



Archdiocese of Birmingham
Diocesan Education Service

From: Governance

Sent: 10 December 2021 06:50

To: Governance <governance@bdes.org.uk>

Cc: Yvonne Salter Wright <y.salterwright@bdes.org.uk>; Mark OConnell <academies@bdes.org.uk>

Subject: Important Update on Archdiocesan Academy Strategy and Vision

Dear Directors, Governors and Leaders in Our Catholic Schools and Multi Academies,

In June, His Grace wrote to you all regarding the Academisation Strategy and his vision for all of our Catholic schools to find security and sustainability within a family of schools in a Multi Academy Company. On his behalf, we would like to provide an update for you and set expectations for how we intend to move forward in 2022.

Since returning to school in September I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of school leaders, directors and governors. Whilst some of those meetings have been challenging, they have also been constructive and informative. It has been very pleasing that in all meetings there has been overwhelming support for His Grace's vision for each school to join a MAC.

Some of the key learnings from these meetings include:

- We all share the same passion and commitment to provide the very best Catholic education for our children.
- We need to change the way we communicate, be open, transparent, honest and respectful of each other.
- We need to better communicate and increase understanding about what it means and what will change by being in a MAC - for children, staff, leaders, governors and directors.
- There is frustration from all parties about the speed at which we are travelling and the uncertainty this is creating for those schools not currently in a MAC.

Early in January the DES team will provide you with detailed proposals for how we achieve as a priority all of our Catholic schools to be either secured in a family of schools within a MAC or to have a clear route map and firm agreement as to which MAC to join by September 2022.

This will include a map of the Archdiocese indicating the preferred destination for all of our schools. The map will give you a perspective of the wider area beyond your school or MAC and provide you with a greater understanding of the rationale behind the preferred destinations.

This information will enable you to engage in meaningful dialogue with each other and with the DES, but will require open and honest communication and discernment by all of us. Taking inspiration from the Diocesan Plan and The Synod, please enter this dialogue with open minds, a willingness to listen to the opinion of others and to accept the need for compromise and be open to change.

The DES team will continue to work in partnership with the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Education Skills Funding Agency and will work **co-responsibly** with existing MAC Directors and CSEs and school governors and leaders to support and chart the journey towards academisation, as well as how we seek to achieve this in alignment of our Diocesan vision. I stress co-responsibly as we see a huge opportunity by working in a truly collaborative way.

Having said earlier that the overwhelming number of people I have met have expressed a commitment to joining a MAC, I know and respect the fact that some of you remain to be convinced.-

The DES will be sharing with you over the coming weeks case studies in this respect. Information in relation to the existing Multi Academy Companies can be found on the DES website with further information being added in the coming weeks:

<https://www.bdes.org.uk/our-families-of-schools.html>

We have a clear vision for the Archdiocese and one which equally applies to all of our schools:

Our vision is 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 have a clear decision from His Grace and trustees for all schools to join MAC's; our task for 2022 is to commence or complete the journey by taking the necessary decisions as leaders, directors and governors.

I offer you on behalf of His Grace, his sincerest thanks for all the good work that you do for our diocesan schools and multi academies, and in anticipation of your continued full cooperation in ensuring that the necessary work is undertaken by our directors, governors and senior leaders to establish strong and resilient families of Catholic schools.

Yours,

Eric Kirwan
Chief Operating Officer

Canon Jonathan Veasey
Education Lead Trustee