

Diocese of Hallam Schools Together Multi Academy Trust Project Update from the MAT Steering Group February 2021

“It is vitally important that the Catholic education system in the Diocese of Hallam is secured, protected and developed further for the benefit of future generations of children and young people, that our schools continue to flourish and that every child who attends one of our schools receives the best possible Catholic education.”

Extract from Bishop Ralph’s letter to schools – January 2021

1. The Vision for Schools in the Diocese of Hallam

The Bishop, through the MAT Steering Group (“we”) has listened to the many comments, suggestions and questions from schools and governing bodies since the start of the MAT programme back in November 2017 and we remain committed to the vision for schools in the Diocese of Hallam which is that all diocesan schools will become equal partners in one of two large Catholic multi-academy trusts (MATs). We have supported the development of this vision which has been under discussion and has evolved over time in collaboration with schools through meetings and webinars and we are now at the point where we are bringing these plans to fruition.

Our shared vision is a response to:

- research into the many benefits that a well thought through and fit for purpose multi academy trust model can bring to all our schools and the children and young people whom we serve;
- an understanding of the risks and weaknesses of our current structures where we have 19 Voluntary Aided Schools, 1 multi academy trust comprising five academies, and 23 single academy trusts. The way our schools are currently organized in these structures has been a significant factor in limiting the Diocese response to interventions from RSC and ESFA;
- a recognition of the talent and expertise within our schools at many levels, including leadership and governance, and a need to harness this talent for the common good;
- a need to put in place fully compliant structures in which all our schools can be supported to flourish and where no individual school is left isolated

In considering how best to protect and secure the future for all our schools, we draw on Catholic social teaching as set out in: THE COMMON GOOD AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SOCIAL TEACHING A statement by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 1996.

“Society as envisaged by Catholic Social Teaching should be made up of many layers, which will be in complex relationships with one another but which will be ordered as a whole towards the common good, in accordance with the principle of solidarity. Solidarity requires action to protect the common good at this level, where it can only be safeguarded by the collaboration of all.”

In providing the security of a large MAT structure we recognize the importance of retaining a school’s individuality and its place in the community. The structures of the new MATs will retain a local tier (currently known as governing bodies) within the wider accountability framework. The linked principles of

subsidiarity and solidarity will be respected. Subsidiarity means that the local tier will be part of the delegated decision-making framework and solidarity means that decisions taken will be in the best interests of all schools.

2. The benefits of the MAT model for the Diocese of Hallam

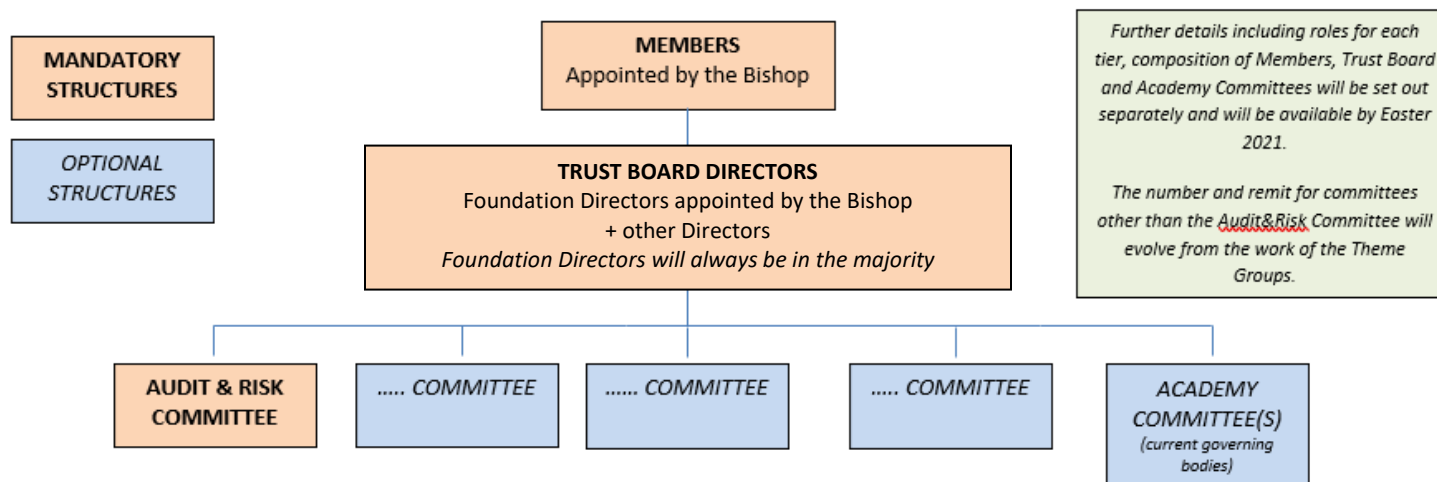
There are many examples of the positive impact of the MAT model:

