

# Diocese of Norwich Board of Education **Education Strategy** **2018-2023**

April 2018

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## Introduction by the Bishop of Norwich, The Rt Revd Graham James

In January 2018 well over 100 Headteachers and Chairs of Governors gathered at the Cathedral to consider the first draft of this education strategy. We gained valuable feedback and this document now sets out the way ahead for the Diocese of Norwich.

It seeks to bring a great many different areas of our life in education together – what we hope to achieve in the character and ethos of our church schools; how we aim to make them all good schools in the Ofsted ratings since our children deserve no less; how to recognise the value of every school in the diocesan family whatever its character; how to make sure our small schools – and we have many of them – are given the support to make them a part of a much bigger enterprise without imperilling their valued place in the communities they serve. Our schools should be places of God's blessing, where Christ's promise that we should have life in all its abundance is tangible.

This reflects the wider Church of England's vision for education – deeply Christian, serving the common good, and setting out the sort of education the Church seeks to enable. This approach wants high outcomes for children while they experience 'life in all its fullness'. There are too many people who are skilled but not wise, gifted but not loving, and intelligent but unsympathetic. When you have too many such people ruling our world it does not become a happier place. So we must not neglect what may look like the softer elements in our

education strategy. They are vital for good living. They also match our diocesan mission strategy which has four work streams each guided by a single word – listen, celebrate, imagine and empower. You can't have education without listening. You don't have a life worth living without celebration. You are unlikely to achieve anything without imagination. And you will never get anywhere if someone does not empower you, or you do not empower others.

Norfolk and Waveney has a distinctive character. We don't travel through Norfolk or the Waveney Valley to get anywhere else. The blessing of being in this part of the world is that communities – our villages, towns and the city of Norwich – matter a great deal. But communities only prosper if they are loved. Schools only prosper if they are loved. And at the heart of this strategy is love for our schools and the young people in them, part of the overflow of the love God has for us all.

Please support this strategy developed by our Diocesan Board of Education and pray for the wider family of our schools and academies. They are the key to the future of thousands of young people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by 'James' and 'Norwich' written in a cursive script.

The Rt Revd Graham James, Bishop of Norwich

Immeasurably more than we can imagine!



Our passion and ambition is to see children in all our schools and academies achieve excellent educational outcomes alongside developing and growing into their potential as individuals made in the image of God. Our culture is one of high aspiration rooted in our Christian values as demonstrated in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. We have a desire to see Norfolk, and our schools in North East Suffolk, and its education system recognised as a place of aspiration, achievement and hope whether living in a rural area, coastal community, market town or the city of Norwich.

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## Executive Summary



This Education Strategy 2017 – 2022 is rooted in the Church of England’s Vision for Education – Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good (Section 1) which consists of four basic elements:

- Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills
- Educating for Hope and Aspiration
- Educating for Community and Living Well Together
- Educating for Dignity and Respect

The Vision for Education is not only for Church schools but, recognising the Church of England’s involvement in education over many centuries, seeks to promote educational excellence everywhere, for

everyone. The concept of ‘the fullness of life’ as offered by Jesus Christ interplays with all these elements and seamlessly links this national strategy with the Diocese of Norwich’s own Mission Strategy 2021 (Section 2). This local strategy sees our work with schools and academies being central to the work of the Diocese as we seek to support parishes, clergy and laity. Strong links with the Children, Youth and Families team further enable such support. This Education Strategy is inclusive being for those of all faiths or none, for those with additional needs or those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Our unique context is set out in Section 3 demonstrating the high number of small schools in what is predominantly a rural Diocese. Our schools and academies educate around 25% of Norfolk’s primary aged children in the Diocese. A challenge remains to improve the percentage of Diocesan schools and academies that are Ofsted ‘good’ or better – this still sits 9% below the national figure for primary schools. In October 2013 the Diocese established its first Multi Academy Trust (MAT) to begin to address this and has recently (March 2018) set up its second MAT.

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) sets out its ambition that the Diocese should play a pivotal role as system leader in the new education landscape in which we find ourselves (Section 4). We are promoting MATs as the best way, but not the only way, of achieving this. It should be noted that the DBE’s policy is that church schools

must join a Diocesan MAT (DMAT). This is supported by the 'National Memorandum of Understanding between the National Society and the Department of Education (April 2016)'. The values and approaches that underpin this Education Strategy are set out, values that see children at the centre of all we do and a belief that a rounded education, based on our Christian distinctiveness enables 'life in all its fullness'. This applies to staff and governors too who we want to see innovate and thrive. Strong governance, that effectively holds senior leaders to account and makes a positive difference for children, is essential.

Over recent years we have seen significant change implemented by national government and responding to this is one of the key drivers of this strategy (Section 5). One important measure is that all our schools and academies are Ofsted good or better. We have the same expectation for all SIAMS inspections. Further drivers are set out in this section but what underpins it all is a passion to see the education system in Norfolk and NE Suffolk (i.e. this Diocese) recognised as a place of aspiration, achievement and hope whether living in a rural area, coastal community, market town or the outskirts of Norwich (a government Opportunity Area).

The Diocese has long promoted the notion of family, service and belonging together as church schools. We therefore see the development of DMATs as a natural extension of this and set out our reasoning for this in Section 6. This focuses on school improvement but also includes the ability

for procurement savings, something that is already being achieved in our first DMAT. A significant factor in why the MAT model is seen as strong is the structure offered to support small schools in the challenges they face to remain sustainably good or better (Section 7). This strategy sets out how we will work with small schools and encourages further federations (within DMATs too). Pupil outcomes can fluctuate rapidly in small schools and where standards cannot be sustained the option of closure will not be ruled out. The Diocese of Norwich wants to be seen as a beacon of excellence for small schools so will develop guidance and support for teachers working in mixed year classes. In developing a five year strategy certain assumptions have been made (Section 8). If all schools choose to become academies then three DMATs of 5000-6000 pupils each (and around 35 schools) would give critical mass in each to develop sustainable school improvement models. Maintaining geographic coherence for each MAT will be essential as will ensuring a balanced proportion of academies that are good or better in each MAT. The five year strategy also details the establishment of a separate company to provide support services (Section 11) and the aspiration to support staff Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and teacher recruitment through the establishment of a Teaching School Alliance (Section 10). The opportunity for a limited number of non-church schools to join a DMAT is open where they may be working in federation already or where strength is added to the MAT. The strategy also assumes that there will be opportunity to bid to

open new free schools / academies once the Department for Education (DfE) announces new guidance or the Local Authority launch a competition for a new school.

