

# **‘Shared’ headmaster relishing new dual role**

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[By Ross Bentley](#)

A HEADTEACHER who has taken charge of two primary schools in west Suffolk has spoken of his aspirations for the arrangement.

Rob Giles, who has been headteacher at Boxford Primary School for 20 years was invited to take on the additional role of headmaster at Monks Eleigh Primary School at the start of this current autumn term after the former headteacher left.

He says the intention is for the schools to “share management expertise and teaching ideas but to retain their own identity”.

He added: “We have what I call a ‘loose federation’ between the schools. Monks Eleigh only has 18 pupils and it would be easy for it to be swallowed up by Boxford, which has around 200 pupils, but it is important that each school keeps its own governing body and has its own budget.”

Mr Giles, who spends four days a week at Boxford and one day at Monks Eleigh, which is five miles away, said there are several examples of multiple schools, which share the same headteacher, in the region.

He said: “The arrangement will become increasingly common as budgets get tighter and schools realise they can save on having to employ a full-time headteacher.”

But, for the moment, a priority for Mr Giles is to attract more children to Monks Eleigh Primary School.

“It’s out of the way, like a lot of villages in Suffolk, but it’s a great school and we want to persuade more people to consider sending their children here,” he said.

In the meantime, the pupils are benefiting from closer ties with their peers at Boxford.

He added: “The year 3 pupils go to Boxford on Friday to play sport because there are only three of them and you can’t have much of a games lesson with that number. Teachers at the respective schools have also agreed to teach the same subjects at the same time, so, for example, years 3 and 4 in both schools are studying the Romans and will come together for a trip to Colchester Castle later in the term.”