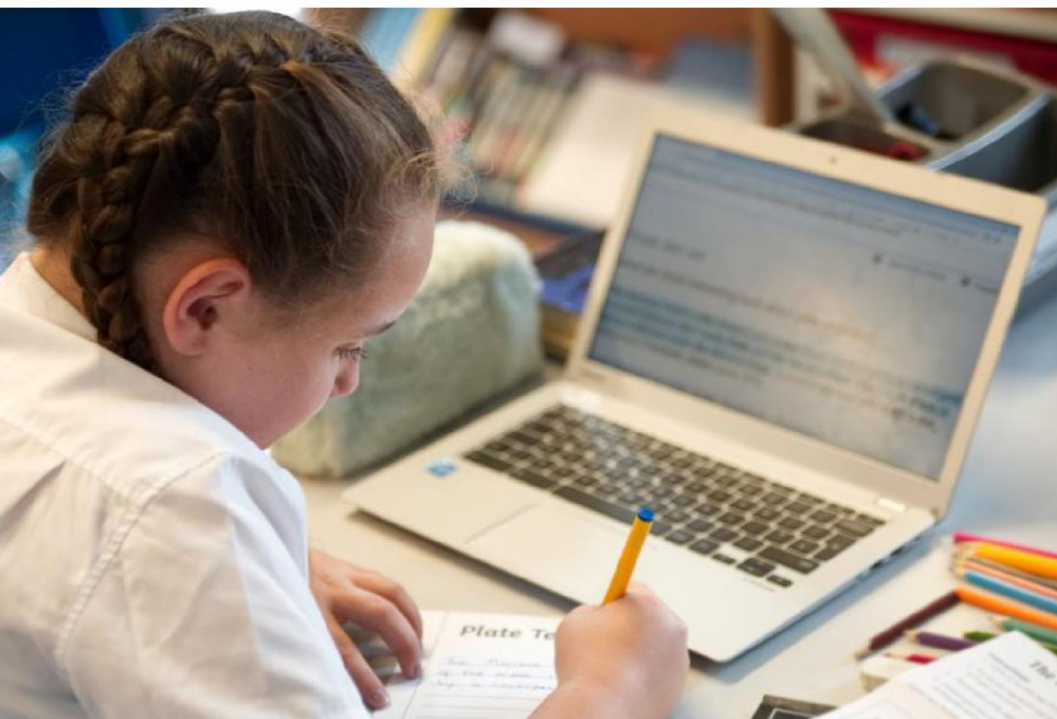




Consultation Report FAQ's: Proposed Merger Between Veritas Multi Academy Trust & Rainham Mark Education Trust





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April 2025

Introduction and context

In December 2024, Veritas Multi Academy Trust (VMAT) and Rainham Mark Education Trust (RMET) jointly announced that both Trusts had positively decided to explore the possibility of a voluntary merger. As part of the merger scoping stage, both Trusts have completed due diligence on one another which was both rigorous and forensic. Following the due diligence, both Trusts agreed to consult with stakeholders on the proposed merger. This consultation process was undertaken independently by both Trusts; but using the same methodology. Both Trusts committed to adhering to the 2018 Cabinet Office [consultation principles](#) to inform the consultation process.

The consultation took place over a period of 5 weeks between 3 February and 6 March 2025 and involved a range of consultation methods and communication channels.

Consultation purpose and methodology

Whilst there is no statutory duty to carry out a consultation, both VMAT and RMET felt it important to engage with stakeholders and carry out a series of listening exercises as part of the merger process. VMAT and RMET remain committed to engaging with the community regarding this significant change proposal as it moves forward. The purpose of the consultation was threefold:

- to seek open and honest engagement with stakeholders in the community and beyond, to learn more about proposed merger and, importantly, to provide a mechanism for their views and feedback to be heard.
- to draw upon views and feedback to inform any proposed merger moving forward
- to raise awareness of the both Trust's proposals to merge.

Consultation – audience and stakeholders:

As part of the consultation, VMAT sought to consult with a wide range of stakeholders, to ensure that as many people as possible were aware of the proposed merger and had the opportunity for their views to be captured. Below is an overview of key stakeholders targeted as part of the consultation:

- Parents and/or carers in the three VMAT schools – Warden House, Mundella and Pilgrims' Way
- VMAT staff
- VMAT members, trustees and local academy committees
- Locally elected Councillors and Members of Parliament
- Any other interested member of the community

Communication methods:

In order to ensure that the consultation had a wide reach, a range of communication and consultation methods were used to promote engagement in the process. These included:

- The establishment of a dedicated consultation area on the Trust's website: [Veritas Academy Trust - MERGER Consultation](#)
- The establishment of a dedicated consultation area on the three Trust school websites
- Targeted letters / emails to the above identified stakeholders
- 6 face-to-face consultation events:
 - 3 for parents and/or carers & wider community stakeholders held at Pilgrims' Way, Mundella and Warden House

- 3 for staff within the Trust – also held at Pilgrims’ Way, Mundella and Warden House
- 1 virtual consultation event – aimed at staff within the Trust
- A joint press release between RMET & VMAT

In addition to the above, a set of frequently asked questions was also shared as part of the consultation process. These FAQs were developed jointly with RMET and also used by RMET as part of their stakeholder consultation.

