



St Francis' Catholic Primary School  
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15 October 2021

Dear Parents / Carers and Friends,

### **Conversion to Academy Status and establishing a Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)**

You may recall from a previous letter and the informal stakeholder survey issued before the summer break that governors have been exploring with other Catholic schools the proposal shown below. The questions raised by parents in the informal stakeholder survey have been answered in the two attached appendices. A separate Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to answer questions from staff and governors has been updated for internal circulation.

### **Proposal: to convert to academy status and join The Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust on the target opening date of 1 March 2022**

As a school in an Ofsted category, St Francis' has a directive Academy Order from the Secretary of State for Education, so is not able to opt out of conversion to an academy or consult formally about this change. However, the school's leaders and governors are fully involved in the formation of The Cardinal Newman Catholic Trust and the interests of the pupils of St Francis' School remains at the heart of all we do. As part of our ongoing commitment to pay regard to the views of parents, the governing body invite you to complete a short online questionnaire. A hardcopy version of the questionnaire can be made available upon request at the school office. The data collected will be used to produce a report for the governing body to consider at the end of the autumn term. N.B. all reporting will be anonymous.

Please click on the link below to complete a short online questionnaire by **3PM FRIDAY 26 November 2021**. <https://forms.office.com/r/wnT93uPKqH>

### **What would be the Main Benefits for Pupils in joining a Catholic MAT?**

Delivering education improvements is at the centre of this proposal. Our proposed MAT would have as its driving imperative the provision of trust-wide school improvement strategies backed by access to greater resources which would improve the statutory academic and Catholic education standards and lead to accelerated and sustained improvement. The key benefits include:

- Creating the opportunities to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential and live life to the full through our commitment to our Catholic vision and ethos, improving the quality of education for all pupils
- Increasing opportunities for pupils to learn from expert teachers and specialist staff who could innovate, share knowledge, and best practice across our family of Catholic schools. Existing MAT leaders have already told us how beneficial it was for staff to collaborate during the early days of the pandemic. Leaders worked together to understand and develop new ways of working to respond to rapidly changing Government guidance. Teachers worked together to design and implement new home learning materials in all the MAT's schools. Staff in standalone schools have had to cope with the increased demands on their own. Another example of how teaching might change would be through math leaders from different schools in the MAT working together to develop a shared Key Stage 1 math curriculum for implementation in all schools, but which allows its teaching and tasks to be adapted to suit a range of individual pupil needs to ensure all children make good progress.

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- Pupils would benefit from the cost savings created through bulk buying power which could be used to improve resources and provide specialist support which may not be affordable for a single standalone school e.g., speech and language therapist, sensory play equipment, IT technician support.
- Pupils would benefit from being educated within a bigger, single legal entity as it would operate with common policies, systems and practice allowing senior leaders to focus on improving the quality of education and related matters that help to ensure all children are ready to learn e.g., wellbeing and attendance. This would be possible because MAT support staff would work together take care of all non-teaching matters in a joined-up way for all schools e.g., contracts, facilities, HR, statutory financial returns, cleaning, repairs and maintenance. A Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in another MAT reported that schools joining their MAT resulted in headteachers having approximately one third of their time being freed up.
- Similarly, pupils would benefit from being served by schools who can bid for additional funding grants only available to academies. For example, building MAT capacity releases headteachers to focus more of their time on driving school improvement. Sponsor grants enable leaders and teachers in high performing schools to support less well performing schools to improve the quality of education provision so that all children benefit from great teaching. This has been proven in other MATs to be a mutually beneficial learning exercise as high performing schools often find that under-performing schools have areas of strength they can share and implement in their own school. MATs with 5 or more schools serving more than 3000 pupils in total automatically receive additional funding called a School Condition Allocation to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings.
- Pupils could benefit from shared enrichment and extra-curricular activities which become affordable when more children participate and promote inter-academy friendships e.g., trips and sports matches. This would be particularly beneficial for pupils as they grow older and transfer to the same secondary school

#### What would be the Main Disadvantages of joining a Catholic MAT?

Greater freedoms would bring additional responsibilities and potential risks for a MAT Trust Board as a charitable company responsible for the performance and fulfilment of statutory duties for a group of schools. Other MAT leaders have been very willing to talk to us to explain how their MATs were set up and share their key learnings which has been helpful in informing our thinking and due diligence process. MAT induction and ongoing professional development training would be provided before and after opening, so we are confident that by working together and complying with the guidance issued by the Department for Education, these responsibilities and risks can be managed effectively and efficiently.

