To: All Parents and Carers
From: The Governing Bodies of Yatton Infant & Junior Schools
Date: 1st July 2009

Following is a copy of the statement provided by the governing bodies of both our Infant & Junior Schools to North Somerset Council to prepare for a press release regarding future collaboration or federation between our two schools:

Since October 2008, Yatton Infant School and Yatton Junior School have been talking about the options that a trigger, such as the retirement of a Headteacher, may initiate for the two schools. The Governors at both schools have had meetings & taken the time to acquaint themselves with the options as identified by the Local Authority, with the help of Governor Support, and have begun to discuss what they mean for the schools. The Governing bodies have formally agreed to investigate collaboration or federation & have appointed a joint working party to take collaboration or federation to the next step.

The announcement of the retirement of the Junior School's long-serving Head Teacher, David Powell, has given the process added impetus, and a recommendation is to be made to the *"Children & Young People Policy & Scrutiny Committee"* to allow the two Schools to continue to work together towards more formal collaboration/federation, NOT Amalgamation.

The Governors and Head Teachers want to ensure that any change involving the schools is a benefit to the children and results in school improvement. They believe that there are opportunities, but are also aware of some concerns. It is the intention of the governing bodies to move steadily forward to realise some of these opportunities, whilst planning to avoid any detrimental impacts in the areas of concern.

Collaboration or Federation will allow both Schools to keep their current identity & individuality (Two Schools, foundation status, School Associations), it will encourage better working together, sharing of best practices & the potential for improved continuity, learning and progression for the children, which should be an enhancement to current School development & improvement plans, also enhancing the range of teaching and learning opportunities in order to raise standards even further.

Collaboration or Federation should also provide an opportunity for more flexibility regarding resources, facilities & expertise – to better serve the needs of all children in both schools, and also provide improved opportunities for Staff development & leadership.

The Yatton Infants & Junior Schools are very popular & children love going to these Schools. There are many strongly valued aspects of these Schools that the governing bodies want to protect. The governing bodies have requested assurance from the Scrutiny Committee that they will be given the time to discuss, hypothesise, try out collaboration projects and eventually agree how the two schools and the children of the local community can gain from any change. The Schools want to be sure that working towards this change does not hinder current school improvement for both schools and negatively impact on the work life balance of both governing bodies and Head Teachers.

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Research and information into federations that reflects the size and success of the two schools is limited, therefore they would be stepping onto new ground for this Local Authority (This is a first for North Somerset). The Schools want to ensure that all decisions are for the benefit of the children.

Some Questions & Answers:

What does collaboration or federation mean?

- **Collaboration:** this is an informal and non-committal arrangement between the two Schools with no fixed agreement and no changes to the governing bodies.
- **Soft Federation:** this is where both schools retain two governing bodies, and make a formalised commitment to work together through committees without delegated powers, e.g. by creating joint committees on aspects of teaching and learning.
- **Soft Governance Federation:** this is where both schools retain two governing bodies, and have more formal agreements such as service level agreements, joint committees with delegated powers and joint appointments;
- **Hard Governance Federation:** this is where a number of schools have decided to operate under the guidance of a single governing body which allows for efficient, stream-lined decision-making.

Who can I talk to about this?

It is very “early days” at the moment. The governing bodies will do everything possible to consider all your views and concerns, and there will be formal consultation period, with you, in the future, when we have a more formal proposal for the future collaboration or federation of the two Yatton Schools. In the meantime, please feel free to talk to any of the governors.

How long does this process take?

There is no intention to “rush”, and so we expect this process to take up to a year to have a version of improved collaboration or federation visibly in place.

Will my child be affected?

It is a priority of both Schools that no child is adversely affected by any changes, and that any changes are for the benefit of the children.

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