



Proposal Statement

The Formation of the Falmouth Multi Academy Trust (MAT)

Proposal statement

There have been many recent national announcements about the benefits of schools working formally together and the future of Local Education Authorities. At the forefront of these national plans are the formation of 'Multi Academy Trusts' or 'MATs' as they are more commonly known.

Falmouth School and the Killigrew Partnership (King Charles and St Francis primary schools) have worked closely and effectively over a sustained period of time to ensure that students under our care have every opportunity to become outstanding learners who can make a real contribution both now and in the future.

Therefore both organisations are now proposing a formalisation of our partnership, by creating a Multi Academy Trust to be known as the 'Falmouth Multi Academy Trust'.

The Falmouth MAT will provide a more formal structure between the schools, ensuring that the children, families and the school community benefit from significant opportunities that an enhanced locally based partnership would bring. Keeping a local governance structure of the Falmouth MAT is a key part of the partnership proposal whereby local people maintain control of the development of education in Falmouth both now and in the future.

If the proposal becomes a reality it will mean:

1. King Charles and St Francis schools will convert to academies (Falmouth School has been an Academy since 2011 and therefore does not need to convert);
2. All 3 schools will apply to the Department for Education(DfE) to become a Multi Academy Trust;
3. The Falmouth MAT will become operational from Easter 2017.

This proposal has been put together by a cross partner 'Project Group' which has been tasked with seeking initial viewpoints. As a result, governors, staff and the wider community were given an initial opportunity to provide informal feedback during the Summer term 2016, all of which has been used to form the questions and answers outlined in this proposal.



What is an Academy?

Academies are state-funded schools, independent of the Local Authority and held accountable by the Department for Education (DfE) by a legally binding Funding Agreement. Academies receive their funding directly from central government so that all of the money allocated by the Government to the schools concerned, actually goes direct to that school. Academies retain the same responsibilities as any maintained school, as part of the learning community.

Academies should not be confused with schools that need to improve. Whilst this may have been the case a number of years ago, since the Academies Act 2010, all schools are now able to become Academies. In Cornwall the majority of secondary schools are already Academies, or have made formal requests to become an Academy and most recently, a number of secondary schools in Cornwall have proactively embraced the drive from the Department for Education for schools to form Multi-Academy Trusts. Well over half of the primary schools in Cornwall are now Academies with a significant number pending approval for their applications.

What is a Multi-Academy Trust?

A Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is a group of Academy schools who agree to work together, overseen by an overarching charitable trust. There are a number of models under which a MAT can operate. Our proposal is for each partner to retain a local governance structure and therefore a local decision making function (please see page 7.)

Each local body will report to an overarching 'Board of Trustees'. This Board will be comprised of current serving Governors from each respective partner. The Board will also have the opportunity to appoint roles that will bring a skills set that will further support the schools in the partnership.

What does the national educational landscape look like?

Academies first began under the Labour Government and the current Government has expanded the process. The current Government have a specific programme to create Academies and particularly in areas such as ours where the Local Authority's capacity is diminishing.

Currently around 70% of secondary schools and 20% of primary schools nationally are Academies.

What does the local educational landscape look like?

In Cornwall over 80% of secondary schools and over 55% of primary schools are already Academies. This is a significantly higher number than that nationally. There are 278 schools in Cornwall and current predictions show that less than 60 will not be an Academy (or in the process of becoming an Academy) at the start of 2017.



Why the Falmouth MAT?

Our Vision

At the very heart of our plan is that the students, families, staff and governors that make up the school based education community of Falmouth retain a governance structure that ensures decisions about the current and future educational provision in Falmouth remains a locally made decision. Our vision is to ensure learning is the focus of our work and that we have the courage to innovate with a passion to achieve the very best we can.

Our Ethos

All partners are committed to the belief that education has the power to change lives. Through ensuring that every child across the partnership is able to bond and learn together, we can provide experiences to enable all students to progress and achieve.

Building on Success

- All 3 schools are strong and successful and the advantages of having a locally set up and run educational partnership together, is one that we feel will provide even more opportunities for our children.
- All 3 schools are distinctly unique and individual and we wish to maintain and strengthen this through establishing our own local partnership rather than an externally controlled one.
- All 3 schools already work closely to provide increased opportunities for our students eg through bespoke workshops, jointly employing staff. A formalised partnership would strengthen this and allow it to expand.

Importance of Locality

At the heart of our plan is a locally based decision making structure with Falmouth based people being responsible for and running education in our 3 Falmouth schools. Strengthening our unique character through the process of setting up our own MAT is paramount. A Falmouth MAT would ensure that local people shape our futures, control our educational finances and make decisions on our curriculum. We believe that this should be a Falmouth decision in the future, not one that is made by an office based many miles from Falmouth.