The second and third Diocesan MATs will be different from our first DMAT which started with a high proportion of grade three and four schools (Section 9). There will be some commonalities to aid practical operation (e.g. finance systems) but the school improvement approach will be led by the school leaders from the good and outstanding schools working closely with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Such collaborative approaches mark our ways of working and free up Headteachers to innovatively lead teaching and learning in their academy. Section 9 also outlines the approach to governance and the importance of a clear Scheme of Delegation.

An important change being brought about with the growth in the number of Diocesan MATs is the establishment of a new company to provide services centrally for Diocesan MATs and VA / VC schools who choose to procure via this route (Section 11). The key measure of success here is that these high quality services provide value for money and cost savings which can be released back to support school improvement.

With only two secondary schools within the Diocese it is important that they are not forgotten. Section 12 outlines how school improvement support is accessed more widely by working with other schools and academies. Other secondary schools / academies would be welcome

to join a Diocesan MAT but this is thought unlikely. Any opportunity to apply to open a new secondary academy would be taken (an opportunity in NE Norwich has been identified by Norfolk County Council but timescales are very uncertain). The DBE has expressed an interest in being involved in opening new Special Educational Needs schools or Alternative Provision (Section 13). During this five year period the Diocese will need to consider developing its own expertise if it wants to bid to open such provision.

Any strategy needs to articulate what success looks. Section 14 sets out overall success criteria and five high level Key Performance Indicators.



Photo credit: St Michael's Church of England Academy

## 1. The Church of England's Vision for Education – Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good

The national government has long spoken of developing an education system that is a world leader, where outcomes for children are achieved through great teachers, great leaders and great schools. There has been a move to enable leaders working in schools to be system leaders and contribute to what is often referred to as a 'school led education system'. The Church of England and its growing network of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) is very well placed to be a central component in successfully delivering this bold ambition. Our schools and academies serve their local communities and are fully inclusive, welcoming those of all faiths or none, those with additional needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. At the heart of this strategy is love for our schools and the young people in them.

The Church of England's Vision for Education, published in 2016, is deeply Christian, with the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. The vision sets out the sort of education the Church of England advocates and seeks to enable. It is not just relevant for Church of England schools. A copy can be found as follows: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2532839/2016-church-of-england-vision-for-education-web-final.pdf>

There are four basic elements that run through the whole approach. Together they form an 'ecology' of the fullness of life, each in interplay with all the others. The headlines are reproduced below.

### **Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills**

*Good schools foster confidence, delight and discipline in seeking wisdom, knowledge, truth, understanding, know-how, and the skills needed to shape life well. They nurture academic habits and skills, emotional intelligence and creativity across the whole range of school subjects, including areas such as music, drama and the arts, information and other technologies, sustainable development, sport, and what one needs to understand and practise in order to be a good person, citizen, parent, employee, team or group member, or leader.*

### **Educating for Hope and Aspiration**

*In the drama of ongoing life, how we learn to approach the future is crucial. Good schools open up horizons of hope and aspiration, and guide pupils into ways of fulfilling them. They also cope wisely with things and people going wrong. Bad experiences and behaviour, wrongdoing and evil need not have the last word. There are resources for healing, repair and renewal; repentance, forgiveness, truth and reconciliation are possible; and meaning, trust, generosity, compassion and hope are more fundamental than meaninglessness, suspicion, selfishness, hardheartedness and despair.*

### **Educating for Community and Living Well Together**

*We are only persons with each other: our humanity is 'co-humanity', inextricably involved with others, utterly relational, both in our humanity and our shared life on a finite planet. If those others are of ultimate worth then we are each called to responsibility towards*

*them and to contribute responsibly to our communities. The good life is 'with and for others in just institutions' (Paul Ricoeur 1992). So education needs to have a core focus on relationships and commitments, participation in communities and institutions, and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.*

### **Educating for Dignity and Respect**

*Human dignity, the ultimate worth of each person, is central to good education. The basic principle of respect for the value of each person involves continual discernment, deliberation and action, and schools are one of the main places where this happens, and where the understanding and practices it requires are learned. This includes vigilant safeguarding. It is especially important that the equal worth of those with and without special educational needs and disabilities is recognized in practice. For the first time in history, there is now something approaching global agreement on the worth of each person through the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and its successor declarations, covenants and conventions, including that in 2006 on the rights of persons with disabilities. How that is worked out in each nation and each school is a massive task that calls on the inspiration and resources offered by each tradition of faith and belief.*

This vision sets out a distinctive approach to a broad and balanced education which is more than just academic results and prepares children and young people for life in modern Britain. It has also been used as the basis for the new Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

framework focusing on vision, provision and impact, a significant change from the previous framework.

Within our distinctively Christian context, where our schools and academies serve their local communities, we can boldly contribute to playing our part in delivering the Church of England's Education Vision.



Photo credit: Catherine Beane

## 2. The Diocese of Norwich Mission Strategy 2021

The Diocese of Norwich's 'Committed to Growth: Mission Strategy 2021' sees its work with schools and academies as an important component of it being 'Committed to Growth in Service'. It challenges all involved with its schools and academies to be bold and 'push back the horizons of our hopes' in recognition that 'God who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine' (Ephesians 3 verse 20). A core feature of the Diocese's approach has been the notion of belonging to a family where service of others is promoted, alongside other Christian values such as the worth of each individual, love, forgiveness, humility and respect. We see these values lived out in our schools and academies every day.

