



The Rainbow Academy Multi-Academy Trust

Growth Strategy Principles

2023-25

Rainbow Multi-Academy Trust is a charitable body that runs a group of schools for the common good. We firmly believe that schools are **community resources**, and that education is a **public service**. We expect our schools to be **inclusive** and serve the needs of children, young people, and families so that together we build up the common life of us all. We have a **clear sense of mission to build a strong Trust** which focuses on preparing children for adulthood, developing rounded characters, gaining knowledge, acquiring skills, deepening understanding, and becoming responsible citizens in a rapidly changing society.

Directors decided and have agreed, with the Regional Director's Department, to remain as a **Primary Specialist Trust** and increase our expertise in leading and managing primary schools. We are also deeply committed to playing our role **in shaping the educational landscape of Cornwall**; a County we know well, understand, and love. We also seek to maintain the **geographical coherence** of our Trust so that we do not lose the sense of **belonging, identity, and purpose**. Our schools must be able to benefit from **peer-to-peer support, continuous professional development, school improvement, resources held in common, shared support services, pupil events and Trust-wide educational experiences**. For this to happen, they must be **in reasonable proximity to each other**. Since the beginnings of our Trust, we have spread out from our origin in the Camborne, Pool, and Redruth area of West Cornwall to St Ives and more recently toward St Austell in the East of the County. Our Western edge currently includes Helston and may soon stretch to Penzance. This remains a reasonably coherent geographical area and future growth should take place within this frame of about 1hour's traveling maximum journey between schools. In the March 2023 DfE Southwest Trusts Development Statement (attached), the Government stated that:

'In Cornwall there is a need to raise education standards through consolidation of the trust landscape, including bringing geographic coherence to fragmented areas through mergers of smaller trusts and the growth of high-quality multi-academy trusts (MATs) by bringing together local-authority-maintained schools and single-academy trusts (SATs)'.

(DfE, 2023, P.6)

This principle is important to Rainbow Trust and has added to our thinking and planning. We want to maintain the closeness of our family of schools and not add to the carbon footprint by excessive travelling between schools.

We are a **majority church school Trust** and work closely with the Church of England's Diocese of Truro to further the mission of the Church and continue serving the spiritual, moral, and educational needs of communities in the County. Our Trust has developed expertise, knowledge and understanding of running Church schools and this remains a **specialist aspect of our growth strategy**. Directors want to continue to support the mission of the Church and provide a Trust for

those **schools with a distinctive character**. We would be particularly open to requests for membership from Church Schools and are committed to developing our expertise in this area.

Rainbow Trust has its origins in running schools in areas of challenge where opportunities are few and we have succeeded in raising standards, breathing new life, lifting horizons, and providing hope. We recognise the need to balance **“capacity-giving schools”** with those which have become **vulnerable and need capacity**. Sustainable growth needs to stand on a firm foundation. Schools already in the Trust need to benefit from new schools joining, as well as being able to give support to those schools needing to draw initially on what is available. It is a complex mix and must feature in our thinking. We want to be able to properly support new schools without depleting resources and stretching beyond what we can do effectively.

The future educational landscape is becoming more visible. The Government’s vision of a wholly academised system is almost a reality in Cornwall. Cornwall Local Authority area has a total of 278 state funded schools (academies, free schools, and local-authority-maintained schools). There are 236 primary, 32 secondary, 4 special and 6 alternative provision (AP) schools. Of these, only 20% (55) are now Local Authority-maintained, with 50 of these being primary and 5 secondaries. A further 80% (223) are academies or free schools, comprising 186 primaries, 27 secondaries, 4 special and 6 AP. There are 22 MATs and 10 SATs (Stand-Alone Trusts). Directors can see that the future lies in having fewer, larger, and stronger Trusts which rationalises the current, fragmented arrangements and they are committed to playing their part in **reducing isolation, creating a coherent, continuous, and consistent framework** which provides **ethical leadership, raises standards, promotes its civic duty, and gives hope to often struggling communities**.

The principles underpinning our Growth Strategy are:

- Cornwall based.
- Commitment to shaping the educational landscape in the County.
- Principle-led. Values driven, Community focussed, Civic minded.
- Primary Specialist Trust
- Geographical Coherence
- Church School Specialist
- Balancing capacity
- Sustainability

This growth strategy document is reviewed **annually** by the Board of Directors.

Rainbow Board of Directors

May 2023

Add: Department for Education: South-West Trusts Statement, March 2023.