

# A strategy for sustaining small and medium sized primary schools in Lincolnshire

## Creating Collaborative Partnerships

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- Context
- Why
- What
- How
- When

## Context



One of the greatest challenges in the next decade will be maintaining rural education. The reasons are:

- The academies programme, with good and outstanding schools leaving the LA and taking the targeted LA resources needed to sustain the rural infrastructure of schools
- Small and medium sized primary schools are not as viable as academies so have little or no attraction to academy sponsors
- Reduced resource in the LA to support rural schools
- Small schools more at risk because of new rules on floor standards and Ofsted emphasis on teaching and learning
- Outcome of failure to meet the standards is conversion to an academy or closure

## Context – What has been tried

- Ad hoc arrangements when opportunity has occurred or like minded heads (friendship) or governors coming together to form a partnership or federation
- Creation of Executive Heads to run some federations when one Head has left and it was thought to be a good idea
- Some pyramid/vertical federations – run by local secondary schools
- Creation of Trusts or Multi-Academy Trusts to consolidate the arrangements

Some are successful, some have failure, few in rural settings with small schools are sustainable in the emerging climate

**Thus the need for a more innovative scheme**

## Why?

- The need to protect rural school infrastructure by improving provision
- To maintain individual schools with their own Headteachers and governing bodies
- To allow Headteachers to focus more on teaching and learning
- To raise standards particularly for pupils with special needs
- To support schools to become 'good' more effectively

# Raising Standards

## Schools below the Floor Standard



<i>Size of School</i>	<i>No of Schools Below Floor 2011</i>	<i>No of Schools Below Floor 2010</i>	<i>No of Schools Below Floor 2009</i>	<i>No of Schools Below Floor 2008</i>	<i>No of Schools Below Floor 2007</i>
Up to 90	23	13	24	20	23
91-180	7	8	11	10	10
181-270	8	6	13	9	12
271-360	5	2	2	7	6
More than 360	3	2	2	5	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>54</b>

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# Average Performance at Level 4+ in English and Mathematics



Size of School	No of Primary & Junior Schools	Average % Performance at Level 4+ in E+M 2011	Average % Performance at Level 4+ in E+M 2010	Average % Performance at Level 4+ in E+M 2009	Average % Performance at Level 4+ in E+M 2008	Average % Performance at Level 4+ in E+M 2007
Up to 90	73	70.3	72.9	70.8	71.7	67.1
91-180	77	76.8	76.9	75.7	75.7	72.7
181-270	52	75.7	75.4	72.2	74.4	70.4
271-360	29	76.8	75.3	74.7	74.1	73.5
More than 360	25	76.0	74.8	74.7	74.5	76.0

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‘Headteachers deal with too many operational issues and administrative tasks. The small size of many primary schools makes distributed leadership difficult, and the system places a lot of expectations – and many individual accountabilities- on the single Headteacher of the individual school.’

*National College-2007:4-Chain Reactions: A thinkpiece on the development of chains of schools in the English school system*



## What?

The proposed solution is to provide additional support to small and medium sized primary schools by developing Collaborative Partnerships between groups of local schools in geographical areas

# What does a Collaborative Partnership look like?

- A group of between 3 and 7 schools within a 15 mile radius
- Each school in the Partnership would have less than 200 children on roll
- Each school would retain its own headteacher and governing body
- Each school would retain its own distinctive ethos

# Supporting Partnership Success



- The partnership would appoint a shared, highly skilled Partnership Business Manager
- The partnership would appoint an experienced, shared SENCo who will support vulnerable children
- Additional resource available to support other shared activity as appropriate to each Partnership
- Strategic leadership of the partnership would be provided through a Lead Strategic Group comprising the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors
- The Lead Strategic Group would be chaired by a Co-ordinator with proven primary leadership experience
- The Co-ordinator would be responsible for the line management and deployment of the shared staff

‘... in all but one of the case study federations, both student outcomes and school inspections or self evaluations actually show discernible and often marked improvement overall. We have identified four key factors associated with this positive trend in federation performance:

- Purposeful Leadership ... raises expectations about what teaching staff and their pupils can achieve.
- Increased Collaboration raises expectations.... affording teachers more opportunity to share good practice
- Improved efficiency... enables schools to draw upon better resources and a wider pool of expertise
- High quality CPD.....has benefitted the overall quality of teaching and learning’

*A study of the impact of school federation on student outcomes. Chapman et al NCSL August 2011*

## How?

- Schools required to enter into a contractually binding agreement
- Each Collaborative Partnership will need to cater for more than 210 pupils
- Headteachers and Chairs of Governors would need to agree to work as a single group, firstly to develop a common vision for the Partnership and secondly, and more practically, to deploy the common resource across the Partnership schools
- Individual schools would need to establish a staffing structure that would ensure Partnership resources are maximised

## How?

### Funding Implications:

Two elements of additional funding will be required:

- ✓ **Start Up Funding** - available in 2 financial years 2012-13, 2013-14
- ✓ **Partnership Premium** - Funding element of the formula by which the DSG (dedicated schools grant) is allocated to schools

## Start-up Funding

£20,000 per school, available for a maximum of 2 years

Funding would be used to:

- Employ a single Partnership Business Manager, whilst restructuring takes place
- Employ a single SENCo across the Partnership
- Cover potential redundancy costs
- Establish true partnership working

# Partnership Premium



- £100,000 per annum allocated to the Partnership
- This would be ongoing funding
- Funding would be allocated to the Collaborative Partnerships not to individual schools



## When?

- Small schools already looking at opportunities to work together
- 5 possible Partnerships have already expressed a keen interest and are very enthusiastic
- Total possible Partnerships would be 39
- Initial Partnerships would commence in April 2012 with full implementation for September 2012

‘We need to create structures and frameworks that provide primary schools with the critical mass necessary to develop strategic leadership, create new career structures, support professional and curriculum development, address school underperformance and realise economies of scale.’

*National College-2007:4-Chain Reactions: A thinkpiece on the development of chains of schools in the English school system*