

Diocese of Leeds Board of Education

Strategic Direction and Operations Policy for the Academy programme

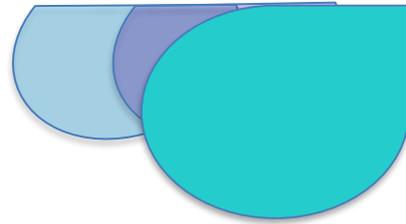
2016-2020

A Diocesan Vision for Education:

**Securing Transformational Outcomes for all Children and Young
People**

PROMOTING

*Distinctiveness
Transformation
Excellence*



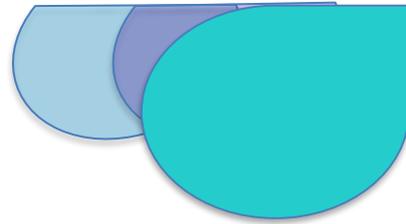
A Diocesan Vision for Education:

Securing Transformational Outcomes for all Children and Young People

The Leeds Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) has a statutory responsibility for 248 Church schools across the diocese and is committed to delivering excellence in education. The DBE recognises that variety exists in its Church schools in terms of the role of the diocese in local governance (described in the different aided, controlled, foundation and academy status of individual schools). Nevertheless, the Board makes no distinction in regards to its level of commitment to each school, in its understanding of its statutory responsibility as a provider of education, and through the exercising of that responsibility, of the need to safeguard the future of all its schools as Church schools.

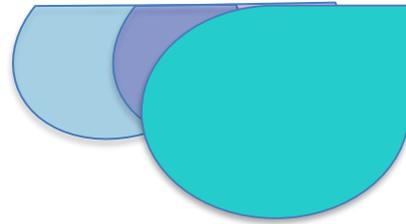
The DBE is committed to working with all strategic partners and stakeholders to provide the very best learning opportunities for all children and young people, irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, culture, faith or no faith background throughout all of its Church schools. The DBE's commitment includes being proactive in supporting models of school organisation and leadership that ensure the best outcomes for children, where all schools can become outstanding, populated by the most skilled leaders and teachers. The DBE expects all Church school learning communities to be built on clear foundations which embrace an underlying Christian ethic that supports a strong moral purpose, which, in turn, promotes high aspiration and excellence. Church school communities should demonstrate a collective responsibility for the results and achievement of all children, working to an ethic of 'If one fails we all fail', within and beyond individual school communities. In this the DBE is wholly committed to the notion of *Educational Excellence Everywhere*.

In its commitment to education and schooling the DBE embraces the national Church of England's Vision for Education: *Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* (2016). In providing a holistic, distinctive, inclusive and effective education, which is 'hospitable to



diversity, respects freedom of religion and belief, and encourages others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings' (*Church of England's Vision for Education p3*) the DBE looks to all Church schools and academies to make an outstanding contribution to the lives and opportunities of our children and young people. The DBE also expects that in its schools and academies children and young people will gain a rich understanding of the Christian tradition and a positive encounter with Jesus that will provoke them for the whole of their life so that 'they might have life and have it abundantly' (*John 10:10*). The national vision articulates four key elements that contribute to a deeply Christian learning experience: educating for wisdom, hope, community and dignity. The DBE is committed to working in partnership with its schools, academies and other stakeholders to create and deliver learning communities that exemplify these four key characteristics.

The DBE strategy for working with the academy programme begins with the aforementioned commitment to a vision for all children and young people in education. Any structural change to our Church schools must deliver the best learning opportunity and environment, supported by a clear vision founded on the Church's involvement and commitment to education. Starting with this vision ensures that academy and Multi Academy Trust (MAT) initiation and growth will focus on 'securing transformational outcomes for young people by combining academic rigour with a rounded approach to personal development, rooted in worship and other shared practices that characterise the life of their community' (*Church of England's Vision for Education*). This commitment will manifest itself through the vision, mission and aims of individual MATs which are expected to demonstrate how strategic and operational work pursues this 'distinctive effectiveness' for all its member Church schools.



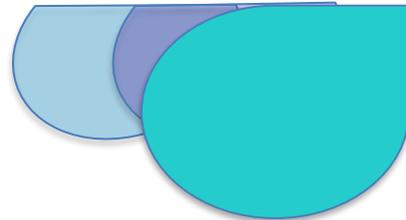
Context and Current Drivers for the DBE Strategy

The DBE is challenged, constantly, by Department for Education (DfE), the Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC) and Ofsted via Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) to ensure swift and prompt intervention, with the right resources in the right hands, to deliver rapid improvement so that the potential of all our children and young people is realised.

The DBE is provoked by the need to:

- Mobilise diocesan Church schools around the core messages in recent legislation, generating deeper understanding and a call to action.
- Actively support Church schools to make the right 'academy' decisions for them as Church schools, including early adopters and those who decide not to become academies.
- Develop its existing MATs to be able to address the high need of schools that may be 'coasting,' requiring improvement or in special measures through school to school support across the diocese.
- Establish new Church MATs across the diocese working with our good and outstanding Church schools in the formation of these MATs to support a strategic rather than reactive response to school vulnerability.
- Rapidly establish sponsorship capacity both in our existing Church MATs (where it doesn't currently exist) and in newly established MATs to be able to support vulnerable schools.
- Ensure a synergy with Achieving Excellence Areas (Bradford), *Educational Excellence Everywhere* and the Education and Adoption Bill 2016.

The Church of England is the largest single provider of academies and MATs into the education system. Because of this engagement there is a developing level of experience and expertise from the Church nationally. The DBE has already converted more than 40 schools to become academies and established or supported the establishment of 9 Church MATs; therefore, the diocese is contributing significantly to the national Church understanding of the academy programme. Consequently, the DBE is also able to offer that experience and our developing expertise across the diocese as we work with individual



Church schools in the development and rolling out of the diocesan strategy for the academy programme.

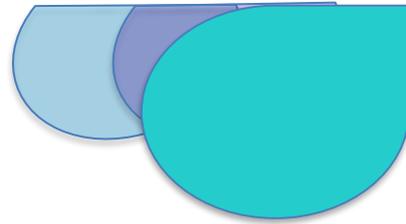
What We Have Done to Date – April 2016 to July 2016

The DBE has engaged in extensive information and consultation sessions across the diocese through thirteen Academy Roadshows. At these Roadshows the DBE has met with more than 700 people representing Church schools in the diocese. The aims of the Roadshows have been to:

- engage with and mobilise school leadership;
- explain what an academy is, what a MAT is responsible for, and how a MAT is constructed;
- provide clarity on the role of the diocese and the position of Church schools, in line with the legal requirements for Church schools and the Church of England's Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between DfE and the Church of England;
- identify MAT models and illustrate opportunities / limitations for Church schools;
- inform school head teachers and chairs of governors about the process to become an academy.

The Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) has met with and is continuing to meet with MAT Chief Executive Officers (CEO) to discuss their growth strategies and how these fit into the DBE strategy. Current MATs are a key part of the strategy moving forward. Conversations and joint planning between the DDE and CEOs for expansion of MATs will be a feature of 2016/17. The DDE and Diocesan Education Team (DET) officers have been meeting with individual or clusters of schools (head teachers and governors) across the diocese to discuss their own thoughts and questions. This will be an on-going element of the strategy throughout the 2016/17 academic year and beyond through planned meetings with those schools that are in a position to actively explore 'next-steps' to becoming an academy.

The DDE has shared the headlines of the DBE Strategy with DfE and has the support of the RSC for Lancashire and West Yorkshire (Vicky Beer) and the North (Jan Renou). Headlines have also been shared in conversation with Local Authority (LA) partners.



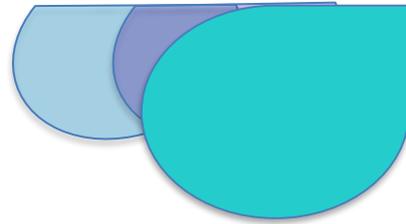
In a number of LAs the diocese is also engaged in detailed discussion concerning school reorganisation and the challenge of small and rural schools. In these discussions the matter of academisation has been a key feature of the conversation, with an acknowledgment that clarity around school amalgamations, federations, new schools or even school closure have to be addressed in tandem with any discussion of an academy outcome.

In various communications to schools from the DBE the supposed government U-turn on the academy programme has been addressed. It is the view of the DBE (and certainly the expectation of Government) that the decision to not embed forced academisation in legislation does not change the current position and expectation: government policy is that it expects all (or most) schools will become academies.

The DBE message is the same as the DfE where we both state: 'do not rush, take your time, consider the best solutions for your children and school'. The DBE is here to support and offer advice, to ensure that your school is safeguarded in its distinctive characteristics as a Church school into the future and that each and every school that takes the decision to, or is forced to convert has a secure Church MAT home.

The DBE does this as it has a statutory responsibility for Church schools and wants to discharge that responsibility with considerable care and attention.

The DBE is very clear that it has no responsibility for non-Church schools and cannot presume what these schools may decide to do about their own future. However, the DBE is equally clear that Church MATs in the Leeds Diocese are open to all schools, both Church schools and non-Church schools. The DBE has a positive and proactive attitude to open conversations and discussions with non-Church schools about providing secure MAT homes which includes them. What the DBE cannot do is create a strategy that relies on non-Church schools to take a lead or to create MATs that will provide the secure home that Church schools will need.



The DBE has been working closely with its legal advisers (Lupton Fawcett Denison and Till) to establish clarity around the process and logistics of conversion. All conversations post the awarding of an academy order will include the diocese's legal team as a strategic partner and diocesan and legal expenses will come from the £25k conversion grant provided by DfE.

The DBE Strategy:

Key messages to Church schools and existing multi-academy and single-academy trusts

The DBE strategy adheres to the MOU between the Church of England and DfE which has the approval of the Secretary of State for Education. It also takes full account of the Academies Act 2010 and the Education and Adoptions Act 2016.

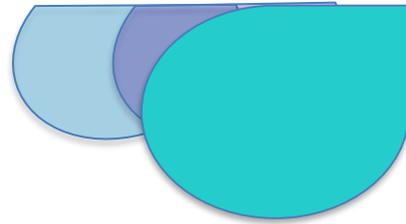
Church Schools in Church MATs

The Diocese of Leeds is the largest diocesan provider of Church schools by pupil number nationally. A considerable number of our Church schools are Voluntary Aided (VA) schools. This creates a challenge for the DBE in establishing a diocesan-wide strategy as the DBE has to establish structures that allows any Church school to enter any Church MAT.

As such, the DBE declares that Church schools, on conversion, need to be in MATs where the company that establishes the MAT has a majority of Members derived from the Church. This will be either as corporate bodies (e.g. the Board of Education) or as a corporation sole (e.g. the Bishop).

The Members appoint the majority of the Board of Trustees (also known as Directors under company law).

The Board of Trustees run the company. Trustees are appointed on the basis of skills, of being able to hold the CEO to account and to represent the interests of the Members as dictated and directed by the Objects of the company.



The company must be established using Articles of Association that have been approved by the Church of England with the DfE. This safeguards the instrument that has established the Church school at its start: The Trust Deed.

In addition, although a model exists where the Church can be a minority Member in a MAT (e.g. two out of five Members) the DBE will only establish new MATs as majority MATs. This will ensure that the significant number of VA schools in the Diocese (which have to be in majority Member MATs i.e. three of five Members) have a choice of Church MATs to consider.

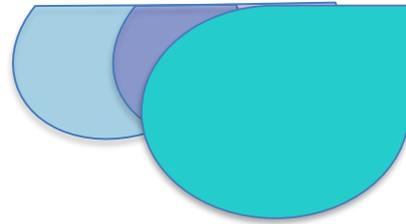
Church MATs open to all schools

Church MATs will not be exclusive MATs for church schools or exclusive MATs for outstanding and good schools. They are open to any and all schools that decide to join them (subject to due diligence and a full business plan).

Non-Church community schools can join a Church MAT. Their status and ethos is protected in a Church MAT and it will be expected that such schools will play a full and strategic role in the development of the MAT. Church MATs wishing to admit non-Church academies must include the DBE in such decisions.

Church MATs and vulnerable schools

Church MATs will play a full and committed role in school improvement and must be ready and prepared to admit vulnerable schools to the MAT where and when the DBE makes such a request. The DBE recognises that the Education and Adoptions Act 2016, Section 7, places a duty on the Secretary of State to issue an Academy Order when a school is eligible for intervention due to an Ofsted judgement of inadequacy. The DBE expects that schools subject to such intervention will be placed in secure Church MAT homes and the diocese will seek to influence existing Church MATs to invite such schools to join them; there will be no 'lost sheep'.



Existing MATs

The DBE will work with existing MATs to develop a strategic and coherent plan for MAT growth determined in partnership with the DBE. The plan will include the establishment of a strong offer to converting and sponsored schools.

New MAT model

The DBE will establish new MATs utilising two models:

- Diocesan MATs

The DBE initiates the creation of a MAT. It will work with a number of good schools to help create the character and ethos of the MAT and identify a growth strategy that, over time, will ensure there is capacity within the MAT to support vulnerable schools. In the Diocesan MAT, the DBE will appoint an Interim CEO to help establish the MAT. In time the DBE will appoint a permanent CEO, possibly from those leading in the MAT. The MAT is the employer of the CEO.

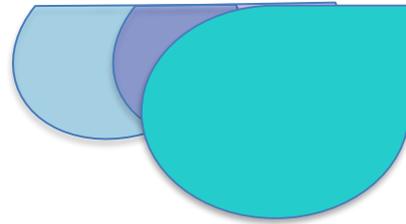
- Church School MATs

The DBE will work with an outstanding Church school (or schools) that already have capacity to establish a Church school-led MAT. The MAT appoints the CEO in partnership with the DBE.

In either model the DBE will be a strategic partner in the establishment of the MAT. It will work to support the MAT development through the network of MATs across the diocese.

The DBE will also work with existing non-Church MATs to explore synergies and collaborations that can be formed in specific areas of the diocese. This might include Memoranda of Understanding and side agreements between local MATs to share resources, CPD, procurement and brokering of school to school support.

The DBE is unlikely to agree the establishment of a plethora of MATs in a close geographical area. New MATs will need to have clear intelligence about the expectations and destinations of Church schools local to them before approval is given.



Size of MATs

The DBE is of the view that MAT success will in part be based on the opportunities to grow and expand, benefiting from economies of scale and providing capacity to support vulnerable schools. The National Schools Commissioner, Sir David Carter, speaks of 1200 pupils as beginning to generate capacity. Church MATs should look to be viable into the future. The DBE will help MATs to determine a strategic growth plan.

Stand Alone Trusts (SATs)

It is the view of the DBE that schools are best served by being in collaborative arrangements and that MATs will provide these opportunities for any Church academy. Any newly converting school will need to be in a MAT. Existing SATs will need to discuss their plans with the DDE to determine whether they are better served joining or forming a MAT.

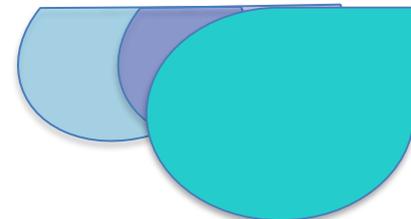
DfE Sponsor Status

The DBE will expect new MATs to apply for Sponsor Status so that vulnerable schools can be located in any Church MAT. The ability to provide strong school to school support will be a condition of MAT approval.

Approval to convert

Written consent from the DBE is required for a school to convert to become an academy. The Diocese of Leeds will hear requests from schools, under the Academies Act 2010 Section 3 iv, for consent to apply for an Academy Order. The diocese will only hear such a request following a resolution of the governing body and the consent to apply from any other foundations / trustees (i.e. usually the Parochial Church Council or Vicar and Church Wardens as site trustees).

No school should embark on consideration of becoming an academy without having had a conversation with the DBE through DET officers or the DDE. There will be specific dates in the year when the DBE will meet to consider applications from schools to become an academy. These dates will be published in advance of the start of the academic year. Discussions with schools and governing bodies can be had at any time.



Continuing to discuss options

The DBE will keep an open approach to the development of the academy programme. Opportunity to discuss specific and unique contexts for individual schools will be maintained. Being creative, within the clear parameters of the DBE Strategy will be key to a successful future.

Next Steps for the DBE and Church Schools: On-going Operational Activity

July to October 2016 – mapping

- DBE to map schools according to their most recent Ofsted and SIAMs inspection judgements
- schools analysed using FFT data by cluster and individually to ascertain where there is strength, strong leadership and where there is contrasting high need
- cross reference to the RSC/DfE/LA view of diocesan schools and where there is perceived under-performance.

September 2016 - How does a MAT work? Case studies:

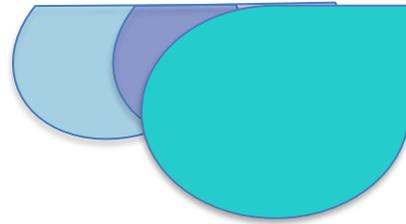
- DBE to produce and circulate diocesan case studies looking at vision, ethos, articles, schemes of delegation, CEO job description, accountability, autonomy, communication and finance.

September 2016 and beyond – Ready to Engage Meetings

- DBE to hold meetings with schools / clusters of schools that are ready to engage with the strategy. These will be information and planning events for school and system leaders and chairs of governors to
 - enable deeper discussion,
 - analyse and explore the case studies reflecting the two models,
 - explore the role of CEO, Trustees, Members, Executive Leadership, MAT hubs, central MAT services and local governance.

Autumn 2016 - Growth Plans

- audit of all current and new MAT growth strategies submitted during autumn 2016



including

- optimum numbers of pupils,
- geographical location,
- leadership,
- financial profiling and
- any necessary expansion of core business team.

Autumn 2016 - Ensuring that Church MATs reflect diocesan vision, values and strategy

- facilitated events for all current CEOs and Chairs of Church MATs to address
 - integration,
 - cohesion and
 - alignment across the diocesan episcopal areas.

2016 – 17 - Establishing additional diocesan MATs across the Episcopal Areas without representation (Huddersfield, Ripon, and Leeds)

- determine where new funding can be secured to pump-prime the development of Diocesan MATs
- identify schools that would be interested to be founder members of these MATs
- develop clear MAT strategy and relationship with the other diocesan MATs.

2016 – 2020 - Supporting the strategic establishment of Church School MATs across the diocese

- ongoing expert advice, support, alignment to non- negotiables for Church schools within the context of the National Society and DfE MOU for any schools identified as having capacity to lead a MAT.

2016 – 2020 - Leadership development for all school leaders and succession planning

- mapping current provision,
- projection of possible turnover
- location of potential executive leaders
- recently and newly appointed head teachers requiring mentoring around the current substantial changes in the system.