This Education Strategy sets high ambition for school improvement but is balanced with ensuring it is fully inclusive. Church of England schools serve their communities

and have always been for those of all faiths or none. Our schools will continue to be places where those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) are welcomed and well supported. Our aspiration is that the 'disadvantage gap' will close for those who are eligible for Pupil Premium funding. We support the notion of 'social mobility' and recognise the vital role education has to play. This Education Strategy 2018-23 and the work of the DBE will proactively support the Mission Strategy 2021. As well as its direct working with schools, there are wider areas to contribute to such as supporting the work of the Children, Youth and Families department as they look to enable parishes to engage with children and young people, and helping clergy to develop a presence in new housing developments. Therefore, we will look to apply to open new schools, where needed due to population growth, and through this, work with clergy and laity in these newly established communities.



Photo credit: St Mary's, Roughton

### 3. The Diocese of Norwich context

There are 111 schools and academies in the Diocese of which only two are secondary schools / academies. 39 are Voluntary Aided, 40 are Voluntary Controlled and 30 are academies. As of December 2017 the Department for Education has approved the resolution of another ten governing bodies who have voted to become academies. These 111 schools and academies represent more than half of Norfolk’s small schools and serve a quarter of the young people in the Diocese, some 16,813 young people in total (as at May 2017). The majority serve rural communities and market towns with a hand full of larger schools on the outskirts of Norwich.

The Department for Education (DfE) considers anything under 200 pupils as a small school. The table below shows the challenge for the Diocese. A yearly admission number of 30 pupils (i.e. one class) produces a 210 place primary school.

The Diocese is committed to enabling high quality education in these communities and has developed its own approach to small schools (see section 7). Our aspiration is to become recognised experts in leading and managing small schools.

The Diocese of Norwich, through its Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), established its

first Multi Academy Trust (MAT) in October 2013. The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust (DNEAT) is now established as an effectively structured and well-governed trust. Clear lines of accountability provide good and outstanding Headteachers the freedom to successfully run their academy in accordance with the Christian vision and values of the Diocese. Where academies are yet to be judged good then appropriate support and challenge is provided through a high quality and responsive academy improvement team. In December 2017 DfE permission was given to establish a second MAT which is called the Diocese of Norwich St Benet’s Multi Academy Trust. Our ongoing collaborative approach working within both MATs enables Headteachers to focus on raising standards, adapting to their own local context – this is not a ‘one size fits all’ approach.

Ofsted outcomes for all our schools and academies remain below the national average for those graded good and outstanding. As of 1st January 2018 the Diocese has 82% graded 1 and 2 compared to 91% nationally. There has been a legacy of grade 3, formerly satisfactory, now requires improvement schools. The first MAT had a high percentage of grade 3 and 4 schools join it (14 out of 30 = 47%, i.e. only 53% good or better).

	No and % of schools below 210	No. and % of schools below 105	No. and % of schools below 60
Diocese of Norwich	94 (85%)	55 (50%)	21 (19%)

## 4. The role of the Diocese in delivering the ambition of an outstanding education system

The Diocese of Board of Education is committed to the education vision set out by the Church of England, the Diocese of Norwich's Mission Strategy 2021 and the aspirations of national government. The opportunity to develop a truly 'school led system' is with us now. We believe that the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) model is the best way, although not the only way, for our predominantly small schools to be sustainably good or better. The DBE policy, for church schools to join Diocesan MATs, is supported by the 'National Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the National Society and the Department of Education (April 2016)'. In this document the Secretary of State 'acknowledges and accepts that it is for DBEs to plan strategically' for its schools and academies working closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). This five year strategy is the outworking of the DBE taking that responsibility very seriously, deliberating thoughtfully and taking feedback from Headteachers, governors and other stakeholders such as the Local Authority.

The sustainability of small schools is measured through educational standards, strength of leadership and governance as well as financially. The Local Authority (LA) has articulated this in its own strategy for small schools and we continue to work in close partnership with the LA to deliver our collective ambition. It is essential that schools collaborate and our network of church schools provides a ready-made family to work with. Together there is a tremendous opportunity to create a sustainable education system fit for purpose in Norfolk and NE Suffolk.

### What values and approaches underpin our Education Strategy?

- Children and young people always at the centre as we seek to provide an exceptional school experience for all
- A relentless focus on outcomes for all children
- A commitment to Christian distinctiveness which permeates our culture and how we work with each other
- An inclusive approach to education where diversity is welcomed and discussed in an open and productive way
- Development of character through the values-led approach of all our schools where 'life in all its fullness' drives the way we relate to one another
- The development of great teachers through the provision and facilitation of high quality and impactful CPD
- Releasing our gifted Headteachers to make a stunning impact in their schools
- Clear and robust governance and lines of accountability
- Using the MAT structure to play a central role as system leaders in the Diocese and beyond
- Using our value for money business model in a time of austerity to ensure delivery of the best outcomes for those in our schools
- A commitment to strong local governance through appropriate Schemes of Delegation within all DMATs
- An outward looking approach that learns from others and contributes to the wider system
- A planned and carefully managed approach to growing the number of MATs and academies that will not compromise existing good standards or rapid school improvement where needed.

