Consultation document for the proposed merger of The Hive Federation and Caister Primary Federation

The governing bodies of the above federations have resolved to seek a new federation through a shared, strategic vision of the schools' future.



Caister Primary Federation

The Hive

Table of Contents

What is a Federation? 3
Background 3
Aims of the extended federation 3
What are the benefits of merging our federations? 4
What are the risks for the schools? 4
How similar or different are the schools? 5
Consultation process 5
The Governing Board 7
What is the proposed Senior Leadership structure? 7
How would it affect staff? 7
Is there a risk that one of the schools would lose out in this arrangement? 7
Would the schools keep their name and identity? 8
Would the uniform policy remain the same? 8
Would the admissions arrangements remain the same? 8
Would pupils be registered to the extended federation or a single school? 8
Would parents and staff be equally represented from all schools on the Governing Board? 8
Would each school keep its own budget? 8
Would the amount each school receives be affected by the extended federation? 8
Would the Federation combine their SATs results? 8
Would the Federation be inspected by Ofsted? 8
Would one school take the lead over the other? 8
Would the Federation meet the different needs of the communities? 8
How do I contribute? 9
How can I find out more? 9
What do you think? 10

What is a Federation?

A Federation is a formal agreement between two or more schools to work together on a permanent basis. The federation of two or more schools is led and managed under the direction of a single Governing Body which can but doesn't have to include representatives of all schools. However, each of the schools in the federation receives their own school budget at source but can decide to combine budgets should it be economically advantageous to do so. Each school also receives separate Ofsted inspection reports and has separately published results.

It is possible for a Federation to be dissolved if the single Governing Body decides it is in the interest of the children to do so.

Background

The Hive Federation was formed between St William's Primary School and Brundall Primary School in 2022. Governors of The Hive began exploring further partnership options in 2023, including joining a multi-academy trust and forming a larger federation with nearby schools.

Caister Primary Federation was formed by the federation of Caister Infant School and Caister Junior School in 2019, then the addition of Rollesby Primary School in 2021, and Hemsby Primary School in 2023.

Governors of both federations voted to pursue merger to form a new extended federation of all six schools in October 2025.

Aims of the extended federation

Children are at the heart of all that we do in each of our schools. There are close similarities between the values of each federation, and we share many of the same key drivers. Below are the core principles underlying the work we do now and upon which the new federation would build:

- A commitment to ensuring that children of the extended federation are provided with high quality learning experiences. They will have access to a broad and balanced curriculum taught by qualified, good and outstanding teachers.
- The schools will continue working to provide a positive, safe, and stimulating environment where children can learn.
- We will continue to be schools and communities that value diversity and enable children to celebrate their differences and achieve great things by working together.
- We believe learning should be enjoyable, allowing children to achieve their potential and helping them become lifelong learners who are ready and able to grasp opportunities.
- Staff in the Federation should be lifelong learners too, always looking for ways to develop their skills for their own benefit and for the children they work with.
- The schools will continue to promote the emotional, moral, spiritual, and physical development of the children at the school.
- We will work in partnership with outside agencies and our communities to ensure ongoing development and learning.
- We will retain the unique characters of each of the schools in the extended federation and work hard to serve the individual needs of each community.

What are the benefits of merging our federations?

The intention is that the extended Federation would enable all the schools to work closely together on efficient systems and practices while also maintaining each school's unique ethos and identity. These are the benefits we believe merging our federations would bring:

- There can be a single shared vision, and equality of provision and expectations across the extended federation set by the Governing Board and Senior Leadership teams of all schools.
- The impact of similar federations suggests academic achievement should be enhanced in the schools working within a federation.
- The capacity and effectiveness of the Senior Leadership structure across all schools would be enhanced. For instance, there would be improved capacity of the schools' leadership in the event of illness or leavers by having a larger leadership team, with a shared knowledge of each school.
- Expertise among the staff can be shared across all six schools. We have many skilled practitioners with highly developed knowledge and expertise in their fields.
- By sharing resources, provision could be improved for children, particularly for arts, music, languages, sport and special educational needs and disabilities provision. This would result from the schools sharing good practice, each school learning from the other.
- The extended federation can provide wider opportunities for professional development and progression for the staff of each school, helping with the recruitment and retention.
- The schools can build on established shared approaches to classroom practice, such as marking and assessment, to allow staff across all six schools to collaborate effectively, thus improving and maintaining standards.
- There is the opportunity to extend extra-curricular provision, using shared resources and expertise, and organising joint events.
- Shared safeguarding practices and procedures would contribute to keeping children safe.
- Support services could be provided across all schools, thus creating economies of scale and saving money which can be spent on the children instead. Services such as catering and cleaning could be provided in-house, saving on costly contracts; staff such as caretakers, and IT services, could be shared across the schools.

