

Governance

From: Governance
Sent: 17 March 2022 12:24
Cc: Mark OConnell; Yvonne Salter Wright
Subject: Archdiocesan Vision for Education and Multi Academy Strategy Publications
Attachments: Birmingham Archdiocesan vision and multi academy strategy as at 17March2022.pdf; Joining a Multi Academy Family Benefits and Challenges Summary as at 17March2022.pdf



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Diocesan Education Service

SENT by email on Thursday, 17 March 2022

TO: All Directors, Governors and Senior Leaders in Archdiocesan Catholic Schools and Multi Academies
CC: Parish Priests and Curia

***Catholic schools are the pulsing heartbeat of the Christian mission,
wellsprings of the common good***

We are writing to you further to our communication in December where we promised to provide you more details in relation to the Archdiocesan vision for education and our multi academy strategy.

Following further dialogue and receipt of feedback, we postponed that communication from January and agreed to publish the following in mid March:

- aims of the Archdiocesan vision for education and the multi academy strategy (attached for ease of reference),
- a summary of the benefits and challenges of joining a multi academy family of schools (attached), and
- the ultimate destination for each school in our Archdiocesan family which would enable this vision to be achieved.

This information on our vision for our Archdiocesan families of schools is now published on the Diocesan Education Service website: www.bdes.org.uk The website includes maps of all of the multi academy families of schools aligned to the Archdiocesan vision and strategy. It will continue to be updated and added to as further helpful information and guidance is identified and developed.

The governing body and headteacher of each VA school in the Archdiocese not yet formally part of a Multi Academy Company (MAC) will receive a further communication today confirming the multi academy family destination, together with requested next steps.

The aims of our vision for education and the multi academy strategy are in summary:

† ***Securing the very best Catholic education for our children and those of future generations as part of the mission of the Church***

† ***Creating sustainable school improvement structures and long-term resilience that encourage aspiration and innovation***

† ***Developing Christ-centred Servant Leaders at all levels, joyful in service to God and neighbour – supporting all children to become the people God calls them to be***

† ***Fostering co-responsibility and a spirit of collaboration for the common good, continually balancing the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity***

† ***Ensuring Catholic children and the vulnerable and disadvantaged are able to continue in outstanding Catholic education provision***

Further details in this regard are available on the attached.

When charting the development of the families of schools, we are considering a strategic vision for the next five to ten years and beyond, ensuring that no individual Catholic school is left isolated and vulnerable. This work sets out to deepen the mission of the Church offering young people with an excellent education and providing them with a solid Christian formation in the light of the Gospel.

We understand the need to agree timelines for the formal academy conversation for each school or multi academy merger that are balanced, realistic and appropriate, providing greater certainty for stakeholders and enabling schools and multi academies to strategically plan for the future. As we plan timescales and the phasing of the implementation of our vision, we also must consider, not solely the capacity for progressing such developments within our schools, MACs and the Diocesan Education Service, but the capacity of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and relevant Local Authorities (LAs) as well as other statutory requirements and processes. The challenges will be addressed through collaboration.

Currently within the Archdiocese we have:

- 234 Catholic schools under the Trust Deed across 13 local authorities from [Staffordshire Moorlands in the north to Caversham in the south](#) of which 143 are already in multi academy families of schools and a further 45 are currently taking steps towards formal conversion
- approximately 54,000 of the c. 81,700 children (66%) in our Catholic schools are already within schools who are part of a multi academy family

We are undertaking this programme of transformation in the context of our collective mission and the wider Archdiocesan vision ***to be a Catholic diocese which is faithful to the mission entrusted to us by Jesus Christ, full of missionary disciples who work together co-responsibly in vibrant communities of faith, joyful in their service of God and neighbour.*** We are seeking to explore and enhance wherever possible the many synergies that exist between the archdiocese, parishes, schools and within our wider communities to fulfill our collective mission.

We acknowledge there remains divergence on some aspects of how this vision is to be achieved. We are keenly aware that there is a need to have clearer and wider engagement and communication as to our aims and what it means in practical terms for those currently in our schools and multi academies. Appropriate stakeholder engagement and dialogue will take place throughout, and there are multi points in the process where formal consultation will take place. The request to act co-responsibly does not negate the need for robust, constructive challenge, but we have to be willing to leave open to challenge our own views as well as to be open to understanding the views of others. We ask that all schools have meaningful and constructive dialogue with those who will be part of their future multi academy family of schools. For many, this will mean engaging with the Catholic Senior Executive Leader (CSEL), Board and others from within an existing Multi Academy Company (MAC).

We have a truly transformative opportunity here in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. We are inviting all those within our schools and multi academies, the parishes and communities within which they reside, as well as our partners at local, regional and national levels to act collectively and collaboratively towards this vision - to build the foundations on which current and future pupils can grow and flourish.

With thanks for your service and support,

Eric Kirwan
Chief Operating Officer

Canon Jonathan Veasey
Education Lead Trustee

For any related comments or queries, please email governance@bdes.org.uk