

## **Federation Headteacher Policy for Primary Schools**

### **1. Background and Rationale**

In Moray the Senior Management Team in Education agrees with the evidence from research that the key to school improvement is the quality of our staff and particularly the development of the skills and talents of our headteachers and teaching staff. In order to allow this development and to ensure it is undertaken in a comprehensive, planned and systematic manner, it is vital that schools have high quality headteachers who are clearly leaders and specifically leaders of learning. We see the paired headteacher, federation or multiple pairing (i.e. more than 2 schools) models as a way of releasing headteachers from an on-going class commitment so that they can lead and focus on their own development and that of their staff, in order to improve the outcomes for children and young people in Moray. Therefore, from a research based and philosophical standpoint we recommend the federation models. As part of the Schools for the Future Policy and subsequent reviews of all schools in Moray, federation models are suggestions when recommending the sustainability of a school for the future.

However, from a pragmatic and practical point of view, we acknowledge that there is a small, but significant, counterweight to the above. As we are a small rural authority with a limited number of staff applying for senior posts, we need to keep options open for those staff who might aspire to senior positions. Historically, a number of staff saw the post of class-committed headteacher as their preferred route to headship as it maintained a close connection to the classroom. Taking all other challenges into consideration, a non-class committed headteacher post, with preferably some form of management team, is now seen as the more preferential option. An increase in additional support needs along with challenging behaviour has increased the requirement for headteachers to support working with a range of partners to better meet the needs of pupils. That, along with increasing scrutiny and need for improvement supports the requirement for non-class commitment to provide additional time to lead and manage on a daily basis.

As a result of the above we need to be flexible in our approach in order to ensure we have high quality leaders in headteacher posts. Ideally, to strengthen leadership and management in our schools, we aim eventually to have no class committed headteachers in Moray. An aspiration which is shared by many other local authorities. Pairings are now common place in Moray and there is a need to once again explore alternative options due to the growing challenge of appointing senior leaders, particularly Head Teachers who are required to hold standard for headship qualifications as a prerequisite from 1 August 2020. This currently is met with Into Headship, previously called Flexible Route to Headship and Scottish Qualification for Headship. Federation models would provide further leadership opportunities with Principal Teacher and Depute Headteacher posts.

When federation models are created the schools will retain their individual identities and operate as single schools where possible. Each will retain its

uniqueness with a curriculum, uniform and identity to suit their local context and community. The headteacher may consider and plan opportunities for staff to work together if shared priorities exist across the schools. Joint planning, moderation or assessment practices will provide opportunities for staff to have a stage partner which is not possible within their own school.

It will be at the discretion of the headteacher and in discussion with staff, pupils and each parent council whether joint trips or joint events take place. Each school will retain its own pupils Council. These things may evolve as the model in place develops. At the moment each school will retain its own budget. The Schools for the Future Policy recommended one budget across the federation but this will need to be considered when the Devolved School Management Scheme is reviewed in future.

## **2. Aims and Outcomes**

This policy sets out the principles/selection criteria and processes when considering a pairing, federation or multiple pairing model in primary schools under one headteacher.

## **3. Principles for Federation**

A pairing can be considered when a class committed headteacher post becomes vacant and has been advertised on at least one occasion with no appointment being made. Where there is an existing pairing and a vacancy occurs for a class committed headteacher in the same ASG, a multiple school model can be considered.

Suitability will be determined on the basis of the following:

- A school will be paired with another school from within its ASG so that the Head Teacher links with one secondary school. The only exception to this will be where any pairing is for two denominational schools.
- A multiple school model is considered where a pairing already exists in the Associated Schools Group. This would be an executive or multiple pairing model. This federation can be used for up to a maximum of 4 schools
- The headteachers in schools identified for pairing/executive models will have a class commitment
- A school will be paired with another where the headteacher in one school is class-committed but the others is non class-committed and either all other schools have been paired in ASG or the distance between schools is great (ie a pairing between a smaller school and a larger school)
- Where possible the schools considered for executive/multiple models as part of the federation policy should be relatively close in proximity to each other. This may not be possible in some rural areas.

