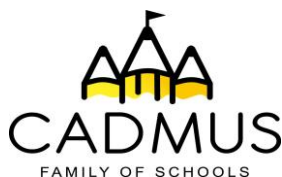




Millfield Primary School



Alumwell Infant School



**Whitehall Junior
Community School**

Consultation on Alumwell Infant School (federating with) Cadmus Family of Schools

Dear All,

The Governing Board of Alumwell Infant School and the Governing Board of Cadmus family of schools have started to consider whether there are benefits to all of the schools if Alumwell Infant School joins Cadmus.

The governors of Alumwell Infant School, after careful consideration, feel there are greater opportunities and benefits to joining Cadmus family of schools. No final decision has been taken however and governors wish to hear from pupils, staff, parents/carers and the wider community before any decision is taken.

We have put together the reasons why the school wants to join Cadmus and the benefits the school will bring to the Cadmus family. There is a feedback form which we would encourage you to complete with your thoughts on the proposal. There will also be staff and parent/ carer events where you can attend to hear more and ask questions.

The consultation period will run from the 3rd June 2024 until midday on the 15th July 2024. Please share with us your thoughts, ideas or concerns so we can make a fully informed decision.

The consultation document is available via the school website. Additional paper copies can be obtained via the school office.

The closing date for comments is the 8th July.

Thank you for your continued support and we look forward to hearing from you

We would encourage you to respond by attending an open session on the following dates:

Separate dates have been organised for staff and unions.

Yours sincerely,

Roland Roberts
Chair of Governors
Cadmus Family of Schools

Helen Canlett
Chair of Governors
Alumwell Infant School

**Consultation on Alumwell Infant School joining Cadmus Family of
Schools through federation
Consultation Summary (May 2024)**

Alumwell Infant School and the schools that make up Cadmus family of schools are undertaking a 6-week consultation to determine whether Alumwell infant school joining Cadmus is in the best interests of all the schools involved.

The consultation will seek the feedback of pupils, parents/carers, staff, the local community, Trade Unions, the Secretary of State and the Local Authority. This consultation document explains what a federation is, and the benefits it will bring to all the schools involved. There is also a form to complete where you can put forward your views.

In May 2024, the governors of Cadmus and Alumwell infant school School separately agreed to go out to consultation on the proposal for Alumwell infant school to join Cadmus family of schools. This hasn't been an instant decision. There have been significant discussions between governors of both organisations. This has led to the increasing sharing of expertise and best practice in both directions.

In addition to receiving the consultation document, drop-in sessions will be organised at Alumwell infants for the parents of Alumwell infant children children at 9am and 3.30pm on Wednesday 19th June where questions can be posed and further information gathered about the proposal. Can you please let the school know if you intend on attending these sessions? We would really appreciate your contribution to the consultation.

There will be a drop in session for staff on Wednesday 19th June at 4.00pm.

Do please complete the form at the back of the consultation pack, and send us your views by the 8th July 2024 on our proposal

.

What is a Hard Federation?

A Hard Federation is the name given to the way in which two or more schools work more closely together. There are already a number of schools that make up Cadmus (Alumwell Junior School, Butts Primary School, Chuckery Primary School, Leighswood Primary School, Millfield Primary School, Palfrey Junior School and Whitehall Junior School).

The experiences of these schools is that they have very much kept their own identity linked to the communities they serve. They still receive their own budget, the same staff will deliver the same teaching and learning on a day to day basis and the school will be led by the same leadership team.

What will change is that Alumwell infant school will be able to access additional support whether that be staff training and development, leadership capacity, the sharing of best practice or access to Cadmus support services such as SEND support or behaviour management support.

Alumwell infant school prides itself on being a safe and welcoming school where every pupil is able to succeed in their learning, take responsibility for their own learning and to love learning. These values align very closely with the ethos and values schools in Cadmus live by.

National guidance in regard to federations states that federations are “not just about structural change. It is also about a different mind-set where the governors and school leaders share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the Federation, as opposed to just a single school, through a school-led system of raising standards and driving improvement”. (NCTL The governance of Federations, 2014).

What are the values of Cadmus?

Cadmus schools inspire and create a passion for learning. They take a localised and inclusive approach, involving communities, to take collective responsibility for ensuring that every child and young person in the federation receives an excellent education.