What are the risks for the schools?

There are risks involved in any change. None of the risks below are completely new. All have been tested already to some extent.

- The schools struggle to form a cohesive Governing Board covering the interests of all schools
- The extended federation does not build strong local connections and does not meet the communities' needs.
- There is a difference of culture among the schools which stifles or prevents effective co-operation.
- The leadership changes in the future and this changes the nature of the federation (this is also true if a new Headteacher is appointed to any type of school).

- The financial economies of scale do not materialise, or we do not recognise diseconomies of scale.
- One school receives more attention from the Executive Headteacher than the others.
- If one school receives an Inadequate Ofsted Judgement, academisation will be forced for one of the schools.

NB It is the Governing Board's job to hold the Executive Headteacher to account for their actions and effectiveness and ensure they are spending the appropriate time at each school depending on the needs of the schools at any one time.

How similar or different are the schools?

St William's Primary School is a two-form entry through primary school with an attached nursery. Brundall Primary School is slightly smaller, with around 45 children in each year group.
Caister Infant and Junior Schools are three-form entry schools serving the same community. Cohorts of children generally pass through both schools. Rollesby & Hemsby Primary Schools are much smaller rural primary schools, with around 20 children in each year group.
Classes therefore may be taught in mixed-age groups at Brundall, Rollesby and Hemsby.
A Specialist Resource Base for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs is attached to the Caister schools. A similar facility is planned at St William's, with the Lead Teacher already recruited.
Children who attend St William's Primary School and Brundall Primary School generally move on to to Thorpe High School, with some children from Brundall moving on to Acle High. Children who have attended Caister Infant and Junior School generally move on to Caister Academy. Children from Rollesby & Hemsby generally move on to Flegg High Ormiston Academy.
However, the communities are similar in many ways. They share a socio-economic and ethnic profile, and many of the schools' priorities for the children are shared.

Consultation process

The consultation process for the merger of The Hive Federation and Caister Primary Federation will start on Monday 5th January 2026. It will end strictly on Friday 13th February 2026 at 3.30pm.
The process is prescribed in the School Governance (Federations) (England)
Regulations 2012. These state that:

The governing boards proposing to federate must jointly consider any responses to the proposals and each governing board must determine whether:
(a) to proceed with the proposals for federation as published.
(b) to proceed with the proposals for federation with such modifications as the governing body consider appropriate; or
(c) not to proceed with the proposals for federation.
The modifications referred to in (b) may not include a change in the identity of the governing Board proposing to federate.

The Governing Boards of each federation are very keen to hear all views and will meet on 25th February 2026, to consider all the responses received as part of this consultation process and come to a formal decision about whether or how each federation should proceed.
If the decision is to proceed (with or without any modifications to the proposals for federation), the current proposal is for the federation to start on Monday 16th March 2026. This will be the date of the establishment of the new Governing Board, with existing Governing Boards disbanding on Friday 13th March 2026.

This decision of whether to merge our federations is the sole responsibility of the Governing Boards. Once it has been made, the outcome will be communicated in writing to all parents and staff.

School	School Type	Postcode	Total Pupils	SEN	EAL	Pupil Premium
St William's Primary School	Primary	NR7 0AJ	408	28	14	49
Brundall Primary School	Primary	NR13 5JX	278	51	10	40
Caister Infant with Nursery School	Infant	NR30 5ET	287	102	8	74
Caister Junior School	Junior	NR30 5ET	327	115	16	111
Hemsby Primary School	Primary	NR29 4LH	129	30	2	24
Rollesby Primary School	Primary	NR29 5EH	104	31	2	15

The Governing Board

A new Governing Board will be formed as follows:

Total membership of the governing board of a federation must be no fewer than seven governors.

The governing board of a federation must include the following:

2 Parents from across the schools in the Federation

The Executive Headteacher

1 staff governor

1 LA governor

2 Foundation governors

Co-opted governors (number to be considered)

The Heads of School, Headteacher and Executive Headteacher would become Associate Governors of the Governing Board. Governors would reserve the right to appoint other Associate Governors to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise. Associate Governors will not be included in the Constitution or Instrument of Government and have no voting rights in meetings. A skills audit of existing and potential Governors would be carried out to ensure the new Governing Board is as strong as it can be.

What is the proposed Senior Leadership structure?

