

Barking Abbey Staff Consultation Meeting

Proposal to Form a Hard Federation



**BARKING ABBEY & EASTBROOK
SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**



Thursday 21st May 2026

23 staff attended

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Introduction & Welcome



Purpose of Today's Meeting

- To provide an overview of the proposed move from a soft federation to a hard federation.
- To summarise the key themes and questions raised so far during consultation.
- To provide clarity around the proposal, governance arrangements and what this means for staff.
- To explain the consultation process and next steps.

Meeting Expectations

- Cameras, microphones and comments are turned off for attendees not presenting.
- This session is intended to provide general clarification and information based on questions and comments received.
- If you have school-specific or personal questions, please email these directly these will not be published but it means we can give a specific response and reassurance
- Further comments and feedback can still be submitted through the consultation questionnaire before the consultation closes.

**Thank you for your time and
engagement**



2 Our Partnership Journey So Far

Barking Abbey & Eastbrook Partnership Timeline

- Partnership began in September 2023 following Local Authority intervention and support arrangements.
- Barking Abbey was formally asked by the Local Authority to support Eastbrook School.
- Extensive due diligence and stabilisation work took place.
- Shared systems and collaborative working were developed across:
 - HR
 - Finance
 - IT
 - Catering
 - Estates & Compliance
 - Premises
 - Operational support services



Progress Since Partnership Began

- Eastbrook achieved its strongest Ofsted outcome to date.
- Barking Abbey retained Outstanding status.
- Significant improvements in:
 - ✓ Attendance
 - ✓ Outcomes
 - ✓ Financial stability
 - ✓ Safeguarding
 - ✓ Operational systems
 - ✓ Recruitment and retention
- Increased collaboration and professional development opportunities for staff across both schools.

**A successful partnership already
delivering real impact**



3 What is a Hard Federation?

A Hard Federation is:

A formal partnership between maintained schools under one Governing Body.

- ✗ NOT an academy trust.
- ✗ NOT a school merger.
- ✗ NOT academisation.

Both Schools Will Continue To:

- Remain Local Authority schools.
- Retain their own identity, name, uniform and culture.
- Have separate Ofsted inspections.
- Keep separate admissions arrangements.
- Continue to receive separate funding allocations.
- Retain LBBD as the legal employer.

Become a formal partnership



4 Why Move to a Hard Federation?

Why Formalise the Partnership?

The current soft federation has been highly successful, but it remains:

- Informal
- Time limited
- Dependent on temporary arrangements

A Hard Federation Provides:

- Long-term stability
- Clear governance and accountability (oversight of partnership)
- Strategic oversight of shared services
- Greater consistency and operational efficiency
- Increased opportunities for collaboration and staff development
- More secure future planning for both schools

Most Importantly

The proposal is centred around:

- Stability for pupils and staff
- Sustained school improvement
- Stronger leadership structures
- Long-term protection of both schools' identities and communities.
- Providing an outstanding provision for pupils staff and members of the local community

About stability, improvement and protecting both schools



5 Consultation Process & Timeline

Consultation Period

 Consultation opened: 8 May 2026

 Consultation closes: 26 June 2026

Stakeholders Consulted

- Staff
- Trade unions
- Parents/carers
- Local community
- Local Authority
- DfE/Secretary of State



Following Consultation

- Governing Bodies will review all responses received.
- Governors will determine whether to proceed with federation formation.
- If approved, the new Governing Body would form from September 2026.

Your views are important and will be fully considered



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Consultation Responses Received So Far

Responses Received as of 19th May 2026

Total responses received: 23

Barking Abbey

Staff: 0

Parents: 12

- 6 with no comments/questions

Eastbrook

Staff: 7

- 2 duplicate submissions
- 1 with no questions/comments

Parents: 3

- 2 with no comments/questions

Local Authority: 1 letter of support

Main Themes Raised

- Individual questions- (related to own child, work or department/school)
- Staffing and contracts (EB Staff)
- Governance and representation (EB Parents and Staff)
- Workload and wellbeing (EB Staff)
- Policies and consistency (EB Staff)
- Curriculum and school identity (Staff and Parents)
- Finance and funding (BA Parents, EB Staff)
- Resource sharing and collaboration (EB Staff)
- Long-term school standards and reputation. (BA Parents)
- School Identity (BA Parents)



Thank you to everyone who has shared feedback



7 Staffing, Contracts & HR



Key Clarifications

- LBBB remains the legal employer. (No changes)
- Existing contracts and terms and conditions remain in place.
- There are currently no planned redundancies linked to the federation proposal.
- Staff will not be forced to work across both schools.
- Where collaboration occurs, workload, travel and operational practicality will continue to be considered.

