



Roots Federation

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR EARLY YEARS

Information for schools



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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Roots Federation. As a Federation of nursery schools in Hertfordshire, we are committed to providing exceptional education for children under five. Our mission is to ensure every child receives the start they deserve, focusing on a child-centred approach that integrates play, skill development and experiences into our curriculum.

We understand the importance of efficient resource management, especially in challenging times, and specialise in consultation services that place children at the heart of financial planning. Our aim is to support schools to achieve financial sustainability, ensuring a thriving educational environment for years to come.

Our training programmes are designed to develop staff expertise so that they can skilfully support children to meet and exceed milestones through a carefully designed curriculum. This approach not only fosters academic growth but also nurtures meaningful relationships and a lifelong passion for learning. We believe in creating joyful, engaging spaces that encourage children to explore and flourish.

For those looking to enhance their educational offerings, we offer a range of services that open opportunities for future collaboration. Joining Roots Federation means being part of a community that values innovative, effective education strategies, and puts the well-being and development of our youngest learners first. We invite you to explore how we can work together to create a brighter future for our children.

Who are we...

In 2021, facing the uncertainties of Maintained Nursery School funding, three Hertfordshire nurseries - Heath Lane, Oxhey, and Muriel Green - recognised the need for a sustainable financial model that would not compromise the quality of education for children. This led to the formation of Roots Federation. The governors of these nurseries sought to create an environment where financial stability and educational excellence could coexist. By Federating, we were able to revolutionise our resourcing approach, introduce a skills-based curriculum, and significantly enhance staff wellbeing.

Our nurseries now operate within budget, while our educators are afforded opportunities for professional growth. Most importantly, our children are equipped with the skills necessary to flourish. Roots Federation is not just a collective of schools; it is a shared philosophy of excellence in early childhood education.

We offer consultation and training based on our successful strategies, extending our approach to other educational settings. Schools that join Roots Federation gain access to a robust structure and a clear vision, ensuring every child receives the start they deserve. Regardless of your budget or challenges, we are committed to working with you to enhance your setting. Our focus is on inclusivity and equal access to quality education, mirroring the belief that every child, educator, and family is an integral part of our community. We invite you to be part of this transformative journey with Roots, where together we can make a significant impact on early childhood education.



Our beliefs & promises

At Roots Federation, we deeply believe in the transformative power of early years education. Our commitment stems from the understanding that the first five years of life lay the foundation for future happiness, health, and productivity. Extensive evidence highlights this period as the most impactful for long-term outcomes, influencing educational success, career paths, health, and even housing. That's why we dedicate ourselves to ensuring every child under five in our care receives exceptional education and nurturing, setting them on a path to a thriving future.



Our vision is for all schools to offer an exceptional early years education. We want this education to be well rounded - developing academic, social, emotional, creative and physical skills. Every child should feel safe and happy in their nursery, and develop a love of learning that lasts beyond their school years. By working together, schools can share their expertise and resources, increase opportunities and capacity for practitioners, and best serve their communities.

Expertise

Qualified and experienced team

Innovation

We tackle challenges with creativity and enthusiasm

Excellence

Internal growth focus

Integrity

Child and family-centric approach

Care

Genuine dedication to welfare and education



Leadership Case Study

Context

Roots Federation actively identified and resolved challenges at Oxhey Nursery School in Watford, exemplifying a commitment to achieving and maintaining educational excellence.

Challenge

- Staffing difficulties and leadership gaps.
- Financial instability with an unbalanced budget.
- Misaligned staff structure, hindering operations.
- Operational inefficiencies due to lack of clear vision.
- Resource shortages, especially outdated technology.
- Lack of structured training for current pedagogical practices.
- Obsolete business systems affecting communication.

Solutions

- Organisational Restructuring and Deployment Decisions Ensuring Staffing Agility
- Training and Development Initiatives
- System Integration and Resource Enhancement

Benefits

- Enhanced Professional Development for Staff
- Reinvestment in Learning Spaces
- Financial Stability and Growth
- Research-Based Thought Leadership
- Cohesive Learning Environment



Our Offer

Roots Federation offers a comprehensive and collaborative approach to enhance educational settings, focusing on both academic and pastoral care:

- **Collaborative School Network:** Working as a family of schools to ensure the best outcomes for all, prioritising both academic and social learning experiences.
- **Career Development:** Offering CPD pathways for staff at all career stages.
- **Centralised Support:** A dedicated team assists with leadership and business tasks, allowing school leaders to focus on teaching and learning.
- **School Improvement and Planning:** Providing support in educational standards assessment, training, and strategic planning.
- **Specialised SEND Team:** Committed to supporting children with additional needs, with a strong track record in securing EHCPs and funding.
- **Financial Management:** A central finance team offering budgeting support and ensuring best value in procurement.
- **Experienced Governing Board:** Offering support, advice, and ensuring legal compliance.
- **Private HR Support:** Focusing on optimal outcomes for employers.
- **Flexible Collaboration:** Opportunities to collaborate without formally joining the Federation.





Our Services

Our consultancy services include:

- **Business and Curriculum Review:** Tailoring solutions for financial stability and ensuring ambition and excellence in day-to-day provision, including for children with SEND.
- **Compliance with EYFS Statutory Requirements:** Ensuring settings are safe, ambitious, and nurturing.
- **Targeted Support:** Focusing on child-centered decisions to foster thriving environments.

Our training programs teach practitioners to:

- **Enhance Core Skills:** Develop strong curriculum implementation through research based pedagogy.
- **Create Stimulating Environments:** Build engaging and cost-effective learning spaces.
- **Engage with Parents:** Collaborate in reinforcing critical skills at home.

By joining Roots Federation, schools and settings gain:

- **Resource Consolidation:** Achieving financial stability and thriving resources.
- **Shared Leadership and Vision:** Adopting pioneering leadership, vision, and values.
- **Curriculum Excellence:** Access to our ambitious curriculum and expert staff, while retaining individual identity and adapting our structures to specific community needs.



Educational Provision

We believe in ambitious and enriching learning experiences designed to cultivate children with a sense of curiosity, building resilience, and developing readiness for the next stages of their education. Our meticulously crafted curriculum principles are rooted in a profound understanding of pedagogy, underpinned by extensive research. We are dedicated to equipping children with essential academic, emotional, and physical skills crucial to their holistic development, laying the foundation for them to not only excel throughout their school years but also thrive beyond the curriculum into their future endeavours. Our schools decide on their own curriculum delivery based on their individual identity and the specific needs of their communities but always underpinned by the curriculum principles.

Given the ever changing landscape in educational policy, the Federation aims to alleviate the workload and stress on its staff by meticulously assessing new initiatives. We employ thoughtful strategic methods that emphasise both optimal practices and cost-effectiveness when introducing any essential changes. Our central team ensures that every school comprehends its strengths and areas needing improvement through regular evaluations. Upon pinpointing areas requiring assistance, we enlist the most proficient staff members from various schools to provide collaborative support.

Eliminating Economic Exclusion

From a very early age socioeconomic factors play a significant part in predicting whether a child will succeed or not. At Roots Federation we are ambitious in our aims and committed to ensuring that every child, regardless of their family's economic status, has an equal opportunity to benefit from quality early childhood education.

Strategies we have implemented to eliminate economic exclusion in our schools

- Targeted staff deployment
- Developing staff awareness of the impact of poverty
- Funding a home library
- Ensuring we have affordable Uniform
- Providing rich outdoor Spaces
- Planning varied community outings and enrichment experiences
- Developing parental expertise
- Healthy Eating

Eliminating economic exclusion in all schools is not only an ethical imperative but an investment in the future of our society.



SEND

Roots Federation is committed to providing exceptional and inclusive educational experiences for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Our approach is underpinned by a dedicated team that works across the Federation, ensuring that each child's unique learning needs are met with the utmost care and expertise.



Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Coordinator (SENDCo)

Strategic lead for SEND across the Federation. Providing mentorship, coaching, and guidance to governors, school leadership, and early years practitioners. Responsible for managing and overseeing all EHCPs, they also handle allocations for exceptional needs funding, ensuring holistic support for children during their time at Roots Federation.



Inclusion leader

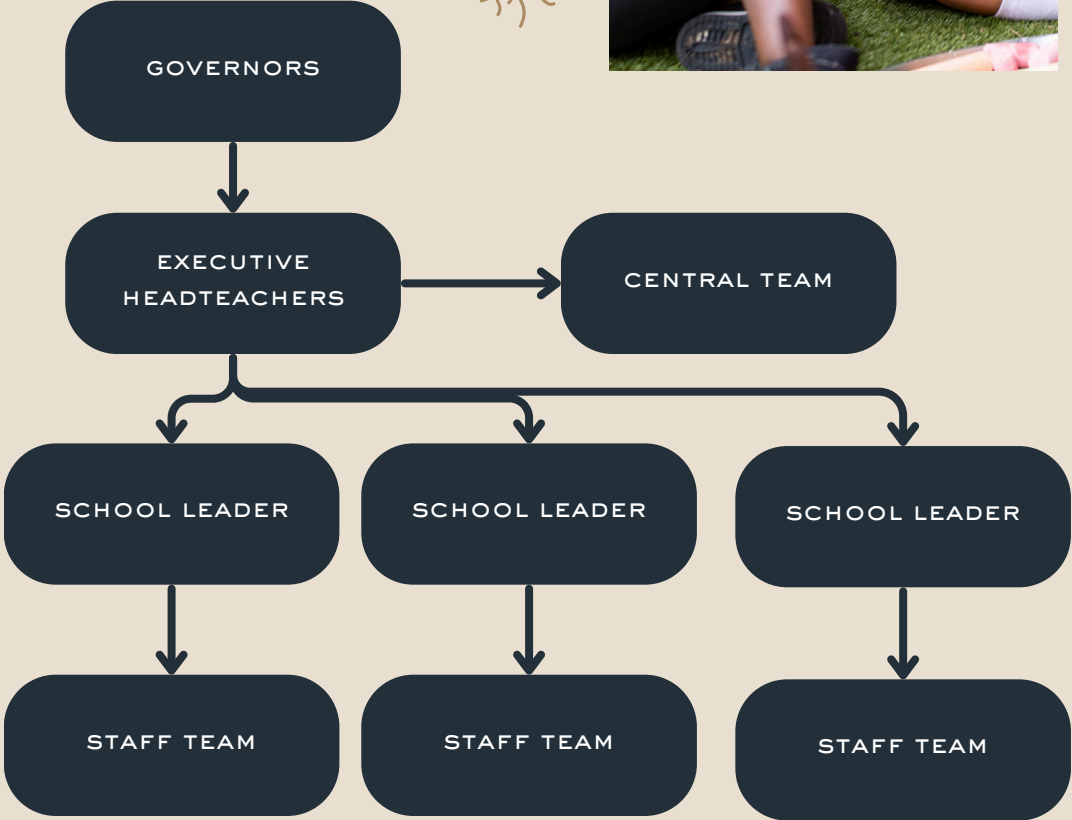
Identifies, assesses, and supports children with special educational needs and barriers to accessibility. They collaborate with staff, parents, and external agencies, ensuring tailored interventions, resources, and strategies to meet individual needs, promoting inclusive practices and holistic development for all children.

At Roots Federation, we believe every child deserves the best possible start in life, and our dedicated approach to SEND provision is a testament to this belief. We strive to create an environment where all children can thrive academically and socially, fully embracing their individual potential.



Leadership Structure

Governors hold the legal responsibilities and powers of the Federation and are accountable to the Local Authority. The governing body sets the overall strategy, they scrutinise, support and challenge the educational and operational performance, data, risks and opportunities. They also appoint members of the Leadership Team. The Board delegate certain responsibilities to Committees as detailed in the Leadership Framework.



Vision for Governance

At the heart of our approach to governance is a values driven commitment to our children and their communities. We base the delivery of our vision on the 7 principles of public life (Nolan principles):

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

With a robust skill set derived from representation across multiple sectors, our proficient Board and Executive Headteachers concentrate on strategic governance, encompassing financial planning, policy oversight, statutory compliance, and legal and employment mandates. This delegation allows school leaders and School link governors to focus in on their localities, prioritising the three C's: children, curriculum, and community. Such focus facilitates an in-depth examination of each locality's distinct achievements, challenges, and risks.





Finance

The Federation has appointed a dedicated finance manager who directly reports to the executive headteachers and finance committee. A significant advantage for schools is having their finances, budgets, and accounts overseen by an expert with vast experience in both the private and education sectors. This strategy produces financial efficiencies, enhanced economies of scale, and decreased administrative burdens in finance.

