
Falmouth MAT consultation responses and additional information

Summary of consultation - 4 school months' informal consultation from May to Sept 2016 with all stakeholders. Feedback from this was used to create the formal proposal which was then sent out for consideration with the full educational community including parents, staff and governors in all 3 schools. The Department for Education, the Diocese and all local schools have also been included in the consultation process. The formal consultation period was 21/10/16 to 2/12/16 following which all responses were reviewed by the Governing Board.

The consultation is now closed.

Any additional questions received, now that the consultation period has closed, will be noted by the governors but are outside of the formal consultation period.

The following document has been compiled following the Governors review of the responses to the consultation. It incorporates a summary of points raised together with relevant additional information. *(13 responses were received)*

Can we have further information regarding the time line for the MAT?

- Partnership discussions have been held across the 3 school over the last 2 years
- Informal consideration of the MAT began in April 2016; 1 year suggested as a suitable time period
- Due diligence activities across all 3 schools began April 2016
- May 2016 - All 3 school communities informed of initial consideration of MAT *(through partnership and individual school newsletters)* and invited to informally consider and comment
- September- October 2016 – Due diligence carried out by Truro Diocese and formal consideration of proposal *(as St Francis and King Charles are church schools)*. Consent for proposal given.
- October – December 2016 – Previous 4 months' informal consultation used to create formal proposal which was then sent out for consideration with full educational community including parents, staff and governors in all 3 schools and all other local schools. Proposal sent to all parents, staff, governors and local schools. Responses reviewed at governors' meeting.
- January – March 2017 completion of due diligence activities
- March 2017 - Final decision to be made by governing bodies of all schools
- April 2017 - Schools do/do not become a MAT

Does moving away from the Local Authority weaken lines of accountability?

- Multi academy trusts are directly answerable for their outcomes to the secretary of state and the Department for Education just as locally maintained schools are answerable to the Department for Education through Local Authorities. Ofsted inspects schools within MATs in the same way that Local Authority schools are inspected. Lines of accountability will therefore be at least the same that they are presently for our schools and, most probably due to the direct link to the Department of Education through the Regional Commission, further strengthened.

Can we have more information about the sustainable benefits for our school?

We have learned, through our partnership thus far, that collaborative working with other schools can provide improved educational experiences for our own pupils through teaching and learning, an enhanced and engaging curriculum, staff development and opportunities for progression, and streamlined services (including finance, human resources, legal services, school improvement structures, and governance arrangements).

As part of due diligence senior leaders from all 3 schools have created short and long term MAT development action plans. The following aspects are included as example potential sustainable benefits of working in partnership...

- Build on established and successful school improvement partnership projects - further increasing capacity across the MAT to develop excellence in teaching and learning within our own 3 schools.
- Pedagogy – the MAT will offer a unique opportunity to focus on pedagogy across phases.
- Standards – maintain high performance and respond quickly and effectively to dips/issues with a wider base of specialist staff.
- Subject specialist teaching development –develop subject expertise across phases through bespoke projects e.g development of KS2 Science
- Curriculum development – e.g Review MFL provision across KS2 and KS3 and provide relevant CPD and development of cross phase curriculum packages by cross phase teams of staff with specific collective subject/pedagogy specialisms
- Improve transition KS2 - KS3 - Greater fluidity of staff, resources and facilities between year groups
- Increase enrichment opportunities for children - Improve Primary pupils' access to secondary school Sports/Arts facilities and opportunities for KS3 and 4 students to become "Young Leaders" in the primaries, providing mentoring /coaching roles.

Are there any legal/personnel/financial/educational issues currently in any of the schools which would disadvantage any of the other schools?

