CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED FEDERATION OF THORNHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LAYCOCK PRIMARY SCHOOL

CONSULTATION PERIOD: 6 JANUARY 2026 – 24 FEBRUARY 2026
PROPOSED FEDERATION DATE: APPROXIMATELY 6 MAY 2026

WHAT IS THIS CONSULTATION ABOUT?

The governors and board members of our two schools are proposing to formalise our successful two-year partnership by creating a Federation. This will secure the future of both schools, preserve what makes each special, and create new opportunities for all our children.

This consultation document has been prepared by the governing bodies of both schools in collaboration with school leaders.

WHAT WILL STAY THE SAME?

- ✓ **School names, uniforms, and identities**
- ✓ **School buildings and locations**
- ✓ **Day-to-day experience for your child**
- ✓ **Separate budgets and Ofsted inspections**
- ✓ **The specialist deaf provision at Laycock**
- ✓ **Both schools remain maintained schools (not academies)**

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

We want to hear what the parents/carers and staff of both schools think about this proposal, you can:

- **Complete the online survey: Click here**
- **Attend informal consultation session**

Consultation closes: 24 February 2026 at 5pm

Please read this full document and share your views

A detailed FAQ document is also available on the school websites

WHAT IS THIS CONSULTATION ABOUT?

The Governing Body of Thornhill Primary School and the Interim Executive Board (IEB) of Laycock Primary School are seeking your views on an exciting proposal: to formalise our successful two-year partnership by creating a Federation.

A Federation will support the future of both schools, preserve what makes each special, and create new opportunities for all our children.

This is your chance to find out more and tell us what you think.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS: OUR PARTNERSHIP STORY

Since April 2023, Thornhill and Laycock Primary Schools have been working together in partnership. This collaboration has already delivered real benefits:

- **Stronger leadership:** Shared strategic direction from Executive Headteacher Jenny Lewis, while each school keeps its own Head of School and identity.
- **Better outcomes:** Improved teaching and learning through sharing expertise and best practice.
- **More opportunities:** Enhanced curriculum experiences and specialist support for all children.
- **Secured provision:** The specialist deaf provision at Laycock has been strengthened through improved funding agreements and collaboration with specialist agencies.

Both schools' have thrived through partnership. Now we want to build on this success by formalising our relationship through federation.

Since April 2023, our partnership has delivered measurable improvements:

- Pupil attendance has improved by 4% at Laycock and remained stable at a positive level at Thornhill.
- Staff in both schools report increased confidence through joint training and collaboration opportunities.
- Pupils have benefited from joint curriculum projects and through shared enrichment opportunities.
- A clear funding agreement for the deaf provision at Laycock has been established with the local authority, securing the provision as a defining feature of Laycock School.
- Both schools have successfully shared expertise in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and across multiple curriculum areas.

These improvements demonstrate that our partnership is already working. By federating we will formalise our partnership enabling us to secure and build on this success.

WHAT IS A FEDERATION?

A Federation is a formal, legal partnership between maintained schools. Think of it as formalising our successful partnership.

What this means in practice:

- **Both schools remain separate schools** with their own names, uniforms, buildings, and identities.
- **One governing body** provides strategic oversight and governance for both schools.
- **Shared Executive Headteacher** sets the vision and direction across both schools.
- **Each school has its own Head of School** leading day-to-day operations.
- **Separate budgets** for each school (though we can choose to buy some things together to save money).
- **Separate Ofsted inspections** – each school keeps its own rating and is inspected individually.
- **Both schools stay as maintained schools** within Islington Local Authority, not academies.

Laycock is a one-form entry primary school with 230 children aged 3-11, including a specialist regional deaf provision serving 40 deaf pupils. The school is located in the Laycock Ward.

Thornhill is a two-form entry primary school with 463 children aged 3-11, located in the Barnsbury Ward.

Both schools serve diverse communities with higher than national average proportions of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium.