There are robust schedule of delegations which allow for responsive curriculum teacher whilst ensuring that schools are working in line with the Schools financial handbook.

We will:

- provide training and support for school leaders and administrative staff
- work with you to review and assess all existing contracts. Federation wide contracts, such as IT provision and HR provision as well as group purchasing often mean a reduction to costs upport with the
- support with budget planning and monitoring process complete all statutory returns and reports.



Human Resources

We believe that staff wellbeing is central to what we do. A motivated, happy staff will ensure that we provide the best possible education.

The Federation implements a People Strategy aligned with our strategic plan, ensuring that individuals excel in appropriate roles to achieve optimal outcomes for children and families attending our school. Through this strategy, we strive to ensure staff feel valued, enjoy fulfilling careers, and access relevant professional development. We actively seek staff feedback to shape the Federation's strategic direction and involve them in decisions impacting our team, students, and families. We continually strive to be an employer of choice.

We will support you with:

- ensure staff wellbeing is at the heart of each school. Staff will feel valued, listened to and well informed.
- Fostering a culture where staff across all schools view themselves as integral parts of a broader Federation, emphasizing the recognized importance and benefits of collaborative efforts.
- Cultivating and integrating a staff culture that promotes and values equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout our workforce, empowering every individual to reach their fullest potential.

We work with Judicium HR who support us to comply with the legal requirements imposed upon us as employers under the numerous sources of laws and regulations and in dealing with any workplace issues that arise in the running of the Federation.

Staff Feedback



“It’s a pleasure to support and watch as the children settle in, making new friends and getting their first sense of community. I love the depth and breadth of our curriculum - how it keeps children engaged and excited to learn. It’s so rewarding to see children and staff succeed and achieve where they thought they couldn’t.”
Sue Wells



The support given by members of the leader team goes above and beyond, makes you feel special, valued and gives a sense of belonging. The training from the Inset days, online sessions, in setting sessions and regular professional development video clips by members of staff has allowed me to learn so much during my time at the setting. The team I work with are like family, we work so well together and genuinely care for each other.
Michelle Goldsmith



Communications & Marketing

To enhance the marketing support for Roots Federation, the strategy could be refined and expanded as follows:

Unified Brand Vision Aligned with Trust Principles: Develop a cohesive brand strategy that aligns with the core values and principles of the Roots Federation. This plan should integrate the unique qualities of each school while maintaining a unified brand identity across the Federation.

Brand Identity Development: Craft and implement a distinctive brand identity for each school, both internally among staff and students, and externally in the community. This involves creating a consistent visual and communicative style that resonates with the school's ethos.

Digital Presence Enhancement: Focus on expanding the schools' online visibility through strategic use of social media channels, targeted Google/Facebook advertising, and optimizing for search engines (SEO). This will help in reaching a broader audience and enhancing engagement with the community.

Website Structure and Content Strategy: Provide strategic input into the website's structure and content to ensure it is user-friendly, informative, and accurately reflects the school's brand and values.

Effective Multi-Channel Communications: Establish a clear and shared communication strategy for timely and effective messaging across various channels. This includes emails, newsletters, social media, and other platforms to ensure consistent and coherent communication with all stakeholders.

By implementing these strategies, Roots Federation can effectively raise its profile, engage with the community, and achieve its objectives of maintaining and increasing pupil numbers while upholding its core principles and values.





Collaboration

We work to learn from and support one another to develop localised solutions to the challenges we face in order to achieve the highest outcomes, aspirations and opportunities for our children, parents, staff and wider community.

The collaboration cultivates a synergistic environment where schools can leverage collective strengths, resources, and expertise to enhance educational quality, efficiency, consistency, and community engagement.

We aim to:

1. **Share Best Practices:** Facilitate the exchange of innovative teaching methods, curriculum experiences, and pedagogical approaches to enhance educational quality and impact.
2. **Resource Optimisation:** Pool resources, including human capital, materials, and expertise, to maximize efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and access to specialized services and training opportunities for staff.
3. **Consistent Quality Assurance:** Establish and maintain consistent standards and assessment criteria across to ensure high-quality education, care, and developmental opportunities for children.
4. **Professional Development:** Create collaborative professional development and training sessions that enable staff to share knowledge, skills, and expertise, fostering continuous learning and growth.
5. **Community Engagement:** Strengthen relationships with stakeholders, families, and the broader community through collaborative initiatives, events, and outreach programs that promote mutual support, shared responsibility, and a cohesive vision.