#### **4. Appointment Processes for Federation Models**

- 4.1 When a vacancy occurs for a class-committed headteacher post, possible pairings will be considered within the Associated Schools Group in the first instance. If a pairing is possible, the initial step will be to offer the remaining substantive headteacher the post. An interview for the paired headteacher post. This will be conducted by the Chief Education Officer and Quality Improvement Manager/Business Support Team Manager or delegates. At interview there will not be the opportunity to make no appointment. The exception to this is where the vacancy is in a denominational school where a pairing outwith the ASG can be considered.
- 4.2 When a vacancy arises for a class-committed headteacher post and a pairing already exists with the Associated Schools Group, consideration should be given to an executive/multiple pairing if the substantive headteacher agrees to this. The headteacher will be subject to an interview by the Chief Education Officer and Quality Improvement Manager/Business Support Team Manager or delegates. At interview there will not be the opportunity to make no appointment. The exception to this is where the vacancy is in a denominational school where a pairing outwith the ASG can be considered.
- 4.3 If vacancies arise in more than one school in an Associated Schools Group and they meet the criteria as indicated in section 3, this should be advertised as a paired headteacher post. Interviews would follow the normal HT appointment procedure.
- 4.4 When a new pairing or any federation model is created, the Headteacher will liaise with the Business Support Team to advertise and appoint any additional management posts. This will further enhance leadership capacity across the schools.
- 4.5 Where a federation model is considered, the leadership arrangements put in place will be in line with any new linear formula being developed and under constant review with any major changes reported to Committee.

#### **5. Consultation Processes for Federation Models**

- 5.1 Once a vacancy has been advertised with no appointment on at least one occasion, the Chief Education Officer, the Business Support Team Manager and Quality Improvement Manager (with responsibility for schools) should consider federation model arrangements. This should be shared with the Chief Education Officer's line manager. The LNCT joint secretaries will be advised when the Education department first identifies a possibly pairing/federation model. A job sizing exercise will be undertaken. It should be noted that any job sizing for a paired or federation HT will be the job sizing salary plus one salary point.
- 5.2 The Quality Improvement Manager should inform Ward members as well as the Chair and Vice Chair of Children and Young People's Services Committee.

- 5.3 Where a pairing is considered with a school which has a substantive Headteacher, they will be consulted in the first instance so that they can consider whether to accept the invitation to interview.
- 5.4 The parent council of each school should be visited by officers so that they can be informed of the proposed pairing or federation model being considered.
- 5.5 Consultation should be undertaken for any pairing and as part of this officers should visit staff in each school to inform them of the pairing and discuss the changes to leadership and management arrangements prior to any changes proceeding. Information should be provided about staffing policies and procedures should additional leadership posts be put in place.
- 5.6 In order to inform pupils of the new arrangements, children from an existing pairing/federation model should visit each school so that they can hear from their peers how the pairing has worked for them. They should be joined by their headteacher.
- 5.7 Once all consultations have been completed a letter should be sent to all parents/carers/parent council chairs and staff to inform them about the pairing or federation model and when this will take effect.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

It will be the role of the Chief Education Officer working with a Quality Improvement Manager and Business Support Team Manager or other officers to seek advice or to implement this policy,

## **7. Quality Improvement, Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Quality Improvement Framework and procedures for schools in Moray is appropriate and robust with ongoing review including the potential to formulate school improvement groups outwith the formal Associated Schools Group format. These policies and procedures apply in the case of all schools and will apply where schools have a federation model in place.

## **8. Staff Development**

The Education Service puts in place peer support and officer support for newly appointed headteachers and this will apply to those in federation models.

## **9. Consultations**

The following have been consulted in the formulation of this policy:

- Senior officers in Education
- Parent Council chairs
- The Moray Education Headteacher Consultative Group
- Head Teachers of existing paired schools
- Head Teachers
- Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers (LNCT)
- Chair and Vice Chair of Committee

## **10. Review Date**

This policy will be reviewed as and when required or within five years (2029) if no changes have been made by this point.