Methods of providing feedback:

Good practice (Cabinet Office 2018) states that a variety of feedback mechanisms should be used, including opportunities for those without access to technology. Consequently, four means were established:

- Dedicated proposed merger consultation email address – mergerconsultation@veritasmat.co.uk
- Survey
- By post – Merger consultation c/o Veritas Multi Academy Trust – Warden House Primary School, Birdwood Avenue, Deal, Kent, CT14 9SF
- In-person and online consultation events

Guidance used to inform consultation planning:

The following guidance was used to inform the planning and execution of the consultation:

- Cabinet Office consultation principles (updated 19 March 2018) – [consultation principles guidance](#)
- Browne Jacobson and the National Governance Association (NGA) guide for MAT mergers - [MAT mergers - a guide for academy trust leaders and trustees](#)

Frequently asked questions arising from the consultation

As part of the consultation process, a number of questions were posed. Below is the Trust’s response to these:

FAQ	Trust response
Why has the Trust sought to enter into a merger with another trust that is in a different local authority to Veritas?	<p>It is not uncommon for Trusts to span different local authorities. Other examples include; Extol Trust, Harris Federation, Leigh Academies and REAch2 Academy Trust. As a Trust, we are not bound by the limits of geography. We see the potential in the establishment of geographic ‘hubs’ of schools working under same umbrella Trust.</p> <p>Veritas Trust has a growth strategy that outlines the principles that frame the Trust’s decision making process when considering potential opportunities for growth. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We will only pursue discussions with prospective partner schools / trusts where there is an alignment of values between both organisations, predicated on inclusive practice and addressing disadvantage and inequity 2. We will not compromise the success of any of our existing schools through our growth strategy <p>It is on the basis of these principles being met; including the rigorous and forensic due diligence that the Trust has undertaken, that has informed the decision to propose a merger between Veritas and Rainham Mark Education Trust.</p>

<p>How will the merger benefit the pupils in Veritas schools?</p>	<p>There are a number of ways that this merger will benefit Veritas pupils. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Veritas pupils through improved outcomes. • 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 which will directly benefit Veritas pupils. • Larger trusts benefit from other financial gains, e.g. receiving an annual conditions grant to support the development, maintenance and general upkeep of our school premises. This helps to ensure that our pupils are learning in the environments that they deserve.
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<p>What due diligence has been undertaken to identify any potential risks associated with this merger?</p>	<p>As part of any merger between two multi academy trusts, there is a requirement to undertake a 'due diligence' process. The process followed by both Veritas Multi Academy Trust and Rainham Mark Education Trust has been informed by advice sought from Veritas' solicitors. Both Trusts have, independently, followed the same due diligence process. The due diligence process commenced on 22 November 2024 and concluded on 31 January 2025. The following six areas were explored as part of the due diligence process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal, compliance & contracts 2. Finance 3. HR & Organisational 4. Premises, estates and property 5. Quality of Education & Safeguarding 6. Reputation <p>The findings of the due diligence process were shared with Trustees.</p>
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<p>Has the Trust looked at other growth opportunities, apart from a merger?</p>	<p>The Trust's growth strategy recognises that growth can come in many different forms. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a prospective school joining the Trust • a free-school bid to open a new school • the expansion of an existing school (e.g. the addition of an age range) • a merger <p>The Trust Board has, in the past, explored a number of ways to grow, and therefore secure the long-term viability of the Trust, For example; in the last two years the Trust has submitted two bids to open new free schools. On both occasions, feedback received was that the Trust was too small to take on the project of leading the opening of a new school. The Trust has also sought to grow through the change of age range at Mundella Primary School.</p> <p>The merger between Veritas and Rainham Mark Education Trust will increase capacity for potential free school new build projects in the future. The creation of a larger Trust is also more attractive to potential future schools joining and therefore provides immediate future growth potential.</p>
<p>How will the central team of a newly merged trust be structured and what will happen if both trusts have a duplication of roles within the central team?</p>	<p>Both Trust boards have agreed that Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus will be the permanent, substantive CEO, should the merger proceed.</p> <p>It is currently envisaged that the newly merged Trust central team will require a different structure and we acknowledge that there may be some duplication of roles. A restructure will be considered post-merger and decided at a later stage, once the operating requirements of the Trust are clear.</p>
<p>How do systems and software differ between both Veritas and Rainham Mark Education Trust?</p>	<p>As part of the due diligence process, a mapping exercise was undertaken to compare systems, software and licences. Should a merger take place, this will then be used to determine which systems and software will be used going forward; including the potential timeframes for any changes. Part of the decision making will be driven by licencing agreements already in place, when these are due for renewal and an analysis of the pros and cons of different software and systems used. There is a commitment though to not make change for the sake of change. It is not uncommon in mergers, at least in the short term, for different systems and software to run in parallel.</p>
<p>The proposal is for two Trusts with two different names and 2 different</p>	<p>The proposed merger of the two Trusts, each with their own names and set of values, will be carefully managed to ensure a smooth integration. As part of the due diligence process, both Trusts have thoroughly reviewed</p>