HR & Decision Making

- Schools continue to operate within LBBB policies and procedures.
- Executive Headteacher, SBM and designated school leaders retain operational leadership responsibilities.
- Central HR team - HR processes are intended to provide:
 - consistency
 - fairness
 - transparency
 - legal compliance

Why Shared HR Support Matters

- Shared specialist expertise provides stronger operational support, oversight and consistency across both schools.
- This has already strengthened recruitment, compliance and staffing processes.

Supporting staff and maintaining stability



8 Policies, Curriculum & School Identity

Policies

- Both schools remain LBBD schools.
- Core HR, staffing and financial policies remain Local Authority policies.
- Some operational or school-specific policies may remain individual to each school where appropriate.

Curriculum & Teaching

- Curriculum decisions remain the responsibility of each school.
- Teaching and learning approaches continue to be led locally by school leadership teams.

School Identity

- Both schools retain:
 - Their own name
 - Uniform
 - Ethos
 - Community identity
 - Admissions arrangements (remain with LBBD)



✓ This is collaboration and formal partnership

✗ Not becoming one school

**Consistency where needed, flexibility
where appropriate**



9 Governance & Staff Representation

Proposed Governance Structure

- One central Governing Body for the federation.
- Local School Committees for each school.
- FGB Structure - Restricted by DfE guidance and Policy

Staff Representation

- One elected staff governor on the Executive Governing Body.
- Additional staff representation through Local School Committees.
- Local committees ensure school-specific voice and representation remain part of decision making.

Purpose of the Governance Structure

- Stronger accountability (of partnership)
- Clear oversight
- Better strategic planning
- Maintaining each school's local voice within a shared structure.



Strong governance with local representation



10 Finance & Budget



Key Financial Clarifications

- Both schools continue to receive separate funding.
- Both schools retain separate budgets.
- The Local Authority has confirmed no change to funding arrangements due to federating.
- School finances remain publicly available and transparent.

Why Partnership Strengthens Financial Stability

- Shared expertise and operational efficiencies have already reduced costs across both schools.
- Shared procurement and services create greater sustainability.
- The federation creates stronger long-term financial resilience for both schools.

Important Clarification

- This proposal is not about one school funding another school.
- It is about creating stability, efficiency and sustainability through collaboration.

Transparency, stability and sustainability



11 Workload, Wellbeing & Staff Voice

Questions Raised

A number of responses focused on:

- Workload
- Staff wellbeing
- Communication
- Transparency
- Opportunity for feedback



Monitoring & Support

- Existing wellbeing and feedback mechanisms remain in place.
- Schools will continue to use:
 - Staff surveys
 - TEP surveys
 - Department feedback
 - Governance oversight
 - Operational review processes

Commitment

- Staff voice remains important throughout this process.
- Feedback received during consultation will continue to inform Governors before any final decision is made.

We are listening and will continue to listen



Key Messages & Reassurance

The Proposal is About:

- ✓ Stability
- ✓ Long-term sustainability
- ✓ Strong governance
- ✓ Collaboration
- ✓ School improvement
- ✓ Protecting the future of both schools



The Proposal is NOT:

- ✗ A merger
- ✗ Academisation
- ✗ Removal of school identity
- ✗ Immediate restructuring
- ✗ Removal of existing terms and conditions

Central Principle

Both schools remain individual schools, working together within a formal long-term structure for the benefit of pupils, staff and the wider community. In line with the schools White Paper

Both schools remain individual schools



13 Next Steps

**Consultation Remains Open Until:
26 June 2026**

What Happens Next?

- Governors will review all consultation responses.
- All feedback will be considered before any final decision is made.
- If approved:
 - New governance arrangements would begin from September 2026.

Questions & Feedback

- Please continue to submit feedback through:
 - Consultation questionnaire
 - School email
 - Consultation meetings

We value your voice



14 Final Message

Thank you for your continued professionalism, commitment and engagement throughout this process.

The partnership between Barking Abbey and Eastbrook has already achieved significant progress for both schools, and the proposal to form a hard federation is about creating a stable and sustainable structure that allows this progress to continue long into the future.

The focus throughout remains:

- ✓ the best interests of pupils,
- ✓ supporting staff,
- ✓ strengthening leadership,
- ✓ and protecting the identity and future of both schools.

**Thank you for your continued
commitment**





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