



# Great Marlow School

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**HEADTEACHER:** Mr K Ford

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Dear Parents/Carers

Our priority at Great Marlow School (GMS) is to continue to provide an excellent education for our children while protecting the school's role at the heart of our community and retaining its unique qualities and strengths.

As you may be aware, over the last few years, there has been a considerable drive by the government to convert schools into academies and bring these academies together into Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). GMS has been a 'standalone' academy since the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2011.

It is widely recognised that school to school collaboration, which provides opportunities for shared professional development, leadership development and pooling of expertise, is one of the most effective ways of developing schools, teachers and, ultimately, the children.

Six years ago, we communicated that we were considering joining the Marlow Education Trust, which consisted of Sir William Borlase's Grammar School and Beechview Primary School in High Wycombe. At the end of that process, we concluded that the time was not right for us to join a MAT.

GMS's trustees and leadership team have continued during the intervening period to widen their knowledge and understanding of how MATs operate in the south-east of the country. This has involved meeting with leaders and trustees of existing MATs and conversations with the Department for Education. Throughout the meetings and conversations, it has always been the preference of the trustees for GMS to be an integral part of a MAT that works in partnership with our local primary schools and the secondary schools in our region.

Great Marlow School has continued to go from strength to strength and has prospered from our deeper relationships with the local primary schools. At the end of last summer term, Marlow Education Trust approached the GMS trustees to enquire whether they would consider engaging in a new conversation about the development of a broader local MAT. This coupled with the work being carried out by trustees highlighted above was a very timely question. The conversations that followed included some local primary schools who had expressed an interest previously, in being involved in a local MAT which included both secondary schools in Marlow. The potential to bring together local primary schools, secondary schools operating within the selective system and comprehensive schools has been a key driver in our decision making.

On this basis we are entering into a period of due diligence with the Marlow Education Trust, which still consists of Sir William Borlase's Grammar School and Beechview Primary School in High Wycombe. Great Marlow School's commitment to this is to second Mr Kevin Ford (Headteacher), one day per week, to the Marlow Education Trust, to support with this process. Mr Ford's role will be that of Deputy Chief Executive Officer. A key part of the role will be to engage in the negotiations on the potential growth of a regionally focussed MAT with a new agreed name, and appropriate leadership and governance structure.

To facilitate this, the trustees have appointed Mr Ford as the Executive Headteacher of Great Marlow School and to ensure continuity and best practice, Mr Guy Pendlebury (Deputy Headteacher) as Head of School. These are both interim appointments while we carry out due diligence and are effective from Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

The decision on whether to join Marlow Education Trust, will only be taken after comprehensive due diligence and consideration of the findings. The trustees and leadership team at GMS will work conscientiously to provide the best educational environment for the children, staff, parents, carers (stakeholders) and that will not be compromised.

All stakeholders will be provided with an opportunity to share their views at the appropriate time when sufficient information is available.

Yours faithfully

Jean-Henri Beukes  
Chair of Trustees