values to merge. How will this be managed?	<p>each other's values, confirming that there is a strong alignment between them. This alignment will serve as the foundation for the next steps in the merger. In addition, both Trusts have committed to undertaking a rebranding exercise, during which stakeholders from all levels will be involved. This will not only help create a unified identity for the merged Trust, but it will also foster collaboration and ensure that the values and vision are shared by all parties.</p> <p>It's important to recognise that when two organisations, such as multi academy trusts or other entities, come together through a merger, a key part of the process involves bringing people together. This merger presents a valuable opportunity to reflect on and refresh the vision, values, and ethos of the Trust. This will be a collaborative process, ensuring that all voices are heard and that the new merged entity reflects the best of both Trusts.</p> <p>This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen and unify both Veritas and Rainham Mark Education Trust, creating a more impactful Trust that will better serve all stakeholders.</p>
Will the central team staff be required to change their place of work?	<p>RMET's Trust central office is located on the grounds of Twydall Primary School. Individual's place of work will be dependent on the operational needs of the merged Trust. Both Trusts remain committed to flexible working arrangements, as long as the operational needs of the organisation are met.</p>

Initial Frequently Asked Questions shared during the Consultation process



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Rainham Mark Education Trust (RMET) & Veritas Multi Academy Trust (VMAT) Proposed Merger Consultation

<p>Why is a merger being considered and why now?</p>	<p>Rainham Mark Education Trust and Veritas Multi Academy Trust have already been working successfully in close collaboration with one another, following Dr Kerry JordanDaus being appointed as the interim CEO of RMET; after the departure of the former CEO.</p> <p>As Dr Jordan-Daus has a proven track record of transformational leadership across all phases in education, preliminary discussions had already taken place through both Trust Boards as to whether this could become a permanent arrangement, through the merger of both Trusts.</p> <p>Following careful consideration, and in the best interests of the children and young people, staff and local communities that both Trusts serve, we are excited by the prospects and benefits that a potential merger will bring and feel that this is an opportune time for both Trusts to join and grow together.</p>
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<p>Who makes the final decision on the proposal?</p>	<p>Each Trust Board will independently make a decision if the merger will proceed based on the outcomes of the due diligence process and consultation with all stakeholders. It is expected that this decision will be made by both Trust boards no later than the end of March 2025.</p> <p>An application will then be submitted to the DfE. The application is then considered by the Regional Advisory Board of the DfE, chaired by the Regional Director for the South East. Ultimate decision-making responsibility lies with the regional DfE board.</p>
<p>What does the due diligence process involve?</p>	<p>Both Trusts independently carry out due diligence on each other. As part of this thorough process, a number of areas are explored. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal, compliance & contracts 2. Financial stability and compliance 3. HR & organisational 4. Premises, estates and property 5. Quality of education, standards & safeguarding 6. Reputation of the Trust and its schools
<p>Would other schools join us and who would make the decision?</p>	<p>Yes, other primary and/or secondary schools could join in the future.</p> <p>The creation of a larger Trust could bring additional benefits for children and young people, staff and local communities, however, our priority at this stage, if approved, is to focus on the successful and smooth merging of both Trusts.</p> <p>Opportunities for further growth after this point would be carefully considered by the Trust Board, with decisions always made in the best interest of our immediate school communities.</p>