An Executive Headteacher would lead the Federation on a strategic level. A Head of School or Headteacher would lead each of the individual schools on an operational level, managing day to day affairs, and providing the main point of contact for parents. The Central Service Unit will manage all services provided to the schools, including safeguarding and pastoral care, administration, finance, attendance, premises management, IT and catering. This unit would be managed by the Chief Operating Officer.

The Federation Senior Leadership Team would be made up of the Executive Headteacher, the Heads of School, Headteacher, the Lead Teachers of the SRBs, and the Chief Operating Officer.

How would it affect staff?

It is not anticipated that many staff members would experience significant change in their day-to-day work. The Governors believe a new venture such as this is an attractive option for teachers and support staff looking for a new challenge while providing welcome professional development opportunities for the staff of each school. As a larger federation, the schools could continue to recruit well, attracting high-impact, talented staff with access to opportunities to work across the schools. There will be no changes to the conditions of service for existing staff.

Is there a risk that one of the schools would lose out in this arrangement?

No. The aim of the extended federation is for the schools to work together in a full and equal partnership to continue to grow stronger together, while protecting the unique character and individual identity of each of the six schools. The structure of the federation will enable the benefits to be appropriately and fairly shared across schools. The single combined Governing Board would ensure each school's interests were fully and equally represented and would be best placed to serve the strategic development of the six schools.

Would the schools keep their name and identity?

Yes. Each school would keep its own name and identity but be under the umbrella name of City 2 Coast (C2C) Primary Federation.

Would the uniform policy remain the same?

Yes. All six schools would maintain their own policy regarding uniform. There are no plans to change them.

Would the admissions arrangements remain the same?

Yes. Norfolk's admissions policy would continue to apply to all six schools. This can be found on our websites.

Would pupils be registered to the extended federation or a single school?

Pupils would be on roll at a single school.

Would parents and staff be equally represented from all schools on the Governing Board?

Not necessarily. All governors would serve all six schools. The new governing board will be an amalgamation of the two current federation boards. Any persons interested in joining the new federation board, should contact their school for more information. It would be beneficial to have representation from each of the schools to enable the full Governing Board to understand local contextual issues.

Would each school keep its own budget?

Each school would continue to receive its own funding and have its own budget. Each school would make a proportionate contribution to the central services unit, which would in turn allow each school to benefit from economies of scale.

Would the amount each school receives be affected by the extended federation?

No. All school budgets are worked out using a formula based on pupil numbers for the individual school.

Would the Federation combine their SATs results?

No. Results would continue to be attributed to the individual schools.

Would the Federation be inspected by Ofsted?

No. Each school would have separate Ofsted inspections and be graded separately.

Would one school take the lead over the other?

No. The schools would continue to collaborate and work together as equal partners. The

Executive Headteacher would strategically lead all six schools.

Would the Federation meet the different needs of the communities?

Yes. As each school would have their own Head of School, each community's differing needs would be separately met. There would continue to be separate parent, pupil and staff voices.

How do I contribute?

We are very keen to hear your views about this proposal. We should therefore be grateful if you would either return the attached form before the final date of consultation **OR** complete the survey at the end of this document. The Governing Boards will then consider the responses to the consultation.

How can I find out more?

There will be five open meetings for parents during the consultation period. In the spirit of partnership parents and members of the public are welcome to attend any session:

Rollesby Primary School – Wednesday 7th January 2026 at 6pm

Hemsby Primary School – Monday 12th January 2026 at 6pm

Brundall Primary School – Tuesday 27th January 2026 at 6pm

St William's Primary School – Wednesday 28th January 2026 at 6pm

Caister Primary Federation – Monday 9th February 2026 at 6pm

You can have your say by completing the consultation survey link or by completing the form on the next page.

What do you think?

Please complete this form and return it by ***3.30pm Friday 13th February 2026*** to one of the following:

Brundall Primary School office
St William's Primary School office
Hemsby Primary School office
Rollesby Primary School office
Caister Infant School office
Caister Junior School office

All responses should be signed (anonymous responses will not be considered) and returned in sealed envelopes marked confidential and for the attention of the relevant federation Clerk of Governors. The Clerk of Governors will report to each of the Governing Boards.

Do you support the proposal to merge The Hive Federation and Caister Primary Federation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (Please tick one box)

Comments:

Name:
Address:

Postcode:

Signed: .....

Please tick one box that you feel most appropriately represents your interest in this matter:

☐ Parent/Carer of a child at ..... School
☐ Member of staff at .....School
☐ Local resident
☐ Parent/Carer of a child at another local school (please specify).....
☐ Other (please specify) .....

Please make any submissions strictly by 3.30pm Friday 13th February 2026. No submissions will be accepted after this time.