#### Would any Changes be made to the school because of joining a MAT?

- The main changes relate to the legal status of the school i.e. a Local Authority maintained school to an independent charitable company regulated by the Department for Education.
- The MAT would contract directly with the Department for Education to receive its funding rather than through the Local Authority.
- All staff wherever they are based would be employed by the MAT, not an individual governing body.
- The MAT as a single legal entity would be governed by a single Trust Board responsible for overseeing the performance of all schools and ensuring compliance with its statutory duties. However, committees would be established to work in accordance with the Trust Board's Scheme of



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Delegation. The remit for each Local Governing Committee would be to focus on holding their school's headteacher to account for the quality of education, pupil outcomes, wellbeing, spirituality and attendance, community engagement. Two parent governors would sit in each Local Governing Committee so do let us know if you are interested in finding out more about the role.

In embarking on the exploration of this move please be assured that the governors do not intend to make any changes on conversion to the name of the school, its unique identity, pupils' uniform or its Catholic ethos and values. This means that day-to-day leadership of the school and staff engagement with parents and pupils would continue as it does now.

#### What Happens Next?

The outcomes of the parent questionnaire will be reported to the governing body to consider at the end of the autumn term. N.B. all reporting will be anonymous.

Yours sincerely,

Cath Hanley  
Chair of Governors

Catherine Hunt  
Headteacher



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## **APPENDIX A**

### **What is the Role of the Diocese?**

Canon Law (Church Law) provides that each Diocesan bishop has strategic responsibility to commission sufficient school places to meet the needs of baptised Catholic Children in this area. A Catholic school is one which is recognised as such by the Diocesan bishop.

In respect of his schools, which includes academies the bishop has the legal right to appoint (and remove) an overall majority of directors and governors. In addition to all the other legal responsibilities, the law recognises that foundation directors and governors are appointed specifically to ensure:

- That the Catholic character of the school is preserved.
- That the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed.
- That the religious education curriculum is in accordance with the bishop's policy for the Diocese.

The Diocesan bishop, acting through his Director of Schools and Colleges is responsible for:

- The provision and future development of excellent Catholic education throughout the Diocese.
- The oversight of high educational standards, progress, and outcomes in all Diocesan schools
- The appointment, development and training of foundation directors and governors and their removal.
- The inspection of religious life of schools and RE (Section 48 inspections)
- The development of Catholic teachers and leaders (and all appointments should be made with diocesan protocol)
- The oversight of school buildings/ estate and capital projects
- Planning of school place provision
- Engaging with the Local Authority (LA), Regional School Commissioner (RSC) and Ofsted
- Maintaining links with the Catholic Education Service and appropriate government departments

### **What is the Bishop's Vision for His Schools?**

In 2016 and again in 2019, Bishop Declan shared his vision for all his schools to work together and undertake a due diligence exercise in readiness for the establishment of Catholic Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) across the diocese. His reason for doing this was to respond to the changes in the educational landscape and "ensure Catholic education is sustainable and remains true to its key principles for the generations of pupils now and yet to come".

### **What Options were Considered?**

In 2016, the Diocesan trustees considered the following options to inform the development of the bishop's vision for Catholic Schools:

1. **Do nothing** – this was and is still not considered to be a viable option. The Government has repeatedly made it clear that overall, families of schools, or MATs, are the best option for improving school standards and pupil outcomes. National policy has led to the South West region becoming the most academised region in England and a reduction to funding to Local Authorities means their capacity to support schools has largely reduced or disappeared. The Diocesan Director of Schools

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and Colleges has written to every affected Local Authority to advise them of the bishop's vision, so they are aware of his preferred direction of travel and timescales. Currently, not all Catholic schools are currently judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' and there is a backlog of overdue inspections due to Covid. This means there is a risk the judgement of some schools could change and/or become 'requires improvement'. Where a Catholic school is judged by Ofsted to be 'inadequate' the Department for Education can issue a Directive Academy Order which means the school MUST join a MAT. Currently Clifton Diocese does not have any MATs to support poorly performing schools to improve so there is a risk of them being moved to a non-Catholic MAT.

