

Statutory Consultation Report John Rankin Infant and Nursery School converting to an academy and joining Maiden Erlegh Trust

June/July 2025

The Governing Body of John Rankin Infant and Nursery have consulted on becoming an academy and joining Maiden Erlegh Trust (MET).

Maiden Erlegh Trust are a local multi-academy trust that operate schools in Bracknell Forest, Wokingham, Reading and South Oxfordshire.

Background

Maiden Erlegh Trust have a vision and values that is community focused and inclusive. Their core values are **Aim High, Be Inclusive, Work Together** and these core values align with our 5 'C's'.

Maiden Erlegh Trust can evidence their capacity and expertise of School Improvement. They sponsored Great Hollands Primary School in 2017 and improved them from Inadequate to Good, with KS2 results for 2022 in top 3% nationally. They also sponsored Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge in 2018 from and improved them from Inadequate to Good in 2022, and Hamilton School improved from Inadequate to Good in 2024. All schools within Maiden Erlegh Trust have good or outstanding judgements across all areas of the inspection framework.

Maiden Erlegh Trust were previously a Teaching School but have shown agility to rebrand this area of their work under what is now known as the Maiden Erlegh Institute. The focus of the Institute is on Continuing Professional Development, Early Careers Framework and regional leadership, and wider system leadership work. For our staff there will be opportunities to access a wide variety of training and CPD through apprenticeship levy funded courses, and the comprehensive menu of tailor-made CPD programmes run by the Institute which benefit all staff.

Maiden Erlegh Trust have a clear, and balanced growth plan, which includes growing its primary hub. Being a part of the primary hub gives us an opportunity to be supported by a local MAT, while also being able to contribute to the MATs vision for education locally.

Maiden Erlegh Trust schools are all closely geographically located, operating schools across Berkshire and South Oxfordshire. Their inclusive ethos is lived out through the range of settings – Primary, Secondary, Special and Alternative Provision settings.

Maiden Erlegh Trust are financially robust with healthy revenue and capital reserves. They have a coherent and well-planned strategy to ensure that they remain financially viable. It is clear that MET’s Shared Services are strong and have the capacity to support us through the transition period and beyond. They have invested in developing their Shared Services offer, with particular investment in a high-quality school improvement team, as well as being able to offer expertise in other areas such as Finance, Human Resources, Estates Management and ICT.

Consultation Timeline

Date	Activity
17 June 2025	Initial communications issued to stakeholders
23 June 2025	Stakeholder communication via letter and website informing of the commencement of consultation period (JRS Staff and Parents, MET Staff, SAB & Trust Board, Parents, Local Authorities, Diocese, West Berkshire Schools)
30 June 2025	Face-to-face staff and parent presentations and Q&A attended by Co-Chairs of Governors and Executive Headteacher alongside the CEO, Director of Education, and Primary NLE of MET
9 July 2025	Online community consultation event with presentation and Q&A attended by Co-Chairs of Governors and Executive Headteacher alongside the CEO, Director of Education, and Primary NLE of MET
18 July 2025	Online meeting with NEU representatives attended by Co-Chairs of Governors
18 July 2025	Consultation period closed
25 July 2025	GB of John Rankin Infant and Nursery School held a EFGB to review the consultation responses.

Consultation Media

All documentation relating to the consultation was published on both the [John Rankin Schools website](#) and the [Maiden Erlegh Trust website](#). Questions and comments that were raised by stakeholders throughout the consultation were collated and responded to and these were published on both websites.

Feedback Methods

Feedback was sought from stakeholders in the following ways:

- In person via the school.
- In person via the Staff, Parent and Community presentations
- Online via the Parent and Community presentations
- Via a Microsoft Form with link provided.

Consultation Results

In total there were 89 responses to the Microsoft Form questionnaire as well as one email received by a member of staff, on behalf of staff, and one letter received from representatives of the West Berkshire NEU. All comments received, and responses, are appended below.

Respondents to the online questionnaire:

The consultation respondent categories are outlined below and demonstrate engagement with the consultation from a broad range of stakeholders.

Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	37	41.6%
Other member of the local community	1	1.1%
Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school	11	12.4%
Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust	18	20.2%
Staff / Governor at John Rankin Schools	20	22.5%

Statutory Consultee e.g. LA/Diocese/Other educational establishment	2	2.2%
	89	100%

The Microsoft Form asked the following questions:

Do you support the principle of John Rankin Infant and Nursery School becoming an Academy?		Yes	No	Sum	%		
	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	34	3	37	41.6%		
	Other member of the local community	1		1	1.1%		
	Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school	6	5	11	12.4%		
	Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust	11	7	18	20.2%		
	Staff / Governor at John Rankin Schools	10	10	20	22.5%		
	Statutory Consultee e.g. LA/Diocese/Other educational establishment	2		2	2.2%		
		64	25	89			
	72%	28%					
On a scale of 1-5 how supportive are you of John Rankin Infant School becoming an Academy? (1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree)		1	2	3	4	5	% 4 & 5
	Other member of the local community					1	100.0%
	Statutory Consultee e.g. LA/Diocese/Other educational establishment					2	100.0%
	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools		3	4	4	26	81.1%
	Staff / Governor at John Rankin Schools	9		1	2	8	50.0%
	Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust	5	1	4	2	6	44.4%
	Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school	4		4	1	2	27.3%
Do you support the proposal for the Infant and Nursery School to join Maiden Erlegh Trust?		Yes	No	Sum	% Yes		
	Statutory Consultee e.g. LA/Diocese/Other educational establishment	2		2	100.0%		
	Other member of the local community	1		1	100.0%		
	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	33	4	37	89.2%		
	Staff / Governor at John Rankin Schools	10	10	20	50.0%		
	Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust	9	9	18	50.0%		
	Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school	2	9	11	18.2%		
			89				

Included also was a free-form open feedback question, which are appended below including responses where responses were required.

This document will be shared on both the John Rankin Schools [website](#) and the Maiden Erlegh Trust [website](#), and issued directly to those respondents who specifically requested a copy.

Summary

A face-to-face staff meeting was held on 30 June 2025, and the majority of staff attended. A face-to-face parent and carer meeting was held on 30 June 2025 and a total of 15 parents and carers attended. Furthermore, an online webinar was held on 9 July, at which 12 stakeholders attended.

In considering the feedback provided there appears to be broad support for John Rankin Infant and Nursery School to become an academy and join Maiden Erlegh Trust.

In answer to the question ‘*Do you support the proposal for the Infant and Nursery School to join Maiden Erlegh Trust?*’ **77%** of those respondents with a direct interest in the school answered ‘**Yes**’ whereas only 38% of the Maiden Erlegh Trust community were positive about the proposal. Overall, **64%** of all respondents support the proposal for the school to join Maiden Erlegh Trust.

The Governing Body therefore believes that there is clear stakeholder support for John Rankin Infant and Nursery School to join Maiden Erlegh Trust and further believes that this report satisfies our statutory requirement to consult.

Appendix: Freeform Questions and Responses

Question / Comment	Respondent Category	Response
Change is needed, particularly the headteacher that has set the wrong tone over the last few years and taken a good school down to inadequate levels	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	Comment. No response required.
It would be good to see a high level analysis of considered options, to reassure parents that due diligence has been followed in selecting the best trust.	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	As outlined in the Consultation Document, MET was chosen by the DfE as the best option to support the Junior School to improve, with a view that the Junior School would be directed to join MET. The Governing Body strongly believes it would be unnecessarily disruptive to our pupils, staff, and wider community if the Infant and

		Nursery School did not move forward together with the Junior School as we feel it is imperative to maintain our collective community ethos.
Given the schools run so closely together as one site, I'm not sure how it would work if the infants was not academised and I'd be very concerned that there would be a detrimental impact on the infant school.	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	Comment. No response required.
I believe the schools should remain as one, assisting the children in their transition between the two schools. I fear without the infant school being treated as one, the infant school will suffer. Surely the areas of "inadequate" at the junior school will apply to the infant school should it be ofsted?	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	Comment. No response required.
For the school's good, both parts of John Rankin School must be part of the Maiden Erlegh trust. This can be achieved only by working under the same rules and regulations to ensure stability and a smooth transition between schools. It has been a difficult enough year for all staff, children and families this last 6 months, so please do the right thing and have the whole school aligned and part of a single trust.	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	Comment. No response required.
If the infants did not become part of the juniors academy - I would start to question our future at the school. Currently we have a child in juniors	Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools	Comment. No response required.

<p>and in infants and another starting in 2026. Ideally we would want them all under one leadership and direction.</p>		
<p>As a parent with children at both the nursery and junior school I feel that it would make sense for both schools to be part of the academy. The infant school would then be taught in the same style as the junior school with a smooth transition from one to the other. The teachers from both schools could then continue to teach across the schools which I have found is very helpful and reassuring for the children. The children at both schools could continue to interact with each other and younger siblings at the nursery and infant school would still be able to see and connect with their siblings at the junior school. My boys love it when they see each other during the school day.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>Ensuring continuity, alignment and a joined up approach for all management of the school is imperative.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>John Rankin Schools have been ruined since Ms Cooper became Executive Head Teacher. She has caused nothing but disruption, so much so that many parents including myself chose to take children out of the School which is not an easy</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>

<p>decision at all. I'm very pleased that an academy is getting involved because West Berkshire council have not supported the School, they have only supported Ms Cooper which has resulted in multiple failings.</p>		
<p>Disagree, but recognise that this is a necessary step.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>The answers above are based on the fact that the junior school IS joining Maiden Erlegh Trust - it does not make sense to separate the schools</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>I think the infant school should be run by the same trust as the Junior School, to make for a more cohesive school and education for the children</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>I believe that the infant and junior school are both better off for moving to the same Academy Trust. I believe keeping the strong links between the two schools is important.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>I have a son who is currently in year 3 and a daughter starting the infant school in September. I also work in the education sector. To me, John Rankin Infants and Juniors are one school so it makes complete sense for the schools to both fall under the support of the academy. From my experience the majority of pupils move up from the infants, so for consistency of education and</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>

<p>provision the schools should be seen as one.</p>		
<p>As described in your FAQ's, to separate Infants & Juniors in some way, would be costly, impractical and would certainly not be in the best interests of the children & wider community. If the Trust brings additional resource & investment into the school as part of the changes, it would be unfair to not see this apply to the Infants too. Some reassurance to parents that costs will not go up, e.g. nursery fees, would probably be helpful to those who might be concerned.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>We would not expect the conversion of the school, in and of itself, to cause an increase in Nursery fees. Ultimately this will be a decision for the MET but the MET have confirmed they will seek to ensure that Nursery fees remain affordable for parents and in line with other local school Nursery provision.</p>
<p>Keeping the infant school separate and leaving it in the hands of the current headteacher would be a terrible idea</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>Really Impressed with MET presentation and have full confidence in their ability. Would like to ensure community feel and LT remains as I am passionate about Ms Coopers vision for the school. Preference is for both infant and junior to join trust.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of Child at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>We have lost really good teachers beforehand when we have supported other schools and with resources already stretched teachers efforts shouldn't be focused elsewhere.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school</p>	<p>As John Rankin Schools are primary-phase schools, the MET has confirmed it is highly unlikely that Maiden Erlegh School staff will be required to support John Rankin Schools.</p>

<p>I had never heard of the John Rankin schools and had to look them up - based in Newbury, they are far away - will our children have more temps, different faces, disruptive changes to routine whilst their teachers are helping elsewhere? I understand that Maiden Erlegh has around 1,600 children, we need a Head fully focused on just them - what will happen?</p>		
<p>It is not clear to me how an infant/Junior school based in Newbury will benefit Maiden Erlegh School by joining the trust and vice versa</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school</p>	<p>MET exists to enhance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, which includes a responsibility to support the wider system. This is something that MET has been identified as excelling at, and maintain the work they do with other schools helps to shape the work with the other existing schools, and all the schools benefit from this approach.</p>
<p>Feel that the trust is already big enough.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>As a parent i am worried about the idea of other school joining the trust. I know some of the teachers are feeling unhappy and even thinking about leaving which is really upsetting. They work hard and that is why our school is so special.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>Concern regarding financial stability of this school and the further drain on finances of the current maiden Erlegh school</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school</p>	<p>John Rankin Schools are not in financial distress, and the MET has confirmed it will continue to ensure that all Trust schools are suitably resources to provide and exceptional education to all our children and young people.</p>
<p>Please concentrate on the schools and children you already have and try to improve those.</p>	<p>Parent / Carer of child at a Maiden Erlegh Trust school</p>	<p>The Trust has a strong record of school improvement as a growing organisation, and it is always a privilege to be asked to support other schools. MET has confirmed its position that it will only agree to do so when we feel there is an alignment of values and that we have the capacity to do so. As John Rankin Schools are primary-phase</p>

<p>I have noticed the new headteacher of Maiden Erlegh in Earley Silverdale Road is quite... invisible in comparison to the previous one. I want to see more improvement there, please do not take your eye off the ball.</p>		<p>schools, it is highly unlikely that Maiden Erlegh School staff will be required to support John Rankin Schools.</p>
<p>I support the Trust growing its number of schools and sharing knowledge and resources within the primary hub. My concern would be the physical distance between schools in the primary hub.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	<p>The MET growth strategy outlines our consideration of distance as a factor when determining schools we would consider supporting into the organisation. John Rankin Schools fits within MET's desired area of operation.</p>
<p>With the current state of the trust, I do not think adding another school with financial pressures will benefit. With the trust already going through restructures of TLRs etc to try and save £150,000 I do not think adding two more schools to the trust will benefit anyone.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>The schools are geographically too far away to be meaningfully aligned with the values of the trust. Particularly as they are primary schools and our primary schools are already quite far away in the opposite direction. There are already enough alignment barriers to overcome; and an hours drive is an unnecessary addition to that list.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	<p>The MET growth strategy outlines the consideration of distance as a factor when determining schools that could be considered to support into the organisation. John Rankin Schools fit within this desired area of operation.</p>

<p>With the state the trust is already in trying to cut costs (TLR review) and with a school that is already struggling (MECE) I don't think it is a wise idea to take on another school within the trust</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	
<p>I do not support this in any way - focus needs to be made on failing and struggling schools that are already in the Trust rather than extending the Trust's responsibilities. With each new school that is opened or taken over, previous schools become more and more neglected. River Academy has all the bells and whistles, Chiltern Edge has been left for dust by the Trust, special schools are largely ignored by directors.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	<p>River Academy was a DfE-funded, Local Authority required free school that Maiden Erlegh Trust was privileged to plan and run and opened in 2024. Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge continues to be a valuable part of our organisation. MET's Special Schools have been directly supported by the School Improvement team over a number of years, as evidenced by external validation of their own improvements.</p>
<p>If it means finances will be stretched even further with less care and understanding for the staff on the ground, I don't find it a good idea to expand the Trust.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	
<p>At this stage, during a pay and conditions dispute, we should not be taking on yet another school.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>In light of recent economic challenges, particularly those affecting TLR payments, I do not believe there is a clear or compelling benefit for our infant school to join the TRUST. From my perspective, this move seems likely to benefit those already in significantly higher-</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	

<p>paid positions, while offering no tangible advantage to frontline staff like myself. I am concerned that this decision could further widen disparities without improving outcomes for staff or students at our level.</p>		
<p>The Maiden Erlegh Trust is growing too fast to keep up with it's own finances. Currently the Maiden Erlegh Trust has 2 schools that are not at full capacity, one of which will never get to full capacity as the community has lost trust in the institution (Chiltern Edge). The Maiden Erlegh Trust is also having to already make it's staff suffer through it's financial burdens due to it's far too fast growth and adding yet another failing school won't help. Sort the finances of the Trust before adding more burdens to the purse.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	<p>MET has grown at an average of fewer than one school per year since 2015 which, compared with many other Trusts both regionally and nationally, could be considered steady.</p> <p>The organisation is financially robust, and Trust leaders work closely with Headteachers to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the organisation as a fundamental requirement and condition of our Master Funding Agreement.</p>
<p>One of the great things about MET is it's track record of improving schools and I have no doubt that they will do a great job support John Rankin.</p>	<p>Staff / Governance colleague at Maiden Erlegh Trust</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>I would like to know if there is still going to be continuous provision in Key Stage 1. The children this year have really benefited from it, especially when the children move from Foundation to year 1. It has also been invaluable as the children moved up to year 2. Being able to</p>	<p>Staff / Governor at John Rankin Schools</p>	

<p>spend time working with small groups, collaboration between each other, working on purple challenges have been successful in supporting the children with their learning. Sitting such young children in rows would be not ideal.</p> <p>If this was not to continue, then we would like to know how formal the set up in the classrooms would need to be.</p> <p>A lot of time and effort was given last year in setting up classrooms - boards, borders, labelling, books, furniture etc. Now it seems that we are going to lose some of our individuality and have to follow a set structure from another school. I thought that we were going to be able to keep our individuality of John Rankin. Also, if we are following another school's set up, then the thin lined books for the young children are not appropriate.</p> <p>I think that there are many staff who would like to have many reassurances of staffing structure, pay structure including pay increases, complete transparency of where everyone is in the academy and where they are expected to fit, accountability etc.</p>		
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<p>I do not agree with most of the reasons put forward to justify the Infants joining the Trust. I cannot comment on the matter of contracts but the rest of the reasons seem trivial and easy to sort out. The grounds would not need fencing off, they were not fenced before when the schools were separate. In any case, I would welcome separate play grounds; Opal lunchtimes have been overwhelming and chaotic for the younger children. As for the uniform, it would simply need a gradual change to the logo on the sweatshirts, starting from Nursery or Reception. I also think that changes to teaching at the school are inappropriate for the younger children. Sitting in rows, for example, and following a timetable jammed packed with bought in schemes that are better suited to Juniors.</p>	<p>Staff / Governor at John Rankin Schools</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>
<p>This school has much to offer. Have been 'involved' as a parent, governor, and general supporter for over 40 years. This school has a very varied catchment and should not be compared to the more privileged local primary schools. The grounds are amazing, especially now all children can access all areas. Keep the school child and family centred. Wonderful forest school developing.</p>	<p>Other member of the local community</p>	<p>Comment. No response required.</p>

Now you need a Montessori nursery to make full use of the resources!		
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Questions asked at online consultation meeting

What is the benefit to MET of taking on John Rankin – Is MET a for profit organisation, and does it get extra funding from DfE and therefore gain from economies of scale by taking on JR?	MATs are not for profit organisations, and there is no direct financial benefit as a result of John Rankin Schools joining MET. Where benefit can be derived is through economies of scale through procurement and efficiencies in operations that allow us to do and achieve more with comparatively less.
The Head at Great Holland has described how their children have excelled in core academic subjects. How have you ensured this has not come at a cost of broader child wellbeing and broader creative curricular subjects	As an organisation MET review the entire curriculum offer in their schools. Annual school reviews explore the complete curriculum offer not just the core subjects. Pupil surveys and ongoing ‘pupil voice’ conversations track pupils’ engagement and happiness with the curriculum offered in each school. Personal development is at the heart of the primary school offer. As explored in the presentation, MET’s parent feedback scores very highly for areas such as character, diversity, relationships, and e-safety education.
How long would the commitment to be part of the trust be, and can the school leave the trust if things do not meet the success criteria?	It would be the intention that when JRS joins MET it would be for the long term. Whilst there are legal routes through which to re-broker schools these tend to be rare and only in exceptional circumstances.
What are the enrichment opportunities (clubs - inc. academic, trips, arts, science, sports) for the pupils?	MET schools offer a range of visits and visitors. These are tailored to the individual needs and desires of each school community. As a ‘live’ example this week Great Hollands had a science fair and competition, took Year 1 to the seaside, ran a photography club, went to Legoland and next week the Year 6s will be going on a residential trip.
Does the trust have control over SLT and will there be changes made to this?	The SLT at JRS will be directly supported by the leadership structures of MET. The MET do not anticipate any changes in the near term.
How are parent and pupil voices considered in trust-wide decision-making?	The Trust runs an annual stakeholder voice programme where we seek to hear from our children, staff, and parent communities. The MET use Edurio to ensure independence and are able to benchmark outcomes against national data. The insights from this then feed into school improvement planning.
How does the trust measure non-academic success, like pupil wellbeing, inclusion, or personal development?	MET assesses non-academic progress and success through a triangulated approach of surveys and questionnaires, peer review and analysis and pupil voice roundtables.

Do you intend to maintain as many of the current JR staff as possible?	The MET wants to support and work with as many of the current JRS staff as possible as it is ultimately they who will be driving the improvements required at the school that will lead to exceptional experiences and outcomes for the pupils.
So 3-4 years down the line. if things are still not working out (hopefully not) as promised for pupils, what recourse do parents have to change trust / exit?	It would be the intention that when JRS joins MET it would be for the long term. Whilst there are legal routes through which to re-broker schools these tend to be rare and only in exceptional circumstances.
Sorry I may have missed it earlier in presentation, but come this September is there a situation where Junior is part of trust and infants is not?	Whilst unlikely, it is possible. In this event MET would need to work very closely with both the local authority and the DfE. In reality, given the number of challenges it would pose around leadership and management, safeguarding, and site security, it would be difficult for this situation to materialise.
So if Infant is not granted a decision by September, is it another year to wait?	Not necessarily. The Regional Director determines proposals to convert on a monthly basis, but it takes around 4-6 months to complete the legal process of conversion once a suitable Trust has been found.

