



Consultation

Proposal for the Federation of Framfield CE Primary School & Pioneer Federation

9th February 2026 – 23rd March 2026

Dear School Community,

As you are aware, the Pioneer Federation have been working closely in partnership with Framfield CE Primary School since September 2025, to strengthen the infrastructure of the school and continue to enhance school improvement.

The initial rewards of this partnership are clear, with improved resources and teaching and learning opportunities for pupils, and staff across all schools already benefiting from wider expertise.

We plan to build on this success by establishing a formal federation. This is therefore a consultation on the proposal for Framfield CE Primary School to join the existing Federation and extend the size of the Federation to eight schools (the current six schools plus Framfield CE School and Stonegate CE School). This will enable us to invest strategically in a forward-thinking Federation that can provide the highest of standards across all levels of school life.

We recognise that Framfield has been in a Federation previously and there may be some concerns about entering into another formal collaborative commitment. We believe that the Pioneer Federation, as a larger federation, will enable Framfield to retain its uniqueness whilst securing the future for the school and the pupils at Framfield.

Pioneer is an established Federation dedicated exclusively to small schools since 2012, who understand the benefits and pressures of small school mixed aged classes/teaching.

- All Pioneer schools retain their uniqueness (small village primary schools) whilst being part of federation of schools working collaboratively to support each other.
- They have consistently strong Ofsted/SIAMS inspections for all schools since joining Pioneer & a proven strong mixed aged curriculum.
- There are clear opportunities for a central approach to curricular development and expertise. There is a strong Church School culture/ethos for all our Church Schools- *Outstanding/Grade 1* SIAMS inspection outcomes for all Pioneer Federation church schools.
- Pioneer provides financial stability & resilience and economies of scale in procurement.
- There are clear career paths for all staff ensuring retention and embedding of culture, as well as best structure for effective teacher recruitment, training and development across the federation.

Pioneer Leaders and Framfield Governors have ambitions for there to be a school hall within the school premises, rather than needing to utilise the village hall. Feasibility study is in place and exploration around funding. We believe this will provide a stronger and safer premises plan for the pupils at Framfield.

The Governing Bodies of all the schools have decided to initiate a consultation to seek the views of everyone that has an interest in our schools. We would like to invite you to share your views on our proposed federation.

This consultation will be open for six weeks from **9th February 2026** until the **23rd March 2026**.

We believe that federation is the key to future sustainability, not only maintaining our schools, but helping us grow them and improve them for our children today and in years to come.

What is our Key Aim?

Our key aim is to ensure that our children will have access to successful, well-run schools that provide them with an excellent, well-rounded education, with greater curricular opportunities, working in partnership with parents/carers and the wider community. We want to encourage our children to aspire to great achievements as they learn and grow in a caring, safe and friendly community of schools.

Our schools currently have a strong ethos of care, creativity and hard work. The strong ethos and deep sense of community that exists within each of our schools are all things that we wish to maintain, encourage and develop further - building on the success of our existing partnership.

We would like to formalise the closer working relationship that has been forged between the schools by establishing a federation. We look forward to entering into a consultation period where we can tell you more about our proposals and find out your views.

How will it Affect the Admissions Process?

The current admissions process would be retained:

- The admissions authority for Park Mead School, Chiddingly Primary School, East Hoathly CE Primary School, Nutley CE Primary School and Stonegate CE Primary would continue to be East Sussex Local Authority.
- The admissions authority for St Mary the Virgin CE Primary School, Groombridge St.Thomas CE Primary School and Framfield CE Primary would be the Federation's Governing Body.

Our Proposal

The proposal is to federate the Pioneer Federation of 6 schools with Framfield CE Primary School starting on **1st September 2026**. Simultaneously a consultation (and potential federation) process is being undertaken with Stonegate CE Primary School along the same timelines.

By working collaboratively, the schools have been able to develop consistent educational approaches and share skills, expertise and resources and enhance curricular provision across the school communities.

Should the federation go ahead, it will be led by an executive headteacher and individual Headteachers/Heads of School with a robust senior leadership structure in place at each school. The Federation will be divided into **3 clusters**, linked by locality to each other. **'Ashdown Cluster'**, **'Weald Cluster'** and **'Downs Cluster'**. There will be 2 or 3 schools within each cluster. The schools in each cluster will work closely together and continue to work collaboratively as a whole federation. Our school would be in the Weald Cluster and we would be working more closely with East Hoathly CE School.

What are the Benefits and Opportunities of Federating?

We are passionate about ensuring the very best education for the children in our communities. We are aware of the vulnerability of rural schools which operate as a single entity and recognise this proposed model as being mutually supportive and one which provides long term stability. It brings an opportunity to achieve economies of scale to secure financial stability and sustainability of our schools into the future. Federation has been fully discussed with governors, the Local Authority and the Diocese and we feel it is the best way to achieve our goals and secure a supportive future for the schools.