- The MAT process so far has involved due diligence analysis of legal, personnel, financial and educational contexts in each school
- This has included
 - sharing of budgets and all financial commitments. To date the 3 schools have shared their past two year budgets and three year indicative figures and benchmarked their financial performance. Similarities and differences in processes and reporting have been identified.
 - sharing of assets information. To date the schools have shared expertise and plans on assets including capital resource development opportunities within the MAT
 - sharing of personnel information. To date the 3 schools have shared details of staff deployment, staff movement and staff satisfaction surveys.
 - sharing of leadership and management policies and practices. To date the 3 schools have had a number of SLT joint meetings to share similarities and differences in approaches.
 - sharing of school improvement plans,
 - sharing of future ambitions and aspirations,
 - sharing of pupil outcomes and educational standards.
- So far no increased liability has been identified. Governors will continue to carry out further due diligence over the next 3 months.

How will the MAT impact on our relationship with other schools in the locality?

- Our positive relationships with the other 3 primary schools in Falmouth will continue through maintaining our joint school improvement activities and sharing staff training. In addition our joint participation in community events and celebrations will continue. *(It is of note that 2 out of the 3 other primaries have been in separate MATs for several years, and this has not negatively impacted on their relationship with the other schools in Falmouth)*
- The headteachers of all 6 schools in Falmouth will continue to meet regularly and have a strategic lead on shared priorities.
- New opportunities for pupils/staff/parents generated by the Falmouth MAT is likely to positively benefit pupils/staff/parents in the other school communities.

We understand that within the MAT the primary and secondary lines of leadership will remain as they are, but how might they influence each other negatively or positively?

Sharing of primary and secondary leadership processes will develop all leaders' reflection and focus on the best possible actions

- It is likely that the more focused business and financial systems used by the secondary school will positively influence and support the less developed similar systems in primary, resulting in gains in efficiencies of time and resources
- It is likely that the leadership of specific curriculum subjects at secondary will positively influence curriculum provision at primary, resulting in improved and sustained staff and pupil subject knowledge
- It is likely that the leadership of pastoral care and holistic education at primary will positively influence provision at secondary, resulting in increasingly personalised approaches
- There will be greater consistency in the operational leadership decision making across the MAT thus ensuring improved leadership continuity in such factors as term times, length of school day and attendance procedures – “joined up thinking.”

What are the advantages/disadvantages of joining a different, already established MAT?

Potential advantages	Potential disadvantages
An infrastructure will already be in place – key processes will be provided	Our systems will need to comply and fit according to wider influences (<i>this will not be a local, school based context</i>)
A CEO and Board of Directors will be in place and provide leadership and strategic direction	Leadership will be externally based and a corporate approach introduced across all the schools. Locally based decision making therefore within our school will be reduced. The Board and CEO may not be local and not physically available.
Decision making is centrally controlled	Trustees of the pre-established MAT can make changes without local influence or the need to consult
If the MAT was successful we may be able to share best practice and learn from them.	Most MATs in Cornwall are made up of small primary schools – the schools in our proposal are all recognised as good schools that are more likely to be seen as the provider rather than the receiver of support.
Access to contrasting localities and schools	Satellite management of our schools and a MAT with geographically widely spread schools will limit positive influences

What are the advantages /disadvantages of the 2 primary schools creating a new MAT with other schools (and not the specific Falmouth schools proposed?)

Potential advantages	Potential disadvantages
Joining with similar sized schools to us may provide useful benchmarking	There aren't many similar sized schools in Cornwall. Not offering any new benefits – King Charles and St Francis already benchmark against each other and local/national data
Joining with other successful primaries could result in sharing of best practice	There are only a limited number of primary schools not already in a MAT – choice is very restricted. Most primary schools in Cornwall are smaller than ours and we could be likely to be seen as the provider rather than the receiver of support. Due to Cornwall's geography, partnerships with other schools would require a wider catchment area and increased operational costs, potentially reducing not improving local leadership capacity. Limited impact for staff e.g sharing of expertise because of geographical/financial barriers.
Limiting the MAT to primaries provides opportunity to specialise	Excluding any educational phase within the 3-19 age group limits opportunities for students. Continuity for learning

	across phases provides the opportunity to build on prior learning and develop expertise, both for staff and pupils.
Joining with other Church primary schools could strengthen Church schools as a group	There are only a limited number of Church primary schools not already in a MAT and benefits for St F and KC may be minimal (already SIAMS Outstanding)
Increased opportunities for pupils accessing information about schools in other localities (probably through IT)	Limited practical advantages for pupils e.g sharing of core facilities. Cross phase sharing of current and planned facilities, such as the new Sports Development at Falmouth School, has the potential to significantly improve the educational experience for our pupils.