MESSAGES FROM OUR LEADERS

Message from Jenny Lewis, Interim Executive Headteacher

Working across both schools for the past two years has been a privilege. I've seen children flourish, staff develop their practice, and both school communities embrace collaboration.

Federation will allow us to build on this strong foundation. It means we can plan for the long term with confidence, knowing that both schools have the governance, leadership, and resources they need to thrive.

What excites me most is the opportunity this creates for every child. Whether your child attends Laycock or Thornhill, federation means they'll benefit from the best of both schools – excellent teaching, rich curriculum experiences, specialist support when needed, and a real sense of belonging to our local community.

The day-to-day experience for your child won't change – they'll still be taught by their class teacher or Qualified Teacher of the Deaf, in their school. But the opportunities available to them will grow, and the security and stability of their school will be strengthened.

I hope you'll support this proposal, and I look forward to hearing your views during the consultation.

Message from Prue Barnes-Kemp, Chair of Laycock Interim Executive Board

Over the past two years, I've witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of our partnership with Thornhill. The collaboration has brought stability, enhanced expertise, and renewed confidence to Laycock, particularly in strengthening our specialist deaf provision.

Federation is the natural next step to secure these benefits for the long term. It will ensure that both schools can continue to thrive, that our deaf provision remains a centre of excellence, and that all our children receive the outstanding education they deserve.

This proposal is about two strong schools becoming even stronger together but retaining their individual identity. I encourage you to read this document carefully, attend our drop-in sessions, and share your views. Your voice matters in shaping the future of our schools.

Message from Lisa McCrindle, Chair of Thornhill Governing Body

Thornhill has always been committed to collaboration and supporting other schools. Our partnership with Laycock has been genuinely reciprocal – both schools have benefitted from new opportunities through working together.

Federation represents an exciting opportunity to formalise what's already working well while creating new possibilities for all our children and staff. It allows us to maintain everything that makes Thornhill special while benefiting from the strengths and expertise at Laycock, particularly around inclusive practice and specialist provision.

Most importantly, federation secures the future of both schools in an increasingly challenging educational landscape. It keeps us as maintained community schools, accountable to you, while giving us the resilience and capacity to continue delivering excellent education for generations to come.

Please take time to consider this proposal and let us know your views.

WHY FEDERATION, AND WHY NOW?

There is a clear national expectation that schools should work together in formal partnerships to improve outcomes for pupils and ensure long-term sustainability. For maintained community schools like Laycock and Thornhill, federation is the established model for formalising collaborative working while preserving each school's individual identity and community.

Federation is an increasingly common approach across London. There are a growing number of Federations in Islington, and within our neighbouring boroughs of Camden, Haringey and Hackney, where schools have successfully come together to strengthen their provision while maintaining their distinct characters. Federation allows schools to combine their strengths, share expertise and resources, and provide enhanced opportunities for pupils and staff, while each school retains its name, building, budget, and place in its community.

Securing our future together

Federation offers both schools long-term sustainability in a challenging educational landscape. With falling pupil rolls and funding pressures affecting London primary schools, working together makes us stronger. It formalises the successful leadership structure already in place, keeps both schools as maintained community schools accountable to Islington families, and secures strategic oversight and resources for the deaf provision.

Natural alignment

Our schools already share a commitment to developing each child's cultural capital, strong values around inclusion and community, curriculum approaches focused on creativity, and a belief that every child deserves excellent education regardless of background. Federation allows us to build systematically on what we've already achieved together.

Building community connections

In a city as large as London, it's easy for families to feel isolated. Through federation, we can create intentional opportunities for children and families from neighbouring schools to build relationships and a shared sense of belonging to our corner of Islington. Connected communities are stronger communities. When children know they're part of something bigger than just their school, they develop confidence, empathy, and a sense of place.

