

## Introduction and context

Maritime Academy Trust was established in 2016 and is now formed of 13 primary schools across South East London and Kent including schools in Greenwich, Bexley and the Medway area. Spring Trust was established in 2014 and comprises 5 primary schools in the Bromley borough. There are many similarities between the Trusts both in vision, values and ethos. Importantly, both Trusts provide support to their schools whilst respecting and valuing the unique identity and autonomy of each school.

In May 2026 the Trustees of both Trusts made a commitment to explore the possibility of a voluntary merger for Spring Trust to become part of Maritime Academy Trust following extensive discussions between the Executive teams and the Chairs of Trustees, and an application has been submitted for the DfE to consider the merger.

Both Trust Boards are now undertaking a due diligence process, and a staff TUPE consultation has been launched regarding transferring Spring staff to Maritime Academy contracts.

## Formal consultation

Formal consultation will run from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June to Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026 to provide opportunities for feedback from all stakeholders including parents/carers and wider partners. Following this public consultation the Trust Boards of both Trusts will independently decide if the merger should go ahead.

As part of the proposed merger process, many questions have already arisen, the answers to which have been shared below. Following the end of the consultation period, we anticipate being able to update this document and answer further questions as they arise and share these with stakeholders. We thank you for taking the time to read these as part of the consultation.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

FAQ	Trust Response
<p>1. How will the merger benefit the pupils in our schools?</p>	<p>There are a number of ways that this merger will benefit our pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School improvement is at the heart of both Trusts. Each Trust has specific expertise, and a merger would provide increased capacity for school improvement and widen the scope of work with an increased pool of staff to carry out school improvement work. This will help to further drive forward teaching excellence in our classrooms across our schools, for the benefit of our pupils through improved outcomes.</li> <li>● Financial planning and greater economies of scale will ensure long term benefits by making resources for our pupils go further.</li> <li>● Larger trusts benefit from other financial gains, e.g. receiving guaranteed capital funding to support the maintenance and upkeep of our school buildings. This helps to ensure that our pupils are learning in the environments that they deserve</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The merger will not interfere with the educational provision in any of our schools. It will enhance what we currently do. The way that parents/carers interact with their child's school will not change.</li> </ul>
<p>2. How will the merger benefit staff in our schools?</p>	<p>We believe that the merger will bring benefits for our staff as well as for our pupils.</p> <p>Through increased collaboration, specialist networks and groups, staff will have access to enhanced best practice sharing, resources and training. This will be for teaching and support staff across a number of areas e.g. subject groups, administrative groups and practitioner specialisms.</p> <p>Peer support networks will provide additional support for all staff.</p> <p>A combined central team will strengthen the support and service offered to Headteachers and schools across school improvement, SEND, governance, operations, finance, IT, HR and recruitment and the school estate.</p> <p>Both Trusts will continue to benefit from the existing school improvement services provided by both Trusts. An enlarged Trust will increase the capacity for impactful contributions to enhance this.</p>
<p>3. What are the overall advantages of the proposed merger?</p>	<p>As mentioned we believe it would further enhance the educational opportunities and experiences our pupils and staff receive. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Trusts would benefit from working with a wider range of colleagues, enhancing professional development opportunities and strengthening recruitment and retention of high-quality staff. A larger Trust is able to provide more pathways and diverse opportunities for staff to enhance their careers and progress.</li> <li>• Merging the Trustees and the central teams will strengthen governance by widening the range of skills and expertise.</li> <li>• Combining the expertise of our central teams will provide improved central services and build capacity.</li> <li>• The merger will offer greater operational efficiency, financial stability and resilience through economies of scale, additional grants and more effective procurement. It is in line with the DfE's current thinking and achieves the growth ambitions of both Trusts.</li> </ul>

<p>4. Will the Trust be too big with 18 schools?</p>	<p>No. Although it will be relatively large the current trend nationally and promoted by the DfE is to build capacity and grow. Maritime already has 13 schools and relationships between Headteachers and colleagues are known for being collaborative, caring and supportive. Due to the distance between schools, the Trust provides opportunities for all staff to come together both online and in person and also to benefit from smaller regional hubs in Greenwich, Bexley and Medway. This model works well.</p> <p>The schools within Spring Trust are all within the Bromley borough and will operate as a new Bromley hub, therefore continuing to maximise local collaboration whilst benefitting from wider opportunities further across the merged Trust. Headteachers already work closely together with strong relationships and increasing opportunities for collaboration between school staff. Bringing the Trusts together will strengthen both.</p>
<p>5. What matters have been considered when exploring whether the Trusts should merge?</p>	<p>Both Trusts have considered the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Finances - due diligence is being completed to enable the Trustees to have the reassurance needed to agree that a merger makes financial sense. This includes external reviews and consideration of financial forecasting.</li> <li>● HR matters</li> <li>● Condition Surveys of the Estate</li> <li>● Quality of Education and Safeguarding</li> <li>● Reputation</li> <li>● IT</li> </ul> <p>Findings to date have been shared with Trustees and have informed their decision making.</p>
<p>6. Have the Trusts looked at other alternatives to merging?</p>	<p>A merger offers both Trusts the best way to realise their growth ambitions rather than adding individual schools incrementally. However, over time other schools may be attracted to our MAT and we would consider each one on its merits in terms of whether it would add value to the schools and the wider Trust.</p>
<p>7. Who makes the decision on the final proposal?</p>	<p>Each Trust Board will independently make a decision if the merger will proceed based on the outcomes of the due diligence process and consultation with all stakeholders. It is expected that this decision will be made by both Trust Boards in Autumn 2026.</p>
<p>8. What is the proposed timescale?</p>	<p>This decision will be informed by a final review of the due diligence process to date and a review of the feedback received from this consultation.</p> <p>Should a decision to merge be agreed, it is anticipated that Spring would become part of Maritime Academy Trust in January 2027.</p> <p>However, legal and HR processes can take some time and be subject</p>

	to delays so we will keep stakeholders informed of any changes to these proposed timescales.
9. What will this mean for staff?	At the point of the merger (proposed for 1 January 2027), Spring Trust staff will transfer to be formally employed by Maritime Academy Trust. As with any merger, there is always a 'transferring' trust and a 'receiving' trust; in accordance with legal frameworks. Spring is the 'transferring' trust as there are a smaller number of schools and staff to transfer. Spring Trust staff will be protected to transfer on the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. This is legally covered by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations; commonly known as TUPE.
10. Will school staff have to work across different locations?	There are no plans for this. Spring Trust currently has portability in their contracts, although staff are appointed to work at a designated school. Staff with the portability clause would not be directed to work outside the Bromley hub. However, for those that want this there will be more opportunities to work across the trust as part of wider collaboration.
11. Will the school names change?	No. All school names from both Trusts will stay the same.
12. Would the term and holiday dates change?	No.
13. How will governance work?	The Trust Board for Maritime Academy Trust will continue and the current Trustees for Spring Trust will continue to be involved post-merger either as part of the Trust Board or in a local governance role.
14. Are there any financial risks to either Trust	Both Trusts are currently financially secure and have their own reserves, and the financial stability of both Trusts is a key component carefully considered within the due diligence stage and throughout the considerations of both Boards. Following a merger, the reserves of both Trusts are 'pooled' and budget setting and monitoring for schools will continue as normal. Schools are experiencing falling pupil numbers as a result of a fall in the birth rate and the merger will help to counter the impact of this by providing greater resilience.