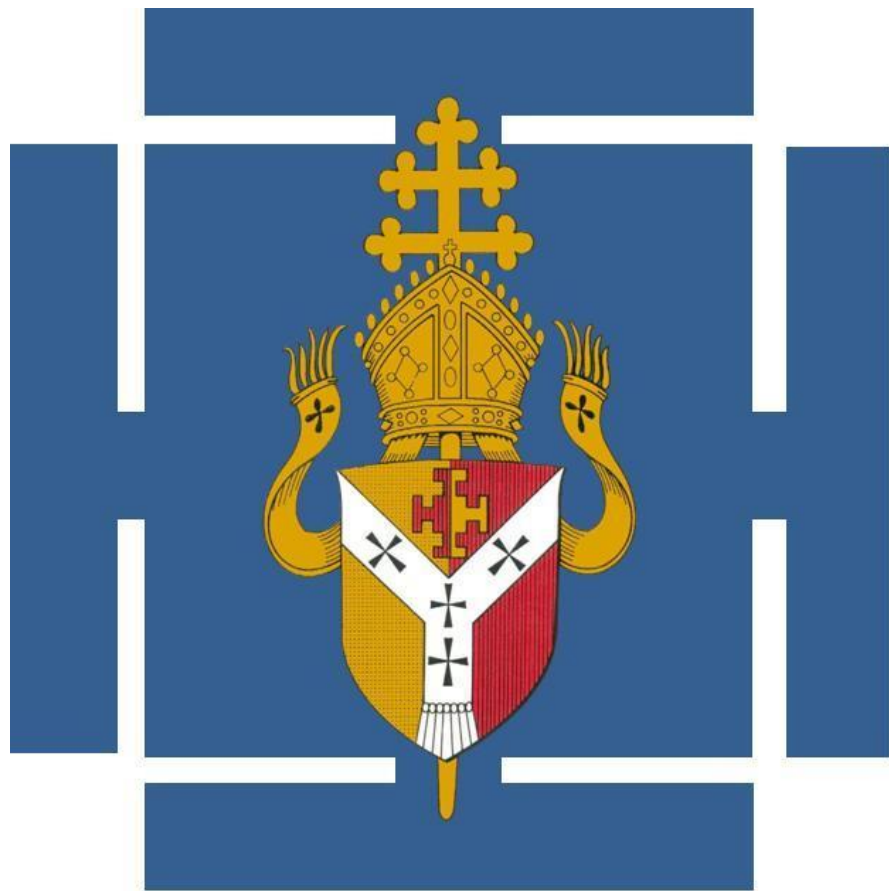


Associated Guidance: Becoming Academy Ready and Moving Forward



DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

Archdiocese of Birmingham Registered Charity No 234216

Making Christ Known Today

Phase 1: Establishing Commitment (Anticipated that this phase will take approximately 3 – 6 months)

The Full Governing Body/Board of Directors to establish a Working Group to look at the Schools current position with regard to becoming an Academy. This group should;

- i) Establish where the School currently is with regard to working with other local Catholic Schools.
- ii) Develop a secure knowledge and understanding of what becoming an Academy (as part of a Multi-Academy Company MAC) means and how this is different from your current situation. A useful guidance document is ['Forming or Joining a Group of Schools: staying in control of your school's destiny'](#):
- iii) Pay due regard to the Diocesan Education Service (DES) 'suggested groupings' and enter into positive dialogue with your linked DES Officer to further develop your local approach.
- iv) Develop joint discussions with these Schools (both individually and collectively) in order to reach consensus and agreement on the way forward so that all Schools are 'Academy Ready' (see DES definition below).
- v) Establish an agreed group of Schools and seek provisional agreement from the DES on moving this forward.
- vi) In conjunction with the DES hold discussions with the Local Authority re future plans.
- vii) Undertake a collective review of finance, organisational, performance and legal/commercial factors which will need to be considered prior to committing to moving forward. A useful guidance document is Leading and Governing Groups of Schools, reference pages 59 and 60 of [this document](#)

By the end of Phase 1 it is expected that the group of Schools would have made a formal commitment towards joining together as part of a MAC and will be 'Academy Ready'.

DES definition of 'Academy Ready':

- Develop a secure knowledge and understanding of what becoming an Academy (as part of a Multi-Academy Company MAC) means and how this is different from your current position.
- Develop working partnerships with other Schools and have some demonstrative evidence that this is successful at both an operational and strategic level.
- Have a 'shared sense of vision' with partner Schools on what working together actually means.
- Establish a realistic timeline for the conversion to a MAC and communicate this to the DES.

Moving forward towards becoming a Multi-Academy Company

Phase 2: Application (Anticipated that this phase will take approximately 3 - 6 months)

- i) Governing Body/Board has given formal approval for the School (s) to join/form a MAC.
- ii) Diocesan letter of approval has been issued.
- iii) On-line DFE registration form has been completed and application to convert submitted <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/convert-to-an-academy-information-for-schools>
- iv) Named contact from DFE contacts the School (s) and supports them through the conversion process.
- v) Notify Local Authority of intention to convert to Multi-Academy status.
- vi) School Governing Body starts the consultation process required by legislation with interested parties – staff, parents, pupils.
- vii) Seek advice from DES Officers on the engagement of approved professional partners (legal, financial, HR).
- viii) Engage with DES re the creation of a Shadow Board pre conversion and to discuss the application process for Directors and Academy Committee Representatives.
- ix) Secretary of State approves School proposal and issues Academy Order

Phase 3: Conversion (Anticipated that this phase will take approximately 2 months)

- i) School submits grant claim to DFE and receives £25,000 grant to cover costs associated with the conversion process.
- ii) School finalises Academy conversion documents as agreed with the DES and DFE.
- iii) The MAC is registered with Companies House.
- iv) Schools agrees licensing arrangements for the School land and building with the Diocese.
- v) Each School Governing Body complete the TUPE process in conjunction with their HR provider
- vi) School completes required consultation with interested parties.
- vii) School submits the funding agreement.
- viii) All Board and Academy Committee members are agreed with DES. Please note that due consideration will need to be given to the need for both practising Catholics and a mix of skills referred to in the Foundation Director and Foundation Representative DES application forms.

Phase 4: Opening

- i) EFA provide School with indicative funding letter.
- ii) DFE sign and seal Academy Funding Agreement.
- iii) School puts new finance systems and contracts in place.
- iv) School completes Academy registrations e.g. with exam bodies.
- v) School opens officially as an Academy as part of a MAC.