

Formal Consultation on the creation of a Multi Academy Trust in the Roseland region

Period of consultation is 7th October 2015 to 18th November 2015

All consultation responses will be taken seriously and you are urged to either respond in detail or to return the attached consultation response form to secretary@gorran.cornwall.sch.uk .

Which schools are proposing joining together as a Multi Academy Trust?

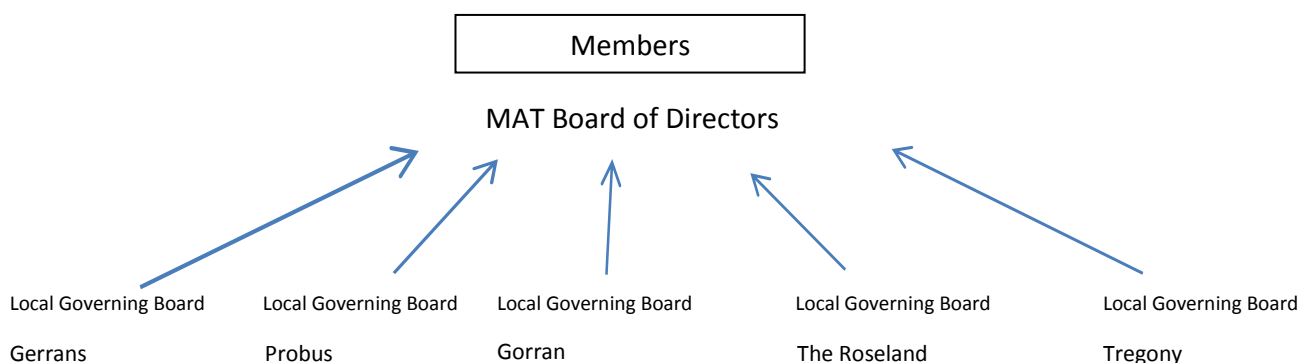
Gerrans School, Gerrans
Probus School, Probus
The Roseland Community College, Tregony
Tregony Primary, Tregony
Gorran School, Gorran

What is the purpose for forming a Multi Academy Trust?

1. To maintain the commitment to families on The Roseland Peninsula to deliver excellence in education and high quality learning environments for children aged 3 to 16.
2. To share school improvement strategies and work together on raising attainment and progress.
3. To strengthen academy leadership across the trust.
4. To reduce overall costs by sharing business support functions.
5. To support other schools in the region who do not wish to convert to academy status independently.
6. To become a formal sponsor of under-performing schools.

What is a Multi Academy Trust (Sometimes called a MAT)?

A MAT is where a number of schools join together so that they can share resources and help each other to improve. All the academies in a MAT have one single trust and a single board of directors, who are responsible for standards and the overall effectiveness of all the academies. Each academy retains an Academy Board who have devolved authority to make decisions on a range of things. The MAT Directors focus on long term strategy, business support functions such as IT, payroll, premises, personnel advice and manage the overall budget. The Academy Boards are only concerned with their own school and manage the 'education' side of the academy – curriculum, examinations, uniform, ethos and culture, behaviour, child protection etc.



How are Local Governing Boards created?

It is likely that at first, the LGBs will be made up of existing school governors. Eventually the new Board will take shape, as previous governors reach the end of their term of office. There may then be elected parent governors and elected staff governors with the rest of the Board co-opted by the MAT Board or the Local Governing Board, depending on the skills and knowledge required.

Who will be the Directors of the Multi Academy Trust?

The first directors will come from the five schools joining together. They will be proposed by the existing governors of the five schools. Directors have to look at the interests of all five schools and not just the one that they have a connection with. The Directors should have the relevant skills and experiences to run a large organisation.

What are the advantages of a MAT? Why are five schools proposing to join together?

The Headteachers of the five schools have been working closely together to provide the highest quality education for young people in our area for many years. They share ideas and help each other to make improvements in developing the skills of staff or of trying new approaches to learning. However, much of this work is dependent on individuals and on 'goodwill' and schools being willing to take a risk for the others in the cluster e.g. when appointing shared staff that we would not be able to appoint as individual schools such as Sports Development Coaches, Parent Support Advisors, School Business Managers or Modern Foreign Language teachers. The five Headteachers and governors believe that there are real advantages to working together in a more formal way.

Our children will benefit through:

- Developing a coherent curriculum from 3-16, with reduced learning loss at main transition point, whilst utilising expertise from all phases to secure progress when learning challenges are being faced by our children and families.
- Greater opportunities for learning across the schools, both physically and through technology, enabling pupils to collaborate together from across the Roseland fostering more friendships with each other, which will further reduce anxiety at transition to secondary school.
- Enabling a greater consistency in learning created through shared best practice across the schools, with a richer and broader range of learning opportunities and experiences.
- Access to improved resources, services and support functions that Cornwall Local Authority can no longer provide schools with due to their spending cuts.
- Access to a greater number of shared resources e.g. curriculum materials linked to specific areas. Including enabling direct access to and support from a wider set of staff expertise and teaching and learning styles.

Our parents and communities will benefit through:

- A belief in maintaining communities at the heart of our localities, recognising its uniqueness and delivering the 3-16 educational commitment to all our families.
- Schools that have consistent shared policies and practices, including school improvement strategies aimed at ensuring all our schools continue to provide highest quality education.
- Having coordinated and joined up leadership across the Trust, leading to improved communication and clearer expectations for all students across our Trust.
- Well maintained community buildings, through the Trust being able to manage and invest in our school buildings, facilities and services and run them cost-effectively by being part of a larger group where costs can be shared leading towards even more increased economies of scale.