## 5. Key drivers for the Diocese of Norwich Education Strategy 2017 - 2022

The development of this 5-year strategic plan aims to respond creatively and flexibly to the current education landscape. Key drivers are:

- The aspiration to see all Diocesan schools Ofsted 'good' or better within three years
- The belief that the MAT model enables a sustainable, high quality school improvement system to be delivered
- The national and regional governments' desire to see successful MATs leading the system in line with the most recent legislation; the Education and Adoption Act 2016
- The evidence that working together in local MATs secures a collaborative local family of like-minded academies where all are valued and can positively contribute
- An ambition to see Diocesan MATs and academies as the employer of choice for staff
- The belief that our core Christian values enable a culture in which all can flourish
- A desire to see all our schools SIAMS inspections good or better
- An ambition to see excellent leadership developed across our schools and academies with real opportunities for career progression as part of succession planning
- Ensuring a positive balance of good and outstanding schools (as well as different sized schools) in each DMAT to maintain capacity for school to school support
- Working in DfE 'Opportunity Areas' to greatly improve the life chances and social mobility of children and young people
- The desire to see great leaders running schools and great teachers having an impact in all schools
- An ambition to establish a Diocesan Teaching School Alliance to enable local initial teacher training and a high quality CPD programme for all
- A plan to provide high quality guidance and support for teachers in small schools
- The desire to continue the values and tradition of a 200 year heritage for all young people as set out in the statutory DBE Measure
- A passion to see Norfolk, and our schools in NE Suffolk, and its education system recognised as a place of aspiration, achievement and hope including in rural and coastal communities.

It is recognised that it is necessary to take a planned and measured approach to strategic development and growth. It is also understood that governing bodies are the decision makers in existing VA and VC schools and need to be convinced that this strategy supports their own vision and strategic planning. So why are we promoting multi academy trusts (MATs) as the preferred model?

## 6. Why do we believe joining a MAT makes sense?

It is first and foremost about school improvement. Whilst we must inevitably talk about structures, these structures are only important and necessary if they lead to an excellent educational experience. For a long time the education world and the national government has talked of a 'school-led' system whereby education leaders are at the forefront of driving sustained school improvement. If we look at the best MATs, and we only aspire to be the best, this is exactly what they do. They are systems leaders in their area and the support they provide for pupils, staff and governors makes a significant impact on outcomes for pupils and their all-round school experience. Appendix 1 highlights some external reports setting out the benefits of MATs and their role in a school led improvement system.

With a very high proportion of small schools, the Diocese of Norwich has long supported the notion of family and encouraged schools to join together in federations. Our experience of establishing our first DMAT is now showing the advantages of being 'hardwired' even more closely, for example, in developing comprehensive CPD programmes, career development opportunities and value for money back office services that are making procurement savings.

The education sector has experienced a funding scenario where costs have increased against flat funding making it

harder to balance budgets without staffing adjustments. Working in a larger group, such as a MAT, provides opportunity for procurement savings, a factor that has already been demonstrated in DNEAT.

There is significant risk in isolation even if currently graded good or outstanding by Ofsted. This is particularly true for small schools where the change of a Headteacher or the loss of one critical staff member can see the dynamics change rapidly and standards soon become of concern. This education strategy therefore also sets out a position for small schools (Section 7).

However, isolation can be a risk for larger and medium sized schools even if good and outstanding. Governors and Headteachers may ask 'what's in it for us?'; a sensible question. Appendix 2 details some work recently carried out by Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and the Academy Improvement Team in DNEAT. It lists the benefits that all feel come from being part of a hard-wired school improvement club. Of course, as governors consider whether to join a MAT, then understanding what responsibilities are passed to a MAT Board of Trustees and what are still delegated to local governing bodies is essential. Section 9 gives some more context to this. Being part of a Diocesan MAT is an exciting activity and one where good leaders can make their mark and truly play their part in system leadership.

## 7. Sustainably good or better small schools – our approach

The Diocesan Board of Education has regularly considered its approach to small schools giving reference to national research (e.g. from the Church of England, DfE) and Norfolk County Council's small schools' strategy. At its meeting in October 2017, this was considered again noting the data set out in Section 3 above whereby 50% of the schools in the Diocese are below 105 pupils and 85% below 210 pupils (i.e. one class of 30 per year group). Critical factors discussed included:

- LA data showing a three year trend of low performance for cohorts of less than 10 – attainment standards in very small schools are generally poor
- Academic standards are the most important of the four components needing to be assessed to ensure sustainability for small schools – the others being leadership, governance and finance
- Small schools tend to attract a disproportionately high percentage of SEND children
- Often small schools do not have the professional expertise to deal with specialist areas such as SEND
- Being in a year group with only a few other pupils does not prepare them as well for life in secondary school and limits experiences such as team sports
- Recruiting teachers with the skills, or interest in teaching mixed year groups is challenging
- Instances where significant proportions of catchment children do not attend their local small school

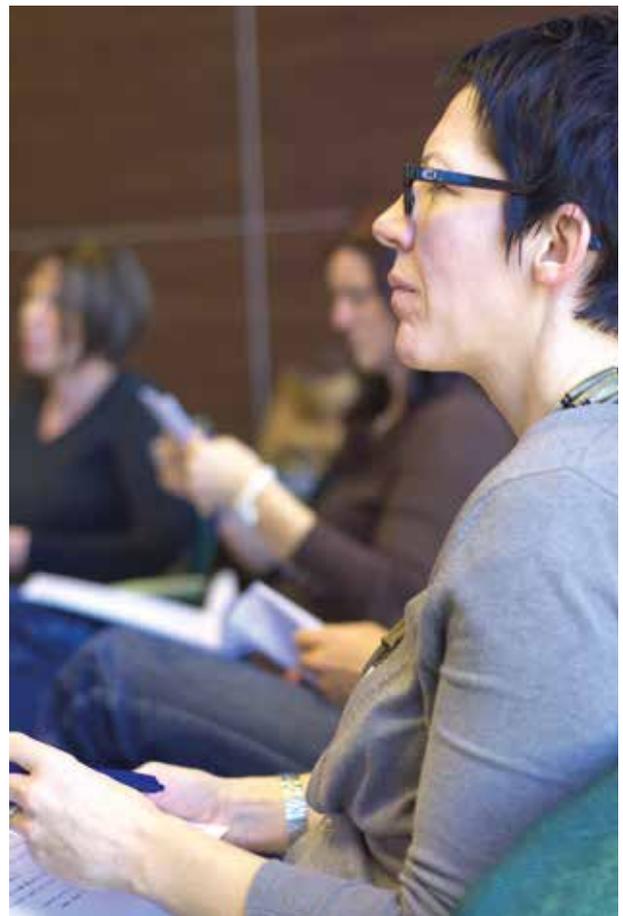
- Concern where Headteachers have to carry a significant teaching commitment and its impact on their wellbeing
- Small schools still needing to operate as federations even if they join a MAT.

