



Consultation about whether to establish a Federation



The Governing Bodies of Maples Nursery School and Children's Centre and South Acton Children's Centre want to hear your views about their proposal to jointly form a Federation, which would be called Acton Early Years Federation. This document provides more detail about why this is being proposed and how to respond. The consultation ends on Monday 3rd March 2025.

What is being proposed?

This consultation is about a proposal to establish a Federation that would involve the following two schools:

- Maples Nursery School and Children's Centre (Maples); and
- South Acton Children's Centre (SACC).

Both schools are Nursery Schools in accordance with education legislation, and so able to form a Federation. Annex 1 provides summary information about the proposed federation, and Annex 2 provides the proposed vision for the federation.

Each Governing Body has given in-principle approval for the federation and approved undertaking this consultation. The responses from this consultation will inform the final decision of each Governing Body.

Why is this being proposed?

Establishing the Acton Early Years Federation:

1. Formalises the existing partnership between Maples and SACC, which has benefited both schools;
2. By formalising the partnership, it enables effective and strategic planning for both schools;
3. Secures leadership capacity and structures for the schools, improving succession planning;
4. Enables governance and leadership to both operate across the federation (as opposed to only leadership operating across both schools as is happening now, and only happening now on a temporary basis), improving collaboration and collective responsibility; and
5. Does not preclude future changes, such as other schools joining the federation or the federation being dissolved, if those are considered appropriate at the time; and
6. Keeps the financial benefits that result from partnership, in particular in relation to leadership structures and financial planning / management.

What is a Federation?

A federation is two or more local authority maintained schools operating under the governance of a single governing body. Each federated school is treated as an individual school, meaning it continues to – for example – have its own budget and is inspected individually by OFSTED. A federation can include nursery, primary and secondary schools, but can only include Council maintained schools (not academies). A federation can include schools from more than one local authority.

The partnership between Maples and SACC has operated since January 2024 when the temporary Executive Headteacher and Head of Centre roles were established. The two Governing Bodies have been working increasingly closely together during 2024, including jointly investigating options to formalise their collaboration. That research and collaboration has resulted in this proposal for federation.

What would the implications be for pupils and their families?

The new federation would have the same ethos and expectations as Governors and leaders have for the two centres currently. Through the partnership and through staff collaborating, there is an increasingly consistent approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment, as well as operating policies and procedures. Staff at both centres have benefited from working within the partnership and with colleagues at the other centre.

Ms Roach would continue to be the Executive Headteacher of both centres, with a Head of Centre for each of Maples and SACC as there is now.

Forming the federation would not change practical things such as the time each day that the centre is open.

How would the federation be governed?

A new Federation Governing Body would replace the two existing Governing Bodies (which would automatically cease on the date that the federation becomes operational). The Federation Governing Body would be responsible for both centres. Annex 1 includes the proposed structure of the Federation Governing Body and the process for appointing the governors.

Annex 3 provides more information about the proposed governance arrangements.

How would the federation be led? What are the staffing implications?

Ms Roach would continue to be the Executive Headteacher, supported by a Head of Centre for each of Maples and SACC.

Staff would remain in their current roles at their current centre. They would continue to be employees of Ealing Council, and would work under the direction of the Federation Governing Body. Employment contracts would continue as they are now – there would be no changes to contractual terms and conditions – i.e. salary, allowances, annual leave, working hours etc. There would be no redundancies or financial detriment for any staff as a result of forming the federation.

What could happen in the future?

There is no current ambition for the federation to be larger than Maples and SACC. However, if the federation wished to grow in the future, it would need to be reformed as a new federation with the new school also admitted. There are mechanisms so that a school can choose to leave a federation, and also for the schools to collectively decide to end the federation and return to having separate Governing Bodies. It is also possible for a local authority to propose the closure of a school within a federation.

What other options are available?

Other options available to each Governing Body are:

- To continue with the current arrangements whereby the centres work in partnership but without a federation - this option does not provide security for either school as, in

accordance with national employment terms and conditions for teachers, the current arrangements are temporary and should not last more than two years without either being made permanent (as they would be if the federation is formed) or ended.

- To end the partnership and each centre act as separate schools – this is not considered to be in pupils' best interests due to the educational, financial and staffing benefits of a federation.

Who are we consulting?

We are consulting staff, parents and carers, the local authority, local primary and nursery schools, our ward councillors and MPs, and trade unions. Any individual or organisation is welcome to respond to the consultation.

How to have your say

Please have your say on the proposal by:

- Completing the online questionnaire that is available [here](https://forms.office.com/e/KBBgT4Zzk7) (<https://forms.office.com/e/KBBgT4Zzk7>); or
- Writing to the Executive Headteacher, Ms Roach, at the address of either of the centres; or
- Completing a paper copy of the questionnaire (available from each centre office).

