

1 February 2010

Dear Parent/Carer,

Robertsbridge Community College (RCC) is actively investigating becoming a Trust School. This letter is to explain why it is being looked into at this time, what the proposals are and to give you an opportunity to express your views.

What is a Trust School?

Trust Schools are a new kind of school – part of the local authority system, but supported by a Trust which will appoint some of the governors. The governing body will continue to run the school and be responsible for its performance and Ms Roberts will continue as Headteacher. The day to day running of the school will remain the same and the National Curriculum will continue to be taught.

What does this mean for pupils?

RCC will continue to operate and function as at present. The current and continued aim is to create a learning environment where each child can reach their full potential.

So why become a Trust School?

A Trust School has the ability, by way of partnerships, to facilitate

- Enhanced development of learning opportunities
- Continuity of learning throughout a pupil's education

This ability to enhance and improve is far more extensive than that available to the current Community College. A Trust School is able to form partnerships with likeminded and complementary organisations within the area. The college would also be able to be opened up for learning to all members of the community and this will help to further help and enhance the reputation and standing of RCC.

Trust Partnerships

You may already know that RCC works with a number of community organisations in the area and has informal links with post-16 colleges and education providers. One of the undertakings within the proposed Trust is the formalisation of these relationships. This would enable standards to be raised further and the ability to offer wider opportunities to both pupils and the community. To undertake this each of the community organisations would be invited to become partners within the Trust. Our proposed partners share this commitment and have informally agreed to help to make it a reality.

Who are the proposed partners?

- University of Brighton
- Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys
- Plumpton College
- South Coast College, Hastings
- Salehurst Primary School
- Robertsbridge Children's Services Trustee

- East Sussex County Council
- Young Pioneers (a group that offers leadership experiences to children)

What will the proposed partners bring to the Trust?

All the proposed partners will actively collaborate with RCC to improve and enhance the education and opportunities on offer.

For example:

- University of Brighton students will mentor our pupils and their experts will help to develop our subject expertise e.g. in maths
- Plumpton College will offer agricultural/equestrian opportunities from age 14

The above are just a few examples of the many exciting and innovative schemes that are possible.

Other benefits will come from the proposed partners' experience and ideas. These will be used to:

- Offer outstanding educational opportunities for students within the Robertsbridge community
- Provide a national lead in maths education
- Narrow the attainment gap for vulnerable groups e.g. those with special needs
- Develop best practice in transition e.g. from Primary to Secondary Education
- Develop leadership programmes
- Develop non-traditional learning opportunities for RCC, its community, and beyond: e.g. Internet Learning
- Develop RCC as a centre for staff development
- Develop RCC as a community resource

What does this mean for parents?

Parents will have the security of knowing that their child can potentially be part of a learning journey from pre-school (Robertsbridge Children's Services) through to Higher Education (University of Brighton).
Becoming a Trust School will help to secure the future of our (relatively) small and unique rural Community College.

Consultation process

Please let us know what you think about the proposal. There is a short reply form at the end of this letter which you are invited to complete and return to the school. Every opportunity will be given for parents and pupils to have their say and RCC will provide various methods by which this consultation process can be undertaken: e.g.

- Replying to or posting questions on the RCC website
- Completion and return of the attached consultation questionnaire
- Writing or emailing direct to RCC / Governors at governors@robertsbridge.org.uk
- Talking to the Parent Governors on the Steering Group, Ian Bristow and Christine Watson

Feedback and updates will be provided throughout the process, details of which will be distributed as soon as they become available.

Yours sincerely



Ms K Roberts
Headteacher

What Next

Initial comments need to be submitted and received by Friday 5 March 2010.

However the sooner comments, questions etc. can be received the sooner concerns and issues can be addressed. This is not expected to be a one-way process and parents and pupils are encouraged to actively engage through the process.

After the 5 March 2010 the governors will take into consideration all the comments received and make a decision whether to continue with the process of becoming a Trust School or not. This decision will be published as soon as it has been made.

The consultation process is your opportunity to affect and influence the final proposal.

PARENT CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN TO MS ROBERTS, HEADTEACHER.

1. Do you agree with these proposals? YES NO (Please tick)
2. Is there anything you would change?

3. Do you have any other concerns or suggestions that we should think about before we publish formal proposals?

Thank you for your comments.