



The Diocesan Board of Education seeks to offer our children and young people life in all its fullness

## Derby Diocese Board of Education Academisation Policy

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) has agreed the following strategy in light of the Education and Adoption Act 2016, and the published Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) 2016 which has been agreed between the Church of England's Education Office and the Secretary of State.

*The principles underlying this strategy are in relation to the DBE's wish to maintain a cohesive Diocesan family of schools which will effectively deliver the vision of offering our children and young people life in all its fullness. The DBE recognises that the Department for Education's aspiration is that all schools are academies and that the vast majority of these will be within Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs).*

The DBE has considered the various MAT strategies adopted by other DBEs. In some cases these are that schools may only join the Diocesan MAT and in other cases that a range of MAT models are used. Derby DBE has determined this strategy based on its analysis of its context with significant consideration of the strategic needs of its family of schools. There is a clear mix of VA and VC schools across the Diocese and the DBE acknowledges the growing body of opinion which suggests that MATs will need to reach a certain number of pupils to reach a point of sustainability.

Given that VA schools or former VA academies will either be part of any such arrangement at the outset or in the future, the DBE wishes to ensure that constitutional arrangements are established on a 'once for all' basis, thereby keeping legal costs and unnecessary negotiations to a minimum. *A number of MATs have been established on this basis which any of the Church school family along with community schools may join. VA schools that wish to convert will only be given consent to join established Church majority MATs.\**

\* A Church majority MAT does not require a majority of Church schools but describes a MAT which can incorporate VA, VC and Community schools. Local governance arrangements reflect the previous status of the school.

- The Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) will support schools by ensuring that they are 'connected' and working in partnerships which are maintaining and developing school effectiveness. The trajectory is for academisation within MATs and so the DDE will, on behalf of the DBE, encourage schools to seriously consider their response to this agenda.
- In line with the MoU, schools requiring sponsorship should be sponsored by a MAT with appropriate Church of England governance. It is presumed by the DBE that schools will join the diocesan MAT (Derby Dioceses Academy Trust - DDAT). The DDE will work with the Regional School Commissioner (RSC) to determine the most appropriate solution.
- Schools wishing to join a MAT should contact the DDE at the earliest opportunity to explore the options available to them. The DDAT continues to welcome community schools into Church majority MAT partnerships and believes that many will be attracted to the Church of England's proven track record and ethos. The DDE will support schools to understand the role of Members as distinct from Directors and to consider the due diligence required of schools and governors in consideration of this process.
- The DBE recognises that for a few schools, there may be strong local reasons for that school wishing to join a MAT other than DDAT. However, even in this circumstance the DBE expects the school to have had a presentation from DDAT in order to have made a fully informed decision. The school then needs to give the DBE their reasons in writing for choosing a MAT other than DDAT. The proposed MAT must then make a presentation to a sub group of the Board trustees to they are convinced the MAT is the best option for the school and that its Christian distinctiveness will be supported and developed. The model that a school enters into must also demonstrate that it is financially viable as well as benefitting from rigorous external scrutiny.
- There will be clear training and support facilitated by the DDE and DBE team. Partnership working between all schools is highly recommended by the DBE and creative solutions will be sought to ensure such partnerships can continue. This may include partnership agreements with MATs, local development group partnerships to support transition of pupils or membership of Teaching School Alliances. MAT structures do not preclude other partnership working. Indeed, the DBE consider that it is vital for schools within MATs to maintain an outward-facing approach and avoid isolationism.
- The DDE will work together with MAT leaders to ensure that they are connected and supported in their system leadership capacity.

The MoU may be found here:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/517423/Memorandum\\_of\\_understanding\\_between\\_the\\_National\\_Society\\_and\\_DfE.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/517423/Memorandum_of_understanding_between_the_National_Society_and_DfE.pdf)