<p>What are the advantages in this merger?</p>	<p>There are many reasons why both Trust Boards believe that a merger is in the interests of Rainham Mark Education Trust and Veritas Multi Academy Trust.</p> <p>First and foremost, we believe it would further enhance the educational opportunities and experiences our children and young people and staff receive. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • Combining the expertise of our central teams will provide benefits for all. • There is alignment of vision and values of both Trusts allowing a smooth transition and collaboration, including with the interim CEO already having used this period to enact new collaborations across the two Trusts. This close working will be strengthened through a merger. • A merger will help to provide much needed stability to Rainham Mark Education Trust; through the leadership of Dr Kerry Jordan-Daus. • 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. • Larger Trusts benefit from other financial gains, e.g. an annual condition grant to support the development of our estates and school buildings <p>In addition, it will help support the ongoing sustainability of both Trusts and its schools from an operational perspective, with reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Small Trusts do not yield some of the benefits of larger Trusts. For example, financial efficiency. • A larger Trust provides more options for the future, e.g. bidding for a free school (new school).
<p>What is the proposed timescale?</p>	<p>A formal decision to merge will be made by the end of March 2025 by both Trust Boards.</p> <p>This decision will be informed by the completion of a due diligence process which is currently underway and a review of the feedback received from this consultation. Should a decision to merge be agreed, it is anticipated that the new Trust will be established for September 2025; following approval by the DfE Regional Director. However, these processes can take some time and be subject to delays so we will keep stakeholders informed of any changes to these proposed timescales.</p>

What will this mean for staff?	<p>We believe that the merging of both Trusts will bring benefits for our children and young people and communities, as well as our staff. Through increased collaboration, staff will have access to enhanced best practice sharing, resources and training.</p> <p>This merger is not about redundancies and both Trust Boards have made this commitment. If both Trust Boards did not believe that this merger would bring about benefits for our schools, our families, our communities and our people we would not be entertaining this proposal.</p> <p>This merger presents no changes to existing staffing. However, at the point of the merger (proposed for 1 September 2025), Veritas Multi Academy Trust staff will transfer to be formally employed by Rainham Mark Education Trust. As with any merger, there is always a 'transferring' Trust and a 'receiving' Trust; in accordance with legal frameworks. Veritas Multi Academy Trust is the 'transferring' Trust.</p> <p>Veritas Multi Academy Trust staff will be protected to transfer on the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. This is legally covered by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations; commonly known as TUPE.</p> <p>Prior to a merger there would be a full staff consultation regarding TUPE for Veritas staff, which is set out in the regulations. Further information on this will be shared at the appropriate time. We are committed to ensuring that this contractual change happens smoothly with no disruption.</p>
Will staff have to reapply for their jobs?	There are no plans for this. Should any reorganisation decisions need to be made later down the line, those members of staff affected would be consulted with directly, in line with employment procedures.
Will staff be moved across locations?	There is no plan to change the location of staff members' places of work. However, for those who want it, there may be opportunities to work across more settings and be part of a wider collaboration.
How will this support staff's professional development?	Following the merger, we hope there will be increased opportunities for collaboration and professional development for all staff with the Trust, including through best practice and resource sharing.
What does this mean for our children and young people?	<p>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 parent and/or carer relationships with their child's school will continue as normal. The staff, including senior staff will continue to teach as they currently do.</p> <p>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.</p>
Will the school names change?	No. All existing schools from both Trusts will retain their current names.
Will there be any changes to the admissions criteria?	No. All existing schools from both Trusts will continue to work directly with the merged Trust to ensure their own admissions policies and admissions criteria reflects the requirements of their own schools.
Will the curriculum change?	We currently already teach to the National Curriculum.

Would the term and holiday dates change?	There will be no changes to published term and holiday dates. The Trust will continue to work with all schools to ensure dates best serve children and young people and staff within their community.
	Synchronised calendars are already in effect throughout both Trusts to allow for shared training and development opportunities on INSET days across the academic year.
Would there be a change in school uniform?	No, all existing schools from both Trusts will retain their current school uniforms.
The schools across both Trusts are quite different, how will this work?	Each school will continue to retain their own unique identity, however, merging as a broader collective of schools will only help to enhance and diversify the experiences, opportunities and insights that our staff and teachers can benefit from.
How would governance arrangements work?	Currently each Trust has its own Board of Trustees. This would change and there would be one Trust board for the newly merged Trust. The newly formed Trust Board would be made up of skilled and experienced individuals and would comprise of existing Trustees from both Trusts. As with now, each school will continue to retain its own local academy committee (LAC), with responsibilities delegated from the Trust Board. There is no planned change to LAC arrangements.
Are there any financial risks to either Trust?	Both Veritas and Rainham Mark Education Trust are currently financially secure and have their own reserves, and the financial stability of both Trusts is a key component carefully considered within the due diligence stage, and throughout the considerations of all Boards. Following a merger, the reserves of both Trusts are 'pooled'. Budget setting and monitoring for schools will continue as normal.
What are the potential risks?	<p>As ambitious Trusts and schools, we believe that the greatest risk is to stand still and remain at our current respective sizes.</p> <p>Merging two existing Trusts and forming something new and enhanced will greatly increase our capacity and expertise to deliver the best possible education to our children and young people, which only provides security rather than risk. However, we are currently undergoing a robust process with due diligence and consultations to ensure that any risk is limited or pre-empted.</p>

