



## Burford School and the Marlow Education Trust

### FAQs re: Education

#### **How would it affect my child's education? / Will the curriculum or approach to learning change in any way?**

We have been assured that, as long as our curriculum and our approach to teaching and learning continue to work well for our pupils and deliver strong results, there would be no requirement to make any changes. Joining the MET would hopefully give us opportunities for strengthening our educational offering even further, as school improvement is a key part of their offer.

#### **Will Burford's unique identity and values be protected?**

Yes. This was one of our key concerns, and we have been assured that the MET understands that each school's context, cohort and community are different and that each school's identity must be protected.

#### **How would joining a multi-academy trust with secondary schools help Burford?**

Trusts that include both primary and secondary schools can have advantages such as improving the transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. As GMS and Borlase are the secondary schools that most Burford pupils move on to, we think there are opportunities to work more closely with them.

#### **Why are you considering joining with secondary schools? How will this help us? / At the moment the MET has only one primary school (Beechview). Would secondary people be making decisions about primary schools when this is not their specialist area? / How would joining a MAT predominantly made up of secondary schools support curriculum development in a primary setting? Pedagogy looks very different at A level compared to EYFS. How would that be addressed?**

This was a key focus of due diligence for us, as we needed to be assured of the MET's ability to deliver high-quality, effective school improvement specifically for primary schools. Although the MET currently has more secondaries than primaries, that could change within a year. With Burford and two other primary schools currently considering joining, the balance could soon be flipped the other way. The MET has been focusing on bringing in more primary-focused personnel in anticipation of this change.

#### **What is the MET's vision for primary education, and how does that differ from their approach to secondary ?**

The MET has a vision, common to all schools, of achieving the best outcomes for each pupil, whatever their ability, background or needs. We are confident that everyone at the MET understands that the context and needs of primary schools are different from those of secondary schools, and that a one-size-fits-all approach won't work. They believe their current school improvement model would work for Burford, but are open to the idea of bringing in additional expert support if needed, for example for early years education.

**Would the needs of the secondary schools focused on public exams with GCSEs and A Levels take precedence over primary settings where the focus is phonics screening and multiplication checks? Primary testing is lower profile so 'less important'?**

We are confident that the MET understands the importance of early years and primary education. Children's learning and experiences at primary school lay the essential foundations for success at secondary school.

**Does the MET have a proven track record of improving primary schools? / What does successful primary school improvement look like for the MET, and how have they demonstrated that already?**

This is something we have discussed at length. Beechview Academy was allocated to the MET in 2016 as a 'failing' school. It was judged as 'Requires Improvement' (RI) in two Ofsted inspections following the move. In the 2019 report, all areas were judged to be RI. By the 2023 report, two out of four areas were judged as 'Good', showing that improvements had been made. Ofsted carried out a monitoring visit in 2024, and the report noted that "Staff praise the recent improvements and support, including the help provided by the trust. They believe these have been transformative." Beechview were inspected again in July 2025, and were judged to be 'Good' in all areas. The inspection report, which is full of praise for the school, can be found [here](#). Two of our governors visited Beechview in July 2025 and were very impressed by the school.

**Given that Beechview's Ofsted results are weaker than Burford's, is there a possibility that teachers from Burford will be requested to move to Beechview in the school's attempt to improve?**

As noted above, Beechview's latest Ofsted results are very positive. The school is flourishing and Burford can probably learn as much from them as they can from us. The MET could certainly ask whether a member of Burford staff might be interested in moving to Beechview, but the decision would rest with the member of staff and Burford's SLT.

**If improvements to Beechview have been as a result of our Headteacher acting as their School Improvement Partner (SIP), how could Burford improve?**

Although we are sure that our Headteacher's support last academic year was very valuable to Beechview, there are many factors that will have contributed to the school's improvements over the last few years. This includes the support of the MET, and most of all the exceptional hard work and dedication of Beechview's Headteacher and staff.

**Would our current SLT monitor quality of education or would that be someone within the MET?**

Our current SLT would continue to monitor the quality of education at Burford exactly as they do now. In addition to this, the MET would carry out an annual Trust Monitoring Visit.

**How would educational challenge and accountability be balanced with support across the MAT?**

We believe that both aspects would increase – more challenge, and also more support. We think the correct balance can be struck, and that this could lead to whole-school improvement.

**Would all primary schools in the MET follow the same curriculum for each subject? / Would the MET introduce a centralised curriculum?**

No. Each school's curriculum will be appropriate for its own pupils. The MET's general principles for the curriculum in its schools is that it should be "relevant, broad, well-planned and coherent, and ensure that all pupils gain the cumulative knowledge they need to take successful next steps in learning and life". The details of how each school delivers that is up to them (as long as the pupils continue to make good progress).

**How much curriculum autonomy would we retain? We've invested a lot into becoming an Opening Doors hub. Could we be required to move to a different scheme, such as Literacy Counts, if that aligns with the MAT's preference?**

As long as the school continues to get good results, the MET would not interfere in our curriculum and our choice of schemes. Even if the CEO or Director of School Improvement made a strong recommendation for a particular scheme, it would still be up to the Headteacher to make the decision (again, as long as the school wasn't failing to achieve good results).

**Would we have flexibility to continue shaping our own wider curriculum, including enrichment and outdoor learning?**

Yes. Our enrichment activities, outdoor learning, etc. are all things that contribute to the identity of Burford, and that wouldn't change.

### **Do academies have to follow the National Curriculum?**

Not at the moment. However, the government's Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill proposes that this changes. The MET already sets the standard for its academies that the requirements of the National Curriculum must be met.

### **Do academies get inspected by Ofsted?**

Yes. Academies still have to meet government performance targets concerning progress of all children across all key stages, and will still be inspected by Ofsted.

### **Would Burford's responsibilities in relation to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) change?**

No. Responsibilities in an academy in relation to SEND are exactly the same as for a maintained school.

### **How does the MET support inclusion and SEND provision in primary schools? Do they have a dedicated central team for this?**

The MET's [Core Offer](#) includes the following in relation to SEND: "The Trust will operate a collaborative approach across all schools, to ensure that the very best practice is followed by all schools within the Trust. The Trust has the capacity and influence to secure appropriate specialist support whether this comes from regional organisations or national organisations." One of the MET Trustees has a very strong background in SEND education, which gives us additional confidence that this is an area that would be well supported. In terms of inclusion more widely, one of the MET's stated values is "Inclusivity Regardless of Ability, Background or Need".

### **Would we retain our current Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) or would this be centralised?**

Each school would still have its own SENDCo. A SENDCo needs to really know their school's context, so it would be hard to do that centrally. The MET has said that they would try to make the SENDCo experience as consistent and supported as possible across all schools.

### **What impact would there be to subject leaders? Would there be one subject leader across the MAT and localised 'leaders' simply focus on monitoring and not developing Burford's offer?**

This is an area that is currently undefined. When the MET includes more than one primary school, there will be work to be done to decide whether and how subject leadership will change. One of the potential advantages of being one of the first new primary schools to join the MET could be the opportunity to help shape areas like this in ways that would be beneficial to Burford and the other primaries.

**Will subject specialists be shared, e.g. specialist secondary PE teachers coming to teach PE? Or art teachers for art?**

*[Answer to follow]*

**Will there be opportunities for pupils to benefit from the wider trust (e.g. shared events, access to specialist teaching, clubs)?**

*[Answer to follow]*