This refreshed Education Strategy 2017 – 22 therefore articulates a **position for small schools** in the Diocese as set out below:

- a) Whatever the size of school the Diocese's ambition is that all schools or academies will be Ofsted and SIAMs good or better. Where a school joins a MAT and this is not the case then it will become so within two years. Where a school is already good, then it will become outstanding within three years
- b) We recognise that small schools and academies take their place as an educational asset at the centre of their community
- c) Sustainability of small schools rests in four key areas (standards, leadership, finance and governance). These all inform the ongoing risk assessment of Diocesan schools and academies, with particular emphasis being placed on standards
- d) Small schools and academies in the Diocese will be proactively encouraged to work in federated arrangements under one Local Governing Body and (usually) one Executive Headteacher, sharing one federation budget

- e) The preferred model for primary education is one form of entry per year group giving a number on roll of 210 pupils. However, we recognise in rural communities this is not always possible so will work towards a half form entry model with four classes giving a number on roll of 105 pupils
- f) All schools and academies of 105 pupils or less should be in a federated arrangement
- g) The Diocese, its Governing Bodies and MAT Trustees will maintain a focus on sustainability of small schools as highly effective educational establishments. Where standards, leadership, finance or governance are proved unsustainable then the option of closure, in consultation with the Diocesan Board of Education and other statutory consultees, will be seriously considered
- h) As a Diocese committed to the success of smaller schools with mixed year group classes, we will develop good practice guides for staff and governors working in federations. A specific CPD programme will support executive leaders and staff working across more than one school. This will include guidance on an appropriate curriculum and strategies for teaching mixed age classes. Different successful staffing models will be documented.

There is a tremendous opportunity for all involved in our small schools and academies to develop something special with excellent leadership, effective governance and wonderful CPD and career progression, particularly if we can achieve our ambition of establishing a Teaching School Alliance with a focus on smaller schools as a part of its remit.



## 8. The Five Year strategic plan

Having reflected on local and national drivers, the context of the Diocese and our belief that the Church of England has a significant role to play in facilitating its school leaders to innovate and be successful, this strategy sets out a vision where all Diocesan schools are working together in MATs.

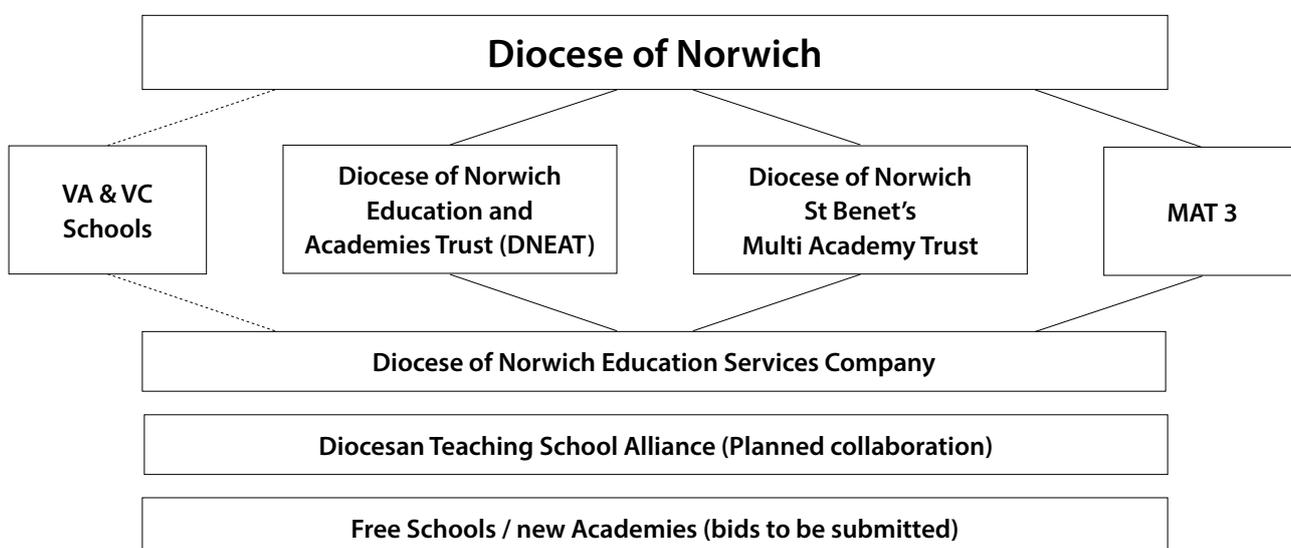
The following section sets out what this could look like and makes certain assumptions:

1. All Diocesan schools are academies by the end of 2023 (there is no presumption when individual schools may convert but it is recognised such change would need managing carefully over that five year period including maintaining a balance of grade 3 or 4 schools within any one MAT as well as different size of schools)
2. Three MATs of 5000 - 6000 pupils and around 35 schools would be created (this pupil number gives a critical mass

to be financially sustainable and to provide school improvement support)

3. Support services (excluding school improvement) will be provided by a separate jointly owned education support services company (see Section 11)
4. A Diocesan led Teaching School Alliance is established
5. A small number of non-church schools will join where they are part of a federation or bring strengths to the Diocese
6. We will bid for new Church of England academies in areas of Basic Need i.e. in response to population growth. Currently, the only way to open such schools are as Free Schools and new guidance is expected on this from the DfE.

The diagram below shows how this is envisaged.



