



Diocese of Westminster

Education Commission

FAMILIES OF SCHOOLS: The implementation of Catholic Academy Trusts (CATs)

September 2017



The Diocese of Westminster



Diocese of Westminster

Education Service
Vaughan House
46 Francis Street
SW1P 1QN

Tel: 020 7798 9005
Email: education@rcdow.org.uk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the launch in December 2016 of the **Academy Strategy and Policy** document the Education Service embarked on a five month consultation programme with all 11 Families of Schools to explain how collectively we can protect, secure and develop the Church's mission in Catholic education. Over 90% of schools attended these meetings to hear what was proposed, to have the opportunity to discuss, challenge, question what was on offer, and to listen to Headteachers and Chairs express their views. This was followed by extensive visits to governing bodies to answer queries and the publication of 5 FAQ documents.

1.2 This commitment to working together will help realise the aim of Catholic schools as set out in canon law¹:

Education must pay regard to the formation of the whole person, so that all may attain their eternal destiny and at the same time promote the common good of society. Children and young people are therefore to be cared for in such a way that their physical, moral and intellectual talents may develop in a harmonious manner, so that they may attain a greater sense of responsibility and the right use of freedom, and be formed to take an active part in social life. Canon §795.

This must always be at the forefront of all we are attempting to achieve.

1.3 The outcome of these meetings highlighted the following:

a. Schools and colleges recognised and empathised with the reasons why the Trustees had agreed to undertake this programme of reform. However, concerns were expressed as to what it would practically mean for individual communities and their perceived level of autonomy. Reassurances were sought that Headteachers would still be responsible for leading the day to day management of a school and governors would still be actively involved in the running and accountability of the school in supporting and developing its mission.

b. In coming together as a Family of Schools it became apparent early on that the schools' knowledge and understanding of each other is not ingrained or consistent. They were however willing to explore opportunities to improve this situation to nurture and develop the mission of the Church;

c. In those areas where Families of Schools crossed local authority lines the schools knew even less about each other and sought opportunities to gain a greater understanding and to develop areas of collaboration and cooperation in their Family to instill confidence that they can work for the common good;

d. The level of understanding of the Academy programme by governing bodies is variable and in some cases very

limited. Where governing bodies had instigated a research group to inform their decisions there was far greater confidence in becoming involved in the process. Where they had done nothing there was rumour and conjecture that needed to be unpicked, challenged and rectified;

e. Governors are willing to explore options but required more detail and more understanding of the practical elements of the conversion process and the benefits of conversion in comparison to existing models;

f. The lack of clarity at government level in the Academy programme made many governing bodies wary of change following the withdrawal of compulsory conversion;

g. The impact of financial austerity and the proposed introduction of the National Funding Formula led many governing bodies to focus on where opportunities for economies of scale could be found. They asked that the business case for Academies be robustly presented and made open to scrutiny. They have welcomed case studies about the benefits of academisation to be presented in the 17/18 academic year;

h. There was no appetite from schools for the diocese to provide a company model offering services they currently enjoy from their local authority or outsourced provider, but rather to encourage the diocese to seize the opportunity to signpost the best practice and act as a broker of services offering governors access to best deals;

i. In the pilot Family of Schools of Watford and Harrow it became clear, after both collective and individual meetings, that there was an overwhelming desire to become Academy, but not together. Each region felt they just did not know enough about the other to feel comfortable about a partnership at this time;

j. Two working parties were set up to help inform the Project Board of the views of Headteachers and Governing Bodies and have met monthly throughout 2017.

k. The majority of schools sought clarity and detail about the following:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Members; Directors; Local Academy Councils (LACs); and Headteachers;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Catholic Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trust. (The new name for the Lead Officer)
- The model contract of employment for the CEO;
- The Scheme of Delegation for the Trust;
- The service slice each school would have to pay to the Trust;
- The nature of an Executive team that would deliver services and compliance.

¹ Canon law is the codified system of laws and legal principles promulgated by the authority of the Catholic Church to regulate and organise the Church's life and mission.