Cadmus values its staff, who model themselves as lifelong learners, hungry to acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding. Governors are chosen to enhance the skills within the Federation and it highly values representation from the local community.

Cadmus aspires to deliver lessons using exciting and innovative techniques, so that pupils are absorbed and motivated by their teaching. Cadmus regularly use outdoor learning experiences to deliver the curriculum.

What will it mean?

In practice, it will mean that:

- All schools in the federation will retain their own identity. No school has merged or lost its identity.
- Alumwell infant school will continue to be known as a school in its own right, at the centre of the communities it serves.
- There will be no change in current staffing levels, the way classes are organised or the curriculum offer as a result of working as a Federation unless it is required. Each school will continue to receive its own budget in full.
- There will be a financial contribution to the Federation for the running of the Federation as a whole but experience from the other schools in Cadmus has been that this provides very good value for money.

- The Federation may employ new staff, with a specific Federation role under a Federation contract. That will be explicit at the point the job is advertised.
- There will be no change to the school's admissions criteria. Those children entitled to go to the school before federating will be able to go to the school after it federates.
- All schools will continue to have their own Ofsted inspection.
- The reporting of standards will remain separate for each school.

Why are we making this proposal?

Cadmus family of schools was created by a like-minded group of head teachers, governors and staff who recognised that the challenges facing schools were best dealt with together, sharing expertise, good practice and commitment to do the best for children and young people served by its schools.

At the core of the Cadmus way of working is that we are stronger together but that local decision making is best.

Through informal dialogue with staff and governors at Alumwell Infant School it has become apparent that Alumwell infants shares the same values and passion for improving the education and social and emotional development of children in its schools.

The governors, leadership teams and staff of all the schools have a shared ambition of maintaining a child focussed environment that continues to drive up standards and one which provides supportive space where children and young people are supported to grow in confidence, independence and grow their unique talents and strengths. Cadmus also have a commitment to continually developing and retaining exceptional staff, investing in high quality professional development. Federating will enable all schools to more effectively recruit and retain high quality staff and share and jointly procure staff training across the federation to ensure quality and value for money.

What are the benefits?

The main benefits are:

- A shared commitment to ensuring the very best development and education for pupils regardless of their unique needs.
- Cadmus has extensive experience in supporting primary aged pupils in achieving their potential. It has a growing team of specialists that are experts in constructive behaviour support and SEND support.
- The Federation provides strength in numbers and support at a time when external agencies are reducing support due to budget constraints.
- There will be greater development opportunities for staff, for example, shared training and a broadening of understanding and experience through collaboration with each other.

- The opportunity to attract future experienced Headteachers and senior leaders. Leading a school can be a lonely job and a highly pressured role. Being part of a family of schools provides breadth of support and also career pathways that create the leaders of the future.
- Where possible, maximise the efficient use of resources to the benefit of the curriculum.
- Less bureaucracy, under a federated structure with one Governing Board but still a local governing committee to provide oversight at a local level.

What will it mean for the children?

On a day-to-day basis there will be no change in school routine or the provision of education at Alumwell infant School. However, there will be opportunities to share staff across schools, which will give access to a much larger pool of knowledge and the chance to share specialist expertise across the schools which will ultimately benefit the children. They will benefit from having access to more opportunities for good quality learning.

There will be greater opportunity to use school resources and budgets more effectively with regard to the purchasing of goods and services which both directly and indirectly impact on the lives of the pupils.

What will it mean for staff?

Day to day management of all schools will continue as it is now. However, there will be opportunities for closer working between staff. This co-operation will create greater development opportunities and career routes within the Federation.

As a federated school Alumwell Infant School will remain a maintained (local authority) school with staff remaining on their current terms and conditions. Whilst there may be career opportunities for staff in the future, staff will still be contracted to work at their existing school. Any request to work at another school in the Federation will only be through discussion and agreement with the staff member concerned.

Will staffing change?

Cadmus will supply an experienced headteacher as Mrs. Harper will be retiring at the end of school year.

The other staffing arrangements currently in place at Alumwell Infant will remain unchanged in September.

It is important to state that there will be no redundancies as a result of moving to a Federation.

What will it mean for parent/ carers?

The schools will continue to operate as usual and parents/carers will continue to receive the same high level of provision and support. It is anticipated that as the schools co-operate more closely and share good practice there will be greater opportunity for shared learning which in turn will help all pupils. This, together with the retention of quality staff, greater staff development and progression opportunities will ensure a continued high standard of education for the pupils at all schools in the Federation.