Our Team



Executive Headteacher

Gemma is an experienced leader who, prior to the Federation of the three Nursery schools, She was originally the sole Headteacher of Muriel Green Nursery School in St Albans. Gemma has vast experience in Early Years leadership. Gemma sits on the governing bodies of two maintained primary schools in Hertfordshire to ensure that she is up to date with educationalbeyond the early years. She also sits on a number of boards representing the voice of maintained nursery schools. Gemma is the SENCo for the schools and takes a lead on the business side.

Executive Headteacher

Hayley is an experienced leader who, prior to the Federation of the three Nursery schools, was the sole Headteacher of Heath Lane Nursery School in Hemel Hempstead. Hayley has previously held the role of deputy Headteacher and held the role of Early Years adviser at Herts for Learning; a quality improvement company commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council. In this role Hayley provided support in excess of 100 schools across Hertfordshire.. Hayley sits on a governing body of a primary school and is a trustee of a multi academy trust in the county. Hayley takes a lead on the curriculum.



Our Team



Finance Manager

Mandy has worked in finance all her adult life and joined the federation administration team in September 2022 working across all three settings. Prior to this Mandy worked for a short period at Herts For Learning as a School Financial Adviser where she worked alongside both Muriel Green and Heath Lane Schools in addition to other schools in Hertfordshire. Before that she worked in industry where she spent the previous 27 years working within the Finance Team at the Head Offices of a global engineering manufacturing company where she held the position of Head Office Accountant.



Admin Assistant to the Executive Team

Michelle has a diverse background in different sectors. Starting her journey at Woolworths, her following roles spanned finance and administrative roles both in education and the mobile phone sector. She has spent the last 5 years working in the world of catering which has given her a wide spread of skills to support the varied roles of the team within the Federation. As admin to the executive team no two days are ever the same. She cherishes her role as a mum to two boys and is a proud houseplant enthusiast.!



Inclusion Leader

Clare has worked in primary education for over 20 years. She has worked as a senior leader and head teacher in several schools. Clare holds a doctorate in education from The University of Cambridge. Her research focuses upon school improvement, in particular developing professional capital through the Lesson Study cycle. She is passionate about inclusion and supporting children and their families to experience success. She prioritises this through her roles as senior teacher at Muriel Green Nursery (two days a week) and Inclusion Leader for Roots Federation (three days a week).

Next Steps

Over the past two years, we have diligently laid the groundwork for our Federation, elevating our three schools to 'Good' based upon well researched paedagogical principles and embedded sustainable financial models for longevity. We aim to grow the Federation sustainably either through informal collaboration or through formally joining the Federation. There is much said about federation growth, but one thing is clear, we do not want to "take over" any school. We want to ensure that the children we currently serve and any future children within the Federation benefit in their academic outcomes and in their personal development.

We seek schools that cherish genuine collaborative partnerships, where dedicated professionals prioritise children's well-being and educational excellence. In our Federation, we believe that all children under five should learn the skills they need to thrive at school and beyond. our core values guide us as we develop this further with others.

To ensure balance, our Federation would benefit greatly from working across counties. Ultimately operating across different counties allows all leaders to align its strategies, priorities, and initiatives with regional, national, or international objectives, frameworks, and initiatives.

We recognise that schools and individuals will want to engage at different levels. With this in mind, we offer a range of solutions to suit your school's particular needs. Should we find a suitable basis to move forward, the pace of development is then entirely down to you, be it through school visits, presentations to governors, staff and parents, or wider consultation with the school community. Together we agree the road map, set the milestones, timelines and deliverables, and then the best bit - start building an exciting new partnership together.





Roots Federation

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR EARLY YEARS

Roots Federation

PROVIDING THE BEST EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS FOR
THE UNDER 5'S PREPARING EACH UNIQUE CHILD
FOR LIFE LONG LEARNING

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR EARLY YEARS

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