2. **Promote school federations** – this was and is still not considered to be a viable option in the long term because a Federation is where two Local Authority maintained schools are overseen by a single executive headteacher and governing body. Occasionally in recent years the bishop has given permission for schools to federate to address an issue in the short-term but legally and operationally, they remain two separate schools funded via the Local Authority so the factors set out in option 1 also apply to option 2.
3. **Promote school trusts or MATs** – this was and remains the preferred option. A MAT is a charitable company whose Trust Board and Senior Catholic Education Leader (SCEL) also known as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) are accountable for the educational and financial performance of more than one school. MATs operate publicly funded or state-maintained schools so receive their funding directly from Central Government (rather than via the Local Authority). Each academy remains a Catholic School under the authority of the Bishop of Clifton and its religious designation does not change.

### **How would establishing Catholic MATs secure the long-term future of Catholic Education across the diocese for children being served by Catholic schools now and in the future?**

Setting up Catholic MATs would help school leaders work together for the common good to overcome three of the biggest challenges currently facing Catholic schools:

1. **Catholic leadership** - headteacher posts in Catholic schools are called reserved posts because the person appointed must be a practising Catholic. There is a shortage of Catholic leaders able to protect and promote a high quality of Catholic education for all children attending Catholic Schools. In some schools, very skilled and capable but non-practising leaders are in post on an interim or temporary basis. Turnover could be minimised if schools formally work together as part of a Catholic MAT which is a charitable company led by a practising Catholic known as a Senior Catholic Education Leader or Chief Executive Officer.
2. **Quality of Catholic education** – It would be the job of the Senior Catholic Education Leader (SCEL) also known as a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to work with every headteacher to drive school improvement by sharing best practice, staff training and resources across all schools in the MAT. Using talented staff to support the professional development of others, especially other teachers, would help to ensure that EVERY child reaches their full potential. This is particularly important right now as many children need more support to overcome loss of learning due to Covid.



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3. **Financial hardship** – Schools' funding depends on pupil numbers; the LA itself is already expecting a significant overcapacity of school places in the next few years and deficits are likely. We have no option but to contemplate different ways of working the finances. A MAT would provide an additional level of control and support currently not available.



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## APPENDIX B – PARENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

This document has been produced to answer the questions and comments given by parents to the informal survey issued in the summer term. A separate FAQ document to answer questions from staff and governors has been updated for internal circulation. Answers have been grouped under themed headings.

	Vision, Ethos and Education
What is the rush in completing a conversion to and join a MAT?	It was in 2016 when the bishop first set out his vision and directives for all his schools to be academy ready by September 2020. The purpose was to respond to the changes in the educational landscape and “ensure Catholic education is sustainable and remains true to its key principles for the generations of pupils now and yet to come”. Five years notice cannot be considered a rush as it has provided governors with plenty of time and opportunity to complete a conversion and join a MAT.
How would the Trust board ensure that each school within the MAT retains its one unique character?	<p>The individual identity and character of each school reflects its unique community and would be retained and celebrated as a strength within the MAT family of schools. There is no intention to change this.</p> <p>In looking for schools to work more closely together, the headteachers worked together to write a shared MAT vision statement to help everyone connected to the schools understand and unite behind a common purpose:</p> <p><b><i>‘Seeking God in all things together’ Cardinal Newman.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Through ensuring that all our Schools are provided with the opportunity to realise their unique gifts and take their next steps knowing how and when to use those gifts for the common good.’</i></b></p>
I want to know the specific benefits for our children. So, exactly what are the trust schools failing to do for children now and how would moving to academy status would fix this.	<p>To be clear, the bishop’s vision and directive for all his schools to be academy ready by September was not because schools were considered to be ‘failing’ to do things for children now but as a bigger picture, strategic decision to respond to the changes in the educational landscape and “ensure Catholic education is sustainable and remains true to its key principles for the generations of pupils now and yet to come”.</p> <p>Please refer to the covering letter if you’d like to find out more about the options considered and challenges facing schools which could be more easily overcome within a bigger MAT family of schools.</p>
Exactly how would our children’s	Delivering education improvements is at the centre of this proposal. Our proposed MAT would have as its driving imperative the provision of trust wide school improvement strategies backed by access to greater resources which would