Of course there are risks associated with any change. The risks are significantly reduced and managed when we retain the decision making capacity through a local partnership development. The risks increase significantly if we do not maintain the lead position in the decision making process.

School Improvement

A key aspect of the drive to be a MAT nationally is the focus on school improvement and the significantly increased capacity that schools have to support each other. The Falmouth MAT proposal recognises the importance of this key driver. The partner schools have a strong record, over time, high standards and good performance which will only be enhanced further through partnership.



Financial Security

With the ongoing reductions in school funding, the cost savings of schools maximising economies of scale together is another significant advantage of working together. The future delivery of education services in Falmouth to the standards we would expect is another considerably important advantage of working together.

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).

Are there alternatives and what are the risks of these?

Yes there are alternatives.

One option is that we could do nothing, carry on as we are and remain alone. The associated risk with this is that, as schools around us continue to join up in various partnerships, we will run the risk of not benefiting from the advantages the schools in partnership are able to give to their children. Before long, we could become isolated and need to join up to a pre-existing partnership because we have little choice. By this time the option to have a locally based partnership may no longer be available, putting us individually in a potentially very different position regarding our further options.

The second option is that, separately or together, both organisations could join a pre-existing MAT. The associated risks with this are that our schools' uniqueness and individuality could be compromised by being under the wing of a larger, more corporate organisation. In addition, decisions about our 3 schools would move away from local control.

What are the risks of becoming a MAT and how have they been addressed?

- Would other school partners be excluded from joining the MAT? No, this would not be the case as any school wishing to join in the future would be able to apply. The Trust would then consider each application.
- Would the MAT be called the Falmouth MAT if other schools joined? The Falmouth MAT is the proposed name because the partnership, at this point, is about three Falmouth schools. There are no factors known at present that would need to alter this.
- Would all of the primary school students have to stay in the MAT for their secondary school? No, parental choice would remain the determining factor for the choice of secondary school.
- Would students joining a MAT school be at a disadvantage if they didn't start in the MAT school? Not necessarily, although there will always be the need to support a student if they join one of our schools part way through the year. All schools in the partnership are very experienced in dealing with and supporting the movement of students within the school year.
- Will the ethos of each individual school be lost? No, in fact quite the opposite would be expected. Our partnership has been built around the solid basis that all three of us already share many aspects of our ethos. Continuing to build this further will provide opportunity for our ethos to be further embedded across the partnership.



Why do this now?

Partnerships amongst schools in Cornwall are developing fast and this is largely because of the significant decrease of Local Authority provided services. In Falmouth, for example, two of the three remaining (*not in this proposal*) primary schools are already in a MAT. In our surrounding areas around Truro, Penryn and Helston, a number of partnerships have been created or are in the process of being created.

Why now for Falmouth School?

The function and service provided by the Local Authority has significantly altered in recent years. Partly due to this reason, Falmouth School became an Academy in 2011 at the same time as a number of secondary schools in Cornwall. Working together more formally with parents locally ensures that the school is better placed to continue to maintain the level of education and service that every family in our community deserves.

Falmouth School considers that it is through local partnership that we can best ensure appropriate education provision is secured in Falmouth. Falmouth School can learn much from our partner schools and in order to continue to develop and innovate, a local partnership is mutually beneficial for all partners involved.

Many schools in Cornwall and in our locality are already in, or about to join a formal partnership with other schools. We have worked closely with the Killigrew Partnership in recent years to ensure we are partners that share the same ethos and vision thus ensuring the best possible grounds for our successful partnership to develop further.

Why now for The Killigrew Partnership - King Charles and St Francis schools?

In previous years both King Charles and St Francis schools have considered moving to Academy and had decided not to make that move. The decisions made then were entirely based on the educational climate and context of the 2 schools at that time. Whilst moving to becoming an Academy was not right at that point, subsequently the 2 schools went on to form a Federated Partnership (The Killigrew Partnership.) This has successfully formalised their working relationship.

The Killigrew Partnership is considering academisation again now, for 5 main reasons:

1. The current and future educational climate, with the significantly decreased capacity of the Local Authority and the significantly increased number of schools becoming Academies and joining Multi Academy Trusts.
2. The context of the 2 schools is now different with both schools successfully operating as a Federation – moving to Academy is the natural next step as it will enable both schools to have even greater control of their futures.
3. By becoming Academies the 2 primary schools will then be able to create or join a Multi Academy Trust which will provide greater stability for the future.
4. This is a unique opportunity to link formally with our local secondary school in a Multi Academy Trust, thereby securing a Falmouth-based supportive model for the future.
5. The Killigrew Partnership has successfully navigated its own future and own successes so far and would wish for this local focus to continue.



