

The Marlow Education Trust Core Offer 2025-26



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Our core offer is the collection of services that the Trust provides for all schools equally. The core offer is funded through the central service contribution. This allows for deployment of financial resources for school improvement which adds more value than any school can achieve on their own. The core offer is more than the sum of its individual parts and schools in the Trust are both the givers and receivers of support. This means that everyone can enjoy not only the services set out below but rely on the support achieved from professionals working in partnership and the support of one another wanting the best educational outcomes for all the students in all of our schools

An essential value of our Trust is to maintain maximum funds in school and therefore decisions about the content of the core offer face the dual tests of best value for money decisions as well as ensuring that it provides the highest quality of service. The ambition for the core offer is to ensure it serves the needs of schools and therefore is reviewed annually.

Where centralisation is done well, external data shows that the cost of the service when assessed on a 'like-for-like' per-pupil basis tends to be lower.

“In highly centralised trusts (with an 80-per cent or more level of centralisation), average per-pupil end-to-end costs are typically ten to fifteen percent lower than in decentralised trusts. In fact, they can be as much as 40 per cent lower.”

The core offer is determined so that it serves the Trust’s vision statement which is:

‘The aim of the Marlow Education Trust is to bring together a community of schools from within Marlow and the surrounding area who will work together to deliver the best educational outcomes for each pupil, whatever their ability, background or needs. These schools will have shared values and share an essential common ethos and vision for education and learning. Our core values will drive our behaviour, decision making and our aspirational ambitions for our schools. Our schools will be where adults want to work; where parents /carers want their child to attend and where each pupil can grow in confidence and self-esteem’

The core offer is built to support improving the quality of education across our schools. School improvement is more than the improvement of teaching and learning. It involves every part and way that a school is run as an organization. A school’s improvement can be both simple and complex, such as needing to be full, in which case marketing and prudent financial management is key.

Equally the management of risk and health and safety, statutory compliance and capital investments etc. are as an important mainstay of schools improvement as the principles of curriculum design are.

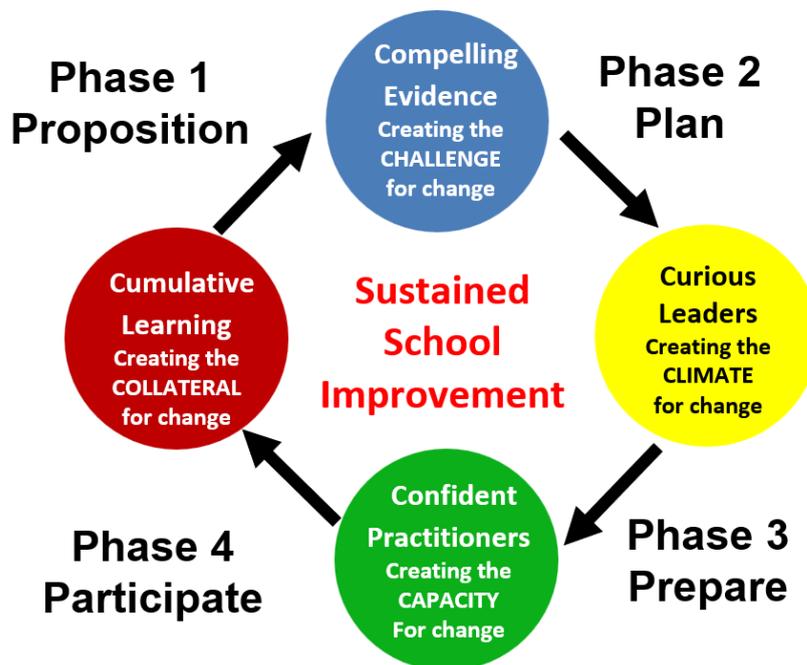
Therefore, our core offer provides support for all the main operational and strategic functions of schools.

School Improvement

All schools will be actively engaged in a programme of continuous school improvement; the scale and depth and significance of the areas that require improvement will vary from school to school. The main part of the core offers therefore centres on learning.

The Headteacher is supported and provided the opportunity to share professional collective expertise to build the best curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. The model of school improvement is underpinned by evidence of what works and is founded on the most successful practice in schools. This is provided in several ways including coaching, external training and participation in Trust meetings for key groups.

The Trust's school improvement model is as follows:-



Phase 1 - Propositions for Improvement

The Trust operates against a series of self-reviews and through this work, the Trust seeks to verify the propositions for improvement.

- All schools in the Trust undertake a cumulative validated self directed review (VSDR) that gathers compelling evidence against a clear and agreed rubric of standards that are verified by the Trusts School Improvement Standards Team
- The initial VSDR along with all previous performance evidence enables the Standards' Team to prioritise schools for improvement by identifying where schools are 'struggling' and where schools have 'strengths' to contribute to the the work of the Response Team

Phase 2- Planning for Improvement

- The Leadership of schools that are 'struggling' to make the rapid improvements needed are supported by the DoSI to create a detailed Rapid Action Plan. This plan will also be supported

following an in depth Trust Directed Review, by strategic intervention from the 'Rapid Response Team' which will be recruited from within the Trust or, if needed, external experts

- Schools will compile and submit an annual School Improvements Plan to build on strengths and sustain high standards- again based on evidence for the VSDR. This plan will be monitored and supported by the Trust Standards Team at termly visits- or if required more frequently.
- All schools within one year of next Ofsted Inspection will receive a Trust Directed whole school review and a validated pre inspection action plan is established that reflects the Ofsted Balance Score sheet and the Inspection Toolkit

Phase 3- Preparing for Improvement

- The Leadership of schools that are 'struggling' to make the rapid improvements needed will have a clear schedule of termly support agreed. Local governors will receive an in depth briefing on why the intervention is happening, the evidence to support this and a draft of the improvement plan to agree. The Trust Improvement Team will also be briefed. The Director of School Improvement (DoSI) will produce a monthly report of progress to date with evidence.
- Schools that have identified strengths that can be shared with others will receive specific training for staff who may join the Trust Rapid Response Team.

Phase 4 - Participating in Improvement

- The Leadership of schools that are 'struggling' to make the rapid improvements needed will meet with the Trust CEO, the Chair of Trustees and the DoSI half termly for a KIT meeting to review improvements to date against the improvement plan.
- The Rapid Response Team will undertake half termly feedback sessions with the schools SLT and Local Governors to provide feedback.
- Those staff being deployed from other schools to work as part of the Rapid Response Team will be trained, badged and accredited as Response Lead Practitioners

Through the adoption of the Trust's School Improvement programme, schools will

- Improve academic outcomes for all, diminishing differences in the performance of different learner groups
- Improve educational provision and opportunity through rich and diverse curriculums
- Developing outstanding professionals, sharing and keeping talent

To ensure sustained school improvement, all school leaders in the Trust will in addition undertake a planned programme of self review, data evaluation, lesson observations and curriculum reviews in their own schools. These will be undertaken following training and shadowing experience of the Trust wide self evaluation toolkit.

These self reviews will be reported back to the Trust in a common format that will enable the Trust School Improvement Trustees Committee to undertake regular on site visits to explore and discuss propositions regarding current standards in Trust Schools with school leaders and Local Governors. This common format focusses in each school as to what is now:–

- **TYPICAL** regarding standards and performance in the school.
- **THRIVING** in the school especially with reference to the Ofsted balance score card
- **TRANSFORMED** – as the result of previous school improvement/development action
- **TARGETED** for strategic improvement.

Curriculum development support

Our distinctive approach when providing curriculum development guidance and establishing agreed expectations is based on our successful experience in creating key learning pathways through each subject at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 that ensures our curriculum conforms in each school to our fundamental principles of being cohesive, appropriate, well sequenced and resourced and focussed on cumulative learning destinations. This enables us to reduce the workload of staff by sharing best curriculum planning and practice including assessment and effective pedagogical approaches.

This entitles all pupils to experience the full scope of the new national curriculum through an appropriate, inclusive and enriching curriculum which is distinctive to each school. The curriculum in each school will ensure all pupils thrive and cumulatively gain the aptitudes, experience, skills, and knowledge needed to equip them to successfully take their next steps in learning and life especially at Key Stage 4 and 5.

Assessment Methodologies

This approach to curriculum design underpins our commitment to collaboratively develop an inclusive learning culture. This enables clear learning destinations to be established for each pupil as they journey through the curriculum and aids the assessment of progress and attainment. This liberates and enables teachers to be agile in their teaching to ensure pupils' specific needs, gaps in understanding, barriers to learning are identified and addressed leading to success and mastery being celebrated. We will look at harmonising our assessment tools enabling us to build a programme of moderation across both our Primary and Secondary schools to ensure robust data and evidence directs our improvement and accountability strategies where needed.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (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.

Our People

The Trust provides all schools with an HR service, which encompasses all matters relating to the employment of individuals within the Trust. The HR team supports school leaders by providing HR advice, recruitment, payroll, training and well being initiatives for their staff.



Recruitment at all levels is managed by the Central Team who use [MyNewTerm](#) recruitment platform.

The team manages all aspects of recruitment from initial screening, interview planning, following up with candidates to the issuing of offer letters and final employment contracts. They ensure that all appointments follow safer recruitment guidance.

The Trust outsources its payroll to [Educational Personnel Management \(EPM\)](#), who also provide the Trust with policies and HR guidance that meets current employment law and DfE requirements.



The Trust operates an appraisal system for both teaching and non-teaching staff (Associate Staff). Managers will be supported in their appraisals by the HR team as necessary. The Trust uses the Blue Sky recording platform to retain this information.

Training & Development

The Trust believes in investing in its staff by means of providing training and development opportunities. Evidence shows that professional development is the most impactful tool to improve the quality of teaching and improving learning.

No matter how good the intent and design of the curriculum it is wholly reliant on its implementation through high quality first teaching. As a Trust, we will utilise the strong structures in our family of schools to better facilitate professional development and thus better teaching and improvement for learning.

Our people will have access to the following training and support;



National College - Full Annual Membership

A multi award winning video CPD site providing essential knowledge for busy school teachers and leaders. Support of apprenticeship training and management of the apprenticeship levy. [More information](#)



The Key for School Leaders

Trusted advice and resources you can rely on, no matter what comes your way. [More information](#)



Safesmart (Incorporating SmartLog)

Safesmart is an ISBL Approved Partner whose software & services are both advanced & affordable to help schools ensure compliance. Smartlog our Learning Management System (LMS) is designed to enable the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, automation, and delivery of training courses. This centralised platform means all staff have a tailored training package, dependent on role, which covers all aspects of health and safety training as well as delivering NCSC Cyber Security Training which is a requirement for RPA (Risk Protection Arrangement) insurance. [More information](#)

Employee Assistance & Occupational Health

The Trust will provide all schools with an employee assistance program and an unlimited Occupational Health referral service provided currently by TP Health.

Employee Wellbeing

The Trust conducts an annual wellbeing survey using the services of Welbee, this is conducted in the Spring term and is sent to all employees of the Trust. The results from the survey are used to inform both the Trust and school level annual plans.

Finance

The MET core offer provides all our schools with a full financial service, all MET financial services are centralised and cover reporting and annual audit, regular forecasting, budgeting, payroll, payments, VAT, invoicing and treasury management and banking. The Finance team will provide schools with monthly account statements to allow the Headteacher and local Governors to monitor their budgets.



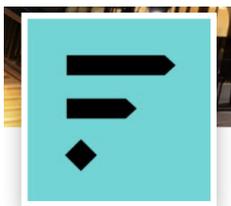
The MET uses Xero Accounting, Founded in 2006, Xero now has 4.2 million subscribers and is a leader in cloud accounting across New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom



IMP Software IMP budget planning software. The only purpose-built MAT budgeting, forecasting and reporting tool



ApprovalMax is an award-winning B2B software platform used by businesses around the world to build robust financial controls. It streamlines the approval process by allowing users to create automated workflows to approve bills and invoices. ApprovalMax integrates with platforms such as Xero, QuickBooks Online, and NetSuite to unlock powerful efficiencies for accounts payable and accounts receivable functions in any finance team.



Flagstone is the cash deposit platform that gives savers everything they need to manage, protect, and nurture their cash ensuring the best return on investment.

Flagstone

Financial Services

Audit Services

The MET will provide all schools with external and internal auditing services through their relationships with MHA and School Business Services. The audit requirements on MATs while similar to those of maintained schools, you must have a programme of internal scrutiny as well as an annual external audit. The Trust will maintain a trust wide risk register which will be informed by the work conducted by our audit partners, by Headteachers, SLT, local governors and the MET central team.



MHA. Independent UK member of Baker Tilly International and provider of audit, tax, consulting, and advisory services.



SBS education sector specialists work with trusts, delivering assurance through thorough reviews and contributing advice and best practice, providing independent assurance to the Trust Board that financial and non-financial controls and risk management procedures are operating effectively.

Legal Services

The Trust will provide all schools with legal support through their relationship with VWV, all matters needing legal support are referred by the school to the CEO who will manage the legal input to the Trust.



VWV assist over 1,000 education institutions, including universities, FE colleges, independent schools, maintained schools and academies, on contentious and non-contentious matters

Operations & Estates Management

The Operations Department for the trust will oversee a number of aspects on your behalf. This includes:

Insurance

The Trust subscribes to RPA, the risk protection arrangement (RPA) is an alternative to commercial insurance for schools. Under RPA, the UK government covers the losses instead of commercial insurance. We will also procure any specific insurances tha schools might need, for example, minibus insurance and ad hoc business driving insurance.

Health & Safety Compliance

The Trust will support the schools in ensuring their compliance with Health & Safety requirements. The aims of the Trust are to ensure that we manage our buildings and equipment in an efficient, legally compliant way and that we inspect and test buildings and equipment regularly, taking into account statutory requirements and best practice recommendations. This includes but is not limited to the Legionella, PAT, fire alarm & extinguishers, emergency lighting, water coolers, regular equipment checks for workshops, playground equipment.

Accident reporting is managed centrally by the Operations department, all accident reports will be reviewed and if further investigation or reporting is required this is managed by the team. We will

set up your CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System), to manage student accident reporting and our complaint system IAM Complaint will manage staff, visitors and contractor accidents and near misses.

The Trust promotes the safety and wellbeing of our staff, pupils, parents and visitors through effective maintenance of buildings and equipment in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

To support, the Trust uses the following third parties.



Simplify your compliance with iAM Compliant! This web-based tool will help manage your school's health & safety, estates management, access to a CPD staff training library, statutory reporting. Use it to manage assets, forecast budgets, create building condition surveys, track DfE policy compliance, produce reports and prevent potential issues from happening before they occur.



Anntara ManagementThe company was established in 2001 by Subash C Ludhra (**BSc (Hons) Occupational Hygiene, C.F.I.O.S.H. EnvDipNEBOSH**) to provide a unique bespoke service to clients large and small. Subash has over 32 years experience in the field of Risk Management and Loss control, working both in the UK and overseas. Subash is a past president of the Chartered Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH). Anntara undertakes annual external health and safety audits at all trust schools, as well as offering advice in between audits and reviewing any H&S documentation.

Site Services

Site services are centralised for primary schools within the Trust. We have a core team of site operatives that will undertake a number of aspects of site services for the school, including:

- All internal compliance testing including but not limited to the Legionella temperature testing, fire alarm & extinguishers checks, emergency lighting monthly testing, site perimeter security checks, ladders, regular equipment checks for kitchens,workshops and playground equipment.
- Book in and oversee contractors to carry out external compliance testing, including but not limited to, gas safe for boilers and other gas appliances, legionella bacteria testing, fire alarm serving, tree surveys and catering equipment servicing.
- On-call team to deal with emergencies including lack of utilities, burst pipes and anything considerably affecting teaching and learning.
- Remedial maintenance and when required organise contractors to carry out works
- Setup equipment/furniture for large scale events

On average the site services above equate to 10 hours a week.

Estates Management

The Trust will oversee the strategic and operational management of your school buildings and wider estate. Ensuring that planned preventive maintenance Schedules (PPMS) are regularly updated with external condition surveys being undertaken every four years. The Trust will also oversee capital funding with the DFE including, Condition Improvement fund (CIF), Schools Condition Allowance (SCA) and Devolved Formula Capital Grants (DFCG), working alongside the Headteacher to plan capital improvement works. The Operations team will also project manage any estates works.

Emergency Planning and Business Continuity

The Operations team will oversee emergency planning and business continuity for all schools, making sure all schools have compliant fire procedures and lockdown procedures. Our plans and procedures cover a number of scenarios to make sure any risk to teaching and learning is minimised. The Director of Operations will oversee any emergency situations alongside the wider central trust team, giving the Headteacher and Senior leadership team a support network for as long as needed. As we are a local multi academy trust, support is never far away whether onsite or remote.

IT Support & Helpdesk

The Trust has centralised its IT support for all of its schools and will provide oversight of, manage and support a schools IT infrastructure (including Broadband, Hardware, Software, Printers) either directly or through third parties contracted by the Trust. The Trust will ensure that a school's infrastructure meets the latest cyber security requirements and is fit for purpose.

Schools will be responsible for selecting their educational IT packages, however, the Trust IT's department will work with the schools to ensure that their IT infrastructure can meet the requirements of the selected software. The trust operates a 5 year IT management (including capital investment) plan, ensuring that the required infrastructure is planned and maintained. The central IT team will also support the technical aspects of a schools Management Information System (MIS), ensuring that an effective support contract is in place that any updates or patches are undertaken and giving training to new administration staff where required.



The Trust uses FreshDesk as its online support desk for all schools within the trust. IT issues are dealt with in severity order to ensure anything affecting cyber security or teaching & learning are dealt with as the highest priority.

Data Protection Services

The schools in the Trust will be able to access the services of Satswana, who will manage their freedom of information requests and Subject Access Requests from parents and other third parties and their DPO compliance. Satswana operate alongside the centralised IT team who manage any data breaches along with the school leadership team to contain and manage any external reporting.



Satswana provides fractional DPO services to schools, local authorities, charities and commercial organisations to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Contract Management & Trust Wide Procurement

The Trust Operations Team will take the lead on negotiating and managing suppliers who operate on a trust wide basis, for example Catering, Cleaning, Grounds Maintenance, Utilities, IT related Services & purchases. The central team will ensure compliance with the latest procurement legislation governing schools. The Trust will use the services of third parties to ensure compliance. This means any issues relating to any external contract will be managed by the Trust.

All procurement within the Trust, whether at Trust or school level utilises ApprovalMax to ensure compliance with financial controls governing purchases of any size, through its interface with the Trust's financial systems.

Governance

The Trust will provide third party clerking services to its Local Governing Board meetings. The clerk selected to work with our schools will be supported by the main clerk to the Trust Board. The Trust uses GovernorHub and has MAT membership of the National Governance Association (NGA) including learning link which is available to all governors.



Designed by governors, for governors who want to feel confident in their role and the work of their board(s). Our governance solutions will help you work better, develop your skills and evidence your efforts.



The national membership association for governors, trustees, and governance professionals in England's state schools and trusts. With over 80,000 members and a growing community, they use their research and insights to provide trusted information, advice and professional development to support governing boards, MATs and organisations.

Safeguarding

The Trust uses CPOMS ((Child Protection Online Monitoring System)) in all its schools as a common platform for safeguarding record keeping. Online training will be provided to all MET employees. The Trust will audit all Single Central Records and will ensure that all schools meet their statutory duties. There is a regular Trust wide DSL forum for school's DSLs.



CPOMS is the trusted provider of safeguarding, wellbeing and pastoral software used by over 20,000 settings worldwide. Its systems support a wide range of establishments, including nurseries, primary and secondary schools, colleges, charities and sports clubs, in ensuring the wellbeing of pupils and staff. The systems also aid Local Authorities by simplifying the sharing of sensitive pupil information to streamline the safeguarding process.

Surveys

The Trust supports all of its schools in the compilation of annual surveys for all stakeholder groups, pupils, staff and parents/carers.