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<p>education be directly improved, how you would measure that and how parents would be able to hold the MAT accountable?</p> <p>Not clear to me what benefits this would bring to an already high performing school.</p> <p>What information can you give around how teaching would change once the new system comes in compared with what is currently being taught in the school, and why you believe this would benefit the children and give them a better future than they are currently receiving.</p>	<p>improve the statutory academic and Catholic education standards and lead to accelerated and sustained improvement. The key benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposed MAT would create the opportunities to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential and live life to the full through our commitment to our Catholic vision and ethos, improving the quality of education for all pupils</li> <li>• Teaching would change through increased opportunities for pupils to learn from expert teachers and specialist staff who could innovate, share knowledge and best practice across our family of Catholic schools. Existing MAT leaders have already told us how beneficial it was for staff to collaborate during the early days of the pandemic. Leaders worked together to understand and develop new ways of working to respond to rapidly changing Government guidance. Teachers worked together to design and implement new home learning materials in all the MAT's schools. Staff in standalone schools have had to cope with the increased demands on their own. Another example of how teaching might change would be through maths leaders from different schools in the MAT working together to develop a shared Key Stage 1 maths curriculum for implementation in all schools but which allows its teaching and tasks to be adapted to suit a range of individual pupil needs to ensure all children make good progress.</li> <li>• Pupils would benefit from the cost savings created through bulk buying power which could be used to improve resources and provide specialist support which may not be affordable for a single standalone school e.g. speech and language therapist, sensory play equipment, IT technician support.</li> <li>• Pupils would benefit from being educated within a bigger, single legal entity as it would operate with common policies, systems and practice allowing senior leaders to focus on improving the quality of education and related matters that help to ensure all children are ready to learn e.g. wellbeing and attendance. This would be possible because MAT support staff would work together take care of all non-teaching matters in a joined up way for all schools e.g. contracts, facilities, HR, statutory financial returns, cleaning, repairs and maintenance. One school governor who works in another MAT reported that schools joining their MAT resulted in headteachers having approximately one third of their time being freed up.</li> <li>• Similarly, pupils would benefit from being served by schools who can bid for additional funding grants only available to academies. For example, building MAT capacity releases headteachers to focus more of their time on driving school improvement. Sponsor grants enable leaders and teachers in high performing schools to support less well performing schools to improve the quality of education provision so that all children benefit from great teaching. This has been proven in other MATs to be a mutually beneficial learning exercise as high performing schools often find that under-performing schools have areas of strength they can share and implement in their own school. MATs with 5 or more schools serving more than 3000 pupils in total automatically receive addition funding called a School Condition Allocation to help maintain and improve the condition of school buildings.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils could benefit from shared enrichment and extra-curricular activities which become affordable when more children participate and promote inter-academy friendships e.g. trips and sports matches. This would be particularly beneficial for pupils as they grow older and transfer to the same secondary school.</li> </ul> <p>In primary schools, as now, SAT results are used to measure improvement in pupils' academic achievement. Internal monitoring and evaluation is ongoing and led by the headteacher and other teaching professionals but in a MAT would be supported by peers in other schools and overseen by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who in turn is held to account for performance by the trust board of directors.</p> <p>Similarly, external measurement would continue through inspections. A Catholic School Inspection assesses the quality of Catholic life, prayer life and RE provision. Ofsted assesses the effectiveness of safeguarding, leadership and management, quality of education, behaviour and attitudes and early years education. The views of parents are sought as a routine part of every inspection.</p> <p>Please read the governance section to find out more about how MATs are held to account for performance by the Department for Education and the role of the Members, directors and local governing committees which would include two parent governors.</p>
	<p>The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the most senior employee with delegated responsibility for the operational leadership of the whole MAT. The CEO can delegate as they see fit to other staff but headteachers would be expected to lead the day-to-day running of their schools as they do now but with more freedom to focus on improving the quality of education and related matters that help to ensure all children are ready to learn e.g., wellbeing and attendance. This would be possible because the MAT CEO would work with support staff to oversee the delivery of all non-teaching matters in a joined-up way for all schools e.g. contracts, facilities, HR, statutory financial returns, cleaning, repairs and maintenance.</p>
<p>I believe in the positive impact of competition. Many schools do not. I would like to know where we can get information about how such things might be impacted by</p>	<p>Joining a MAT is usually a way of offering increased opportunities for pupils to participate in inter-school events, including competitive sports matches, alongside other children in the MAT family. Shared enrichment and extra-curricular activities become more affordable when more children participate and promote inter-academy friendships e.g., trips and sports matches. This would be particularly beneficial for pupils as they grow older and transfer to the same secondary school.</p>



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merger into a MAT.	
<p>What is the critical mass/optimum size for a MAT supporting schools which are geographically dispersed, particularly across different LAs?</p>	<p>There are national, regional and local MATs operating successfully across England. In January 2021, 57% of all state funded schools in the SW region are academies, the largest proportion of academies of any English region. Approximately 50% of them are small MATs overseeing 1-5 schools 23% oversee 6-10 academies, 20% oversee 11-20 academies and 6% oversee 21+ academies. However, the total number of pupils served by a MAT rather than the number of schools determines what is considered as an optimum size. A total of 5000 pupils is considered optimal in achieving economies of scale.</p> <p>At the point of opening, our MAT would be part of a group of five primary schools situated in the Diocese of Clifton and in the Bristol and North Somerset Local Authorities with the furthest distance between the schools being approximately 13 miles and a travelling time of approximately 40 minutes. The distance between Bristol schools is much less.</p> <p>The bishop's growth plan was communicated to all his schools in late June 2021 and indicated that our MAT is expected to grow to oversee 16 primary, 2 secondary and 1 sixth form college by 2025 to serve approximately 8000 pupils in total.</p> <p>Managing geographically dispersed schools has been covered by MAT speakers invited to speak to our governors and leaders. One speaker was the CEO of a South West based MAT with 22 primary academies spread across two counties. They had 75 miles between the most northern and southern school and a travelling time of two hours. To manage this, their MAT introduced small local clusters of schools which makes in person visits possible within a short travelling distance to continue shared practice in planning, assessment and moderation as well as ongoing networking and collaboration with other local schools not in the MAT. The CEO speaker also mentioned how use of technology has become the new 'normal', especially throughout the pandemic. This has been our experience too. All our governing body meetings have been held remotely over the last 18 months, so this is a way of working that people are now used to.</p>
<p>As a non religious family, I would like to know if the delivery of Catholic teaching would be more or less?</p>	<p>There is no intention to make changes to Catholic teaching or make it stricter. RE is a core part of the curriculum as is the teaching of British values and citizenship which aims to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required for pupils to learn about themselves as developing individuals and members of their communities, building on the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development.</p>
	<p>The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is the most senior employee with delegated responsibility for the operational leadership and management of the whole MAT.</p>



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<p>How are you going to bring my child's school up from inadequate (Ofsted) to outstanding again? How would the MAT address this? What processes would you put in place that respect the teaching staff at my child's school and don't make it a corporate organisation?</p> <p>How does this affect MY child's school? What would MY child's education look like? How are the local catholic clergy linked into this?</p>	<p>The CEO can delegate as they see fit to other staff but headteachers would be expected to lead the day-to-day running of their schools as they do now but with more freedom to focus on improving the quality of education and related matters that help to ensure all children are ready to learn e.g., wellbeing and attendance. This would be possible because the MAT CEO would work with support staff to oversee the delivery of all non-teaching matters in a joined up way for all schools e.g. contracts, facilities, HR, statutory financial returns, cleaning, repairs and maintenance.</p> <p>The MAT CEO as the lead for school improvement would also identify where there are areas of strength and expertise which can be shared to improve leadership and teaching practice in other schools if appropriate. Similarly, any improvement themes identified across schools would inform the design of the MAT's programme of ongoing professional development, talent management and succession planning accessible to all staff. More collaboration would provide more opportunities to deliver peer-to-peer support and career progression for existing staff to lead on trust wide areas of responsibility but <u>only if they wish to do so</u>. For example: SENDco, subject leadership of maths, science or English, HR, facilities. In addition, the MAT would continue to work with external partners including the local maths and English hubs alongside the Five Counties Teaching School Hub Alliance.</p> <p>The MAT CEO would work closely with every headteacher to provide support and challenge in the evaluation of their school's performance, improvement planning and implementation to ensure the improvement priorities are identified and addressed in each school. CEO oversight would be particularly beneficial to each school following an Ofsted or Catholic School Inspection as they would provide skilled support and challenge to ensure the school action plan would address the findings made by the inspectors. This would help to improve the school's overall judgement at the next inspection.</p> <p>Where a school need to address improvement priorities which relate specifically to its leadership and management of Catholic life, the school's prayer life and/or RE provision, inspectors often recommend that schools increase and develop the impact of chaplaincy across the schools supported by the local catholic clergy.</p> <p>Additional regulatory oversight is also provided by the Department of Education who operates through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). The ESFA oversees MAT funding and the RSC oversees educational performance, both oversee MAT governance. The MAT CEO and trust board chair of directors are asked to meet with the RSC every year to be held accountable for MAT educational performance. The MAT CEO as its Accounting Officer is also required to ensure compliance with its</p>
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	funding agreements and the Trust Academy Handbook which, amongst others, requires the submission of several statutory financial returns to the ESFA.
	<b>Finance and Staffing</b>
Given that the Catholic ethos would be diluted because each school would no longer be required to have a Catholic headteacher, can you honestly say that this improves the Catholic education for our children?	<p>Yes, because it is not the case that the Catholic ethos would be diluted, it is quite the opposite. The MAT proposal was proposed to respond to the changes in the educational landscape and “ensure Catholic education is sustainable and remains true to its key principles for the generations of pupils now and yet to come”</p> <p>Headteacher posts in Catholic schools are called reserved posts because the person appointed must be a practising Catholic. There is a shortage of Catholic leaders able to protect and promote a high quality of Catholic education for all children attending Catholic Schools. In some schools, very skilled and capable but non-practising leaders are in post on an interim or temporary basis. Turnover could be minimised if schools formally work together as part of a Catholic MAT which is a charitable company led by a practising Catholic known as a Senior Catholic Education Leader (SCEL) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO). This remains the case to promote and safeguard catholicity in Catholic schools.</p>
<p>What are the additional costs of running the MAT &amp; how would this be funded?</p> <p>Would funding be affected for the school?</p>	<p>Additional costs of running the MAT arise because they are a charitable company regulated by the Department for Education (DfE). As a result, there is a much higher level of regulatory oversight and expectation required of MATs than is currently the case. The DfE expect each MAT to employ as a minimum a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to drive school improvement and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to ensure that the associated statutory duties, including financial management and reporting requirement, are fulfilled. More details can be found via:  <a href="https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101222/academies-planning-calendar-2021-to-2022.pdf">Academies Planning Calendar 2021 to 2022 .pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>Our MAT proposes to employ a full time MAT CEO and a part time CFO at the point of opening.</p> <p>MATs receive funding directly for every school they oversee by signing funding agreement or contract with the Department for Education. School funding would be calculated based on pupil numbers in the same way that it is now. Currently the local authority takes a percentage of each school’s funding before it is issued to them. As an academy, each school would receive all its funding but would pay a ‘central service charge’ to the MAT to cover the cost of services provided by it. For example, delivery of expert school improvement and business services (legal/finance/HR/payroll/premises) to free up time for headteachers to focus on teaching and learning.</p>



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	<p>Some additional funding grants are made available by the DfE only to academies. One example is the Trust Capacity Fund which is designed to support new as well as existing MATs to grow their central team capacity. This would be very helpful to our MAT as the Bishop's growth plan communicated to all his schools in late June 2021 indicated that our MAT is expected to grow to oversee 16 primary, 2 secondary and 1 sixth form college by 2025 to serve approximately 8000 pupils in total.</p> <p>MAT also create opportunities to do more with the existing funding received. A group of schools can obtain better value when negotiating contracts for services essential for running schools. Cost savings generated for each school can be used to support the provision of teaching and learning and extra-curricular activities for pupils. For example, external specialist teachers and become more affordable and accessible when paid for by a group of schools e.g., speech and language therapy, sensory play equipment, music to name a few.</p>
<b>Communication and Change Management</b>	
<p>Have I missed the parent consultation?</p> <p>What role would pfa, parent forum, school governors play in relation to school becoming an academy.</p>	<p>No. The informal survey responses helped to keep parents updated and provide an opportunity to ask questions which have been answered in this document. Please see the covering formal consultation letter inviting all parent/carers to participate in the consultation process. The letter includes a link to the online questionnaire and the deadline for returns is Friday 26 November at 3pm.</p> <p>One of the core functions of school governors is to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction so governors are leading this consultation process considering the proposal to apply to become an academy and join the MAT. The governing body has launched this formal consultation exercise to provide an opportunity for all other parties with a legitimate interest in the school to have their say. As examples, this includes but is not limited to other parents, staff, local residents, local authority councillors, other local schools and nurseries.</p>
<b>Governance</b>	
<p>My main concern is the interaction between the individual school 'board' and the overall MAT governing body - it is vital the local school board retains a strong independent</p>	<p>Governors from all five schools proposing to join the trust on the date of opening have been working together to agree how the MAT governance arrangements would work but it is the MAT Trust Board who would be responsible for setting the governance structure model and Scheme of Delegation (SoD) and keeping it under annual review. The SoD clarifies what delegated authorities are given by the trust board to its committees but also to executive and school leaders.</p> <p>The plan is for each school to be overseen and held accountable by a Local Governing Committee (LGC). In summary, the remit for each Local Governing Committee would be to focus on holding their school's headteacher to account for the quality of education, pupil outcomes, wellbeing, spirituality and</p>



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<p>voice and is heard by the overall governing body</p>	<p>attendance, community engagement. Two parent governors would sit in each Local Governing Committee.</p> <p>All committees report to the MAT trust board (the legally accountable Trust Board for the educational and financial performance of all schools in the MAT) to ensure directors maintain effective oversight.</p> <p>The MAT governance structure and ways of working are designed to promote two-way communication, effective and efficient teamwork between the board and its committees. By working together directors and governors would improve the quality and impact of governance upon standards and outcomes for children. The trust board would focus on holding the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer to account for the educational and financial performance of the trust as a whole and local governing committees would focus on holding individual school headteachers to account for the educational performance in a designated school to avoid duplication. The role of local governors (including parent governors) is recognized as hugely important because they have detailed, local knowledge about the school, its pupils, staff and community.</p> <p>A diagram of the proposed MAT governance structure is shown below:</p> <pre> graph TD     Members[Members] --&gt; Board[Board of Directors]     Board --&gt; Finance[Trust Finance, Audit &amp; Resources Committee]     Board --&gt; Ethos[Trust Ethos &amp; Education Committee]     Finance --- LGC1[St Francis, Nailsea LGC]     Finance --- LGC2[St Bernard's Shirehampton LGC]     Finance --- LGC3[St Bonaventure's Bishopton LGC]     Ethos --- LGC4[SS Peter &amp; Paul Redland LGC]     Ethos --- LGC5[St Teresa's Monks Park LGC]   </pre>
<p>What is the Diocese going to do differently to ensure that a switch from a governance role to an operational oversight role is successful?</p>	<p>The Diocese would have a different governance role by appointing their representatives as MAT members. Members meet formally once a year at an annual general meeting and have the following powers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To appoint and remove MAT trust board directors</li> <li>• Instruct directors to take specific action where Members consider that director are unwilling or unable to act in the best interests of the MAT</li> <li>• Amend the MAT articles of association, including change the name of the MAT, its purpose or wind up / close the MAT</li> <li>• Appoint and remove the auditors</li> <li>• Receive the annual audited accounts</li> </ul>



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	<p>The bishop would continue to appoint the majority of the MAT trust board and local governing committees as foundation directors or local governors to act as his representative, implement his vision and directives.</p> <p>The Diocese is supporting the setup of the MAT, including the recruitment processes for both the CEO and CFO to ensure the operational oversight role is successful.</p>
<p>Would there be a skills survey by the trust board of each schools current governing body, and if required a change of governors/COG?</p>	<p>Yes. All existing and new directors and local governors are required to complete a Catholic Education Service skills audit as part of the recruitment process to ensure that collective the board and its committee are equipped with the diverse range of skills, knowledge and experience required to deliver effective governance.</p> <p>All applications to become a MAT board director also require a formal interview process regardless of whether they are an existing governor or a completely new candidate. Other existing governors are only asked to complete the skills audit if they wish to transfer into the MAT on their existing term of office. Governors are usually appointed for 4 years as a term of office so transferring on their existing term of office would help to manage turnover and succession planning more effectively than everyone starting and finishing on the same date.</p> <p>A governance professional would ensure that everyone involved in the MAT's governance arrangements receives effective training, induction, and ongoing professional development to ensure everyone is clear about their different roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>If you are interested in becoming a MAT director or local governor please visit the Clifton Diocese website for more information:  <a href="#">Leadership &amp; Governance   Clifton Diocese Schools and Colleges</a></p>