Please clarify the financial benefits being in a MAT will bring each school.

- There are no future funding packages promised, however capital grants are now only accessible to academies
- The operational structure of the MAT will ensure resources are allocated appropriately within the best interests of all 3 schools.

How has being an academy helped Falmouth School?

- Educationally, school improvement has had to be sourced by the school, and therefore best value and maximum impact is rigorously sought and greater impact has been made (as evidenced by greatly improved outcomes)
- Freedoms have enabled significant facility development
- Additional resources have been secured as removal from local authority top slicing of budget has meant that 100% of money allocated to Falmouth School has been used for Falmouth pupils (as opposed to being used to subsidise schools in other parts of the county)
- School operations are more financially viable with improved focus on best value purchasing and resource allocation resulting in increased funds being spent within the local environment to the benefit of the local community.

Any further questions/suggestions are welcomed – email addresses are included below and all parents are always welcome to make an appointment to chat with the Headteachers and/or Chairs of Governors via the schools’ office email address

enquiries@falmouthschool.net
enquiries@king-charles.cornwall.sch.uk
enquiries@st-francis.cornwall.sch.uk

Update 23/1/16

What has been the process for consulting stakeholders?

From the outset the governors chose to have a full and wide ranging consultation process engaging as many stakeholders as possible.

Educational stakeholders

- To test the validity of a Falmouth MAT, initial meetings were held with the Department for Education at the beginning of 2016 and since then we have consulted them regularly regarding our processes.
- Informal discussions with local schools began in the Spring term of 2016 and they were also included in the formal consultation in the Autumn term.

The Diocese

- Informal discussions and research activities were undertaken in Spring 2016.
- The Diocese conducted their own due diligence at the beginning of the Autumn term, requiring Killigrew Partnership and Falmouth School to present extensive evidence regarding the viability and strategic differences the MAT would make. Following this, the Diocese gave their full support for the MAT proposal.
- The Diocese continue to support the schools' procedures in moving to a new governance structure.
- The Diocesan Director of Schools has been (and continues to be) fully consulted regarding all aspects of the proposal and is influencing the due diligence process.

Parents and carers

- Parents and all stakeholders were informed of the consideration of creating a Falmouth MAT at the earliest opportunity (May 2016), and invited to informally feedback to senior leaders. This was achieved through school newsletters and the Killigrew Partnership newsletters.
- This open approach enabled many parents to put forward their thoughts and suggestions, all of which were used to influence how the proposal document was written, and the content within it.
- In the Autumn term 2016 parents and carers were formally invited to review the proposal over a six week period 21/10/16 – 2/12/16.
- As the governors wished to build upon the personalised approach successfully used so far, parents were given the opportunity to respond in person through individual drop ins or via individual written correspondence. A public meeting was not included as the priority throughout the whole process has been to provide parents with the best possible chance to receive all information pertinent to their own questions. Similarly, providing parents with the opportunity for personal attention is in line with the school's usual approach.

Staff

- Informal discussions with staff began at the beginning of the summer term 2016
- Staff regularly encouraged to ask individual questions and lots of individual feedback received which was also used to populate the formal proposal
- In the Autumn term 2016 staff were formally invited to review the proposal over a six week period 21/10/16 – 6/12/16.
- Staff invited to have their individual questions answered on a 1:1 basis.

All feedback has been reviewed, discussed and analysed, and has fed into governor and other working group due diligence activities. The consultation is now closed. Any additional questions received, now that the consultation period has closed, will be noted by the governors but are outside of the formal consultation period.

Amended structure diagram

Modified following advice from the Department for Education