In order to maintain a balanced proportion of academies that are good or better in each MAT it will be necessary to be flexible with the local geographic borders. It will also be important to ensure that one DMAT does not have too heavy a balance of small schools. Managing this process of growth will need careful planning and consideration. No plans have been agreed as to exactly which DMAT a school might join – this will be reviewed on a case by case basis and in discussion with any school. There may also be times when academies in DNEAT will need to be transferred to a different DMAT but again this will be discussed and only carried out when it

is right for all parties. Any transfers will be kept to a minimum and will all have to be approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner (DfE).

Our existing Diocesan MATs have Articles of Association that allow for non-Church of England schools to join the Trust without needing to become a church school. Clearly, these schools need to share our vision and values and consult fully with their community before joining. However, it is feasible that some existing federations of church Voluntary Controlled (VC) and community schools are likely to seriously consider joining as an existing federation.



Photo credit: Open Academy

## 9. Our approach to governance, accountability and autonomy

In promoting MATs as the preferred model for Diocesan schools, governing bodies, particularly those in strong schools, will need to be convinced of the advantages of this model and how the Diocesan MATs will work with local communities to ensure wide engagement. We do not expect all three DMATs to work in exactly the same way, although some standard approaches will be necessary, for example, finance system, MIS, HR policies.

As described earlier, DNEAT started with a high proportion of challenging schools. Our new Diocesan MATs will start from very different positions and with an expectation that successful Headteachers will shape school improvement approaches and school to school support from the outset. Appropriate central staffing models, led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will be developed in consultation with academies.

Our aspiration is to enable Headteachers and local governors to focus on teaching and learning, and working with their local community within the safety and strength of a robust MAT governance and accountability framework. This gives the best of both worlds where head teachers run their schools and others with specific skills support and challenge appropriately.

We have a clear understanding of governance and accountability and proactively use a Scheme of Delegation to ensure clarity of responsibility in our existing DMATs. This allows for greater autonomy where academies have a proven track record but the Trust Board retains the ability to intervene where academies are struggling. There are key aspects for all academies whereby the Trust Board retains responsibility whatever the level of academy performance, for example Headteacher recruitment, HR policies and overall financial policy.

The commitment to work collaboratively, engaging leaders in developing systems and ways of working, lies at the heart of our approach and culture. Our approach aligns with that of Robert Hill (former DfE ministerial adviser) who says:

*The whole point of a MAT is to grow a teaching and learning model where schools are continually and ever more deeply engaging with, learning from and supporting each other. That requires a shared purpose, shared leadership, shared systems, shared resources and shared accountability.*

## 10. School improvement, staff professional development and teacher recruitment

There is a significant amount of talent and good practice across the Diocese's schools and academies. It is vital this is harnessed for the collective good in any models that we develop. We are also confident in our existing DMAT that we are raising standards in academies through a differentiated and thorough Academy Improvement Strategy proportionate to the level of each academy's need. The approach developed and refined in our first DMAT can be seen in Appendix 3 and is provided as an example from which other MATs could work as they develop approaches specific to their own circumstances. We believe the development of school to school support should feature strongly in any model.

To support and accelerate this school to school support we believe we need to establish a Teaching School Alliance (TSA)

enabling the further development of excellent CPD for all staff and helping in the recruitment and retention of teachers. This critical development is being planned now so that we can submit an application in a future application window. We already run a comprehensive programme of CPD in our first DMAT but a TSA will ensure all staff and academies are catered for in accordance with their needs as well as giving access to initial teacher training. This latter point is vital as we need to increasingly focus on 'growing our own' teachers, particularly in areas where recruitment remains a significant limiting factor. Alongside this, we must remain outward looking and work with a range of partners to encourage strong teacher recruitment and retention in the Diocese (e.g. Norfolk County Council, Headteachers' Association, DfE, UEA, SCITT, Teach First, SNITT).



Photo credit: Fitcham Church of England Primary Academy

## 11. Providing support services (not school improvement)

An essential part of this strategy is to provide a number of high-quality value for money services thereby taking much of this responsibility from the Headteacher and local governing bodies and gaining cost advantages. This allows school leaders to concentrate on educating children, teaching and learning and working with the local community. We plan to establish a support services company that will be jointly owned by the DMATs. It will be a 'not for profit company' so any surpluses made will go back to the DMATs and their academies. This company's objective will be to provide high quality, value for money services for all the Diocesan academies and any VC or VA schools who wish to procure their services from it.

We recognise there are potential risks in this as 'big is not always beautiful' and large scale central procurement has challenges too. Robust governance and risk management will ensure any potential conflicts of interest are managed well. There will be clear, formal contracts for all services provided across DMATs and with VA / VC schools to ensure transparency and the ability to monitor

value for money (VFM). Each year a VFM report will be produced. Every three years an independent reviewer will check the costs of the services provided by the support services company against those available in the market. This will ensure that the DMATs and schools are still obtaining value for money for these services. This approach will give consistency of financial probity, policy implementation and risk management.

By developing this work within one company there are efficiencies and savings that can be made. The objectives set for the central support services company are to:

- Ensure high quality, VFM services are provided for academies and schools
- Ensure systems and performance meet legal and funding body requirements
- Maximise opportunities for driving through cost savings to allow greater investment in front line services
- Actively encourage and positively respond to customer feedback
- Ensure a risk-based approach is taken supported by robust risk management.

## 12. Secondary schools

The Diocese only has two secondary schools in its remit. Open Academy is within DNEAT and Archbishop Sancroft High School is a founding school in the new St Benet's MAT. The latter is committed to federating with Harleston Primary school and potentially becoming an all-through 4 – 16 year old school in the future. New high schools would be welcomed into Diocesan MATs as with only two high schools, meaningful and cost effective school improvement collaboration is limited.

To address this, and ensure both existing high schools are well-supported, school improvement services and collaboration are currently being accessed through the 'Better to Best' school improvement programme.