- **Stronger and wider collaboration through a shared vision and values:** MATs build on existing strengths and expertise, such as specialist hubs, teaching schools, NLEs, NLGs which can be scaled up so that benefits are felt by all schools. Core values are shared, particularly relating to ethos and wellbeing.
- **Deepening of distinctive ethos:** A Catholic MAT has a strong shared ethos and set of values which are embedded in all aspects of the MATs work.
- **Stronger Strategic Leadership:** School leaders and teachers can combine their knowledge and planning abilities to work on challenges and solutions together. Governors and Trustees can draw on each other's experience to formulate strategic approaches.
- **School Improvement Strategy:** A strategy designed around the needs of the schools in the MAT can be flexed according to immediate need and expertise made available for school to school support.
- **Access to Specialist Resources:** With the resources available in a MAT, specialist knowledge can be accessed in many different areas, spanning academic, extra-curricular and operational functions.
- **Access to Funding Streams:** MATs are well-placed to propose wide ranging projects which attract government funding for the benefit of many schools. The Schools Condition Allocation is also allocated at MAT level in a large MAT providing opportunities for taking a strategic approach to funding improvements to the learning environments.
- **High Quality Professional Development:** This can be organised across multiple schools, thus spreading the cost per school and upskilling as many individuals as possible per session.
- **Career Development:** Every member of staff has access to career planning support. Succession planning becomes strategic with opportunities brokered across the MAT.
- **Shared Accountability:** As a Trust represents multiple schools, it is in its interest (and duty) to raise the profile of each, in line with raising expectations.
- **Delivering Economies of Scale:** A Trust is able to purchase as a whole (not just procurement of goods and services but back room services), thereby achieving economies of scale not achievable by schools as individuals. With ever tightening budgets, this can help schools free up resources and time to allocate to teaching and learning.
- **Reducing Duplication of Effort:** Through centralization of services, MATs reduce significantly duplication of effort in areas such as financial returns, processes and audit.
- **Access to Data to inform decisions:** The MAT has access to trust wide data where trends can be identified and interventions targeted, for example on standards, staff and pupil wellbeing.
- **Reducing Policy Burdens:** MATs provide a large number of central policies and procedures for core business services, freeing up governor and leadership time to focus on their school's priorities.

- **Supporting Compliance duties:** MATs provide support for complaints, data protection, freedom of information, HR procedures, ensuring that no school is exposed to unnecessary risk from procedural errors.

3. The Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Structure for the Diocese of Hallam

A multi academy trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is both a company and an exempt charity. The trustees of the charity are also the directors of the company. In a Catholic MAT the trustees of the MAT are called Directors in order to distinguish them from the Trustees of the Diocese. The tiers of governance are set out in the diagram below.