Our proposal is already at an advantage. We have a tried and tested partnership through our joint staff deployment work, financial work and teaching developments. We are therefore, very well placed to consider the Falmouth MAT at this stage. We have undertaken due diligence with respect to partnership work over the past couple of years and the Falmouth MAT is the next natural step in this journey, shaping and securing the best possible future for the children in our schools both now and in the future.

Would our schools change?

Yes and no is the simple answer.

Yes, there will be changes but they will be positive changes that strengthen our operations over time. Therefore the changes will not necessarily be obvious to see initially unless you work in the school in certain roles within the partnership. The teaching in the classroom and the experience that the children and families have will continue to develop. Children will continue to wear the same uniform and continue to experience day to day life in their schools as they would have done prior to the change.

In our proposal, the secondary school will retain its current leadership structure, as will the primary schools. Staff contracts will be transferred across to the MAT with the same employment contracts that they currently have and points of contact will not change for families. Therefore, the change to a MAT, for the vast majority of people, will not result in any obvious immediate changes. We want to continue to be great schools where every child is valued and will only look to change in the future what we think will improve our schools even further.

Who will run our MAT?

The proposed leadership structure is outlined below. The fundamental principle behind this proposal is that local people, based in and around Falmouth, will run the Falmouth MAT.

The Board of Trustees and Members

The Board of Trustees run the MAT. A small group of trustees will also serve as 'Members' who will serve as shareholders of the Trust and the running of the Board of Trustees.

Our proposal is for each partner to retain its own Local Governing Body (LGB) whilst also contributing Members who would create the Trustee Board. The LGB would then have responsibilities delegated to them by the Board through a 'Scheme of Delegation'. It is our proposal that the allocation of budgets to each partner is not altered and current arrangements are maintained.

The Trust would sit above the Local Governing Bodies. They would be the main decision-making group and accountable for all partners within the Trust. The Trust would consist of up to ten Trustees, specifically selected for their skills and tasked with ensuring the excellence of all schools and the delegation of powers to the Local Governing Bodies. The Board composition would also ensure that each partner is represented equally with membership coming from each Governing Body.