This involves working with a number of other high schools and academies across Norfolk. There is no plan for these high schools / academies to join a Diocesan MAT but our strategy should consider this as a possible avenue to explore.

Consideration also needs to be given to whether both our own secondary schools should be located in the same Diocesan MAT.

Other strategic opportunities to increase our representation in the secondary phase should be considered as and when they occur. Norfolk County Council have previously announced the need for a new secondary school just north of Norwich as house building develops. Timing of this is uncertain.



Photo credit: Open Academy

### 13. Other opportunities – Special Educational Needs or Alternative Provision

The Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) has discussed before whether it should be involved in Special Educational Needs schools and / or Alternative Provision for those excluded from mainstream schools and academies. There is a strong desire to play a role in supporting those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged and ensuring they receive a good education.

It has been well reported that in Norfolk there is a shortage of places for both SEN pupils and in those requiring a place in AP. The Free School programme and competitive

tenders run by the Local Authority offer ways for new providers to enter these areas of education.

Both dimensions are very specialist areas of provision and the DBE would need to develop the skills and experience of those on the Board and those employed by the Diocese in order to take this forward. Therefore this iteration of the strategy does not include a plan for immediate activity in this area but a recommendation to explore the feasibility of entering the SEN or AP arena within the next five years.



## 14. How will we know our strategy has succeeded? What are our Key Performance indicators?

Our overall **success criteria** for this strategy are that the Diocese of Norwich and its schools, academies and Multi Academy Trusts are known for:

- Achieving high educational outcomes above national averages in all educational key performance indicators
- Being employers of choice where staff are valued, empowered and enabled to develop their professional expertise
- Providing a broad ranging educational experience where pupils flourish and grow into their potential as individuals made in the image of God
- An inclusive culture which is based on the distinctive Christian values as demonstrated in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ
- Demonstrating strong and effective educational system leadership, successfully supporting national education policy priorities
- Being at the heart of the community they serve, working closely with local churches (clergy and laity), and contributing to its well-being
- Effective and efficient use of financial and physical resources which provide outstanding value for money
- Clear, timely and valued communication to all their stakeholders (internal and external).

The following **Key Performance Indicators** (KPIs) have been identified:

1. The Diocese of Norwich schools will be at or above national average for the percentage that are Ofsted good or better
2. All schools and academies will be SIAMs good or outstanding
3. Schools joining a MAT that are not yet good will be good within two years
4. Attainment measures will be at least in line with those for similar schools nationally
5. Progress measures will be above 0.0.

## APPENDIX 1

### External views on the benefits of Multi Academy Trusts and their role

#### ***Developed from 5 Drivers for a Changing Educational World (DfE policy statements 2017)***

If schools want to play a full role in the 21st Century education system they need to ensure that they are part of a system that can influence change and contribute to the national expectations of;

- Helping provide more good school places for all children
- Doing even better with less resource
- Contributing to the social mobility agenda for the system as a whole
- Operate in a changing set of relationships and gain some protection by working together with like-minded organisations in a more diverse system.
- Recognise that any conversion to academy status has to be to conversion plus improvement, and in developing a school led system evidence suggests that individual schools find this very difficult to sustain.

### ***Ofsted's research into Trusts found the following common characteristics:***

- Ability to recruit and retain high quality staff at all levels
- Well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum
- Commitment to provide high quality education to all pupils
- Investment in CPD of teachers and sharing of knowledge and expertise across a network of constituent schools
- High priority given to initial teacher training and leadership development to help secure a pipeline of future talent across all schools
- Clear frameworks of accountability, governance and delegation across all schools
- Effective use of assessment information to identify, escalate and tackle problems quickly
- Cautious and considered approach to expansion.

### **National Schools Commissioner – Sir David Carter – key messages from presentations**

- MATs provide expertise and local knowledge for the management of the academy system
- We need to develop autonomous MATs with strong school improvement strategies and sound financial models
- Give system leaders greater influence and direction over the academies system
- Create an evolving system allowing flexibility for the system to continue to develop as the number of academies and free schools continues to grow
- Ensure strong governance of the academy system.

‘Changing times – new opportunities and how we build our leadership capacity’ (Autumn 2017)

What underpins the way that the MAT school led system delivers improvement?

- Secure, sustainable improvement takes time but leaders need to prioritise and sequence the changes they need to make
- Schools and Trusts need to see themselves as capacity givers and capacity takers over a period of time
- Schools improve sequentially and in stages
- School improvement is the product of high quality leadership which accurately identifies the stage of the improvement journey for each school
- School improvement can be judged through the lens of results and Ofsted but not exclusively
- STRATEGY + CAPACITY + PACE = Improvement.

## APPENDIX 2

### **What are the benefits of working in DNEAT (an evaluation by Headteachers, Chairs of Governors and the Academy Improvement Team)**

#### **1. Doing things right**

##### Trust Governance:

- Ensuring compliance with recognised governance practices and frameworks
- Development and dissemination of Trust Core Policies
- Small Schools Review response
- Clerking support and quality assurance
- Provision of Governor Improvement Associates
- Facilitating Academy Improvement Reviews
- Development of GovernorHub as a resource and a repository for the MAT.

##### Local Governance:

- Annual timetable of meetings, and resources (agenda/designed governor resources/templates/skills/self-assessment) to support local governors
- Development of Critical Guide to Questioning
- Quality assurance visits and reports
- Training – standard offer plus specific face to face training
- Chair of Governors' termly forum
- Bespoke support to each local governing body
- PEX/Complaints/Grievance Panels including clerking and support

##### Performance Management:

- Leading process of Headteacher Performance including write up of review and quality assurance across the Trust
- Teachers' appraisal data capture and statutory reporting to Trustees and Unions.

#### **2. Staying safe**

- A cycle of safeguarding audits
- Health and Safety audits
- General Data Protection Requirement (GDPR) updates and training
- Rapid response to safety issues
- Support for HR concerns and liaison with HR provider
- Finance support and budget management.