In a Diocesan Catholic MAT, the Bishop has overall control of each MAT

3.1 Key Governance Documents for a MAT

Memorandum of Association	Sets up the company. Signed by the subscribers (the founding Members).
Articles of Association	Set out the Charitable Objectives of the MAT and the powers of Members and Directors.
The Master Funding Agreement (MFA)	The MFA is entered into between the Secretary of State for Education (SoS) and the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), and is the framework under which the MAT agrees to operate in return for funding. The MFA deals with issues such as, admissions, exclusions and reporting requirements.
Supplemental Funding Agreement (SFA)	The SFA is also entered into between the Secretary of State for Education and the MAT, and includes information specific to the particular school, such as its name, capacity and age range. It also deals with how the land will be held by the MAT.
Scheme of Delegation	The MAT is the legal entity, the company, the party to the Funding Agreement with the SoS, the employer of staff and is accountable for the performance of all academies within the MAT. The

Trust Board, whilst remaining accountable, may delegate functions to committees or persons and it records these in a Scheme of Delegation.
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4. Preferred MAT Model for Diocese of Hallam

The two MAT model proposed and discussed during 2020 remains the preferred option. This model will create sufficient capacity and resources to support effective school improvement, deliver the benefits, including economies of scale and provide the essential central services to schools. The size and resources of the MATs will attract high calibre, experienced and skilled candidates for the posts of Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer. The model also accommodates the family of school clusters without splitting the groupings. Options to create more than two MATs will reduce capacity and create additional costs associated with senior leadership structures. Further to the discussions held last year and the presentation made by the Schools Department on the two MAT model, we have concluded that the two MAT model is the most appropriate approach for the Diocese of Hallam.

Schools have been grouped into two MATs according to their family of school groups. Due diligence is ongoing the purpose of which is to provide us with assurance that the model remains viable and sustainable.

It is the intention that both MATs will be set up on the same date, each with a significant number of academies and with a CEO and CFO and capacity to deliver some services centrally. Discussions with the RSC about the start date are ongoing informed by 121 discussions with Headteachers and with oversight from the Schools Department. Proposals on timelines will be made based on the collective needs of all schools in the Diocese in collaboration with individual schools and discussed with the RSC Headteacher Board on 29th April 2021. Proposals will be shared with schools as they evolve.

The timings for the growth of the new MATs, ie when schools will join the initial schools, will be based on discussions with Headteachers, taking account of diocesan priorities, due diligence, logistics relating to legal processes, and in line with RSC expectations. However, the growth will be at pace to ensure that all schools benefit as quickly as possible from being part of the new MATs.