Maximising opportunity

Together, we can achieve more. Federation enables us to share expertise and resources effectively, create career pathways that small primary schools struggle to provide on their own and influence educational thinking more broadly. It positions us to control our own destiny as far as possible in an uncertain policy landscape.

BENEFITS OF FEDERATION

For pupils

- Security and stability with continued strong leadership.
- Access to excellent teaching in both schools.
- Enhanced curriculum with opportunities to learn from specialist teachers across both schools.
- Deaf pupils continue to benefit from highly qualified Teachers of the Deaf (QTODs) providing specialist assessments and tailored interventions.
- Broader enrichment activities and educational experiences.
- Opportunities to build friendships across neighbouring schools.
- Strong safeguarding and SEND support in both schools.

For parents and carers

- Confidence in stable, strong leadership for both schools now and in the future.
- Security that your child's school will continue to thrive.
- Knowledge that pupils have access to extensive curriculum support and specialist expertise.
- For parents of deaf children: confidence that the deaf provision remains central to Laycock's identity, with QTOD support continuing unchanged with enhanced strategic oversight.
- Stronger schools working together under one governance structure.
- Enhanced oversight of vulnerable pupils and safeguarding.
- Maintained local community schools accountable to Islington families.

For staff

- Stability of leadership after two years of working together
- Continued professional development and career opportunities across both schools.
- Joint planning, training, and collaboration.
- Access to specialist expertise including deaf education and inclusive practice.
- Stronger, more sustainable schools providing secure employment.
- Opportunities for leadership development within the Federation.

For both schools

- Stability and security for everyone in our school communities.
- Formalising the successful leadership arrangements already in place.
- Governance that reflects the reality of shared leadership across two schools.
- Better support and challenge for school leaders.
- Stronger accountability and strategic oversight.
- Opportunities for efficient use of resources.
- Protection of what makes each school special.
- A stronger voice in discussions with the Local Authority and others.

WHAT WILL STAY THE SAME, WHAT WILL CHANGE?

What will STAY THE SAME?	What will EVOLVE?
✓ Executive Headteacher leadership providing continuity ✓ School names, uniforms, and individual identities ✓ School buildings and locations ✓ Admissions criteria and catchment areas ✓ Individual school budgets ✓ Strong leadership teams in each school ✓ The specialist deaf provision at Laycock ✓ Day-to-day experience for your child ✓ Community connections at each school ✓ Separate Ofsted inspections ✓ Maintained community sector status (LA schools)	→ Single governing body bringing broader expertise → More opportunities for children to connect → More opportunities for staff to work together → Increased Shared professional development → Deeper collaboration on curriculum and SEND → Enhanced career pathways for staff

Impact on Staff

Federation will not change staff contracts or terms and conditions of employment:

- All staff will remain employed by their current school and there will be no changes to their terms of conditions and pensions.
- Staff will continue to work at their current school (unless they choose to apply for roles across the Federation).
- Contracts, pay, pensions, and other terms and conditions **will not change** as a result of federation.

Federation will create new opportunities for staff:

- Enhanced professional development through collaboration across both schools.
- Access to specialist expertise and best practice.
- Potential career progression opportunities within the Federation.
- Stronger, more sustainable schools.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE OF THE FEDERATION

Leadership

The Federation will be led by:

Executive Headteacher: Jenny Lewis - Providing strategic leadership, vision, and direction across both schools (as she does now).

Head of School at each school: Paul Robinson (Thornhill) and Fred Hall (Laycock) - Leading day-to-day operations, managing their school staff, and working closely with their school community.

Each school will maintain its own leadership structure. Your child's school leaders will remain focused on your school.

Governance

If we federate, a new single governing body will be created to govern both schools. The governing body would be responsible for:

- Setting strategic vision and direction for both schools.
- Holding the Executive Headteacher to account for educational standards.
- Ensuring sound financial management across both schools.
- Maintaining the individual character and strengths of each school.
- Safeguarding and strengthening the deaf provision.