Our staff and schools will benefit through:

- Gaining a greater understanding of pupils' progress from 3 - 16 through the transparency of progress and attainment data, including sharing strategies that work in different settings. In doing so, deliver a structure to reduce 'Between School Variation' with the impact of increased standards against the national measures.
- Sharing 'back office' functions such as financial management, IT networking, personnel management, central purchasing, premises maintenance so that we can do those things more efficiently (ie save money) and more effectively (ie get greater value, better buildings, more effective purchasing). To do that best, we need to have a single employer for all five schools.
- By choosing to join a Multi Academy Trust, the schools will not be forced into academy status under the sponsorship of another school outside our community.
- Enabling the leadership of the trust to bid for grants for additional funding as a charitable status Trust, which The Roseland has significant experience of being successful at.
- Further developing closer links between the schools' staff so that teachers are enabled to work together to develop better teaching and learning, to share expertise and to jointly problem solve. We believe the MAT will enable us to deliver greater professional development opportunities to all our staff. We would like to bring in external advice and expertise to work with staff across all the schools. We can achieve these things without being in a Multi Academy Trust, but it is much easier and much more effective to do so if we are all with the same employer and have clear leadership.
- Increasing opportunities for stability of our school staff through joint working rather than working in isolation. Being a Multi Academy Trust will increase opportunities to develop professionally within our Trust rather than needing to move to larger schools to gain experience, e.g. as the only Year 3 teacher in the school.
- Increasing the likelihood of a stable pupil population due to the reduced need to migrate through the schools in one area.
- Increasing capacity for strategic leadership, as leaders in our schools will be able to work across the Trust as a team and further develop their areas of expertise.
- A structure that enables greater accountability for school improvement and school to school support.

- We find most governors want to help children, to be involved in the educational side of the school and to be part of the community. However, we need governors who understand the business aspect of a school and who can give good advice and guidance on long term spending decisions and setting up efficient contracts with suppliers of services such as catering, cleaning, site security, maintenance, premises development, property compliance, health and safety, working with government agencies and they are hard to find. We believe that a single group of Directors able to help with those aspects of schools will be easier to find – we can share that expertise with all of the schools in the MAT whilst allowing Academy Boards to get on with the teaching and learning in each individual school.
- As Headteachers we want to continue enhancing the teaching and learning within each school delivering excellence in education. We want to be able to devolve other aspects of running the school to a professional team working across the five schools and an expert group of Directors so that we can do what we do best; improving the learning and enriching the lives of the children in the school.

What are the possible disadvantages?

The MAT Directors may not know the individual schools very well?

Response: The MAT Directors are likely to be existing or former governors of the schools concerned. They will want to do their best to make sure all the children are well looked after and to visit the schools themselves.

Staff may find it hard to meet up with staff from other schools due to travelling time etc?

Response: All the schools in the MAT are within twenty minutes drive of each other, often less.

Schools may lose their unique identity?

Response: Each school will retain responsibility for setting its own culture and ethos from selecting the uniform to developing their own curriculum. Much of the sharing is 'behind the scenes' where it is most effective.

There seem to be more governors in this arrangement, not fewer?

Response: The MAT Board will be small and business oriented. The Academy Boards will be smaller than current governing bodies and highly focused on improving teaching and learning, not the business of running schools. Governor meetings will be fewer and more effective.

What is the proposed date for incorporation as a Multi Academy Trust?

The planned date is 1st February 2016 although this is subject to all arrangements being in place at that date.

Will this alter admission arrangements?

No. There are no planned changes to admissions for students at the primary schools to attend The Roseland Community College. All of the MAT schools will continue existing partnership arrangements.

What effect might this MAT have on local schools or the wider community?

In many ways, there will be no impact. Schools will continue to have devolved autonomy to develop partnership arrangements and work with surrounding schools and be part of the local community.

The aims of the MAT are to work together to make all of the schools within it better for students. Other schools may wish to join the Trust and that will be welcomed.

How do I find out more?

There will be public meetings in each school for parents and members of the community to ask questions. These will be advertised through the school websites and in communication with parents directly.

What happens next?

Gerrans, Probus, Tregony and Gorran Primary Schools are currently Local Authority maintained schools and have started the process of converting to academy status. The DfE are supporting this move. The Roseland Community College is an Academy already and now needs to have a period of consultation with the wider community about its plan to change into a Multi Academy Trust. Once the consultation is finished, all the responses are scrutinised by the Education Funding Agency who must agree that the five schools can come together as one Trust.

How can I respond?

Expressions of support or concern are equally welcomed. All responses will be carefully considered by governors, by the DfE and Education Funding Agency. You can write to: **Mr Jonathan Sleep, Headteacher, Gorran School, Gorran, St Austell, Cornwall, PL26 6LH** or email directly to secretary@gorran.cornwall.sch.uk or you can fill in the form below and either post it or email it to the same address.

✂

Consultation Response to proposal to join Gerrans Primary School, Probus Primary School, Gorrans School, The Roseland Community College, and Tregony Primary School into a single Multi Academy Trust

Name of respondent:

Organisation represented: (if applicable)

Are you broadly in favour of the four schools combining into a Multi Academy Trust?
YES/NO/Don't know

Reasons for decision – if you have anything you wish to add

Do you have any concerns or points you would like governors to consider in addition to the above?

Please return any responses by 13th November 2015