



COTSWOLD BEACON
ACADEMY TRUST

Thursday, 14th of May 2026

Dear parents and carers,

Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to share their views as part of the consultation process around Marling School joining Lift Schools. We wanted to write to provide some further background information around the proposals that we hope you find helpful.

Why CBAT schools are joining Lift

Marling is already an academy and was a founding school of Cotswold Beacon Academy Trust (CBAT). As trustees of CBAT, we have always been clear about our primary responsibility: securing the best possible long-term future for our schools, pupils, staff and communities.

Over recent years, CBAT has faced significant financial and operational challenges, arising in part from previous leadership overstretch and the increasing difficulty for smaller standalone trusts to remain sustainable while also delivering the breadth of educational and operational support our schools require. Following careful reflection, Trustees concluded that remaining as a standalone Trust was not a viable long-term option.

As a result, last year we carried out a rigorous and detailed process to identify a partner organisation that could provide stability, stronger school improvement capacity, and more comprehensive wrap-around support for our school leaders, staff and pupils. Throughout this process, our focus has been on ensuring that our schools are able not only to remain sustainable, but also to raise educational standards, broaden opportunities and increase aspirations for every child.

A key principle throughout that process was the protection of each school's unique identity, heritage and place within its local community. This was especially important for schools such as Marling, with its long and distinguished history and strong sense of community identity.

Trustees were consistently reassured during discussions that any future partnership would respect and preserve the individuality, traditions and ethos of each CBAT school, rather than impose a "one size fits all" model. We are very clear that, just as they do with all of their schools, Lift will give our schools the freedom to maintain their identities. Crucially though, they will also bring a wealth of expertise in supporting our staff to raise educational standards and give our children the best possible education.



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Support already provided by Lift

Since last year the Lift team has been supporting CBAT and our schools extensively behind the scenes. This support has included significant educational, HR, IT and financial expertise over the past 12 months. Specifically, around 2 days of support a week in advance of Peter Knight being in post as our new headteacher, whom Lift also recruited. We have also benefited from support from Lift's Regional Designated Safeguarding Lead following the departure of Marling's DSL. Importantly, Lift's support has extended to our sixth form as well as supporting improvements to the quality of teaching right across the school. This has all been provided at no cost to the school, given the continued financial challenges we face.

Name change

Turning to the issue of the school's name. We fully understand there are strong feelings about the proposed name change as Marling joins Lift, and we want to reassure you that leaders at Lift have heard that clearly. They have met with us to discuss this particular issue and with the local governing body. We are enclosing a letter from Rebecca Boomer-Clark, CEO of Lift Schools, which clarifies the position and sets out what we consider to be a sensitive and pragmatic way forward.

Your views

We are keen to make sure that families have plenty of opportunities to voice their views and to support this, we are hosting a series of engagement sessions over the coming weeks. These are deliberately at different times of the day to try and allow for as many parents and carers to attend:

Day	Time	Availability
Thursday 14th May	09:00-15:30	Limited availability remaining
Friday 15th May	09:00-17:30	Limited availability remaining
Monday 18th May	13:00-16:00	Additional - good availability remaining
Tuesday 19th May	13:00-16:00	Additional - good availability remaining
	16:30-17:30 and 18:00-19:00	Public stakeholder meeting



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These sessions are intended to create space for open and constructive conversation, and we would encourage anyone who wishes to attend to do so. To register your attendance and preferred time, please email liftconsultation@marling.school

We know there are differing views within the community, and we appreciate that not everyone will agree on every aspect of the proposal. We are grateful, however, to all those who have engaged thoughtfully and respectfully throughout the process.

Further information about Lift Schools can be found [here](#).

You can register your response to the proposal via this [link](#).

Our shared focus remains on securing an excellent future for the school while respecting the history and traditions that have made it such an important part of the community for so many years.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Brierley

Chair of Trustees

Cotswold Beacon Academy Trust (CBAT)

Duncan Cook

Chief Executive Officer

Cotswold Beacon Academy Trust (CBAT)