



DIOCESE OF
COVENTRY

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Strategic School Organisation Plan



'There should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.'

1 Corinthians 12: 25 - 26

September 2023

Our Diocese

Coventry Diocese includes the City of Coventry, the County of Warwickshire, and two parishes in Solihull Metropolitan Borough. Across the Diocese, there are 244 churches and 203 parishes organised into 124 benefices served by 177 licensed clergy. 76 Church of England Schools make up the Diocesan Board of Education's (DBE) family of schools, with approximately 18,600 children learning and worshipping together in school daily.



There are 6 CofE Majority Multi Academy Trusts containing a mix of CofE and community schools working collaboratively. Parishes are organised into 11 Deaneries enabling clergy, churches, chaplaincies and schools to partner in mission to their geographical areas. There is significant growth in housing with the result that new schools and churches are needed to serve these communities. The DBE is proactive in discussions with local planners and the Department for Education (DFE) to plant new schools and worshipping communities.



Bishop Christopher says:


"For some time now, I've been captivated by one word: 'Life'. That's my overarching vision for the Diocese of Coventry, that, together, we will be bearers of life."

The purpose of Coventry diocese is for churches, schools, chaplaincies and the cathedral to work together as life bearers, worshipping God, making new disciples and transforming the communities around them.



DBE Vision


'Inspiring schools to demonstrate the love of Christ as they educate for life in all its fullness.'



"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:13-16



The DBE will embody SALT and LIGHT by:

- Facilitating partnerships between schools and parishes to **worship God** *incarnationally*.
- *Intentionally* co-creating a habitus and curriculum in our schools rooted in Wisdom, Hope, Dignity and Community.
- *Inspiring* others to "come and see" using a **discipleship** model to form collaborative school groupings.
- Creating opportunities for school communities to become *imagineers*, calling out injustice and taking action to **transform communities**.

Statutory Role of the DBE

Reflecting the Diocesan Board of Education Measure 2021, the DBE....

EQUIPS schools to provide excellent Christian education which is:

- distinctive
- inclusive
- sustainable
- transformational

takes seriously its RESPONSIBILITY to ensure high quality:

- multi academy trusts
- school leadership
- governance
- curriculum designed around the principles of Wisdom, Hope, Dignity and Community

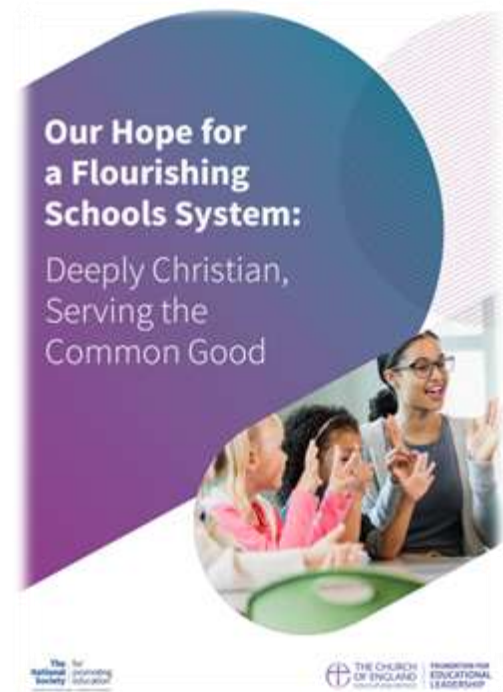


is committed to WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP with:

- Governing bodies
- Parishes
- Clergy
- Local Authorities
- Department for Education
- Multi Academy Trusts

is the 'FOUNDATION BODY' which

- holds **statutory responsibilities** to:
 - appoint foundation governors
 - inspect the Christian Distinctiveness of CofE schools
 - provide conditional consent for academy conversion
 - identify a sponsor for schools receiving an academy order
- provides **advice, guidance** and **consent** for:
 - appointment of school and MAT leaders
 - admission policies
 - land and buildings issues
 - school partnerships
 - new schools
 - alterations to schools



Underpinning Theology

As God's children we are all called to worship. Daily Collective Worship in schools and academies, invites 18,600 children and young people, parents and carers and the school staff team to draw near to God. As they reflect on their daily experiences of life and the world we hope that all will feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.



Our schools, with their Church of England foundation, rooted in Anglican faith and practice, are called to be distinctive and inclusive where those of the Christian faith, other faiths, and no faith are welcomed. We create opportunities for school communities to journey in faith together learning how to be World Changers who bring hope and justice locally and globally. We believe that Jesus demonstrated how to live this 'kingdom life' as he journeyed with his disciples teaching, healing and serving others. Church of England schools reflect the values which Jesus taught and nurture the spiritual qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control in children and staff.

God in Jesus, displays his unconditional love for each person, valuing those rejected by society, welcoming children to come to Him, urging adults to be as children. We hold Christ at the centre of all we do, model His love, and enable others to do the same.

He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18: 2-3



Church of England schools are part of the body of Christ partnering with their parishes and other schools across the diocese in the mission of God. This relatedness encourages us to work together, as family, providing mutual support and celebration. We welcome community schools into this extended family as we grow strong Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) with common objects and foundations.

Academy Strategy

The DBE Academy Strategy sits within the following framework:

- the **values** and **traditions** of a 200+ year heritage;
- partnership with **foundation parishes** and **educational trusts**;
- the legal foundation for the work of the church in the field of education as set out in the statutory **DBE Measure**;
- the policy aims and expectations of the **Department for Education**, as set out in Trust Development Statements;
- **championing** inclusion of **vulnerable** families and children in local schools;
- the differing needs of **small rural** schools and larger inner-city schools;
- the implications of government **funding**.

The DBE has built a culture of trust and sense of family across its 76 schools. In the interests of whole family, we take seriously our responsibilities to create a flourishing school system and believe that the best way to do that is to move towards all schools being part of a strong MAT. The DBE has supported the development of MATs with significant church control (majority Members in the Articles of Association) to ensure all maintained CofE schools are able to join a CofE majority MAT. The DBE believes that MATs have the most impact on the quality of education when schools are able to work together. We encourage MAT boards to include community, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools in their growth plans.

In order to ensure that the church foundation of CofE schools is not diluted, Coventry CofE schools **must** join a MAT that has church majority Articles of Association. This means they will have a majority of Members appointed by virtue of their relationship to the Diocese of Coventry who appoint a majority of MAT Directors. Local governing bodies will be constituted to include foundation governors, nominated by parishes, to reflect the VA (all except elected parents and staff) or VC (25%) status of the converting school ensuring **no dilution** of parish representation.

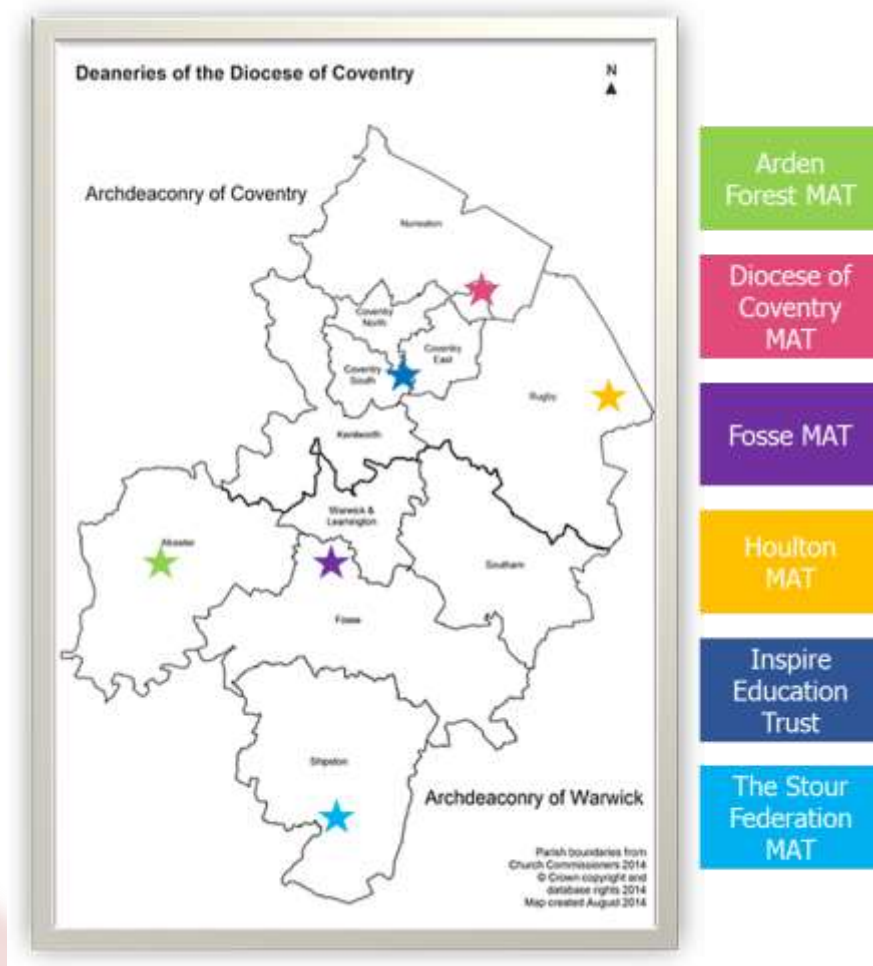
The DBE asks all maintained schools to develop a conversion plan during 2023/24. These plans will identify potential triggers for conversion and preferred destination MATs. This will enable the DBE to build an expected pipeline for conversion into each majority CofE MAT ensuring that there is sufficient MAT capacity for each CofE maintained school to find an appropriate MAT home.

The DBE will work in partnership with the DFE Regional Director's team to review the performance of all Coventry CofE schools to ensure that appropriate school improvement support is available rapidly when needed. This will include supporting the conversion of maintained schools who receive a direct academy order and academies who receive a termination warning notice. By creating 6 majority MATs the DBE expects that **ALL** schools falling within DFE intervention powers will be able to continue to find a home in a **CofE Majority MAT within the Diocese**.

A Family Approach

In order to preserve the Diocesan Family of Schools:

- Coventry DBE expects schools to join a MAT where they can maximise the educational experience of children by collaborating with other schools within a reasonable drive (central hub location shown in the map below);
- Coventry DBE will only provide consent for a maintained CofE school to join one of the 6 Coventry CofE majority MATs;
- Coventry CofE Majority MATs are encouraged to embrace community, voluntary controlled and voluntary aided schools so that no school is excluded from working collaboratively;
- MAT structures reflect the Christian foundation of CofE schools with local governing bodies, reflecting the historic VA or VC status, nominated by the foundation parish.
- MAT Articles will formalise the statutory relationship with the DBE by referencing the rights and responsibilities set out in the DBE Measure.
- Coventry DBE expects that academies requiring intervention are supported by, or re-brokered to, another Coventry CofE MAT.



The Arden Forest CofE Multi Academy Trust was created in 2018 to support and 'protect' local schools by creating a model that is built on collaboration. Our collaborative approach champions the sharing of best practice through promoting creative thinking and innovation. A sense of community at all levels is vital to our MAT and therefore the geographical location of academies is central to any growth plans.



Inspiring Educational Excellence for Everyone
ARDENforest
C of E Multi Academy Trust

www.ardenforestmat.org

The MAT has Church of England Articles of Association but is not exclusive to CofE schools. The vision and values of the MAT underpin what we do and we therefore look to schools that share these values and support the collaborative working approach for the benefit of everyone; children, parents and staff.

The Fosse Multi Academy Trust was established in 2021 to serve the needs of local schools for high quality education through strong collaboration, built on Christian values.

Our mission clearly rests with our civic and public duty, committed to the communities we **serve**. We aim to create school environments where our all children and staff flourish and **grow**. Every person in our trust community matters. We celebrate the people in our trust and recognise all aspects in which they **achieve**. As such we welcome all schools, whatever their designation, to join us in our mission to improve educational outcomes for all. Our schools benefit from:



www.fossemat.org.uk

Ethos and Identity - collaborating with schools that share our ethos and values whilst maintaining each school's individual identity

School Improvement - our schools benefit from close working partnerships and good professional development

Support for the most vulnerable - we have our own Inclusion/Pastoral Leader ensuring we pool expertise from across the trust to meet the needs of all children

Reduced burden - as staff we can share responsibilities across many areas including leadership hence reducing workload and increasing resilience

Increased Financial Security - procurement of services, centralised back office functions, workforce retention and progression

We are deeply committed to achieving outstanding outcomes for all our children and pride ourselves in working closely with our parents and communities because we know how important it is to strive to give our children the very best start.

Based in Rugby, Houlton Trust was established to accommodate a new Free School in 2016 and presents an opportunity to grow something new from the very beginning as partners in a shared mission.

We have a vision to communicate love in the communities we serve and a passion to see children, staff and communities flourish. Backed by a skilled board of directors, we have a leadership team with a wide range of experience in growing and establishing something new. Our approach is to champion the uniqueness of every school and we seek to develop a model of mutual support, learning and growing together to be the best that we can be. We are a primary-school based Trust who would welcome the opportunity to partner with church and non-church schools creating a mixed MAT supporting our town and local area.



Houlton
C&E Academy Trust

**Communicating love; inspiring our
community to flourish**

www.stgabrielshoulton.org.uk/trust

Inspire Education Trust was established in 2016 *'To be the educator and employer of choice, with a first-class education that empowers pupils to flourish, grow and achieve. Where pupils matter to us as much as their academic success and with staff who are valued, supported and developed. Together, we will live life in all its fullness.'*



Inspire Education Trust
Together we achieve. individually we grow

www.ietrust.org

Our values are: **Integrity** - we are open, honest and have strong moral principles which we use to guide us; **Nurture** - we promote positive wellbeing so all feel safe, cared for and enabled to thrive; **Servanthood** – we considerately put the needs of others before our own, recognising that in serving each other we serve all; **Partnership** - we work collaboratively, recognising we achieve more together than on our own; **Inclusive** - we celebrate diversity and difference. All are valued as members of our community knowing they belong; **Respect** - we show care, consideration and courtesy for ourselves and all around us; **Excellence** - we always strive to be better in order to become first class in all we do.

We put the quality of education at the core of our vision, we aim to ensure that all schools achieve the highest educational outcomes for every learner so they all can have as many life fulfilling opportunities as possible. We have strong models of improvement alongside high-quality implementation and delivery, fundamental to this is our collaborative approach to school improvement at every level within our schools. As a Trust, we aim to build school self-sufficiency, not dependency. The best trusts are good employers, with a focus on workforce resilience and wellbeing, we endeavour to ensure that all of our staff are cared for, supported and developed via a comprehensive programme of CPD.

The Diocese of Coventry Multi Academy Trust was formed in 2013 by Coventry Diocesan Board of Education as a separate organisation and has much to be proud of. The most recent academy joined the trust in February 2021 and this grew the trust to 19 Church of England academies, over 4,500 children and 850 members of staff. This scale makes us one of the largest Multi Academy Trusts in the Country.



**The Diocese of Coventry
Multi Academy Trust**
Together, pursuing life in all its fullness

www.covmat.org

Our vision, 'Together, pursuing life in all its fullness' is based on John 10:10 and reflects the Church of England's vision for education. You will see this come to life every day in all our academies. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. We offer opportunities for children and staff to realise their God-given potential and flourish.

The trust has entered an era of change. We have revisited our strategic priorities to ensure they continue to be aligned with the Church of England's Vision for Education, the Government's education policy, and the Academy Act 2010. Our strategy focuses on five core aims, at the top of which is the determination to 'deliver an excellent education' across our trust. This aim is underpinned by strong and effective governance at all levels, a strong and sustainable infrastructure, employer of choice and the delivery of whole child, family and community support.

Working together we are stronger. Through collaborative leadership, steadfast commitment and future thinking, the vision of The Stour Federation is to develop and grow our group of inspirational schools which instill ambition and desire in learners, open their minds, widen their horizons and equip them to flourish in a diverse, challenging world.



www.thestourfederation.com

With coherent strategies, an organisationally healthy culture where excellence flourishes, and a curriculum with reading at its heart, we put the quality of education at the core of our mission and are dedicated to developing, growing and retaining talented leaders and staff across the Trust and investing in staff development.

As a partnership of geographically-close schools, established in 2014, we are better able to formally collaborate to build knowledge to support our children; we strongly believe in the power of collaboration and we continually work together to find innovative ways of working. Our trust has mixed Articles of Association, enabling Church of England and non-church/community schools to work together.

It's the relationships that we forge with people and those connections that make the biggest difference.

Process for Academy Conversion

Policy

In order to ensure that the church foundation of all schools is not diluted, Coventry Church of England schools **must** join one of the 6 Coventry DBE MATs. These MATs have **church majority Articles of Association**, where the **majority of Members** are appointed by virtue of their **relationship to Coventry Diocese**. MATs are **required** to appoint **local governing bodies** with **foundation governors nominated** by the **local parish** to **reflect** their historic **VA** or **VC** status.

Process of Seeking Consent

Schools seeking to convert to academy status must obtain consent from:

- the Diocesan Board of Education;
- the Bishop;
- the Trustees of the school land.

The process for obtaining consent is outlined below.

1. The governing body of the school provides evidence to the Diocesan Director of Education (DDE), by completing the attached form, that they have agreed to pursue academy status.
2. The DDE will ask the proposed MAT to work with the governing body to complete due diligence and create a timeline for conversion.
3. The DDE will have an informal discussion with the Local Authority and Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to seek their agreement to the chosen destination MAT, timescale, and potential forms of additional funding.
4. The DDE will request approval from the DBE for conversion into the identified MAT.
5. The DDE will request approval from the Bishop and Land Trustees for the school to convert.
6. The DDE will inform the Chair of Governors, in writing, when all consents have been received, including copies of the consent letters from all other interested parties. Consent will be given subject to:
 - a. the chosen MAT will use the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) or an alternative insurance policy which protects the interests of the Land Trustees,
 - b. the MAT will enter into a Church of England Supplemental Agreement with the Secretary of State, the Diocesan Board of Education and the Land Trustees to protect the Church of England Foundation of the school and the rights of the school to continue to occupy the land;
 - c. the LA will execute a statutory transfer of any land within their ownership now occupied by a school building to the Diocesan Board of Education;

- d. The supplementary funding agreement for the school will contain the mixed MAT governance clause;
 - e. the MAT will maintain a local level of governance within its scheme of delegation, which meets the DBE minimum requirement, with sufficient foundation governors to reflect its historic VA (All except elected staff and parents) or VC (25%) status, nominated by the parish, using the agreed DBE process;
 - f. the academy will continue to take a full and active role within the family of Diocesan schools including subscription to the Diocesan Service Agreement.
7. The DDE will notify the Vicar and Church Wardens of the foundation parish that consent to convert has been granted.

Academy Order

When applying to the Regional Schools Commissioner for the Academy Order, the school must provide a copy of the DBE consent letter. When the school is issued with an Academy Order it will be assigned an Academy Lead who will provide support for the school during the conversion process. The DBE will provide a named contact to work with the RSC Academy Lead, the MAT and the governing body.

Costs

In deciding to pursue conversion, the school is agreeing to meet all costs (legal and otherwise) relating to the conversion to an academy. Costs incurred by Land Trustees and the DBE in supporting conversion will be re-claimed from the school. The DFE conversion grant should be sufficient to meet these costs. The usual DBE fee for the administrative work involved in conversion is £4,000 plus legal fees and VAT.

DfE Order to Convert

In the case of a Direct Academy Order from the Secretary of State, the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Church of England and the Secretary of State for Education will be applied. The DDE, on behalf of the DBE, will work with the RSC Lead and Local Authority to identify an appropriate MAT with capacity to support rapid school improvement. The process of seeking consent outlined above will then be continued from step 4.