Proposed governing body composition: 12 governors

- 2 parent governors (elected by parents from both schools)
- 1 staff governor (elected by staff from both schools)
- 1 Local Authority governor (nominated by Islington Council)
- 1 Executive Headteacher
- 7 co-opted governors (appointed for their skills and expertise, including a deaf education specialist)

This governing body composition complies with the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012, which specify that federated governing bodies must have exactly 2 parent governors and 1 staff governor elected from across both schools.

Each school will continue to set and manage its own budget, with oversight from the federated governing body. **There are no plans to pool budgets or for one school to subsidise the other.**

The federated governing body will include governors with financial expertise to ensure strong financial oversight and value for money across both schools.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

This is your opportunity to have your say. We want to hear from:

- Parents and carers at both schools
- Staff at both schools
- Pupils
- The wider school communities
- Other stakeholders with legitimate interests in our schools

How to give your views

Complete the online survey: Click here

If you cannot access the online form, you can:

- Ask for a paper form at the school office
- Speak to us at one of our drop-in sessions

Informal Consultation Discussions

We're holding informal sessions where you can come and ask questions and meet members of the Laycock Interim Executive Board and Thornhill Governors.

Laycock Primary School	Thornhill Primary School
14 January 2026 5-6pm Laycock Street London N1 1SW	**21 January 2026** 5-6pm Thornhill Road London N1 1HX

Just drop in any time during these sessions – no need to book.

Need help accessing this consultation?

If you need:

- This document in another language
- An audio version
- Support to complete the survey
- To discuss the proposal with someone

Please contact your school office who will arrange this for you.

TIMELINE

The consultation period has been set to ensure stakeholders have adequate time to consider the proposal and respond, including when schools are open and accessible.

Date	Activity
6 January 2026	Consultation begins – document published and survey opens
6-24 January 2026	Drop-in sessions at both schools
24 February 2026	Consultation closes at 5pm
Late February 2026	Governing bodies meet separately to consider consultation responses and decide whether to proceed
Early March 2026	If approved: joint meeting to appoint members of the new governing body
May/June 2026	Federation takes effect (proposed date, to be confirmed)

What happens after this consultation?

After the consultation closes on 24 February 2026, the Governing Body of Thornhill and the Interim Executive Board of Laycock will:

- **Carefully review all responses** received through the survey, drop-in sessions, and other channels and produce a report.
- **Meet separately to consider the views** gathered and discuss the report on the response to the proposal.
- **Make their decisions** – each governing body will vote on whether to proceed with federating.

Both governing bodies must agree to proceed for federation to happen.

If both agree, we will then:

- Hold a joint meeting to appoint governors to the new Federation governing body
- Complete all legal and administrative requirements
- Prepare for the Federation to begin

If either governing body decides not to proceed, the Federation will not go ahead. The current partnership arrangements would then need to be reviewed.

A detailed Frequently Asked Questions document is available separately and on both school websites. This will be updated in response to questions raised in the survey.

THANK YOU

If you wish to ask any questions, there is space to do this in the consultation response form. To ensure transparency and that everyone benefits from questions raised, we will regularly update the Frequently Asked Questions pages on both school websites based on queries submitted through the survey. This means everyone can access the same information and see how questions from across the community have been addressed.

This consultation document is available on both schools' websites along with the link to the online survey.

If you need support with accessing this consultation in another language, please contact your school office who will be able to provide you with assistance.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal. We look forward to reading your responses.

Prue Barnes-Kemp

Chair of the IEB, Laycock Primary School

Lisa McCrindle

Chair of Governors, Thornhill Primary School

Legal Framework for This Consultation

This consultation is being conducted in accordance with the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 and Department for Education guidance on school federations.

As required by law, we are consulting with parents, staff, pupils, and the wider community before any decision is made about federating.

Both the Governing Body of Thornhill Primary School and the Interim Executive Board of Laycock Primary School must separately agree to proceed for federation to happen. Your views will inform their decisions.