4.1 School groupings in two MATs

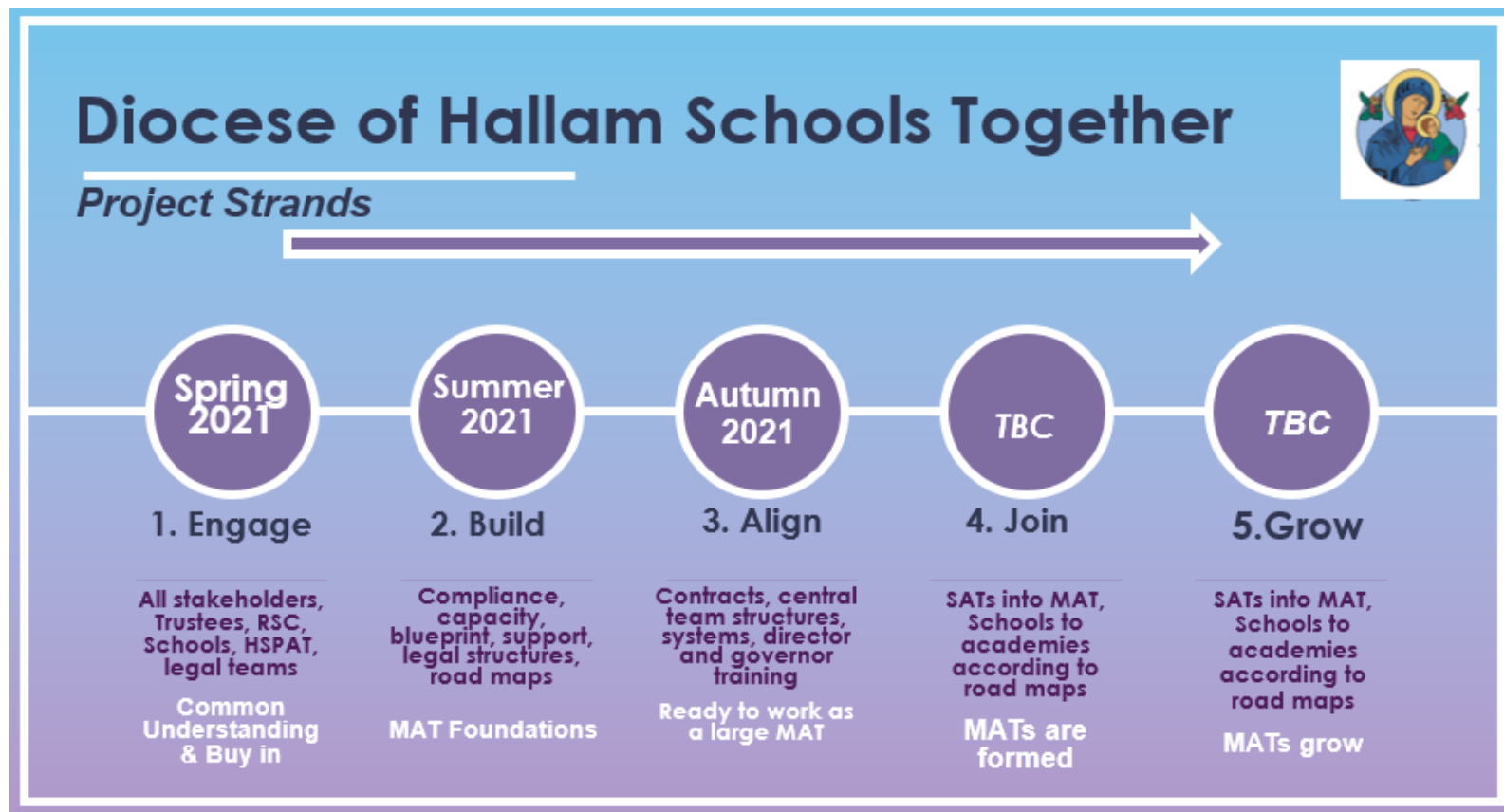
LA Code	School	Phase	Status	Family
3735401	All Saints	11-18	Academy	Sheffield
3735400	Notre Dame	11-18	Academy	Sheffield
3733401	Sacred Heart	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3735202	St Ann's	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3732017	St John Fisher	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3735203	St Joseph's	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3733406	St Marie's	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3733423	St Mary's	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3735207	St Patrick's	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3734016	St Thomas More	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3733402	St Catherine's	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3733414	St Thomas of Canterbury	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3733412	St Wilfrid's	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3732028	Emmaus	Primary	Academy	Sheffield
3735208	St Theresa's	Primary	VA	Sheffield
3704011	Holy Trinity	3-16	Academy	St Pius
3724601	St Pius	11-16	VA	St Pius
3703304	Holy Rood	Primary	VA	St Pius
3703317	St Helen's	Primary	VA	St Pius
3703318	St Michael & All Angels	Primary	VA	St Pius
3703320	Sacred Heart Goldthorpe	Primary	VA	St Pius
3713316	St Alban's, Denaby	Primary	VA	St Pius
3723339	St Joseph's, Rawmarsh	Primary	VA	St Pius
3723337	Our Lady & St Joseph's	Primary	VA	St Pius