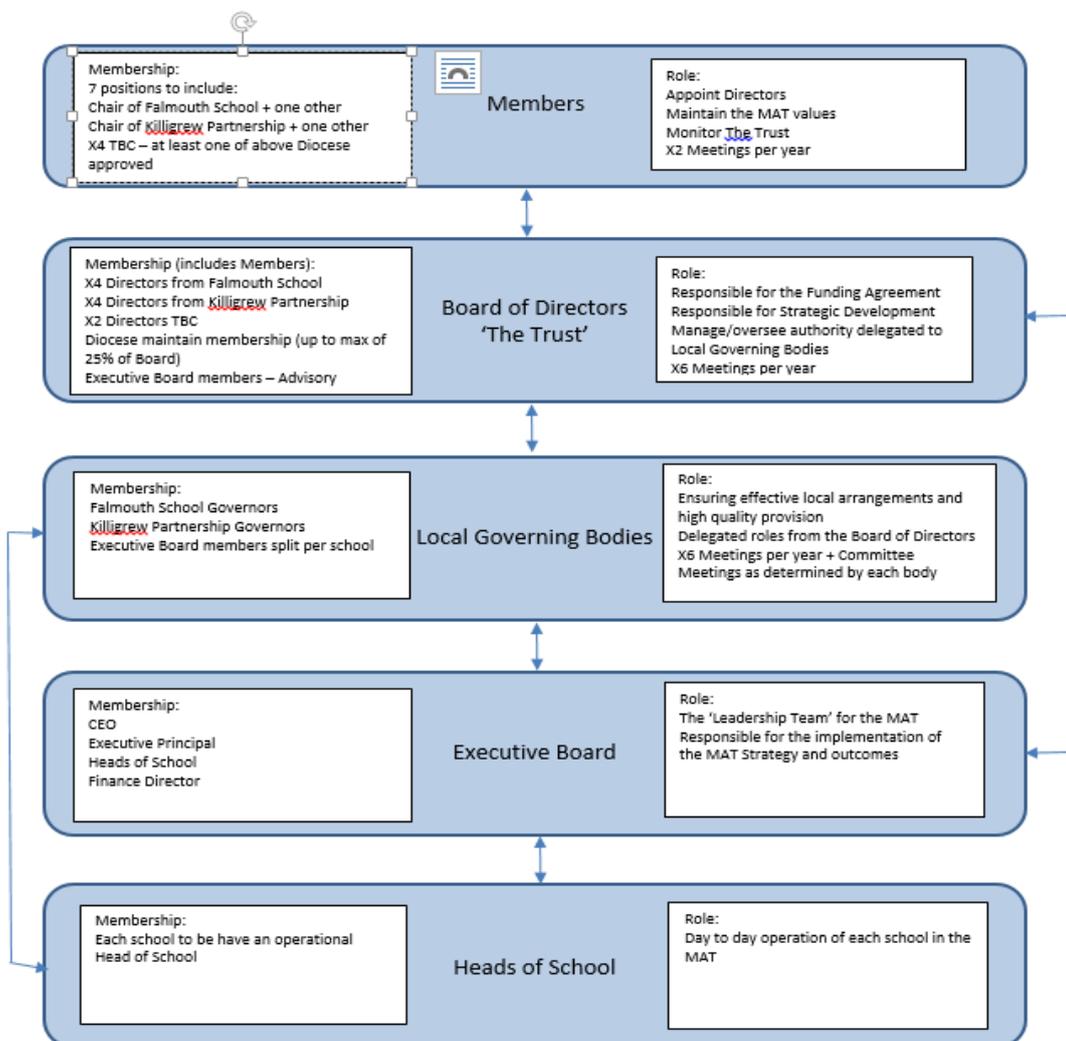
School Leadership

Operationally, the proposal is for the current Primary and Secondary Headteacher model to continue, contributing to the daily leadership and strategic development of the MAT, under the directorship of the Board of Trustees. The Primary and Secondary lead positions would be supported by ‘Heads of School’ in each Academy. This is already in place at both King Charles and St Francis schools.

Both of the main Primary and Secondary Leadership posts will also undertake responsibility to lead on key developments across the MAT. Our proposal is that one of these roles leads on the development of the operational systems that underpin the MAT and the other has a focus on the development of Teaching and Learning across the MAT.

The position of the proposed operational leadership of the MAT, relative to the other aspects of leadership within the MAT is shown in the diagram below:

Falmouth MAT Proposal – Trust and School Structure





Would the admissions arrangements change?

As a MAT we would be responsible for our own admissions procedures. Our proposal is that we would continue to follow the Admissions Codes operational prior to the conversion and therefore there would be no change. If for some reason the MAT wanted to change its admissions arrangements in the future, consultation would be required.

Would the schools have to change their names?

No, our proposal is that schools would retain their names and uniform policies.

Would changes be made to the length of the school day and to term dates?

No, in our proposal we would not seek to make changes to the length of the school day or to term or holiday dates. If we felt there would be an advantage to changing in the future we would consult with all groups, in the same way we would have to if we were not in a MAT.

Would changes be made to the schools' religious designation?

No, in our proposal this would not change for the schools. As church schools, both St Francis and King Charles must continue to be able to demonstrate that they are distinctively and recognisable Christian institutions and will undergo inspections under the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) to evaluate the effectiveness of religious church schools, as before. This will include the impact of collective worship, the effectiveness of religious education and how well the school, through their distinctive Christian characters, meets the needs of all learners.

Would changes be made to the curriculum?

Academies do not have to follow the National Curriculum and can set a curriculum that is more relevant to the needs of our students and the community. However, our proposal is to maintain the current approach and deliver the National Curriculum. Our schools already have strong and effective curriculum frameworks and there would be no plan to alter these plans at this point.

Would academy status affect the SEND provision?

Not directly, SEND services would stay the same. However the Falmouth MAT would ensure an even closer and effective partnership approach to SEND services, particularly at the point of transfer between the schools.

Would the schools continue to access services from the Local Authority?

The schools would still have the option, as they currently do, to 'buy in' a number of services from the Local Authority. As a significant number of schools in Cornwall are Academies, the provision of services from the



Local Authority has diminished in recent years, and as even more schools become MATs, the provision of services from the Local Authority is going to significantly decrease. Therefore there are very few services available to access.

Our proposal would be that the Finance Team in the MAT, represented by the finance leaders in each of the schools presently, will be focused on purchasing the best services for our children at the best value. Services offered by the Local Authority will continue to be considered as part of our proposal.

Who would own the school land and buildings?

At the point of the MAT formation, the schools would take over a 125 year lease for the land and buildings from the relevant freeholder, in this case the freeholders would be the Local Authority and the Church.

Who makes the final decision on whether each school converts to an academy?

The Governing Bodies of each partner considering the Falmouth MAT proposal.

Could other schools join the group and how would the decision be made to do this?