#### **3. Improving together**

##### Quality and Accountability:

- Academies Group Executive Principal bespoke support and challenge
- Termly, quality assured Academy Improvement Review
- Annual Effectiveness Review (led by Ofsted inspector)
- Leadership capacity reviews as needed
- Quality Assurance of Local Governing Body function.

#### Improvement and Development:

- Access to DNEAT 'tools' (Single Change Plan format, Operational Overview format, Head teacher's report/SEF format, School On A Page)
- Regular Ofsted updates
- Support before, during and after Ofsted inspection (and SIAMS inspection)
- Comprehensive Continuing Professional Development programme (100 events) to include moderation of work opportunities for all year groups
- Annual Staff CPD event
- Annual Support Staff CPD event
- Senior and middle leader networks (heads, deputies, SendCos, Subject leads, Early Years Leads)
- Head teacher Regional Alliance (peer support and challenge for Headteachers)
- Brokerage and subsidy of Better to Best offer (linked to regional priorities)
- Externally brokered Pupil Premium Reviews and Impact Assessments
- Externally commissioned Trust wide GL Assessments
- Bespoke Trust wide opportunities (Shirley Clarke – Assessment for Learning)
- Assessment and data analysis support
- HMI project
- Involvement in Strategic School Improvement Funded projects
- Trust wide celebrations – The Big Sing (for all Year 6 pupils).

...and that's not all!

## APPENDIX 3

**Strategic approach to Academy Improvement**

(the approach is expressed through discrete components but all are inextricably linked)

Component	Strategic approach to achieve MAT vision
<p><b>VISION</b> Agree and reinforce the MAT vision of all academies to be good within two years or outstanding within three, and to exceed national benchmarks</p> <p>Define the relationship of the MAT with academies according to the principle of earned autonomy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and comprehensive due diligence on entry to the MAT (in relation to school improvement) to ensure job descriptions are in place, terms and conditions adhered to and 'risks' in relation to MAT ambitions are well understood</li> <li>• Clear protocols and ways of working in a collaborative enterprise are understood</li> <li>• Ofsted grade (and Capacity Audit outcome) upon joining the MAT, adjusted as required, leading to varying levels of autonomy and requirement to purchase central services</li> <li>• Clear terms of reference for accountability meetings with Trustees</li> <li>• Clear and transparent role description for CEO, Academies Improvement Director (AID) and head teachers along with shared knowledge of MAT Code of Conduct.</li> </ul>
<p><b>RISK</b> Use data and intelligence systematically and transparently to risk assess each academy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centralised data and intelligence actively maintained using Pupil Asset, along with key indicators in relation to finance and local governance</li> <li>• Termly collection of end of Key Stage predictions, reviewed and challenged via AID visits, peer challenge forums and Trustee accountability meetings</li> <li>• Each academy assigned a termly RAG indicator in relation to its progress towards the MAT ambition of becoming Ofsted 'good' or better in two years (or for those already good to be outstanding in three) and to exceed national benchmark for age related expectation for achievement</li> <li>• MAT proportionate response to RAG rating.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PLAN</b> Produce a support plan for each academy in line with above</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data and intelligence from 'Capacity Audit' or 'External Scrutiny Assessments (ESA)' informs a 'Support Plan' for each academy</li> <li>• Where findings from initial 'Capacity' audit suggests academy is at high risk, an 'Intensive Support Plan' is agreed to urgently address areas for improvement using expertise of others in the MAT, the AID or through the commissioning of specialists from elsewhere</li> <li>• If appropriate, adjustments to accountability processes are agreed, including the frequency and membership of monitoring groups and trustee involvement</li> <li>• Annual ESAs assess overall progress and impact of school improvement strategies, influencing risk process and outcome.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SUPPORT</b> Proportionate use of a range of school improvement approaches in order to bring about swift improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Intensive Support Plans' for weak academies to address urgent priorities for improvement, including targets, training and development needs; to be accessed from system leaders in partner academies, the AID, the Diocesan Teaching School Alliance (once approved) and from other national and local providers as needed</li> <li>• 'Collaborative Support Plans' in place for all other academies along with proportionate support for leadership, teaching and assessment, utilising opportunities for peer challenge, MAT school to school networking and other targeted programmes.</li> </ul>

<p><b>COLLABORATE</b> Enabling brokered support and collaboration to accelerate improvement and build capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAT system leader talent pool for teaching and leadership identified, accredited and developed. Systematically used for school to school support and deployed between academies through secondments and internships</li> <li>• Support for curriculum development, core subject moderation assessment and tracking using Pupil Asset</li> <li>• Brokered support from other NLEs, LLEs, NSLs, SLEs and excellent teachers as needed</li> <li>• Trustee training and support</li> <li>• Brokered support to develop partnerships with parents and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MONITOR AND INTERVENE</b> Robust and routine system for monitoring academy effectiveness and capacity to improve, leading to appropriate intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each academy submits data to CEO/AID at half-termly intervals for analysis</li> <li>• Joint AID and headteacher peer challenge visits each term to monitor progress towards pupil targets and evaluate evidence of progress towards achieving school development plan priorities and the impact of MAT support plans. Agreed actions between visits</li> <li>• Trustee accountability meetings monitor progress towards the MAT's target for each academy. Where evidence suggests that MAT ambitions are not on course to be met, the risk will be assessed and appropriate action taken to mitigate against this</li> <li>• Further intervention as required, including more direct role of AID and CEO and increased frequency of visits</li> <li>• Possible move from Performance Management to capability proceedings in line with the MAT's strategy to address underperformance</li> <li>• Trustees to direct and/or review intervention in academies of greatest concern where routine approaches have had insufficient impact and something different is required to improve them rapidly</li> <li>• Best practice recorded as a 'case study' and disseminated to all; open days for academies to see first-hand.</li> </ul>



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