The day to day contact arrangements between the schools and parents/carers will not be changed by the Federation, but we will continue to seek ways to improve what we do. If you have queries about your child's education, then you will speak to the same staff members after federating as you do now.

Will it mean a change to school uniform?

No, Alumwell infant School will retain its individual identity and uniform. Parents and carers won't incur additional costs having to buy new uniform.

What will it mean for the governing board?

Were Alumwell infant school to federate with Cadmus then they would secure places on the Cadmus Governing Board. The Chair of Governors at Alumwell infant school or their proxy will on the Cadmus Board and the Head teacher would have an influential role alongside all the Head teachers in the federation on the Cadmus Governing Board. The Cadmus Governing Board has overall oversight of the school improvement journey of the Federation and oversight of Cadmus Inclusive (the body that provides support services to Cadmus schools and other schools on a traded not for profit basis).

The existing Governing Board at Alumwell infant school will become a Local Governing Committee. The delegation planner delegates a high degree of autonomy and accountability to the Local Governing Committee. They will still lead the recruitment of senior staff and have oversight of the school, its finances and the progress being made by pupils.

Were Alumwell infant school to join Cadmus then the Cadmus Governing Board would include:

- 2 Parent Governors;
- 1 Local Authority Governor;
- 1 Staff Governor;
- 1 Chief Operating Officer
- 6 Executive Head teacher's/ Head teachers/ Heads of School for each school in the federation
- 13 Co-opted Governors (including 8 Chairs of local governing committees)

Total number of Governors 24

The governors will share a commitment to improving the outcomes and life chances for all children across the Federation, yet still be able work to improve a single school, where needed.

The Local Governing Committee will be responsible for the following in all the schools that they manage:

- Admissions
- Staffing
- Finance
- Premises
- Curriculum
- Wellbeing and safeguarding
- Reporting on results (for example to Ofsted)
- Being accountable to the DfE for results, finances and management.

Cadmus is passionate about retaining local accountability and decision making.

Is there a cost to being a member of Cadmus?

Schools in the federation pay no more than 3% of their budget to the strategic management and operational running of the Federation.

Any surplus created by the Federation is re-invested back into school across the Federation.

What does it mean for admissions?

Admissions to the school will continue to be under the current arrangements and be unaffected by this proposal. Parents and carers will continue to apply for a place at the school of their choice in the usual manner.

Can a school leave a federation? Can other schools join?

It is possible for schools to withdraw from a federation and governing boards must follow a prescribed process, set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012. Additional schools can join a federation and the prescribed process is set out in The School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

The news talks about the government wanting all schools to become academies. What is the difference and should we not be looking at academising?

A school that joins a federation remains a local authority maintained school. A federated school can withdraw from a federation by following a prescribed process.

A school that joins an Academy Trust can't go back to becoming a local authority maintained school. Academy schools are funded directly by the Education Standards Funding Agency (a part of the Department for Education). A Federation school continues to be funded via the local authority.

Any future consultation regarding academisation would involve all stakeholders across Cadmus

The structure of Cadmus means that it can flexibly adapt to whatever the future holds for the sector.

What happens now?

This document is the start of the consultation period on the proposal to federate. All written comments will be considered by the governors when the consultation period closes on and they will then decide whether to proceed or not. If the decision taken is to proceed, the schools will inform the Local Authority that they wish to federate and Alumwell infant School will join Cadmus family of schools. Should the agreement be to federate then it is expected that this will commence from 1st September 2024. Staff and parents/ carers will be kept informed at each stage.

How can I get more information?

This consultation document can be accessed via the Cadmus website, Alumwell Infant School website and the website of each school

Your views are important to us so please let us have your comments on the proposal by completing and returning the attached response to the school office

Senior staff and governors will be on hand at upcoming events in both schools to respond to queries and explain more about what these proposals mean. The dates for these are as follows:

Proposal for Alumwell Infant School to join Cadmus family of schools

Please use this form to add your comments:

Please return your response form to the school office

Your name (BLOCK CAPITALS)

.....

School

.....

Please indicate which group you belong to by circling the appropriate title:

Parent

Staff Member

Other – please specify

Rather not say

.....

Date: