



MAIDEN ERLEGH  
TRUST

# TARGET 10,000

A strategy for the growth and development of  
Maiden Erlegh Trust 2023-2028

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## A strategy for the growth and development of Maiden Erlegh Trust 2023-2028

### Introduction

Maiden Erlegh Trust (the MAT) was established in 2014 when Maiden Erlegh School in Reading was approved to open and in the six years to follow the Trust would expand to six schools with further pre-approval for an additional two free schools. A key element of this measured, incremental, growth was the preparedness to support the improvement of schools of concern but also to extend into phases of education for which the Trust did not historically have a reputation for supporting. The strategic decision to act on our values and to become a truly inclusive organisation has added richness and diversity to our offer and adds immense value to our proposition in the view of our stakeholders.

There have been significant changes affecting the sector over the past few years. Government policy is leaning firmly towards a self-improving system of education and the academies programme is the Government's preferred vehicle for realising that ambition. In order that they achieve this requires innovation and development in approaches and this itself creates an opportunity for those Trusts who are prepared to think ahead and consider strategically how they may be able to contribute positively to this aim.

This document has therefore been prepared to outline how Maiden Erlegh Trust aims to grow and develop over the next five years, noting that circumstances beyond our control may either support or hinder progress against this plan.

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### What is our vision?

Our vision is to develop a diverse, inclusive, and collaborative community of highly effective schools that deliver excellent educational opportunities for the children and young people of the communities we serve. Through our work we will ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to deal with the demands of an ever-changing world.

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### What are our core values?



**Aim High**



**Be Inclusive**



**Work Together**

The core values of the Trust were refreshed in 2023 alongside the development of the next iteration of the organisations strategic plan. These values, co-created with all stakeholders, will act as the golden thread that binds our approach over the next five-year period.

**Aim High** succinctly captures our fundamentals of high expectations and high aspirations for all – our staff, our children, and young people and our wider community. It asks all our stakeholders to be the best they can be, to view the world through a positive lens and to be continually ambitious for themselves and others.

**Be Inclusive** is the foundation upon which our vision and values are built from, in everything we do and every decision we take.

**Work Together** demonstrates our commitment to team and others over self where collaboration and partnership with all stakeholders underpins how we operate and why we exist. Working together to ensure that the children and young people who attend one of our schools has the very best experience and leaves us ready to take their next steps in the world.

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### Why do we want to grow?

One of the Trusts five strategic pillars is ‘Growing and Developing our Community’ which outlines our commitment to be outward-facing and accept the responsibility we have, as a strong Trust, to the sector more widely.

Growth and development are inextricably linked – in order to grow so too must we develop, evolve and innovate. We aspire to grow our Trust to enable us to serve with more breadth, depth, and quality.

For our staff we want to create a high-performance working culture that promotes collaboration and aspiration and that rightly recognises the critical value of high-quality teaching and support staff and its positive impact on the learning environment. In so doing we will be able to develop more children and young people so that they leave us armed with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to move onto the next stage of their lives as confident and positive contributors to society.

We recognise, through processes of self-evaluation and external validation, that we are good at what we do, and we want to do more of it – we recognise our moral responsibility to contribute to the wider educational landscape which necessitates us elevating our gaze and considering the impact of our work on the wider system, including other educational establishments, multi-agency services and local authority partners.

There is, inherently, a cost associated with growth and development, and it is recognised that public sector resources are finite. As we grow and develop, we must become a more efficient and sustainable organisation, to ensure that the investment we are making in our stakeholders delivers an exceptional experience for our staff and our children and young people.

Our growth and development will better allow us to be more efficient and effective through the provision of expert shared services that adds value to our schools, alleviates workload locally and allows our leaders to lead their communities with purpose.





## What is the DfE perspective?

As of June 2023, there were 8,440,312 pupils were in state-age, state-funded education in 21,597 schools.

*Breakdown of state-funded schools (Yr R-Yr 13):*

	# Schools	Headcount	Average NOR
Primary	16,783	4,647,851	277
Secondary	3,444	3,630,171	1054
Special	1,035	149,099	144
PRU / AP	335	13,191	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,597</b>	<b>8,440,312</b>	

2022/23	Academies	LA Maintained	TOTAL	% Academies
Primary	6,788	9,995	16,783	40.4%
Secondary	2,770	674	3,444	80.4%
Special	460	575	1,035	44.4%
PRU / AP	158	177	335	47.2%
<b>Total / %</b>	<b>10,176</b>	<b>11,421</b>	<b>21,597</b>	<b>47.1%</b>

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>

Of the schools that are Academies, there are 481 Primary and 599 Secondary schools that are Single Academy Trusts.

As outlined in the Schools White Paper when it was published, the Government wants all schools to be in a strong MAT which comprises either a minimum 7,500 pupils or at least 10 schools, by 2030. Whilst the Government appears to have rolled back on the quantum of this ambition nonetheless it is a metric that the sector has locked on to and continues to be referenced.

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## What problem is the DfE trying to solve, and how can we help them do that?

Amongst other things, the DfE is seeking to ensure that all children attend a Good or Outstanding school, make good progress, attain well, and have a suitable destination at the end of their school career.

The DfE perceives that there are certain areas where there is a stubborn underperformance and have designated these areas [Education Investment Areas](#). These areas are subject to [additional investment](#) and the Regional Directors are seeking 'Strong Trusts' to move into these areas to improve standards.

As part of this policy, the DfE has published a range of [Trust Development Statements](#) which outlines the priority areas within each Region and Trusts are being asked to proactively consider how they may assist supporting underperforming schools and Trusts in these areas.

Additionally, it can be assumed that the Department will be looking to reduce, overall, the number of MATs in the sector, by encouraging SATs to join MATs and supporting proposed mergers of MATs. This assumption is supported by the Department's rationalisation and regionalisation of Teaching Schools into Teaching School Hubs and makes macroeconomic sense in the longer term.

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-plots-academy-trust-expansions-and-mergers-across-england/>

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### DfE perspective of 'strong trusts'

In May 2021 the DfE published [Building Strong Trusts](#) – guidance for academy trusts and prospective converters which was published to support maintained schools looking to form a trust, join a trust and also those existing trusts seeking to grow. The guidance outlined the Department's vision for 'every school to be part of a family of schools in strong academy trusts.' The School White Paper, published in March 2022, codified this vision further by stating that 'By 2030, all children will benefit from being taught in a family of schools, with their school in a strong multi academy trust or with plans to join or form one.'

Whilst many of the commitments made in the White Paper are now not being taken forward by the current Government, there appears to be little appetite for other political parties to reverse the academisation agenda. The fact that the Department does not have the benefit of the legislative levers it might ideally like to pursue its aims at a faster pace, its ambition for all schools to be part of strong trusts remains.

In April 2023 the Department published their [Trust Quality Descriptors](#) which developed further the ideas published in the School White Paper of March 2022. These descriptors outline the areas that Regional Directors will consider when assessing Trusts' ability to grow and impact the system more widely.

The descriptors are:

- High Quality and Inclusive Education
- School Improvement
- Workforce
- Finance and Operations
- Governance and Leadership

These descriptors, alongside other such frameworks as the [MAT Assurance Framework](#) give the Trust and Executive leaders the tools and guidance with which to assess their organisations capacity to grow and drive school improvement at scale, and the demonstration of both capacity and capability in the view of the Regional Director will be key to the Trust achieving its growth ambition.

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### What does the regional director and advisory board consider when making decisions about growth?

Fundamentally the Regional Director and the Advisory Board members will want to be assured that the Trust has sufficient capacity to take on new schools without there being any unintended impact on its existing schools. As a result, they consider proposals carefully and carry out extensive due diligence on both the school(s) aiming to join and on the Trust itself. Whilst most of the due diligence pertaining to

the Trust is ongoing through regular engagement and published information, we must also be able to demonstrate, for each project:

- The capacity of the Trust to drive improvement at scale and sustain this over the long term through interrogation of the Trust's school improvement philosophy, strategy and the capacity and expertise that exists (or planned) to deliver it.
- The extent to which there is alignment in vision and values – do the community support the proposal?
- The extent to which there is, or could be, a geographical connection and whether there are existing Trusts operating in the area that might be a better fit or whether the introduction of a new Trust may be welcomed.
- The Trust's financial capacity through interrogation of both the Trust and Schools medium term financial data and assumptions.
- The Trust's operational capacity through interrogation of its shared service systems and processes.
- The governance structure including the capacity and expertise of the Trust Board and the approach to ensuring local governance is integrated within the structure.

The Regional Director has a remit, handed down from the Department, to implement the ambition that all children are taught in a family of strong schools but has relatively little legislative powers to secure that ambition. Therefore, nurturing the relationship with the Regional Directors office alongside consistent demonstration of strength, through their lens, is imperative to the Trust achieving its growth ambition.







## What are Maiden Erlegh Trust looking to achieve?

The Trust is looking to achieve a pupil roll of 10,000 by the end of the current planning period through a mixture of organic growth, new free school development and sponsorships in schools that cover the breadth of the educational offer.

Whilst growth is widely reported in terms of the number of schools a Trust has within its organisation, the Pupil Roll metric is a more realistic metric by which to evaluate size primarily due to the relatively low numbers on roll that are associated with, primarily, special schools but also primary schools. Additionally, it is the Pupil Roll that drives both the income generated and upon which many financial efficiency metrics are based on.

## What will our growth look like?

Given the context of our organisation significant thought has been given to how we might look to structure our growth plan in terms of:

- Number of children and young people
- Number of schools
- Type and phase of school
- Geographical location
- Method of growth
- Organisational structure

## Number of children, number of schools, type and phase of education

To realistically achieve a Pupil Roll of 10,000 by the end of the strategic planning period through organic growth alone we would need to bring into the Trust up to three additional secondary schools over the next five years. With River Academy growth already in the pipeline, and accounting for the PAN reduction at Maiden Erlegh Reading this would mean recruiting three additional secondary schools with an average Pupil Roll of just over 1,000. This is in line with the average pupil headcount across the UK's secondary schools and could through incremental growth or as part of a merger project. Additionally, the development and growth of both the Primary Hub and the Specialist Provision Hub, with pupil rolls that track the average, would appear to enable us to achieve Target 10,000 in a sensible and measured way. The estimated profile of growth required to meet Target 10,000 is outlined below.

Schools	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Primary	2	2	(+1) 3	(+1) 4	(+1) 5	5
Secondary	3	(+2) 5	(+1) 6	(+1) 7	7	7
Special / AP	3	(+1) 4	4	(+1) 5	5	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>

Pupils	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Primary	664	654	1,044	1,450	1,850	1,850
Secondary	3,207	4,333	5,730	7,194	7,435	7,685
Special / AP	206	460	504	581	616	650
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,077</b>	<b>5,447</b>	<b>7,313</b>	<b>9,260</b>	<b>9,931</b>	<b>10,185</b>

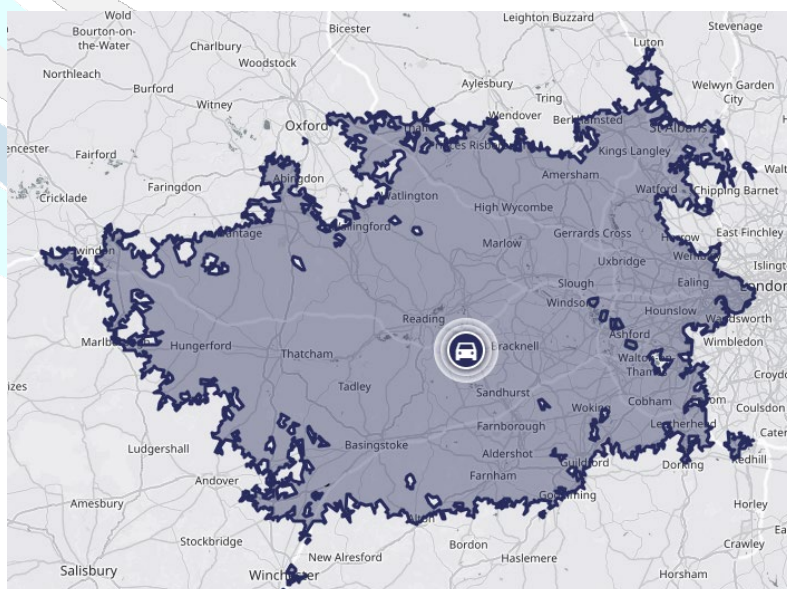
The numbers referenced in the table above are loosely based on our current pipeline, alongside additional early intelligence and relationships which are being nurtured. The Department may have a different view. They tend to view Trust growth from a number of school perspective. They are significantly concerned with ensuring Trusts have the capacity to onboard and assimilate new schools whilst also maintaining standards within its current schools. They may therefore form the view that a +9-school growth over a five-year period is a risk and we would need to mitigate this risk for them by clearly outlining how our support structures would develop to accommodate this growth plan.

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### ***Geographical location***

The Trust has long sought to grow and develop in areas that are easily accessible from our traditional base within a journey time of 1 hour. This was, and continues to be, driven by the notion that it is important that Trust Leaders, School Improvement and Shared Services teams can travel and reach any of our schools within a reasonable commuting timeframe. Additionally, proximity to the hub of the Trust will reduce barriers to wider cross-Trust engagement and allow us to continue to develop the sense of community within and across the organisation.

#### **Locations accessible within 1 hour:**



Our hub location benefits from excellent transport links to the M4 and M3 and arterial routes off from those motorways. Locations accessible within 1 hour presents an opportunity to venture into neighbouring LA areas that we do not currently operate in.

West Berkshire, North Hampshire, South Buckinghamshire, East Surrey, and Windsor & Maidenhead are all accessible within a 60-minute car journey and, crucially, are all part of the same DfE Region Group. Whilst West London is within a commutable timeframe, London is part of a different DfE Region Group where the Trust does not currently benefit from a relationship with the Regional Director or their team. Nonetheless there appears to be sufficient opportunities to grow and develop our organisation in those areas identified above without having to enter into a different regional commissioning area.

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## Method of growth

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### ***Organic growth***

Organic growth comprises new partnerships being formed either through elective conversions or sponsorship. Relationships that lead to elective conversions are generally formed based on recommendation from the Regions Group or through Local Authority introduction. In our recent experience, a prospective approach with identified potential schools in the areas where we have an existing presence does not tend to yield positive outcomes. Growth in this respect is more likely when prospective schools contact the Trust directly, leading to early engagement activities from which positive relationships are then formed.

With this method of growth, the conversion rate is relatively low when considered against the workload required to build prospective relationships. It requires a large pipeline that is continuously monitored and intelligence to know and understand the local landscape. Furthermore, the opportunity to sponsor schools is entirely dependent on the volume and location of those schools being deemed in need of sponsorship.

It is important, therefore, for us to maintain engagement and positive relationships and clarity on our growth plan with the Regions Group such that they are in a position to recommend us to prospective schools who make contact them seeking a MAT partner.

As a result, this method of growth alone cannot therefore be relied upon if we are to meet our growth objectives.

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### ***Free school development***

The Trust has a strong reputation for developing new free schools and this remains a viable option to grow. The primary limiting factors with this method are the Departments policy on new free schools, the data supporting need in our localities, the identification and application process and then the time taken from approval through to the school becoming a full community. This can take 5-8 years depending on the project. The Trust benefits from specific expertise in this method of growth and so remains a legitimate growth option to be considered.

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### ***School improvement partnerships***

Developing and nurturing relationships through the demonstration of our capacity and capability to support individuals, schools (and Trusts) on their improvement journeys provides the strongest evidential foundation upon which potential future growth can be anchored. This encompasses, primarily, the work of the Maiden Erlegh Institute in all its outward-facing activities, from the provision and delivery of high-quality training programmes through to specific school-to-school support requests and more in-depth school or trust improvement partnerships (see below). The continuation of this work, and the development of partnerships at Local Authority level, provide an excellent opportunity to showcase our work locally, regionally, and nationally.

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### ***Trust partnerships***

Trust Partnerships have been proposed as a route to helping schools join MATs and increasingly, as maintained schools are looking into joining a MAT this vehicle is being considered with increasing regularity.



This approach allows for schools to benefit from working with the Trust with a view to joining in a 12-18 month period. Often called a 'try-before-you-buy' model, it allows for relationships to be formed on a more practical and ongoing basis and for the school to benefit, to some extent, from the Trusts offer in real time. Case studies of schools taking up the offer of a Trust Partnership are not widespread primarily because the majority of benefits can only be realised once the school is fully assimilated into the Trust.

The Trust will look to redevelop its Partnership offer and agreement with a view to ensuring that this approach remains an option for prospective new schools.

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## **Mergers**

The advantage of seeking a merger partner is that this has the potential to add significant pupil numbers to our organisation in a comparatively shorter period of time. A merger, however, is a significant undertaking and would undoubtedly limit our capacity, certainly in the eyes of the Department, to take on further additional schools, until the merger is completed.

It should be noted that a single merger alone might not enable us to achieve Target 10,000 – this is dependent on the size, context, and location of the Trust we may consider merging with. For example, we might consider merging with a larger Trust, at least in terms of pupil roll if not number of schools but this then has the potential to add further complexity around composition of the Trust Board, who would fulfil key leadership roles, adoption of policies, processes and procedures, branding and the like. Nonetheless, with the right merger partner and the right foundational relationship this is a legitimate option for consideration, and we know that proposals of this nature are welcomed by the Regional Director.

## Pipeline development

Conversations, presentations, hosting visits and relationship building with school leaders and governors is an ongoing process however it is inherently difficult to manufacture a sense of urgency if the schools have no current educational or financial imperative to convert, or indeed if the Headteacher or Chair of Governors is philosophically set against the academisation agenda.

It usually takes at least 12-18 months to cultivate a relationship from introduction through to conversion and as such it is important to continue work to identify potential schools and engage in dialogue with multiple prospects on an ongoing basis.

As can be seen in the table below, there are currently 3,326 schools in the South East Region and of this number 60% remain Local Authority Maintained. This shows that there remains significant pool of schools that are not yet academies thereby offering the potential for organic growth.

Local Authority	Academy	LA Maintained	Total Number of Schools	% LA Maintained
Bracknell Forest	13	25	38	66%
Brighton and Hove	6	60	66	91%
Buckinghamshire	83	152	235	65%
East Sussex	77	112	189	59%
Hampshire	70	457	527	87%
Isle of Wight	7	41	48	85%
Kent	287	303	590	51%
Medway	76	27	103	26%
Milton Keynes	47	65	112	58%
Oxfordshire	169	128	297	43%
Portsmouth	43	18	61	30%
Reading	26	29	55	53%
Slough	35	11	46	24%
Southampton	34	41	75	55%
Surrey	205	185	390	47%
West Berkshire	13	67	80	84%
West Sussex	86	196	282	70%
Windsor and Maidenhead	31	32	63	51%
Wokingham	37	32	69	46%
<b>South East</b>	<b>1,345</b>	<b>1,981</b>	<b>3,326</b>	<b>60%</b>

In the LA areas where Maiden Erlegh Trust currently has a presence the academisation rate ranges from 34% in Bracknell Forest through to 57% in Oxfordshire. In absolute terms only 47% of the schools in the three primary LA areas where we work are academies demonstrating that there is still scope, at least in numerical terms, to grow in our traditional LA areas of operation. Furthermore, the continuing

decline of Local Authority-provided school improvement services is highly likely to drive a new wave of elective converters over the next five years. Our reputation is already secure in these areas and the data suggests that expansion within these areas will not be seen as saturating the local area in the view of the Regional Directors office.

Accordingly, a key part of our growth strategy will be to build further on our existing local relationships and reputation and continue to seek prospective partners in our current local areas.

Local Authority	Academy	LA Maintained	Total Number of Schools	% LA Maintained
Bracknell Forest	13	25	38	66%
Reading	26	29	55	53%
Wokingham	37	32	69	46%
<b>MET LA Areas</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>53%</b>

When considering other LA areas that we might legitimately look to grow into, and that are within our preferred travelling distance, we can also see that there is significant opportunity. The numbers below are slightly skewed by the larger Local Authority areas of Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, and Surrey which themselves account for 35% of the total number of schools in the South East Region. Further analysis would need to be undertaken by sub-region to determine the potential number of schools in South Buckinghamshire, North Hampshire and West Surrey that fall within our distance parameters.

Again, academisation rates in these other LA areas range from 76% academisation in Slough to just 13% in Hampshire and 16% in West Berkshire. It would seem sensible to target energy and time towards those Local Authorities where academisation rates are lower so as to avoid the risk of geographical isolation and the inherent challenges that brings with building effective agency relationships.

Local Authority	Academy	LA Maintained	Total Number of Schools	% LA Maintained
Bracknell Forest	13	25	38	66%
Buckinghamshire	83	152	235	65%
Hampshire	70	457	527	87%
Reading	26	29	55	53%
Slough	35	11	46	24%
Surrey	205	185	390	47%
West Berkshire	13	67	80	84%
Windsor and Maidenhead	31	32	63	51%
Wokingham	37	32	69	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>990</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>66%</b>

Limitations in the data sets above are that, within the total number of academies it cannot be determined how many of these are already within Trusts or indeed standalone academies. Further analysis of Get Information About Schools would allow us to determine those standalone academies that we might consider approaching.



Turning towards sponsorship opportunities, routine conversations take place between CEO and the DfE about prospective sponsorship options. The number of sponsorship opportunities is however low. As of 31 May 2023, of the 4,435 schools inspected in the **UK** since September 2022 there were 100 schools graded as Inadequate and 119 graded as, effectively, Double-RI. This means that only 5% of schools that have been inspected this year would meet the criteria for a Directive Academy Order where a sponsor Trust is sought. It is not possible, from the datasets, to determine the Local Authority areas where the 119 double-RI schools are located.

Previous Ofsted Outcome	Total inspected	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Outstanding	638	255	319	55	9
Good	3,029	49	2,664	252	64
Requires improvement	500	3	359	119	19
Inadequate	178	4	112	55	7
New school	90	14	65	10	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,435</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>3,519</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>100</b>
		7%	79%	11%	2%

The current Ofsted grades for schools in the LA areas where we currently operate are shown below.

Local Authority	Number of open schools	Number of schools inspected	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Bracknell Forest	38	37	5	32	0	0
Oxfordshire	297	294	32	230	20	12
Reading	55	54	7	40	3	4
Wokingham	69	68	14	49	3	2
	<b>462</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>
			12.8%	77.5%	5.7%	4.0%

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/monthly-management-information-ofsted-school-inspections-outcomes>

Whilst 18 of the schools within our current LA areas are graded Inadequate it should be noted that Oxfordshire, where there are currently 12 schools graded Inadequate, have a policy of partnering with a preferred list of existing Trusts. Given that there remains some political sensitivity about Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and its contribution to diluting sufficiency in the south of the County, they are not currently interested in adding us to this list. There is also the reality that central and north Oxfordshire, where the critical mass of schools are located are beyond the 60 minute travel timeframe outlined above.

Expanding this view to the wider South East Region, there are 3,326 schools (Primary, Secondary, Special and AP) and 90% of those are currently judged to be Good or Outstanding. Just 89 (3%) are judged to be Inadequate and therefore subject to Directive Academy Order proceedings.

Region/Local Authority	Number of open schools	Number of schools inspected	Outstanding	Good	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Bracknell Forest	38	37	5	32	0	0
Brighton and Hove	66	67	6	54	5	2
Buckinghamshire	235	232	44	158	20	10
East Sussex	189	189	22	147	14	6
Hampshire	527	525	79	403	31	12
Isle of Wight	48	49	0	37	12	0
Kent	590	586	97	434	49	6
Medway	103	100	12	79	5	4
Milton Keynes	112	110	25	74	3	8
Oxfordshire	297	294	32	230	20	12
Portsmouth	61	60	6	43	8	3
Reading	55	54	7	40	3	4
Slough	46	46	11	32	2	1
Southampton	75	75	11	51	11	2
Surrey	390	391	79	278	25	9
West Berkshire	80	80	10	64	4	2
West Sussex	282	282	22	232	23	5
Windsor and Maidenhead	63	64	14	45	4	1
Wokingham	69	68	14	49	3	2
<b>South East</b>	<b>3,326</b>	<b>3,309</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>2,482</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>89</b>
			<b>15%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3%</b>

The nature of sponsorships is that they are, generally, unforeseen. As a result, the above point-in-time data is subject to change and any potential for sponsorship moving forward will need to be judged on its own merits.

The data presented serves to support the notion that there is sufficient opportunity for the Trust to grow both within our existing LA areas but also in neighbouring LA areas.

## Organisational structure

Given the context and structure of the Trust the strategy of developing a hub-based approach based on school phase/type has already been considered as the most appropriate structure through which to develop our organisation. This approach recognises the challenges and opportunities that are prevalent in schools of the same phase/type and allows for more nuanced approaches to collaboration across a hub of like-minded establishments.

It also allows for the wider organisational structures to be considered in this context and is relevant to the provision of school improvement support and also the provision of central services which can be aligned in centres of excellence and competency.

As and when the Trust grows into new areas consideration can be given as to whether this structure remains the optimal approach or whether we would need to consider some element of regionalisation as can be evidenced in many of the larger Trusts.

## Conclusion

Maiden Erlegh Trust has demonstrable experience and an excellent track record of developing new free schools in areas where there is an identified need for additional school places, and also in taking on sponsored schools and improving them. In 2022-23 Maiden Erlegh Trust were the top-performing MAT in the South East region in terms of Key Stage 4 progress, and outcomes at Key Stage 2 were in the top 15% in the country. More recently we have successfully attracted elective converters to join our Trust too.

Our relationships with key decision makers within the Department are good and have been enhanced further by progress on developing and opening Oak Tree School and our engagement on developing River Academy.

As a result, the Trust is well placed to support the Department in achieving its own objectives and in so doing achieve its own growth objectives. In realising our growth ambition we will give consideration to:

- Ensuring that we have sufficient leadership capacity to grow. This includes ensuring that our leaders are experienced, well-qualified and well-supported to develop their careers with the Trust.
- Ensuring that growth does not have a detrimental impact on quality of education at any of our existing schools or within our shared services structure.
- Ensuring that we maintain strong financial sustainability and that resources are used effectively and efficiently in support of delivery against the Trusts Strategic Plan
- Ensuring that we continue to demonstrate we are a 'Strong Trust' by the Departments own definition.

It is also important to be mindful of areas of risk and the Trust must continue to be proactive and transparent with our assessment of risk and preparedness to address those areas through mitigation in order to safeguard our reputation both as a strong Trust and as an employer of choice.





## Key priorities and action plan

Key Priority Area	Key Actions
<b>Development of the Primary Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the Primary Hub to at least 1,850 pupils by 2028</li> <li>Appoint a Director of Primary Education* when the Hub achieves 1,000 pupils</li> <li>Development of a hub-led Primary CPD and School Improvement offer, in association with the Maiden Erlegh Institute</li> </ul>
<b>Development of the Secondary Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the Secondary Hub to at least 7,685 students by 2028</li> <li>Appoint a Director of Secondary Education* when the Hub achieves 5,000 students or 5 schools</li> <li>Development of a hub-led Secondary CPD and School Improvement offer, in association with the Maiden Erlegh Institute</li> </ul>
<b>Development of the Special/AP Hub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the Special/AP Hub to at least 650 pupils by 2028</li> <li>Embed structural improvements at Hamilton School such the school is viewed as at least 'Good' on its next graded inspection</li> <li>Agree a revised SLA at Cranbury College that meets the needs of the community and also supports Brighter Futures for Children in meeting its statutory obligations</li> <li>Ensure that Oak Tree School achieves an overall grading of at least 'Good' at its first graded inspection</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership Development and Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a suite of cross-Trust Lead Practitioner posts dedicated to school improvement and system leadership</li> <li>Development of an in-house Integrated Therapies Team to service the needs of all our schools</li> <li>Facilitation of intra-trust improvement networks that provide experiential opportunities for development and demonstrate impact</li> </ul>
<b>Maiden Erlegh Institute</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to develop a high-quality, inclusive CPD programme that offers career development pathways for all staff</li> <li>Cement our position as a system leader by expanding our strategic school improvement offer, utilising hub-based Lead Practitioners</li> <li>Continue to seek opportunities to contribute to wider system leadership and system design</li> </ul>

<b>Shared Services Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a Shared Services growth strategy, aligned to Target 10,000, that ensures ongoing provision of high-quality services to our schools</li> <li>• Ensure that Shared Services has sufficient capacity and expertise to fulfil its remit and maintain high-quality provision</li> <li>• Consider how Shared Services can contribute to wider system leadership in association with the Maiden Erlegh Institute</li> </ul>
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed the principles of Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning to ensure that staffing levels and costs are in line with sector comparators and deliver the Trusts strategic aims</li> <li>• Ensure that medium- and long-term investment planning is robust and supported by approved strategies</li> <li>• Ensure ongoing compliance with regulatory frameworks</li> </ul>
<b>Effective Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the ongoing professional development of the Governance Professional</li> <li>• Commission an external review of governance</li> <li>• Commit to an annual review of governance effectiveness</li> <li>• Commit to improving representation across the governance and leadership structure</li> </ul>

\* Appointments to the roles of Director of Primary and Secondary Education may be part-time appointments with a view to moving to full time at a later date. The primary factor in creating those posts will be to protect the capacity of the Executive Director of Education.