



## Burford School and the Marlow Education Trust

### FAQs re: other areas

#### **Would admissions arrangements change?**

No. Parents/carers would continue to apply for places via the Local Authority, as they do now, and there are no plans to change our admissions criteria.

#### **Would being part of the MET give Burford pupils priority for admissions for MET secondary schools?**

In theory, the admissions criteria for GMS and Borlase could be changed to give priority to pupils who attend a MET primary school. But a change like that couldn't happen without public consultation.

#### **Would the times of the school day and holidays change? / Would Burford move to a 2-week October half term in line with Borlase? Would all holidays in the MET schools be aligned?**

We have no plans to change the times of the school day or the term dates. Any future changes would be subject to consultation with staff and parents/carers.

#### **What would happen to Burford's existing leadership team – would they retain autonomy, or be more accountable to the Trust? Would there be any change in the Headteacher's decision-making power? / Would there be any changes to our current leadership structure and what might that look like in terms of accountability?**

They would lose some independence and autonomy. The Headteacher is currently accountable to both the Burford Governing Board and the Local Authority. As part of the MET, the Headteacher would report into the MET's CEO, and she would be accountable to both the Burford Local Governing Body (LGB) and the MET Board of Trustees. We have been assured that in most situations our Headteacher would retain decision-making powers, in consultation with SLT and the local governors as she does currently, based on the needs and context of our unique school. Reduced autonomy is one of the risks of academisation, and is something we have discussed at length during due diligence. However, one of the potential advantages is that our Headteacher would get more support than she does currently.

#### **How would Burford's governance structure change? Will there still be strong local parent representation?**

At the moment, we have our Burford Governing Board who are accountable to the Local Authority. The governance structure would be a bit different in the MET. They have Members (who oversee the governance arrangements and make sure the vision

and values of the Trust are upheld) and a Board of Trustees (who are responsible for strategic leadership and oversee the overall management and performance of the Trust). Each individual school has a Local Governing Body (LGB), who is responsible for the educational standards of their own school. All the LGBs must contain parent governors, elected by the parents/carers at the school.

**Are any Burford governors currently employed by the MET or by any of its schools? If so, have they formally declared their interest, and how is that being managed to ensure transparency and fairness throughout the decision-making process?**

One of Burford's parent governors is a member of staff at Borlase. Governors have to declare any potential conflicts of interest, and this has been done. The governor in question has no vested interest in Burford joining the MET, and he is also not one of the governors leading the academisation exploration.

**Could any existing relationships between members of the MET and members of Burford's SLT and governing body influence the due diligence process? Could this create any sense of pressure, intentional or otherwise, for either party?**

Our SLT and governors see themselves as 'guardians' of the school, and do their best to make all decisions based on what is best for Burford as a whole. We are guided by the Nolan Principles (the Seven Principles of Public Life): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. We will continue to work in the interests of the school, its pupils and its staff.

**Is the government still encouraging schools to join academy trusts?**

Not any more. In the 2022 schools white paper 'Opportunity for all', the government outlined a vision for all schools to join or be in the process of joining a strong multi-academy trust by 2030. However, the current government has not backed that vision and instead is 'agnostic' when it comes to school structures. So there is no current push from the government to academise.

**Has Burford explored other MATs, such as the Inspiring Futures Partnership Trust? / Has the SLT/Governing Body looked at the potential of other local MATs? Is Burford only entering into due diligence with one MAT and not two or three?**

The governors have carried out some informal exploration of a few local trusts, including desk research and informal chats with some Trustees and LGB members. Our conclusion was that academisation in general wouldn't necessarily be of significant benefit to Burford, and that the specific appeal of the Marlow Education Trust was the fact that it includes the two main secondary schools Burford feeds into, and its vision of expanding to include the Marlow primary schools. The due diligence process is quite intense and time-consuming, particularly for the Headteacher, so entering into it with more than one MAT would probably be unmanageable.

**Which other schools are considering entering the MET? / Have any Outstanding primary schools started the due diligence process?**

There are two other primary schools in Marlow who are also exploring joining the MET. They were both judged to be Good with Outstanding areas in their most recent Ofsted reports.

**Will the Marlow Education Trust expand to include more schools over time?**

That is their plan, with the aim of keeping it to schools within a small radius of Marlow to make sure that it stays as a 'local' MAT.

**What is the current salary of the MET's CEO?**

You can find this information on the [MET website](#).

**Is there a clear exit strategy or fallback plan if the partnership doesn't deliver expected outcomes?**

No. Once a school joins a MAT, there is currently no option for them to return to being an LA maintained school. So we need to be really sure that this is the right move for Burford.

**Have any of the other MET schools experienced challenges since joining, and what was learned from those experiences?**

*[Answer to follow; but since the only school to have joined since 2016 is GMS, and they only joined in June 2025 it might be too early for this to be answered.]*

**How would our school's voice be represented in MAT governance and strategic decisions?**

*[Answer to follow]*