Questions asked via email by staff members

<p>Working Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Will there be any changes to our current terms of employment, including working hours, duties, or professional expectations? 	MET adheres to the school teachers pay and conditions document and the “burgundy book” as a framework. Expectations for staff joining would not vary from this.
<p>Pay and Pensions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Will existing pay scales and pension arrangements (including the Teachers’ Pension Scheme) be maintained for all staff? · Are any changes planned regarding pay progression or the appraisal process? 	<p>Yes – this would be outlined in the measures letter which is part of the TUPE process. Existing pay and conditions are honoured on transfer, as will recognition of continuous service</p> <p>MET does have its own appraisal cycle which focuses on staff development and support. Pay progression decisions taken prior to transfer will, of course, be honoured.</p>
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Are there any anticipated changes to current staffing levels or a potential restructuring? 	Not immediately.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Will all existing roles be retained, and are there any plans to alter the current leadership structure? 	<p>As with all schools, over time the MET have to ensure that staffing models are affordable and appropriate to support effective education and care so sometimes there can be a need for changes and, occasionally, restructuring.</p> <p>The MET will review the leadership structure to ensure it is optimally structured to support the school.</p>
<p>Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Will there be any changes to the curriculum currently delivered at our schools? · If so, what training and support will be provided to ensure a smooth and effective implementation? 	<p>There has already been a significant amount of curriculum change at JRS since the Ofsted outcome. Whilst the curriculum will develop over time towards aligning with the schools across the MET primary hub, this will be well paced and considered. Appropriate training, support and implementation time will always be provided to support any curriculum change.</p>
<p>5. Resources and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · What plans are in place to ensure the school is well-resourced—both in terms of teaching materials and staff development opportunities? · Will there be changes in how resources are allocated or accessed? · What is the academy’s approach to special educational needs (SEN) and inclusion? 	<p>The budgeting methodology for schools within MET means that the Trust will consider what the staffing and resource needs are for each school and ensure that they are appropriately funded. The MET will ensure that curriculum capitation budgets are sufficient and allocated according to need.</p> <p>There will be significant opportunity for staff development. The MET have a very comprehensive staff development offer through our “Maiden Erlegh Institute” including dozens of courses and other training opportunities that meet the needs of all staff. Additionally, as a family of schools we will provide a wide range of opportunities to learn from one another. The MET have supported teacher exchange programmes and consistently encourage staff to look for training and development opportunities through recognised and accredited programmes (e.g., apprenticeships, NPQs, etc.)</p> <p>One of the Trust’s values is “Be inclusive!” and the MET consider that in every aspect of our work, especially in relation to SEND. Whether that be the range and diversity of SEND provisions and schools that the MET have within the organisation, or the highly effective and supportive SENDCO networks that we operate, or the specialist expertise within the school improvement team, or the relentless focus the MET have in ensuring all the staff are trained and skilled in quality first teaching. The MET states it is proud that the schools are known for their inclusivity and their support for the most vulnerable pupils in our schools. This year, SEND pupils at Great Hollands achieved SATS combined scores in excess of 60%.</p>

Content of letter received via email from West Berkshire NEU representatives

Comments	Response
<p>We understand the background to the academisation proposal, that the Junior School is subject to an academy order and that, as the Infant School is federated with it, the governors have decided to seek to maintain the federation by ‘academising’ it into the same trust. Set out below is the union’s response to the consultation. The response is derived from union policy and experience but most importantly is a reflection of the views of members working at John Rankin Infant School. For ease of interpretation I have addressed the issues that arise separately.</p> <p>Academisation in principle.</p> <p>We are concerned about the loss of local oversight and decision making. Decision making for the school will no longer be rooted in the community as the governing board currently is, but will rest with a nebulous and remote body – the academy trust.</p> <p>Members in the school have expressed a firm opinion that they want to continue to work for West Berkshire Council and have no wish to change employer. The governing board and LA know the school, and the particular needs of its community; a remote trust cannot.</p> <p>Members point out that the school’s most recent Ofsted outcome was ‘good’ and that many changes they are having to make are to address weaknesses that Ofsted identified in the junior school not in the infant school. They fear that the trust will continue to treat the two schools as a single entity, when legally they are not. They feel that it would be in the best interests of the children at the school for the two schools to be separated as they once were.</p> <p>All members who responded to our survey (see below) were confident that the infant school could operate as a stand-alone school.</p> <p>We are aware that governors are concerned that ‘defederation’ would be a complex process. While this may be true, the two schools are currently separate entities in the allocation of finance from the local authority (through the schools funding formula); in Ofsted inspection; in reporting of data to the DfE and in other respects. We are aware that many staff are on ‘federation contracts’ but our members all identify themselves as working wholly or mainly at one of the schools or the other so we believe that resolving which staff should be employed by which school should not be an insurmountable difficulty.</p> <p>Some of the reasons given for the need to maintain the federation are easily overcome e.g. there is no reason why the schools should not continue to have the same uniform if there were no branding other than the school name.</p>	<p>While members are correct that the most recent Ofsted outcome for the infant school is ‘Good’, governor and local authority monitoring of the provision in the infant school throughout the year and the current pupil outcome data suggest that there are similar areas for improvement as those flagged at the junior school. This is supported by school leaders, who have drafted the development plan which is driving this work. It is therefore not accurate to suggest that the weaknesses requiring addressing are all in the junior school nor to describe the school as ‘thriving’.</p> <p>Indeed, the primary reason that governors resolved to apply for academy status for the infant school was to support the rapid improvement of standards across both schools. Whilst there would be some complexity to any separation process, particularly regarding estate and staffing, avoiding complexity is not the main motivation for academisation – rather it is the opportunity to deliver sustained improvement for all children at the schools and to provide a continuous educational experience. We also know from parental survey responses in the spring term that our parents value their children being educated from 2-11 in a single setting, and not moving between schools with different leadership and, potentially, vision.</p>

