

Subject: Expansion of the Mid Essex Anglican Academy Trust

1. **Question:** [To what extent does Mountnessing school and the Trust share similar organisational values?](#)

Response: The core organisational values which underpin everything we do.

- Christian ethos;
- FORGIVENESS - TRUST - RESPONSIBILITY - RESPECT - THANKFULNESS - JUSTICE – HUMILITY;
- Excellence – we are committed to excellence in everything that we do;
- Fairness – we treat everyone fairly;
- Transparency – we are honest and strive to be open and transparent;
- Collaboration – we are a listening and learning organisation.

At this stage the trust does not publish a separate statement of values but they are no different from those of St Mary's School. Mountnessing School upholds similar values.

2. **Question:** [What are the Trust's vision and values? I am assuming they are different to the tactical, more operational school values of St Mary's. Whilst I know it exists as an umbrella holding organisation the 'Trust' currently means little to me as a parent.](#)

Response: See above. Individual schools within the trust are likely to define their own core values in different ways but they will need to be compatible with the above to be welcomed into the trust.

The trust may mean little to parents as the day to day running of the school has remained unchanged. To this point trustees have had two roles, one as a trustee and one as a local governor for the school. Strictly these roles should be separated and we are in the process of putting this into effect now so that there will be a trust board separate from local governing bodies for each of the schools in the trust.

Similarly, we expect parents at Mountnessing to see little change.

3. **Question:** [What does the Trust want for the children and families in Mountnessing and to what extent is there a match with what is already done in Shenfield St Mary's for children and their families?](#)

Response: The discussions with the Mountnessing School have reached an advanced stage because there is a high match with St Mary's School. The trust will have the same aspirations for the Mountnessing children – excellence in teaching practice, richness in development opportunities and the best possible outcomes for pupils.

4. **Question:** [Is any school allowed to join the Mid Essex Anglican Trust? Or must they fit with Shenfield St Mary's culture, ethos etc ?](#)

Response: As above - individual schools within the trust will have their own culture, values and ethos but these will need to be compatible with those of the trust to be welcomed into the trust.

5. [**Question:** To what extent is the Mid Essex Anglican Trust looking to expand? ie phased approach to more school's joining with a maximum number in mind?](#)

Response: It is evident that since the trust was formed in 2013 and only now in 2018 is there the possibility of expanding the trust by one smaller school that MEAAT is not primarily focussed on expansion. To date efforts have been concentrated on improving practice and experience at St Mary's School. The progress made positions the trust well to contemplate expansion.

There is no maximum number of schools that might comprise the trust, however, we envisage that, in foreseeable future, there will be no more than four or five schools all within a close geographic proximity to Shenfield. There are no aspirations to become a very large trust organisation.

6. [**Question:** Does Shenfield St Mary's anticipate a school improvement task for Mountnessing? If so what could be the impact on Shenfield St Mary's staff/resources?](#)

Response: Mountnessing School is a good school. However, the process of evaluating the opportunity for expansion with them involves both financial and educational due diligence yet to be reviewed by the trust. This due diligence may highlight areas for improvement.

7. [**Question:** How will this change affect Shenfield St Mary's funding? What will the school receive in return from Mountnessing for it's expertise or vice versa?](#)

Response: There will be no change in funding for either school. However, Mountnessing will need to support the work of the trust. The amount involved will have only a modest impact on Mountnessing for which they will receive a variety of service benefits which will free up leadership there to concentrate on pupil rather than administrative matters.

8. [**Question:** Is this proposal purely fiscal or do both school's anticipate organisational changes where staff can be moved more freely between schools etc.?](#)

Response: The proposal is not purely financial although this is a factor that will feature highly with smaller schools where funding of their activities is more problematic. All staff will work for the trust, rather than an individual school. This provides scope for greater flexibility in the assignment of staff, an opportunity that will not succeed without cooperation all round. At this stage there are no plans for change.

9. [**Question:** What's the driver for this change - financial, access to resources \(ensure survival and maintain standards\) or scale \(spread cost of new initiatives and share expertise\)?](#)

Response: When the trust was formed in 2013 it was a conscious decision to become a multi academy trust rather than a single school trust as this fitted better with our Christian ethos and original foundation objectives. In fact the trust was the first church school multi academy trust in the diocese although to date there has been no expansion. For many years St Mary's School has been held in high regard as it has provided a good or outstanding primary education for the children in the Shenfield area.

The organisation at St Mary's School is professional and efficient and the school is financially stable, as secure as is possible in the present budgetary climate.

The view held has been that the trust's formation positioned the school well to support other like minded schools should and when the need arises. Whilst we have made it known that we are available for expansion Mountnessing School is the first to ask to join the trust. As a larger, well run organisation St Mary's School inevitably has more resources than a smaller school. For the trust as a whole expansion provides opportunities to capitalise on the benefits of a larger scale operation across the board.

10. **Question:** [What's the likely impact on both school's leadership teams in the short and long term? No doubt the work involved with absorbing another school will be time consuming \(due diligence checks\) plus naturally there will be work for Mountnessing school too.](#)

Response: There has been a degree of re-assignment of duties at St Mary's School to allow the Head Teacher to focus on project managing this potential change. This affords significant career development opportunities for those involved.

Much of the preparatory work has already been undertaken and the Head Teacher at Mountnessing School has played a full part in this process. Due diligence has been delegated to two specialist support organisations but the review by trustees of their findings has yet to take place.