LA Code	School	Phase	Status	Family
8305413	St Mary's High School	11-18	Academy	Derbyshire
8303503	Immaculate Conception	Primary	Academy	Derbyshire
8303549	St Joseph's, Staveley	Primary	VA	Derbyshire
8303502	St Mary's Primary	Primary	VA	Derbyshire
3714606	McAuley High School	11-18	Academy	Don & Notts
3713317	Holy Family, Stainforth	Primary	Academy	Don & Notts
3713318	St Mary's Edlington	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
3713302	St Francis Xavier	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
3713315	Our Lady of Perpetual Help	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
3713314	St Joseph & St Teresa's	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
3712012	Our Lady of Sorrows	Primary	Academy	Don & Notts
3712001	St Joseph's Rossington	Primary	Academy	Don & Notts
8913710	St Joseph's Retford	Primary	Academy	Don & Notts
3713301	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
3713300	St Peter's	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
8913764	St Patrick's Bircotes	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
8913768	Holy Family, Worksop	Primary	VA	Don & Notts
3724800	St Bernard's	11-16	Academy	St Bernard's
3723338	St Joseph's Dinnington	Primary	Academy	St Bernard's
3723340	St Bede's, Rotherham	Primary	Academy	St Bernard's
3723336	St Gerard's, Thrybergh	Primary	Academy	St Bernard's
3723322	St Mary's Herringthorpe	Primary	Academy	St Bernard's
3723335	St Mary's Maltby	Primary	Academy	St Bernard's

5. Engagement

We are committed to developing the MATs so that they are fit for purpose and bespoke for the Diocese of Hallam. This means that there is no set blueprint which sets out a pre-determined school improvement model, staffing structure or scheme of delegation. However, we will draw on best practice from elsewhere within and outside of the Diocese and will ensure that, where there are lessons to be learned from other MAT programmes, those shortcomings are not replicated in the Diocese of Hallam proposals.

The approach will therefore be through engagement with key stakeholders on the vision. The blueprint for the MATs will be developed by key stakeholders through work in theme groups, 121 discussions with Exec Headteachers/Headteachers, dialogue with the RSC, with oversight of the Schools Department. Where there are mandatory requirements these will be made clear so that proposals remain viable and compliant. All proposals will go through the MAT Steering Group for approval. The diagram below provides a summary of the strands showing that we have started with the engagement phase. This will continue throughout the project.



The table below sets out our intention and commitment to involve all key stakeholders; formal consultation relating to academisation will be in addition to the actions set out below.

Diocese of Hallam Schools Together - ENGAGE		
Stakeholders	How	When
Diocesan structures: MAT Steering Group, Schools Dept, HSPAT Board, Hallam Property Dept, Anglican Dioceses	Meetings, support, reports, proposals Co-ordination of actions HSPAT Board, weekly meetings with Schools Dept Through Comp Sec Letter sharing Bishop's Statement	Started 7 th Jan 2021 Ongoing 12 th January + ongoing 29 January 2021
DfE, RSC, ESFA	RSC Meeting with MAT Steering Group & MAT <u>Devt</u> Group, regular meetings with Desk Officers RSC Headteacher Board April meeting	13 th January 2021 25 th January 2021 + 29 th April 2021
Headteachers & Chairs of Governors	Statement from Bishop Family Cluster Meetings (5) Fortnightly Newsletter 121 Project Lead/Headteacher meetings Themed Groups	18 th January 2021 from 19 th January 2021 22 nd January 2021 from 20 th January 2021 Start Spring Term 2021
School Staff	Themed Groups Fortnightly newsletter, Training for new systems/roles	Summer Term 2021 From 22 nd January 2021 Autumn Term 2021 onwards
Clergy	MAT <u>Devt</u> Group Meeting with Clergy Newsletter Themed Groups	28 th January 2021
Parish Communities	Bishop's Pastoral Letter	After April RSC Headteacher Board
Current Governing Bodies & new appointments in the governance structure	Themed groups Training and support for new roles	Summer Term 2021 Autumn Term 2021
Parents	Information notices on schools website Engagement as part of academy transfer and transfer of SATs to MATs	Summer Term 2021 TBC subject to timeline
Local Authorities	Schools Department & MAT <u>Devt</u> Group by letter and meeting	Spring Term 2021
Wider Community	Recruitment notice to be included in all recruitment campaigns	Spring Term 2021

5.1 Consultation

Where statutory consultation is required, for example, during academy conversion consultation and TUPE processes, then this will be authorized by the MAT Steering Group and supported by the MAT Development Group so that consultation is co-ordinated, consistent and meets the requirements of those processes. Template documents will be provided to support those consultations. In all cases the consent of the Bishop is required for all academy conversions and academy transfers. Those consultations will take place once we know more about the timescales for setting up the MATs. Further documents will be provided setting out the processes involved for VA schools converting to academy status and for SATs transferring to MATs.

