

Tarka Learning Partnership,  
Roundswell Community Primary  
Academy, Claypits Road,  
Roundswell, Barnstaple, EX31 3WJ

19 July 2024

Dear all,

Chief Executive Officer: Mr Richard Light  
Chief Finance Officer: Mrs Tash Brown  
Chair of Trustees: Mr Graham Cockell

## **New Trust Update**

As we move towards the end of the academic year and a well-deserved summer break, I thought I would update you with proposals for a new academy trust involving Tarka and Ventrus.

Throughout the spring term 2024, representatives from the central teams of Tarka and Ventrus, headteachers and trustees worked together towards the creation of a new trust. The detailed planning and consideration towards a smooth transition for both sets of schools, staff and communities is a large change management process.

In May 2024 trustees from both trusts submitted formal proposals to the Department for Education Advisory Board. Papers were due to be considered at the June meeting of that board, but the purdah invoked by the general election meant the meeting did not occur. Despite this delay in formal approval of the proposal, staff from both trusts continue to work more closely together on joint projects.

From September 2024, our schools will work in partnership with Ventrus schools on improvement matters. Headteachers will benefit from a series of peer review visits and joint meetings with their Ventrus headteacher colleagues. Subject and middle leaders will have enhanced opportunities for specific networks in English, maths, early years and SEND. Specialist networks for teachers in Year 6 and safeguarding leads will also be available.

While the prospect of the new trust is exciting, we do recognise the challenges in navigating such a large change for our staff and schools. Communicating on developments as well as the benefits in a balanced way is vitally important. As we move into autumn amid the hope of formal approval to proceed from the DfE, we will undertake a range of significant stakeholder consultation exercises to gather views and take feedback on the proposals. We also hope to be able to share with you formally, the name of the new trust with a carefully managed social media launch.

On behalf of all Tarka trustees, may I take this opportunity to thank you all for your dedication to the children and communities of North Devon over the past year. Have a wonderful summer break.

Graham Cockell  
Chair of Trustees  
Tarka Learning Partnership