The consultation ends on Monday 3rd March 2025.

What happens after the consultation?

All responses to the consultation will be carefully considered by each Governing Body before they each independently make a decision about whether they wish to form the Acton Early Years Federation.

If both Governing Bodies decide to form the federation, we would notify all staff and parents / carers as well as other organisations as required by the Department for Education. The Federation Governing Body would be established during the summer term, ready for the federation to become operational on 1 September 2025.

If either Governing Body decides not to form the federation, each Governing Body would need to decide whether to continue with the partnership given the decision not to formalise it.

Annex 1: Summary information regarding the proposed federation

The following table summarises key information about the proposed federation.

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| Proposed name of the federation | Acton Early Years Federation |
| Schools proposed to be within the federation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maples Nursery School and Children’s Centre; and ● South Acton Children’s Centre. |
| Proposed date for the federation to become operational | Monday 1 st September 2025 |
| Proposed composition of the Federation Governing Body | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Executive Headteacher (who is the legal Headteacher of each school within the federation); ● Two parent governors elected by parents from across all the schools; ● One staff governor elected by staff from across all the schools; ● One governor nominated by the local authority; ● Up to 10 governors co-opted by the Governing Body (subject to employees not being more than one third of the total number of Governors, including the Executive Headteacher and staff governor). ● Total number of Governors: Up to 15 |
| Employer of staff | <p>Ealing Council is the current employer of staff at each centre (with staff acting under the direction of their respective Governing Body).</p> <p>Ealing Council would be the employer of all staff within the federation, with staff acting under the direction of the Federation Governing Body.</p> |
| Admissions authority | The Federation Governing Body would set the admissions policy for each centre. As neither school provides statutory age education they are not subject to the provisions of the School Admissions Code. |

Annex 2: Proposed vision for the Acton Early Years Federation

The future vision for a federation is that there will be two outstanding maintained Nursery Schools in the Acton area that will provide high quality education for all children in the locality. This will ensure children will have the best possible start to their education in a friendly, supportive and fun learning environment providing solid foundations for their future. It is fundamental that children are able to access high quality education in their local area and to meet the demand for places.

There will be a strong partnership across the staff teams enabling collaborative working and training to promote, maintain and evolve the 'grow your own ethos' striving for highly qualified staff with the opportunity for progression in their career paths. To use a peer on peer approach across the settings to enable a seamless support network, share good practice and develop innovative ways of working. To also have the flexibility for staff to work across both settings supporting the difficulties in staff recruitment and retention and opening opportunities for new roles.

The federation will allow for a sustainable and viable future enabling cost savings by negotiating dual contracts for building and maintenance, sharing of resources and provision as well as joint training. We will continue to developing new ways of working, sharing innovative ideas, the possibilities are endless on a journey together. A journey that involves a staff group of very passionate, highly qualified, skilled and knowledgeable professionals in Early Years.

Annex 3: Governance of Acton Early Years Federation

On the date that the federation becomes operational, the existing Governing Body of Maples Nursery School and Children's Centre and the existing Governing Body of South Acton Children's Centre would both automatically cease and the federation Governing Body would be incorporated.

The composition of a federation Governing Body must comply with DfE regulations. The following is the proposed composition of the federation Governing Body:

- The Executive Headteacher (who is the legal Headteacher of each school within the federation);
- Two parent governors elected by parents from across all the schools;
- One staff governor elected by staff from across all the schools;
- One governor nominated by the local authority;
- Up to 10 governors co-opted by the Governing Body (subject to employees not being more than one third of the total number of Governors, including the Executive Headteacher and staff governor).
- Total number of Governors: Up to 15

Terms of office for all Governors would be four years, with the exception of the Executive Headteacher who would be ex-officio.

This structure would be established in a new Instrument of Government.

The Federation Governing Body would be established as a new Governing Body. There is no 'right of transfer' from the existing Governing Bodies. Therefore for the Federation Governing Body:

- The Executive Headteacher would be an ex-officio Governor (Mandy Roach);
- Nominations would be sought for the parent and staff governor roles from the communities of both Maples and SACC, with elections held if required (NB As is currently the case, parent and staff governors do not represent parents or staff, they do bring the perspective of a parent or of a member of staff to the Governing Body);
- The local authority would propose the local authority governor (who would be appointed by the Federation Governing Body); and
- The Governing Body would appoint the co-opted governors based upon the skills and experience that they would bring to the Governing Body.

The Federation Governing Body would have the same legal responsibilities as each current Governing Body, but for both centres within the federation. The focus when seeking Governors (whether for co-opted appointments or via parent or staff nomination) would be to secure individuals with the capacity to undertake the role, a commitment to the federation as a whole and all of the children that it serves, and for the Governing Body collectively to have an appropriate breadth of skills and experience.