5.2 Communication

Communication will be through the fortnightly newsletter, use of the Diocesan website (under development), through 121 conversations with Headteachers and by email. Online meetings will also be convened when appropriate. An FAQ document has been prepared which brings together the questions raised so far through engagement.

6. Building the MATs

6.1 Theme Groups

We have commissioned a series of Theme Groups with specific terms of reference. These are set out in the table below:

Theme	Membership	Timescale	Led by
School Improvement Strategy	Exec Heads, Headteachers, specialist leaders, membership through expressions of interest to the Schools Dept	1 st March 2021 – start-up of new MATs	Schools Department
Wellbeing	Exec Heads, Headteachers, Chairs of Governors initially + other staff as the work develops	1 st March 2021 – start-up of new MATs	John Brady
Catholic Life & Ethos	Exec Heads, Headteachers, Lay Chaplains, Clergy, Trustees membership through expression of interest to MAT Steering Group. Sub Group to explore Joint Schools	15 th March 2021 – start-up of new MATs	Alan Dewhurst
Procurement	Finance Directors, School Business Managers membership through expressions of interest to MAT Development Group	12 th April – 9 th July 2021	MAT Development Group (Phil Curtis/Cecilia Emery)
Governance	Governors, prospective Directors, Trustees, Schools Department membership through expressions of interest to MAT Steering Group	12 th April – 9 th July 2021	MAT Development Group (Neil Weightman)
Finance & HR	Finance Directors, School Business Managers, Headteachers membership through expressions of interest to MAT Development Group	1 st June – 31 st October 2021	MAT Development Group (Phil Curtis/Cecilia Emery)

The timescales for the theme groups may be extended subject to work requirements and additional appointments to membership of the groups may be made as necessary. We may also commission additional theme groups as appropriate to the needs of the project. Further details are set out in the Terms of Reference for each group.

6.2 Due Diligence

Due Diligence 1: Initial high level due diligence to support Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning, financial forecasting and procurement is taking place currently. Outcomes of the due diligence will be shared with Headteachers during March 2021 to support decisions about staffing structures and budget planning. Discussions with Headteachers, Finance Directors, Business Managers, based on the high level due diligence, will continue into the Summer Term.

Due Diligence 2: In depth due diligence to support academy conversion and transfer of SATs to MATs will commence during the Summer Term and extend into the Autumn Term and up to conversion/transfer. Full details of the information required will be issued to schools nearer the time.

6.3 Legal Support

We have engaged legal support through a single contract. The legal team appointed will act on behalf of all schools, academies and the new MATs. The legal work will be co-ordinated through the MAT Development Group who will support the conversion and transfer processes. This is to ensure that the conversions and transfers take place with minimum burdens placed on schools. Further details will be provided to explain how this will work.

7 Aligning to the new MATs

7.1 Training

Training for staff on new systems and processes will commence once the new systems are available. Training for Members, prospective Directors and governors of Academy Committees will commence in the Autumn Term supported by the documentation developed by the Governance Theme Group.

7.2 Recruitment to key posts in the new MATs

It is our intention to recruit to the posts of CEO and CFO in advance of the start date subject to affordability. The timescales for recruitment are to be confirmed. The recruitment arrangements for the CEOs will include current senior leaders who will be part of the process to determine which candidates are invited forward for final panel interviews. The CEO posts for the new MATs will be reserved posts, ie practising Catholics.

7.3 Procurement

The procurement theme group will explore opportunities for moving to centrally procured contracts where this will deliver cost savings prior to the start-up of MATs.

7.4 Staffing Structures

The Finance & HR theme group will explore options for staffing structures taking account of the proposals from the School Improvement Strategy Group, the financial forecasts and the need to provide a minimum level of central services on Day 1.

8 Spring Term Milestones

