speak to Teresa or a member of the governing body, who would welcome a discussion on your thoughts and any concerns.

We are committed to keeping you informed throughout this process and will share updates as soon as they are available.

Thank you, as always, for your continuous dedication to our children and communities.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Edge

Chair of Governors

Biggin C of E Primary School

Mark Shearing

Co-Chair of Governors

Youlgrave All Saints' C of E Primary School

Sandra McCurrach

Deputy Chair of Governors

Biggin C of E Primary School

Rachel Shooter

Co-Chair of Governors

Youlgrave All Saints' C of E Primary School

Biggin and Youlgrave school federation consultation process

How long will the consultation period last?	Six weeks from the 13 th April to the 26 th May 2026
Where can I get a copy of the school federation proposal?	It can be obtained online here [link]. A paper copy can be collected from Youlgrave/Biggin school
How can I talk to someone about the proposal?	There will be drop-in sessions on [Youlgrave] the 22 nd April and Governors will be available at school between 8.30-9.30am, 12.30-1.30pm and 5.00 until 6.00pm/ [Biggin] the 23 rd April and Governors will be available at school at 8.30-9.30am, 12.30-1.30pm and 3.00 until 5.00pm. There will be a final drop-in on the [Youlgrave]29 th April/[Biggin] 30 th April between 5 and 6pm
How can I respond to the proposal?	You can respond at one of the sessions above or by completing a response form. A response form is available from school, and is also available online here . Responses can be returned to the school office or emailed to Mandy/Jane at enquiries@youlgrave-all Saints.derbyshire.sch.uk
When should I respond by?	Responses would be very welcome at any time during the consultation period – but ideally the sooner the better. The deadline for responses will be Sunday the 26 th May 2026.