



5th January 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

On behalf of the Royston Schools Academy Trust, I want to thank everyone who responded to the consultation regarding the proposals to merge Roysia, Greneway and Meridian Schools. The feedback provided important insights to help us decide how the Trust heads in the future.

Thank you also for the valuable feedback from the public meetings, drop-in sessions and feedback forms. I can tell you that 163 responses were received via the feedback form, with 40% in favour of going ahead with the merger plans, 49% against and 11% neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Those in favour mostly indicated this was linked to the financial reality created by government cuts, referring to the unsustainability of maintaining three separate schools financially and that the merger seemed a sensible way to resolve that situation.

We have looked very closely at all the points raised and we'd like to set out the immediate steps we intend to take as a direct result:

Desire to retain 16 - 19 provision.

Closing the Royston Sixth Form has been an option explored by RSAT, and a Sixth Form alliance allows an alternative. The Trust, in collaboration with Knights Templar, is offering a range of A level and vocational programmes with free travel for Royston students for the two-year A level courses at Knights Templar. We know this is not ideal, but sadly we cannot see a viable alternative due to the financial constraints of sixth form provision for less than 200 students on roll. The advantage of this option is that, if circumstances allow, an increase of courses could be offered in Royston in the future.

Size of the school and capacity

Herts County Council have confirmed that the site and buildings are perfectly able to cope with the expected numbers and more. The new combined school would not exceed 1000 pupils in the foreseeable future. The younger pupils would be accommodated in one part of the site which is clearly separate from the older students: this is very similar to the present arrangements within Greneway and Meridian. Feedback confirmed that educating children in age-appropriate surroundings is important to you, and we are confident that the teachers and leadership teams have significant experience in delivering that already, and will continue to do so.

Increase in traffic

The Trust will continue to liaise with Herts County Council and a range of representatives of the local community to consider how to minimise potential impact and find the best solution for everyone for example, exploring school times of the day.

Cont'd.

Transition

We recognise that transition is very important to you and to your children, and this is one of the reasons why we support the three-tier system and the transitions between years 4-5 and years 8-9. The RSAT schools have been part of a wider study carried out by the National Middle Schools' Forum: 'Managing Effective Transitions in Three Tier Systems' which we are using as the basis for planning the new school.

The staff of the three trust schools are all motivated to do the best for the children, and as such are committed to getting this transformation right. With that in mind, we are preparing a timeline of current events which will involve pupils throughout the remainder of the year, as well as planning a range of more-closely combined events to support the transition process for all pupils. There will also be a number of joint working days during Spring and Summer terms to ensure the pupils (particularly Roysia pupils) feel confident with the new sites.

Loss of choice at middle school

As you now know, school funding is based on pupil numbers and we regret it is not financially viable to sustain the Roysia site on its own.

Considering all of the feedback we have had from pupils, parents, staff, the community, Royston First Schools, local councillors and the Department for Education, The Trust has decided to proceed to the next stage of the process and has submitted a business plan to the Department for Education. Once their decision is taken, I will write to you again to let you know what they say and to offer more information on how we plan to move forward.

We will keep you updated on how you can be involved in this process because it is our intention to work closely with you and the local community to ensure you have an outstanding school in Royston.

Yours sincerely,



Carol Boston,
Chair on behalf of the RSAT Board