



**Response to the Estyn thematic report on  
Federated schools:  
Common features of effective federation**

**Report title:**

Federated schools: Common features of effective federation.

**Report details**

The Welsh Government requested Estyn in the 2018/19 remit letter to examine the features of effective federation.

The report examines the features of effective federation. It identifies the conditions, processes and arrangements that lead to and maintain effective federations. It also considers the possible pitfalls for federations and explores the reasons why federations are not always successful. It identifies examples of effective practice where governing bodies and local authorities have achieved successful federation.

**Summary of main findings**

In successful federations, leaders improve provision and outcomes for pupils by sharing resources, systems and good practice across schools. However, in most cases, federated schools do not use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to support collaboration, and in particular pupil collaboration, across school sites.

Federation can have a positive impact on leadership capacity at all levels. However, there are too few opportunities for headteachers to engage in professional learning that will prepare them to lead a federation or for senior leaders and staff of federated schools to network and share practice.

Federation may result in budget efficiencies for schools. Increasing the role of administrative staff or employing a business manager to oversee budgets across the federation often results in further savings and efficiencies.

Where teachers plan for pupils to work collaboratively with their peers in the other schools in their federation, this has a positive effect on pupils' social skills and wellbeing. Learners in federations also experience more positive transitions between schools.

A clear vision for what schools to hope through federating is critical to its success. As is an effective leadership structure to support this vision.

**Recommendations**

***The Welsh Government should:***

**R12** – Explore arrangements to help federated schools pool their resources.

***Welsh Government response:***

**Accept**

The Welsh Government will explore how it can facilitate federated schools better share their resources. We will also seek to optimise guidance on federation by setting out the benefits and potential pitfalls of federating for

schools and local authorities doing so, as well as clarifying the formal process for forming a new federated governing body. We will work with the Hwb team to promote the use of sharing resources digitally within federations to make most efficient use of teaching and learning resources.

**Publication details.**

The report will be published on or after 2 July 2019 on Estyn's website:

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports>.



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