Any decision on additional schools joining our group would be made by the Board of Trustees. Any schools joining the Falmouth MAT would need to abide by our vision, ethos, and governance structure. They could also be required to contribute to and learn from the other schools in the group. Any school joining would not necessitate any change to the original setting up of the MAT unless the Board of Trustees determined otherwise.

What costs are involved for conversion?

Conversion grants of £25,000 for each of our primary schools. These will cover the costs of conversion. Falmouth School is already an Academy and therefore is not eligible for a conversion grant.

If the schools were no longer part of the Local Authority, who would they be accountable to?

The Falmouth MAT would be accountable directly to the Department for Education and our accounts would be audited on an annual basis by external auditors. These accounts would be publically available.

We would also be overseen by our Regional Schools Commissioner Office, (for us that would be the South West office) and would continue to be subject to separate Ofsted inspections. We have had an initial meeting with a representative of the Regional Commissioner Office to discuss the proposal. Ultimately, the decision to allow our MAT to form will be made by regional office.



In our proposal, if parents/carers had concerns about progress in the schools, they would follow the same procedures currently in place. There is no proposal to change this.

Can schools withdraw from the conversion process?

Either partner would be able to withdraw right up to the point that they sign the Funding Agreement. Once this is signed there is a legally binding agreement between the Secretary of State and the partners.

What is the timescale for conversion?

In the Summer term 2016 each partner's Governing Body voted individually to formally confirm that we would proceed with consultation on the formation of a MAT and this proposal. This term we are consulting all relevant groups. Following this, each partner's Governing Bodies will analyse the consultation responses and then have a final vote on whether to convert to MAT status. If it is agreed to form the Falmouth MAT, the Funding Agreement will be signed which is the legally binding agreement.

The entire process from start to finish generally takes 4-6 months. If agreed, it is likely that the Falmouth MAT would come into operation in 2017, around Easter. Throughout the process of consultation and conversion if agreed, there will be no impact on the smooth running of the school day.



How do we get a say?

The Governing Bodies of the Killigrew Partnership and Falmouth School invite your views on the proposal. The deadline for responses is Friday 2nd December 2016 and you can respond by any of the following means:

- Writing a letter or email to Glyn Williams, Chair of Governors at Falmouth School, or Dave Nicoll, Chair of Governors at the Killigrew Partnership at the addresses below:

Glyn Williams
Chair of Governors
Falmouth School
Trescobeas Road
Falmouth
TR11 4LH
Tel: 01326 372386
dlaw@falmouthschool.net

Dave Nicoll
Chair of Governors
King Charles C of E VC School
Western Terrace
Falmouth
TR11 4EP
Tel: 01326 313607
secretary@king-charles.cornwall.sch.uk

Dave Nicoll
Chair of Governors
St Francis C of E VA School
Longfield
Falmouth
TR11 4SU
Tel: 01326 211910
secretary@st-francis.cornwall.sch.uk

- Attending a face to face meeting with the Chair of Governors and Headteacher of one of the schools in the proposal. You would need to complete the attached reply slip and return this form to your School Office/Reception and an appointment will be made for you. The available dates are:

Falmouth School

- 3.00 – 5.00 pm on Thursday, 10th November

15 minute appointments can be made by completing and returning the attached slip to the school office, or via telephone (*numbers included above*)

St Francis

- 3.00 – 5.00 pm on Thursday, 10th November

15 minute appointments can be made by completing and returning the attached slip to the school office, or via telephone (*numbers included above*)

King Charles

- 3.00 – 5.00 pm on Wednesday, 9th November

15 minute appointments can be made by completing and returning the attached slip to the school office, or via telephone (*numbers included above*)

All staff employed within the partnership schools will also have the opportunity to feedback to the Governors over the consultation period. Staff are invited to feedback to the Headteacher of their school or directly to the Chair of Governors.



Proposal Statement
The Formation of the Falmouth MAT (Multi Academy Trust)

Request for informal meeting with Chair of Governors & Headteacher

If you wish to discuss the proposal in person, please complete and return this form to your School Office/Reception and an appointment will be made for you

NameParent of School.....

I would like to have an informal meeting to discuss the proposal and am available on the following dates and times (please tick all availability)

Falmouth School

Thursday 10th November – Please tick the time you would like below:

3:00		3:15		3:30		3:45		4:00		4:15		4:30		4:45	
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King Charles School

Wednesday, 9th November – Please tick the time you would like below:

3:00		3:15		3:30		3:45		4:00		4:15		4:30		4:45	
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St Francis School

Thursday, 10th November – Please tick the time you would like below:

3:00		3:15		3:30		3:45		4:00		4:15		4:30		4:45	
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