1.3. The challenge undertaken by the Education Service and the Project Board has been to address all of these issues. This has involved extensive negotiation and reassurance at all levels that the programme is deliverable and achievable. It has affected the original timetable, but it is far more important to achieve each stage of due diligence carefully and collaboratively. It has involved the support of the DfE, CES, legal firms, Headteachers, Governors, and the Dioceses of Birmingham, Nottingham and Leeds.

1.4. The response to these challenges has been as follows:

a. It is crucial that a mindset of total local autonomy is challenged and schools have the opportunity to see benefits of working together and in partnership for the common good. Headteachers can be reassured that they are the substantive Head of their school and that will not change. The change is in the level of accountability added to their performance by the introduction of the Catholic Executive Officer (CEO) working in collaboration with the schools' governors. To that end various meeting have taken place arranged by the diocese and by the schools themselves to seek out opportunities to work together. The CEO is appointed to challenge and support the Headteacher within a CAT in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation and mission of the Church;

b. Families of Schools need time, opportunity, systems and protocols to get to know each other for the benefit of the common good. By introducing Hubs within a Family of Schools it will allow existing partnerships at local authority level and deanery level to flourish and build a platform for development across local authority lines to grow exponentially over time. Local authority partnerships should be the starting point for a Family of Schools to grow. These are known and recognised partnerships and, by having hubs within a Family of Schools, executive officers can be employed to work with more than one hub or even a Family of Schools to bring down costs and to increase consistency of delivery and mission across the diocese. It is important that all schools continue and nurture their existing partnership arrangements with their local community schools and local Academy partnerships;

c. There are now schools coming together to see how learning opportunities can be explored to increase confidence in working in partnership and solidarity. There is evidence that schools are finding opportunities to help improve teaching and learning experiences of their students whilst gaining experience and insight from other Catholic schools locally;

d. Governing Bodies require high quality training and materials to inform decisions. There has been training introduced and the response and uptake has been very good. Detailed materials have been written, refined, scrutinised and made fit for purpose to help inform governors of what the change means for them on a practical basis and how it can be delivered;

e. The impasse at national level on education reform is an opportunity for stability and engagement in this diocesan programme of reform. It allows a more steady approach and not a rushed one. Dialogue and listening to all stakeholders has shaped the policy and not hindered it. It is worth noting that 74% of all secondaries and 26% of all primaries in England are now Academies.

f. In seeking economies of scale there has been training and published materials for school business managers. Schools were initially reticent about submitting their financial audits but this has improved significantly in recent months. This will allow us to present a business case with accurate financial forecasts and not historic ones. Based on the research we have undertaken and to meet the statutory roles identified by the DfE, we are working on a 2.5% to 3% service slice for schools to pay for service provision. This is 2% lower than most Trusts and schools need to understand that the slice they never see taken by the local authority is released, which should offset any concerns that this service slice might be significantly challenging to meet. It is there to provide direct employment and service to their school;

g. The diocese recognises the preferred option of schools is for the diocese to act as a broker for services rather than a provider. They acknowledge the diocese has access to schools intelligence of what works and what does not. The diocese is actively working with St Mary's University to help shape and develop talent management and leadership to meet current need, and future planning opportunities. It is also working with Churchmarketplace to provide high quality deals and services based on need and requirements. Proven providers have welcomed the opportunity to bid for service provision beyond their current local authority remit in all aspects of teaching and learning;

h. In the autumn term there will be a new wave of Family of Schools meetings to explore how the Hub model within a family can be introduced and developed. There is evidence that suggests schools wish to start in smaller groups and grow organically but recognise the sharing of resources and staff across hubs or Families of schools will bring immediate economies of scale. Confidence will grow when partnerships are working. Existing partnerships should be the bedrock upon which future models can develop.

i. Both the Headteacher and Governor Working Parties have been pivotal in shaping policy and communicating to schools that the programme is on course. They have been robust in their challenge and this has helped shape materials that have value and resonance with the mission of the Church in securing the finest opportunities for pupils and staff.

