

December 2024

Planned merger of Veritas Multi Academy Trust and Rainham Mark Education Trust

Dear families

I am writing to inform you of a potentially exciting development involving both Veritas Multi Academy Trust and Rainham Mark Education Trust who are currently exploring the possibility of a merger. This communication provides information on our proposals to bring our two, successful multi-academy trusts together as one Trust. It outlines why we feel this is a positive move and the increased benefits such a merger provides to all six schools in our two Trusts. Both Trusts are heavily invested in and committed to our respective local communities, and by coming together and forming a larger Trust, with increased capacity, we feel strongly that we can really deliver far more for our young people and communities than we could do on our own.

This is an exciting time for us as we continue our drive to provide the very best educational provision for everyone in our family of schools.

Background

Rainham Mark Education Trust was first established in 2011 and Veritas Multi Academy Trust in 2015. Both were initially established as single standalone academies, and both have grown. Both multi-academy trusts serve diverse communities in Kent and Medway. All our schools are aspirational in their vision and mission to enhance the life chances of children and young people, through high quality education and enrichment. Both Trusts have proven their capacity and capability of school improvement. Our schools create communities through a sense of belonging. All our schools have proud histories and are locality based. Both Trusts value the importance of what each individual school brings to the collective family of schools within each Trust.

Why is a merger being considered?

Following the departure of the CEO of Rainham Mark Education Trust in July 2024, Veritas Multi Academy Trust, fulfilling its responsibility as a systems leader, provided support through the interim CEO appointment of Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus. Dr Jordan-Daus has a proven track record of transformational leadership across all phases in education. There then followed some preliminary discussions through both Trust boards as to whether this could become a permanent arrangement, through the merger of both Trusts.

Reasons for considering a merger include:

- The Department for Education continues to actively promote the creation of larger trusts, through mergers of smaller trusts. This voluntary merger between both Rainham Mark Education Trust and Veritas Multi Academy Trust ensures that we have control over our future, rather than it being dictated to us.
- Both Trusts have strategic priorities for growth, with a potential merger as one option to achieve this.
- The creation of a larger Trust is more attractive to potential future schools joining and therefore provides immediate future growth potential; with additional secondary schools joining our family of schools.
- A merger further increases capacity for school improvement which will directly benefit the children and young people in our schools.
- Small trusts do not yield some of the benefits of larger trusts. For example, financial efficiency and economies of scale.
- There is alignment of vision and values of both Trusts allowing a smooth transition.
- Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus has used this period to already enact new collaborations across the two Trusts and this close working will be strengthened through a merger.

- A merger will provide stability to the Trust; through the leadership of Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus.

What are the benefits of merging?

The merger of Veritas Multi Academy Trust and Rainham Mark Education Trust will benefit not only the children and young people in our schools, but also our families, communities and staff.

- School improvement is at the heart of both Trusts. Each Trust has specific expertise, and a merger would provide increased capacity for school improvement and widen the scope of work with an increased pool of staff to carry out school improvement work. This will help to further drive forward teaching excellence in our classrooms across our schools, for the benefit of our children and young people.
- Both current Trusts would benefit from working with a wider range of colleagues, enhancing professional development opportunities and strengthening recruitment and retention of high-quality staff.
- Governance at all levels would further diversify and provide the opportunity to build on existing governance skills and expertise.
- The merger provides reassurance for the long-term future and viability of the newly formed Trust and our schools.
- Financial planning and greater economies of scale will ensure long term benefits to Trust growth and school improvement by making scarce resources go further. This will mean more money going to our schools which can be spent on teaching and learning.
- Larger trusts benefit from other financial gains, e.g. receiving annual conditions grant to support the development, maintenance and general upkeep of our school premises and estates.

What is the proposed timescale?

A formal decision to merge will be made by the end of March 2025 by both Trust boards. This decision will be informed by the completion of a due diligence process which is currently underway. This due diligence process involves both Trusts independently reviewing the other Trust in a range of areas including finance, quality of education, legal, premises etc. Should a decision to merge be agreed, it is anticipated that the new Trust will be established for September 2025; following approval by the Department for Education Regional Director.

What does this mean for me and my child?

The merger will not interfere with the educational provision in any of our schools. It will enhance what we currently do. There will be no changes to senior leadership and your relationships with your child's school will continue as normal. The staff, including senior staff will continue to teach as they currently do. There will be improvements to the way we support teaching, for example in the capacity to provide additional staffing resource, information technology and funding. There will also be enhanced opportunities for developing the condition of our buildings to provide first-class facilities for everyone.

Your voice:

This is an exciting opportunity but both Trust boards recognise that change has the potential to cause uncertainty. We understand that you will have lots of views and questions and the next stage will be to listen and hear what you have for to say to help shape our future. This will begin in January 2025. I am also currently working on an FAQ document which will also be shared in the new year.

Thank you for your support. Wishing you the best for the forthcoming festive break and I look forward to continuing to work with you in the new year.

Best wishes

Kerry
Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus