

Nottingham Roman Catholic **Diocesan Education Service**



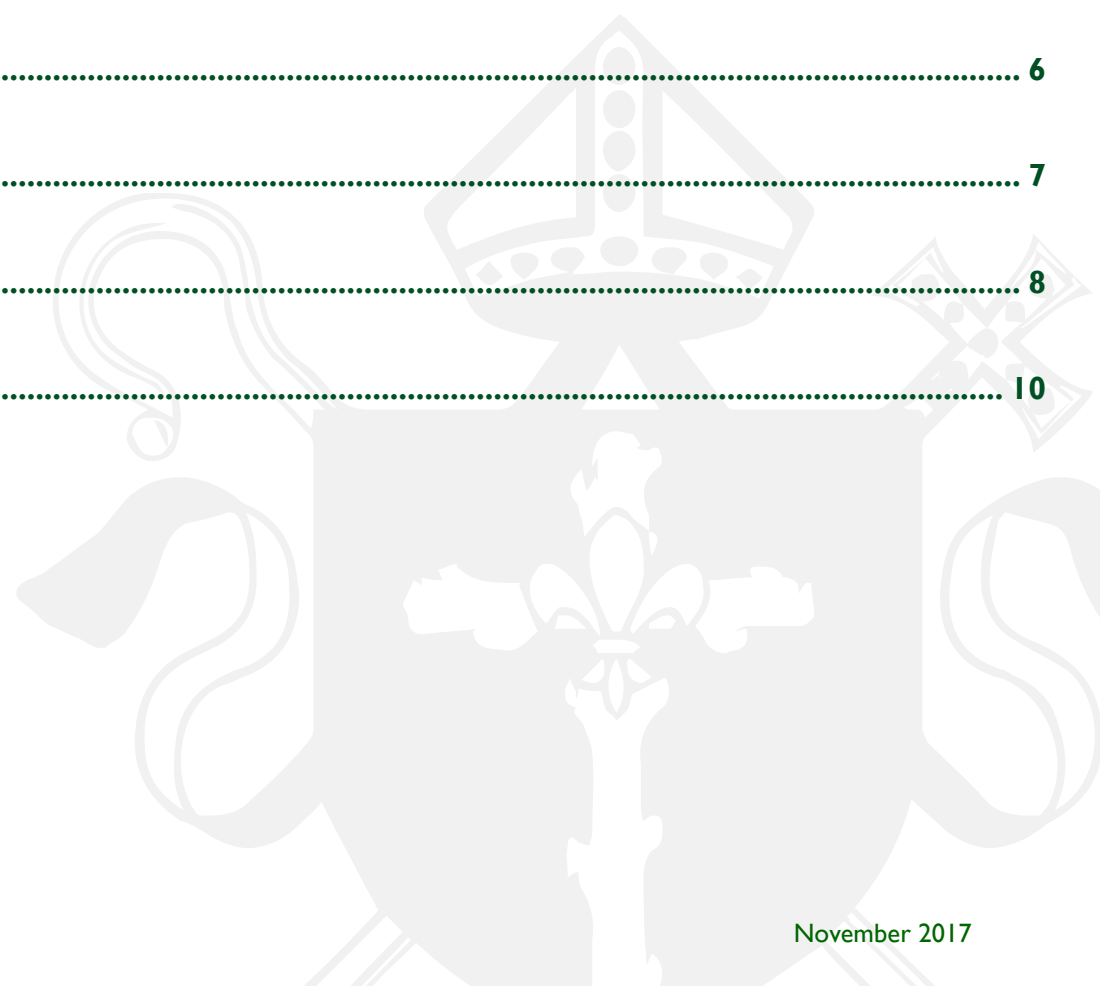
Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Nottingham – Part II

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

November 2017

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I. Conversion Process

Will schools lose their identity?

No, not at all. Each school will retain its own identity, name, local leadership team and local governors.

Will Voluntary-Aided schools convert to academy status before the new Catholic Multi-Academy Trust is established?

No. They will convert and join the new Catholic Multi-Academy Trust on 1 September 2018 although conversion work (including obtaining an academy order) will take place in advance of that date according to the schedule for an individual school which will be discussed with the Local Implementation Project Lead.

When will the academy conversion process start for the Voluntary-Aided schools?

Each school will have its own detailed timeline which will be drawn up by the Local Project Implementation Teams in discussion with headteachers over the coming weeks, however, it is envisaged that the consultation phase for all remaining Voluntary-Aided schools will be completed during the Autumn Term 2017.

When will Local Implementation Teams be in place?

Local Project Leads are being appointed now and will be in place for each of the four new Catholic Multi-Academy Trust areas by the end of October 2017.

Will the implementation teams in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire be working together?

The four Project Leads will be expected to work closely together and support one another where they can. Neil Weightman will co-ordinate their work in his role as Project Manager on behalf of the Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocesan Education Service (NRCDES). We have also engaged with Browne Jacobson for the legal support and a Human Resources company called Birch HR to support the project implementation teams.

How will the accountability of the Local Implementation Teams be managed?

There will be a Local Reference Group in place for each of the new Catholic Multi-Academy Trust areas populated by governors and directors from across the region. Each of the Local Reference Groups will hold the Local Project Teams to account and ensure that implementation is delivered as set in out in *Part II of the Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Nottingham*.

What is the position of the current Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs)?

The current MATs will continue to function up until 31 August 2018. The Company Number of one of the MATs in each of the four areas will be used as the vehicle to form the new larger Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.

Are Local Authorities aware of the plans?

We are informing Local Authorities through our (NRCDES) regular dialogue with them.

When will we know when and how the changes will impact on staff in our schools?

The majority of people working within our schools will be unaffected by the changes. However, some may be affected and we appreciate that this is a really important issue. We want to get this information out as soon as possible and so we have made it a priority action. The Local Implementation Teams will be gathering up to date staffing information from each school this Autumn Term. This will enable us to understand what the position is for each Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (CMAT) so that we are able to develop a strategy for each regional area that will minimise the impact on employees. We aim to complete this work by the end of the Autumn Term and to be in a position to share the results as soon as possible thereafter.

2. Leadership in the new Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts

How can we be involved in the selection of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)?

We are exploring ways in which we can engage a wide group of people in the selection process for the CEOs. Firstly, we have asked at our regional meetings if people can send in ideas for tasks to be set at interview and we are happy to receive these over the next few weeks. We shall also ensure that a representative group of headteachers and local governors is involved in some of the activities which will be conducted as part of the interview process.

What is the timeline for the appointment of the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs)?

A recruitment company which specialises in senior leadership recruitments in church schools (Emmaus Leadership) has been engaged to lead this process. The advertisements will go live in November 2017 with interviews taking place before the end of the Autumn Term 2017.

Who will be involved in the recruitment and appointment of the new CEOs?

This will be a Bishop's appointment (as it is a 'reserved post') made jointly with the Boards of the new CMATs but we want to engage stakeholders in the recruitment process as far as we can. As stated above, we have asked at the regional meetings for people to send in proposed scenarios and questions to test the candidates against and we shall also involve representative headteachers and local governors in the interview process. We continue to work with the Catholic Education Service and Directors from some of the other Catholic dioceses in England.

Will the new Executive roles in the CMAT be advertised?

Yes, these will be advertised but not until after the recruitment for the CEOs has been concluded as we would want to engage the successful CEO candidates in the recruitment process for the other executive posts within the new CMATs.

Will the appointment of CEOs be transparent and consider gender, ethnicity and primary/secondary experience?

The process will be fully transparent and will be open to all to apply regardless of gender, ethnicity or the phase of education in which they specialise. The objective is to ensure as big a pool as possible for these roles and to secure the best person for the role based on the criteria for the post (this information was issued with *Part II of the Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Nottingham*).

Does the CEO need to have an education background?

We are clear that we expect the successful candidates to have a background that enables them to play a full part in supporting and monitoring school improvement across the new CMATs. The successful applicant will therefore have to be able to show how their skills, background and experience enable them to do this. Following the publication of *Part I* of our *Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Nottingham*, it was stated that the CEO would have to have been a headteacher of a Catholic school. Following feedback, this requirement has now been changed, however, the requirement for a proven and effective track record in school improvement remains.

Who will make decisions on the appointment of the central teams if the CEO does not start until September 2018?

Similar to where a new headteacher is appointed ahead of the new academic year, the incoming CEO will be engaged wherever possible in the recruitment process of the other senior appointments in the CMAT Executive Team along with the Board of Directors for each of the CMATs.

3. Vision for our CMATs

What will our new CMATs be called?

In *Part I* of the *Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Nottingham*, we stated that each of the new CMATs would be named after a saint of the Church and that there would be two female and two male saints. Following consultation and a voting process, the new name for each of our new CMATs will be as follows: St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (Derbyshire/Staffordshire/Stockport), St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (Leicestershire), St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (Lincolnshire), Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (Nottingham).

What will the role of the local governing body (LGB) be?

The local governors will have their responsibilities set out in a Scheme of Delegation but their prime responsibilities will be to monitor standards and pupil attainment (including pupils' wider outcomes), to hold the leadership team to account and to ensure that the Catholic Life of the school is maintained and developed. We shall also be producing a range of new training materials to support governors in this important role.

There is a concern that the members are only representing one part of the Church, clerics only and not lay people.

Based on the feedback we received following the publication of *Part I* of the *Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Nottingham*, the members will not all be members of the clergy. We are appointing 7 members across all four CMATs; these will include Bishop Patrick McKinney and the Episcopal Vicar for Catholic Education but the other five members will come from the laity. We have also ensured that the role of members is clearer in the future.

When will new directors be appointed for the new CMAT Boards?

We hope to appoint foundation directors in two tranches over the coming months. The recruitment process for tranche 1 has already begun. Information has been sent to all chairs of governors, chairs of trusts, headteachers and parish priests. The current round of applications will close on 20 November 2017. The second tranche of applications will take place in March 2018.

Will there be an opportunity to look at gender issues in relation to the composition of the new CMAT Boards?

We will be following the recommendation from the Governance Working Group that we use an open process for the recruitment of new foundation directors which is based on skills in the first instance. However, we shall also make every possible effort to ensure that there is a good gender balance on the new Boards.

How will the directors communicate with the local governors and vice-versa?

We expect the directors and governors in the new CMATs to determine how they want to work this within their CMAT in collaboration with the newly appointed CEO but we are clear that good two-way communication between directors and governors will be a vital characteristic of a successful CMAT and we will want to see clear evidence that this is working well.

Will local governing bodies be able to meet with the CEO?

Again, we see that it will be critical that the CEO is visible and accessible and we would want to see evidence that this is happening in practice. We would expect to see that systems are developed to facilitate this. Obviously, the CEO would also want to ensure that they are in regular communication with local governing bodies when there is a specific issue which needs to be addressed.

Will the sponsored academies continue to be sponsored by their local CMATs?

We are in discussions with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) on this. Our understanding is that the RSC will be content for an academy presently sponsored by NRCDES to move into one of the new CMATs with the CMAT becoming the sponsor, however, the RSC will want to first be assured that the new CMAT will be able to provide ongoing support for the academy. It is also possible that a sponsored academy with a track record of successful outcomes over the past two to three years could as part of the move to the new CMAT be 're-designated', however, this is an issue for the RSC and not for the Diocese of Nottingham.

4. Teaching, Standards and Effects on the School

Will the local governing body have a role in looking at standards in the new CMATs?

Yes, in fact this role will be further strengthened in our new arrangements. It is of vital importance that the local governing body oversees and monitors standards (including pupils' wider outcomes) in the school in order to ensure that each of our Catholic schools provides an outstanding, all-round Catholic education.

What would be the role of the local governing body in the new CMAT with Ofsted?

The local governing body would continue to be involved in a school's Ofsted (and diocesan canonical inspection), alongside representation from the CMAT executive, the CEO and the Board of Directors where appropriate.

Will all systems be the same across schools with data collection and looking at standards?

This will be a key question for the new CMATs and it is recognised that any new data system will take time to roll out across the CMAT so there will be a need for a transitional period.

Will there be an SEN provision within the new CMAT?

Local Authorities will continue to take a statutory role regarding SEN issues. However, the CMATs may also want to develop additional services to support pupils in schools such as pupil wellbeing and educational psychology services. These will be decisions for each of the CMAT communities to make based on their needs and in collaboration with the CEO.

Would there be any provision for behaviour in the CMAT?

This could be part of the provision that the CMAT offers. It is not our role to say what the provision should be here, this will be something for the newly appointed CEOs to discuss with the local school communities and will be dependent on need.

What impact will the CEO and central executive team have on the day to day running of schools?

The CEO and executive team would intervene in a school where standards is an issue, however, the day to day management of schools is down to individual headteachers and not the CEO, there will be no intervention when schools are doing well.

5. Services

What will be centralised across the CMAT and what will be localised?

Finance and HR functions will largely be centralised but there will be some finance related work which will have to be carried out locally. Additional areas may be centralised as the CMAT develops and where local circumstances suggest it would be beneficial. The CEO and Executive Team will engage with the schools in discussions on future development of the CMAT so that the growth of the central CMAT functions meets their needs and the local circumstances.

Will the payroll for the MATs be centralised?

Yes, payroll will be centralised across the four CMATs.

Would it be possible to set out what the cost of the services delivered centrally by the CMAT will be and what those services will look like?

Yes, the Local Implementation Teams will be engaging with headteachers this Autumn Term to discuss this with them.

Can advice be given on where schools should be buying their services from in this interim period as contracts come up for renewal or replacement?

Yes, we have already issued guidance on the management of contracts in the run up to September 2018 but more will be done on a school by school basis by the Local Implementation Teams this Autumn Term.

What are the benefits of the central contracts?

You are able to choose the suppliers, the larger buying power of the CMATs will allow for savings. Churchmarketplace will support with this process.

What will be the role of the clerk to governors?

Clerks will still be required and will still be supporting the work of the local governing bodies. There will be changes to ways of working as we are introducing 'Trust Governor', an e-based resource, to support efficient practices across the CMATs. The clerks will also be supported in their work by the Trust Company Secretary.

6. Finances and Resources

With the pressures on school budgets will the establishment of these new CMAT posts lead to redundancies?

We certainly hope that the phased approach to establishing the CMAT central teams will ensure that redundancies can be avoided wherever possible. The model of financing the new MATs suggests that centralising contracts and service delivery will, over time, relieve some of the pressures on school budgets and more than offset the salary costs of the central CMAT posts.

Where does the money come from for the 5% contribution towards the work of the CMAT?

This will come from the GAG (general annual grant) funding only, not from other income streams such as pupil premium funding.

Will the CMAT 5% contribution cover the present Diocesan Schools' Contribution?

Yes, the 5% top slice will cover the Diocesan Schools' Contribution and delivery of services from the NRCDES.

Why is the top slice 5%, why not 3%?

We did a lot of research on this before deciding on the 5%, the decision was based on what other MATs do and the advice from the National Schools Commissioner on what funding is required to establish a fully functional and sustainable MAT. We couldn't say that this would stay always the same as it is not possible to predict the future where educational finance is concerned. The 5% is to pay for the central roles and services and there will also be money available for school improvement work.

Will the 5% be immediate or will it build to this amount?

It will be 5% from the beginning, the first year may involve an interim school improvement model, however in phase 2, the executive team will be able to decide on a permanent school improvement model based on the needs of the schools within the CMAT. This will also allow time for the CEO to decide on the best and most appropriate model for school improvement at a local level.

When will we see savings start to accrue as part of the CMAT and the introduction of the proposed top slice?

We know that there are real term cuts to school budgets as part of the national funding formula and therefore we know that schools have to collaborate in the delivery of functions and services in order to minimise the impact of the cuts. The CMAT model with collaborative services delivered centrally appears the best option to protect school budgets in the longer term. We also need to be clear that the CMAT central funding will pay for services that individual schools already have to fund and so this will not be an 'additional' pressure on school budgets.

How will we account for planned financial projects?

We have asked schools to identify if projects have been established with funds on a 'restricted use' basis. The Local Implementation Teams will discuss this with the schools.

Are we confident that the 5% top slice is reasonable and will still allow schools to operate?

The 5% figure is based on the national modelling undertaken by the National Schools Commissioner of what is required by a MAT to be fully functioning and sustainable. It is important to recognise that with the funding, the CMAT will deliver services for the academies in the Trust that the schools are presently funding from their central budgets, so in effect there is no additional call on school finances. In addition, the likely cost savings to be made by the CMAT on service delivery through central procurement with third party providers should have a significant positive impact on finances.

Will all of the school funding be centralised by the CMAT? Will the GAG funding go to the school?

Present DfE/Education and Skills Funding Agency policy is for each school in a CMAT to receive its GAG (general annual grant) funding directly.

Will the school be deciding its own use of funding?

Headteachers will decide how they want to use funding for their school. The CMAT Central Finance Team will support them with development of their annual and 3 year budgets. The Board of Directors will approve annual school budgets. Local governing bodies will monitor the effectiveness of the use of resources.

7. Impact on Staff

What happens to terms and conditions?

Standard Teachers' Pay and Conditions (STPCD) will be adhered to for as long as they are in existence.

Terms and conditions of employment are protected by the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ('TUPE'). This means that, on the day staff transfer employers, such as from a VA school to a CMAT or from CMAT to CMAT, all staff will transfer with their terms and conditions as they were before.

Terms and conditions are a contract between an employer and employee and so can only be changed by agreement. TUPE requires that if a school envisages offering new terms and conditions, they must consult with employees and their representatives.

What will happen with the current business managers in the existing MATs?

Finance and HR functions will be brought into the central CMAT structure and so there will be opportunities available within the central CMAT for those undertaking those functions presently in schools. It is, however, recognised that schools will still need to have individuals to support their administration, to ensure that things run smoothly and to provide support to headteachers on day to day non-teaching aspects, so there will continue to be opportunities for people to work within the school setting as well.

Where will the CEO and central teams be physically located?

We are undertaking an audit of options and space available in our schools and other diocesan buildings and will consider the possible options for each of our CMATs. Our Local Implementation Teams will continue to work on this over the coming months.

Who is responsible for communicating this all to staff?

We will continue to provide information through our standard communication channels such as the *Director's Update* and the *Email Bulletin for Schools*. Local Implementation Teams will be working with headteachers and governors to ensure that staff are engaged and supported. We would expect that, in the first instance, communication is led by the headteacher in each school however, the Local Implementation Teams will also provide support where required.

What is the role of Diocesan Education Service in the future?

The NRCDES will continue to act as the agent for the Bishop of Nottingham on all matters concerning Catholic education and this will continue to involve an oversight of standards. However, the more direct role on standards will be passed on to the CEO for each of the CMATs. The NRCDES will continue to engage in direct communication with the RSC and the DfE on all matters concerning Catholic schools in the Diocese of Nottingham. In addition to this, the NRCDES will continue to lead on admission arrangements for diocesan schools and work on the appointment and training of foundation directors and governors. It will also continue to administer and carry out denominational inspection (diocesan canonical inspection) and will support schools on areas such as Catholic Life, Collective Worship, Religious Education and Relationships and Sex Education.

What advice is there on vacancy filling in the interim period?

A Vacancy Filling Strategy document was issued to all schools in February 2017. This is presently being reviewed and will be re-issued to schools shortly. Queries can be addressed to academies@nottingham-des.org.uk or to Neil Weightman on 01332 293833 (Ext 211).