‘Children in our Catholic schools deserve the very best educational opportunities.’

j. Providing clarity and detail on the following:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Members; Directors; Local Academy Councils (LACs); Headteachers; Hub model was completed in June 2017. The key focus of this document is on the following;
- Key Responsibilities on Governance;
- Key Responsibilities on Finance;
- Key Responsibilities on Contracts;
- Key Responsibilities on Curriculum and Standards;
- Key Responsibilities on Special Educational Needs;
- Key Responsibilities on Safeguarding;
- Key Responsibilities on Admissions;
- Key Responsibilities on other pupil related matters;
- Key Responsibilities on Staffing;
- Key Responsibilities on Information Management & Communications;
- Key Responsibilities on Health, Safety, Risk and Estate management;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Catholic Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trust (the new name for the Lead officer); this was completed in July 2017 with the approval of the CES and our lawyers to ensure robust compliance. It has also been approved by the Project Board;
- **Essential qualifications for the Catholic Executive Officer (CEO) are:**
 - Being a practising Catholic;
 - Graduate status;
 - QTS;
 - Representing and promoting the mission of Catholic education;
 - Leadership in Catholic education;
 - Effective communication skills;
 - Effective interpersonal skills;
 - Strong advocate for and proven track record in pupil achievement;
 - Stamina;
 - Resilience;
 - Integrity;
 - Professionalism.

- **Desirable qualifications for the Catholic Executive Officer (CEO) are:**
 - Further experience and management qualification in education, such as NPQH, Ambition School Leaders, Future Leaders, MBA (Ed), headship;
 - CCRS/CTC;
 - Post-graduate qualifications in Catholic education;
 - Experience as an Ofsted or Section 48 Inspector;
 - Experience as a Teaching School Lead;
 - Evidence of relevant CPD in Leadership.
- **Key Roles and Responsibilities are as follows:**
 - Preservation and development of the Catholic character and identity of a CAT;
 - Strategy development and implementation;
 - Effective use of and analysis of data;
 - HR and staffing;
 - Day to day management of the Trust;
 - Accountability;
 - Working with the wider community.
- The model contract of employment for the CEO was completed in July 2017 with the approval of the CES and our lawyers to ensure robust compliance. It has also been approved by the Project Board.
- The Scheme of Delegation for the Trust was completed in June 2017 with the approval of the CES and our lawyers to ensure robust compliance. It has also been approved by the Project Board.
- The service slice each school would have to pay to the Trust: research undertaken so far suggests we can manage a 2.5% to 3% service slice to pay for the executive team model. CEO salary could be set at £140k pro rata and key officers at £50k; this is subject to review and change but will be our starting point.
- The nature of an Executive team to deliver on services and compliance. Each Trust Board will need to decide how best to manage and implement these roles set out in the December 2016 document.

2. The conversion of schools and timetable

- 2.1 By July 2017 65 schools had informed the diocese of their Expression of Interest to convert to academies. This constitutes 42% of all eligible schools that could convert. Only 11 schools have said that they are not interested at this time, and the vast majority have been awaiting this document to make a judgement.

2.2 In September 2017 there are three Families of Schools that seek to move forward to convert within the new framework.

2.3 There is a consensus that for the moment we do not change four of existing academy Trusts but reshape one Trust to reflect the new model. Our existing Trusts can work in partnership with emerging Trusts and explore opportunities for collaborations over time. The expansion of the All Saints Trust will involve a change to their current scheme of delegation and will take place in the autumn term 2017.

2.4 Evidence of cost savings from being an Academy Trust was sought by schools and case studies will be presented in the autumn term.

3. Purpose and Mission

3.1 The move to establish a network of Catholic Academy Trusts in the diocese seeks to ensure that Catholic schools and colleges will be better enabled to work together. Isolation and fragmentation compromise the Church's mission in education. The academisation process allows clear working relationships to be established between local Catholic schools to assist with school improvement, leadership recruitment and formation, governance and co-operation to strengthen Catholic mission. This development moves beyond the existing partnerships between schools to enable a new spirit of collaboration so that the present success of Catholic schools and colleges in our diocese might be harnessed more effectively by working collectively, transparently and in dialogue.

3.2 Within a changing landscape of national education policy and provision we need to reinforce and develop the relationships between our schools. We are at our best when we work together, for each other and in service of the dignity of the individual and the common good, embracing both solidarity and subsidiarity. This is essential to all decisions and actions undertaken by Catholic schools and colleges in our diocese.

3.3 Utilising our previous experience of forming CATs, and drawing upon that of the Catholic Education Service and other dioceses, we will assist schools and colleges to establish a network of CATs through a gradual programme of implementation. The realisation of these CATs will evolve across our diocese as we work initially with those schools and colleges that are best placed and desirous to make a more immediate transition. Consultation has shown this will grow organically and be evidence led.

3.4 In the formation of each new CAT, or in consultation about how existing Academies form part of this new structure, the Project Board has been and will continue to support the process of transition and be available to assist with the process.

4. The Structure of CATs

4.1 The structure of each CAT is built upon the Catholic principle of 'communion,' of working together in a 'common union.' It is not simply a communion amongst member schools, but also, and importantly, a communion, an interdependence, among those who lead and manage CATs at every level.

4.2 At the level of the Academy Trust there is a Board of Directors who oversee the whole group of schools. At the level of each school there is a Local Academy Council (formerly the Governing Body) which relates to a particular school. The Academy Trust Directors and Local Academy Council Representatives (previously governors) need to know what each other's roles and responsibilities are in order to ensure that these are fulfilled. As we move toward a new expression of our diocesan family of schools and colleges, this area of oversight and support is critical and requires a process of recruitment for Directors and Representatives.

4.3 The Local Academy Council will carry out some duties and functions on behalf of the CAT, such as the monitoring of standards and the Catholic life of a school.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

There are some core principles that underpin our diocesan Catholic Academies and schools. The following are excerpts from the 'Schools of Discipleship' and their meaning in the context of Catholic Academy Trusts needs to be discerned in a local context.

1. Catholic schools have the Child at the Centre

Our schools are designed and run to ensure that the very best educational opportunities and life fulfilling experiences, within communities which have the teachings of Christ and His Church at the centre.

2. Catholic schools have Christ at their heart

Our schools are places where everyone is valued as a child of God, where every individual is enabled to mature towards their full growth in Christ and achieve their rightful potential. It is the Spirit of Christ who brings life to Catholic schools; giving strength and hope; promoting harmony and enabling reconciliation; ensuring that with enthusiasm and celebration, these things of God always take first place.

3. Catholic schools are distinctive

The school community will be anchored in the principles which flow from the Gospel by which we live. The school through its clear and visual Catholic identity, will be, for many people the place where Christ and his Church are encountered. As such Catholic schools are evangelising communities.

4. Catholic schools have a liturgical, sacramental and spiritual life

Every Catholic school is also a worshipping community. The Eucharist is the Church's central act of worship and is the nucleus of the school's life of faith. Classroom prayer, year and whole school liturgies and assemblies are key to the distinctive spiritual identity of Catholic schools.

5. Catholic schools are centres of excellence for Religious Education and the wider curriculum

In a Catholic school, the entire curriculum is underpinned by and expresses Catholic beliefs and values. It is vital that an understanding and knowledge of the Catholic faith permeates all aspects of school life. Religious education is a core subject in Catholic schools as demonstrated by the priority given to it within the school timetable. Promoting excellence in the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is of paramount importance.

6. Catholic schools are collaborative

Catholic schools actively promote strong and positive links with the wider community, involving the diocese, deaneries, parishes, local authorities, families and other schools. Given that parents, or those who act in their place, are the primary educators of their children, links between the home, the school, and the parish are especially significant. Good communication is fostered so that all relationships in the school community and beyond are based on mutual respect and honesty.

7. Catholic schools are essential

Catholic schools are places where every child matters and where safety, well-being, enjoyment, tolerance, respect and dignity are reflected in all aspects of school life. Pupils are cherished for who they are as much as for what they achieve, and all achievement is recognised and celebrated.

NEXT STEPS

5.1 Publication in September of a new wave of Family of School meetings in the autumn term and active encouragement of early adopters.

5.2 Three pilot Family-of-Schools CATs to begin the process of conversion from September 2017.

5.3 Case studies to be commissioned and published in the autumn term of experiences of conversion in our diocese and others.

5.4 Governor conference update on Families of Schools in November 2017.

5.5 Regular monthly bulletins online.

CATHOLIC PURPOSE

In October 2016 the Trustees of the Diocese of Westminster agreed to the expansion and development of CATs through the introduction of local families of schools coming together to protect, secure and develop Catholic education for the foreseeable future. Children and young people in Catholic schools in the diocese deserve the very best educational opportunities and life-fulfilling experiences within Catholic communities imbued with gospel values and where Christ is at the centre. We seek to ensure that every school and college is seen as a giver and receiver of support.

The Archbishop together with the Trustees will adopt the Memorandum of Understanding devised by the CES that ensures each CAT is conducted in accordance with canon law and teachings of the Catholic Church and in accordance with the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Westminster so that at all times the Academy may serve witness to the Catholic faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ.

All Catholic schools are equally valued members of the diocesan family of schools. The Archbishop is, by virtue of the authority given to him in canon law, the head of that family.

The diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools in his territory ... and has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools ... Those who are in charge of Catholic schools are to ensure, under the supervision of the local Ordinary, that the instruction given in them, in its academic standards, are at least as outstanding as that in other schools in the area. *Canon §806*.

No Catholic school or college in the diocese should be seen as working in isolation. There must be clear working relationships established with local Catholic schools to assist with school improvement, leadership recruitment and formation, governance of schools and working together to strengthen our Catholic mission. We seek to go further than the existing partnerships between schools that have flourished over many years to establish and secure a new spirit of transparency and being open to dialogue and working collectively and cooperatively together. As the future unfolds it brings with it uncertainty and financial austerity, and as a diocese we need on-going formation and development of relationships between schools. We are at our best when we work together for each other and the core principles of Catholic social teaching, namely, the dignity of the individual, the common good, and solidarity and subsidiarity, are integral to all decision making and actions undertaken by a Catholic school.

The diocese has a wide range of experience and expertise in the formation of multi-academy companies. It is our intention to assist schools in the project management in establishing CATs.

For each new CAT being formed, or consultation on existing academies coming together, we would envisage that a newly appointed Project Board would support you through the transition, be available to help you with the process, and assist with your queries. Within our current Academy Trusts there is now a wide range of expertise that can help to support the transition work that needs to be undertaken. Some of these services will be familiar and at work in our schools; others may well be new.

We seek to ensure every school is part of a formal collaboration that develops 'next' practice and research potential. We seek to improve our system of management of schools strategically.

The agenda of the government is clear: the majority of schools in this country will become academies over the forthcoming years. Whilst the political wrangling of past months has reached a level of compromise for some, the academy solution for most schools is unlikely to disappear. Why?

- The increasing inability of local authorities to provide adequate resources to support schools and any underperformance by local authorities in raising the standards of education: We know that this may well have implications in the future for our schools if an Academy Order is issued on all maintained schools in any local authority. We know that in the area that our diocese serves, we have a number of vulnerable authorities;
- The powers of the Secretary of State to issue an Academy Order on any school have been strengthened by the new Education and Adoption Act;
- Increased powers of intervention in struggling schools that receive a warning notice about their performance. These powers effectively mean that schools need proactive, robust intervention that will bring change at a rapid pace. Whilst we have tremendous school improvement tools to hand, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the diocese will want to see that our improving schools have secure structures around them enabling this work to flourish;
- There is no doubt that current budgetary issues and changes to the national funding formulae are causing grave challenges for many schools. Schools in financial decline will need to be able to operate with slimmer services as well as working with other schools to create the necessary economies of scale.

The planned grouping of the families of schools is designed to translate the collective vision of the diocese into a workable and durable reality that protects, secures, and allows development of all schools regardless of their OfSTED rating or financial situation. The key principles of solidarity and subsidiarity underpin the reasoning, action taken and rationale for moving forward.

- All schools have been matched and grouped with other schools within their local authority area or local deaneries;
- The purpose of the CATs is to help protect, develop and extend our mission to the Church;
- The planned grouping is based on allowing close proximity to promote collaboration, cooperation and mutual benefit;
- The proposed grouping will allow local Catholic parishes to see a direct link to a local network of schools that can reflect the local identity and community in partnership and cooperation;
- The latest directive from the DfE regarding financial viability and sustainability in terms of numbers for Academy Trusts is 5,000-plus students. The due diligence undertaken by the Education Service has grouped schools to reflect 6,000 students in each of the 11 different families of schools;
- Using locally understood boundaries create opportunities to develop far more tangible, durable and sustainable partnerships that outlive current incumbents is both necessary and prudent;
- Following the Families of Schools' meetings in spring 2017 it was clear that, to increase confidence and understanding within a CAT, it would be prudent to introduce Regional Hubs.
- Regional Hubs will reflect the local authority partnerships and will allow hubs to work in collaboration with those areas they know least well with a view to forming a more formal partnership in years to come.
- The Regional Hub model will allow Executive Officers to be employed across Families of Schools to bring down costs and ensure consistency across the diocese.
- The Families of Schools have been designed to contain both primary and secondary schools, where possible, to ensure that the opportunities for closer ties between the two sectors offer mutual benefits and prevent isolation or fragmentation;
- The Families of Schools have been designed to ensure that, if a CAT encounters any unforeseen trouble, then another CAT will have the responsibility to help steer a course out of trouble by working closely with the Trust to address and resolve any identified obstacles to improvement;

- The Families of Schools will need to recognise and work with the current five Academy Trusts without undermining or usurping their proven expertise and experience. Each one of these Trusts has particular circumstances that need to be addressed. However, there will be no changes undertaken that are detrimental either financially or operationally to each school.
- All potential Families of Schools should be open to scrutiny, and where an argued case can be made to join a neighbouring grouping it should be considered by the Project Board. The Project Board has the final decision on groupings;
- There will be no forced academisation. Each school will be encouraged to consider seriously this proposal with a view to join when the time is ready;
- We will continue to have open and constructive dialogue with all the professional associations to ensure there is clarity of purpose.

WHY DOES THE CHURCH PROVIDE CATHOLIC ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS?

The Church provides Catholic academies and schools to:

- Assist in its mission of making Christ known to all people;
- Assist parents, who are the primary educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children;
- Be at the service of the local Church: the diocese, the parish and the Christian home;
- Be a service to society.

The vision for the education of children in Catholic academies and schools is based on answering the fundamental question, posed by Pope Benedict XVI: 'What kind of person would you really like to be?' Education in the diocesan family of schools is about enabling children and young people to grow as human persons. Working together, the aim is to provide a rounded education for the whole person.

Catholic education is inspired by a vision of life seen as a whole, embracing the fullness of human experience and its expression in the life of the individual, in the family, in the local community and in society at large. We are created for goodness; we want to help children and young people fulfil that promise and enrich the world as they grow from childhood to mature citizenship.

Governors, headteachers, senior leaders and all staff must reflect the image of Christ and go about their work with children, families, parishes and local communities in a manner that gives witness to the Catholic faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and gospel values in action.

THE BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

There is an increasing body of evidence for the benefits of close collaboration between schools. These include the following:

- Strong collaboration with shared accountability can lead to better progress and attainment for pupils, and help schools meet rising expectations;
- School leaders and teachers can share thinking and planning to spread expertise and tackle challenges together;
- Governors can come together to share strategic thinking, to combine skills and to support each other during challenging times;
- School leaders, teachers and other staff can be shared across more than one school, enabling schools to find different solutions to recruitment challenges, to retain staff by providing new opportunities within the group and to plan succession more effectively;
- Groups of schools can find it easier to find and fund specialist expertise (specialist teachers and specialists in areas such as data analysis, finance, health and safety) and provide richer curricular and extra-curricular activities;
- Shared professional development can more easily be arranged, whether led by staff from one of the partner schools or an outside body;
- The economies of scale and collective purchasing made possible within larger groups can help schools cope better with shrinking budgets.

Opportunities for Staff Development

Forming a CAT will mean that additional opportunities for staff development in teaching and learning, and leadership and management are possible. For example:

- Shared subject leader roles in primary schools, e.g., Mathematics and literacy coordinators and other specialist teachers, possibly enabling these specialists to be free from class teaching responsibilities in order to share their knowledge and experience across a Trust. They may be involved in coaching and mentoring staff across trust schools, team teaching, demonstration lessons, monitoring and evaluation teaching and learning, leading staff meetings on subject knowledge, curriculum and policy, and so on;
- Lay chaplaincy teams to work across the CAT;

- Enabling secondary subject specialists to support work of primary colleagues, e.g., languages, music, and such, in a strategic and on-going way;
- Special educational needs provision;
- Family and social work support;
- Educational welfare support;
- Secondment opportunities.

SETTING THE STRATEGY

How can organisational structure really change? A brand new culture cannot be created from thin air. However, there are some really effective ways to begin to understand and shift some of the cultural patterns in a positive direction. Here are some ideas which, when used together, give the basis for an approach to cultural change.

1. Understand existing patterns:

For any culture to shift, first existing patterns or normative truths that exist have to be understood. Our existing five Academy Trusts have a proven track record of success. Protecting what has been achieved is crucial, and before any changes take place for these schools a risk assessment will be undertaken, and a proposed strategy will be developed to allow each one to move at the right time in order to minimise disruption and address each school's individual risk. Each Academy Trust will be helped in this change under the management of the Project Board in accordance to the wishes of the Trustees.

2. Engage senior leaders and governors with the current reality:

Change is the reality in education. By working with our outstanding practitioners in leadership and governance we hope to shape ownership for what is to be created and allow them to help move it forward by embodying the change they wish to see.

3. Vision starts now:

It is easy to set out a vision but it will not change anybody's behaviour if it is seen as too abstract. However, if existing patterns are understood and the need to protect, secure and develop our schools is accepted, there is far more chance of people engaging and making changes for the common good. The Trustees wish to see the setting up and engagement of 11 families of schools to help shape Catholic education for many years to come.

4. Catholic education culture cannot be imposed, although it can be co-created:

A danger for any organisation can be falling into the trap of believing that, if it spends ages defining the new culture and values it wishes to see, then, somehow, it will miraculously come to pass. It won't. There is an inherent resistance within the human system to change. The

human system's first job is to protect itself and so will resist change. Catholic education does not need to be like that. We acknowledge our many successes and we know what makes a great school. This is about together securing a far more effective leadership of our schools that allows us to make the decisions that need to be made by the Catholic community for the Catholic community. There needs to be co-authorship to a mutually beneficial state of change.

5. Purpose is important:

We all have a duty to embrace the purpose for this organisational change. It is important for everyone connected with our schools to work towards an ambitious, engaging and exciting common goal for the common good. There are many proven opportunities that come about as a result of this change. If we all aim to understand why there is a need to change, it will have a fundamental effect on culture and therefore engagement.

6. Catholic education culture is not a linear pattern; it's more like a web:

In working with schools and colleges it is not surprising to face many multi-layered and inter-connected issues. All sorts of things form part of this web, including areas such as organisational structure, control systems, rituals and routines, etc. When we look to understand and shift cultural patterns we work with the whole web, recognising the inter-dependent nature of each of the factors we observe and the constant need to reflect on the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity. Our schools need to develop further the culture of giving and receiving support.

7. Change organisational structures to shift the culture

We acknowledge that ingrained current structures and certain cultural elements often form blockages that require clearing in order for our schools to grow and develop. Empowering our own school community working locally and collaboratively in a way not undertaken before is both a challenge and an opportunity. Catholic education has always been able to adapt to change in the past from a position of strength. This is another opportunity to seize the initiative and not wait for decisions to be made for us.

8. Existing diocesan Academy Trusts

All Headteachers and Academy Boards will be convened to meet with the Project Board to go through the next steps as they lead the way to expand their experience and proven track records with new groups of schools. This will happen before the convening of the new 11 families of schools takes place to ensure mitigation of risk.

9. St Charles and St Dominic's Sixth Form Colleges

As part of the diocesan plans for academisation, it has been proposed that the two Sixth Form colleges, St Charles and St Dominic's, should be established as stand-alone Sixth Form Academies.