There are greatly improved opportunities for children and staff at all schools to interact, learn from each other and share best practice. See the school newsletter letters on the Framfield website.

For children:

- Children will have greater access to specialist expertise from each school's current staff and a wider range of resources and experiences to broaden their curriculum.
- Children within the federation will continue to receive the highest quality teaching and learning, enriched by collaborative working and enhanced resources across the schools.
- Stability and continuity with increased opportunity to meet and work with other children in a wider community.

For parents/carers and communities:

- It strengthens the ability of our schools to develop and improve while maximising our ability to cope with changes in educational policy, enabling us to continue to provide excellent education in our villages.
- It extends the opportunities available to children and their families by creating a long term, stable school structure.

For staff:

- Leadership will be secured for the future and staff development opportunities will enable our schools to retain valued staff and be more attractive for new staff to join the school.
- Shared staff meetings and combined staff training have the effect of widening the circle of peers that our staff can call upon for fresh and creative ideas and support.
- Shared ideas and resources help staff avoid needless duplication of effort and materials and will allow for more time to be devoted to teaching and learning.
- Increased joint working enables us to develop our subject leads across the schools as well as giving us an opportunity to jointly develop and plan our school curriculum to the benefit of all our pupils.

What about The Governing Body?

A new single governing body would be formed as required by the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012, to take overall responsibility for all schools within the federation. As you are aware, there is currently an interim governing body at Framfield and this would be replaced by the Pioneer Federation governing body, securing long term governance.

The role of the federated governing body will be to:

- Ensure that the character of each school is maintained whilst moving forward as one.
- Define a shared vision and strategic direction for the schools that places the children at its heart.
- Ensure due diligence and financial probity; effective financial management.
- Hold the executive head teacher to account for the educational performance of the schools.

The proposed new federated governing body would consist of 19 members. This would comprise:

- 2 Parent Governors
- 1 Staff Governor
- 1 Local Authority governor
- 10 Foundation Governors (*includes 5 Ex officios being clergy*)
- 1 Ex officio being Executive Headteacher
- 4 Co-opted Governors

Each cluster ('Ashdown', 'Weald' and 'Downs') would have a governing committee. This would comprise 6 governors on each with a Chair for the cluster, as follows:

- **Ashdown**- St Mary, Groombridge & Nutley
- **Weald**- Framfield and East Hoathly

- **Downs**- Park Mead, Chiddingly and Stonegate

There would also be a Pioneer Finance Committee, formed of the FGB chair and the Cluster Chairs and a Pioneer Strategic Group, Local Authority and Diocese representatives would be invited to these strategic meetings.

And Staffing?

The existing senior leadership structure would continue, led by Mr. James Procter as Executive Headteacher for the Federation. Alongside the Executive Headteacher, the leadership team in the schools will consist of Cluster Lead Headteachers and Heads of School and Senior Teacher/s. At Framfield we have a temporary leadership arrangement which would be formalised by the appointment of a permanent Head of School and Senior Teacher if the federation membership goes ahead. This would give us long term, stable leadership.

What is the Federation Consultation Process?

The governors of Pioneer and Framfield have set up a consultation process to seek the views of parents, staff, community, the local authority, the Chichester Diocesan Board of Education and other key stakeholders. The consultation process will last six weeks, starting on **9th February 2026** ending on **23rd March 2026**.

Governors welcome your views and comments and invite you to any of the following meetings, regardless of which is your child's school:

<u>School/Online</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>
Pioneer Schools	24.02.26	4:00pm – Chiddingly Primary School Hall
Framfield	06.03.26	9:00am- Village Memorial Hall

You are welcome to attend these meetings online if you wish. The Google-Meet link is:

meet.google.com/deo-qnrm-ijt

If you are unable to attend any of these meetings, and would like to discuss this proposal, please contact your school to make an appointment in the usual manner. Notes of meetings will be on the school website.

How do I Submit my Views?

Comments and views must be received by **Monday 23rd March 2026 at 3.30pm**.

Written responses should be addressed to the Clerk to your school Governing Body of your school.

- Pioneer Schools: clerk@pioneerfederation.co.uk
- Framfield School: clerk@framfieldcep.e-sussex.sch.uk

A box for written responses will also be provided in each school.

When Will the Decision be Announced?

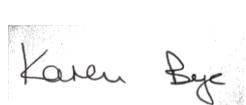
Following the consultation period the Governing Bodies will consider the views and comments before meeting to make a final decision on this proposal.

We look forward to hearing from you and will, of course, keep you fully informed regarding our final decision by **Friday 27th March 2026**.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Brundle
Chair of Governors Pioneer Federation



Karen Bye
Chair of the Governors - Framfield CE School