It is evident that decision makers over many years have concluded that the educational interests of the children at the two schools are best served by maintaining their separate identities or they would have been amalgamated.

Joining Maiden Erlegh Trust (MET) in particular

Members have expressed concern about the amount of money that is likely to be lost from the school budget to pay for expensive administration at the trust, which is much higher than at the LA.

They are also concerned about very formal classroom organisation and teaching methods that have been imposed since MET became involved in support.

The union is currently involved in a dispute at Maiden Erlegh School and members are well aware of this. They note that in West Berkshire the NEU has never needed to take strike action for local reasons and they would very much like to keep things that way.

We are also concerned that MET has no other primary sector schools within thirty miles of Newbury. John Rankin is within walking distance of several LA primary and infant schools while the few primary sector academy schools in West Berks are all in close proximity to other schools in the same trust - which for them makes joint working without lots of travel feasible.

Survey of members

We conducted a survey of members who identified themselves as working at John Rankin Infant school in our membership system and again in the survey.

The responses were as follows:

"Do you think that joining Maiden Erlegh Trust in tandem with the junior school is in your best interests" All respondents replied 'No'

"Do you think that joining Maiden Erlegh Trust in tandem with the junior school is in the best interest of the pupils at the school?" The large majority of respondents replied 'No' The remainder 'Don't know'. None replied 'Yes'

"Do you think that the Infant School would be able to operate as a stand-alone school if it remained with West Berks Council?" All respondents replied 'Yes'

We also asked members to make comments if they wished. The following is a small sample; each from a different respondent:

'Ofsted has already found the teaching at the Infants to be good. We do not welcome a return to this old fashioned style of worksheet based learning.'

'I believe the school has worked before as a separate school, and can do so. I do not believe it is my best interests as I do not want to work for an academy that pays its CEO enormous salary and doesn't fairly pay staff for TLRs and other responsibilities. I also want to ensure that the

We recognise that the funding model for academies is different to that for maintained schools but we know that there are safeguards in place at trustee and DfE level to ensure that funds are spent to secure the best outcomes for young people. We are confident that, given the track record of MET in improving similar schools, funds and resources will be well deployed to secure the best outcomes and that systems to monitor this are in place.

Issues raised by members about teaching methods can be raised with MET for their attention and awareness, as would be the case in any scenario where a staff member disagreed with an approach advocated by leaders, regardless of whether in an academy or maintained school.

Although there are no other MET primary schools in Newbury, this does not preclude effective partnership working and many of the benefits we could realise could take place virtually or remotely.

trust will promise to adhere to the Burgundy Book, which I feel MET will potentially turn their backs on in the future.'

'I feel that it has been decided already and that our opinions won't be considered.'

Conclusion

The National Education union opposes the academisation of John Rankin Infant School. It is currently thriving as an LA school and there is no reason why it should not continue to do so. Members in the school cannot see any benefit to themselves or, more importantly, to their pupils in academisation with MET. Indeed, they fear that changes already made at the behest of the trust are not in the best interests of pupils.

'Defederation' is far from impossible, just less complicated than continuing the Federation. The NEU does not believe that 'because it is easier' is a sound reason for 'academising' a school which, were it not for the academy order placed on another school, would undoubtedly remain with the LA.

We ask the governing board to reconsider its decision for the school to become an academy and instead to pursue a different course.