

LDBE POLICY ON ACADEMIES

The Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education has adopted the following Policy on Academies.

- LDBE will work proactively with the Regional Schools Commissioner and DfE in strategic planning and determining academy proposals and arrangements.
- LDBE consent will be required in respect of converter academies, and this is not a formality. LDBE will normally grant provisional and conditional consent to conversion to academy status, providing certain conditions are met:-
 - ✓ the school consults LDBE throughout the process;
 - ✓ use of national model documentation on the “as-is” principle;
 - ✓ CECET becomes a corporate member of the academy trust with the ability to appoint an appropriate number of directors;
 - ✓ LDBE approves the membership/directorship structure;
 - ✓ the school pays LDBE’s legal fees and a fee for work carried out by LDBE officers;
 - ✓ where appropriate, the Members’ Agreement applies;
 - ✓ schools can opt into the CECET Raising Achievement Scheme, if they so desire.
- LDBE consent to convert may be withheld if it has concerns about the long term sustainability or capacity of any proposed MAT.
- LDBE will carry out its own due diligence in respect of requests from CE schools to convert to academy status, and may seek a meeting with governors and or the Headteacher (and may request to see a written statement of the educational plan and vision for the MAT).
- LDBE wishes to encourage more CE schools (especially Good and Outstanding schools) to join the existing diocesan MAT (St Chad’s Academies Trust), potentially as local “hubs”. This is subject to the Board of Directors being satisfied that such schools are appropriate to join, and that the schools will commit to the MAT governance structure, scheme of delegation, and Raising Achievement Board.
- **VA schools:** in line with national expectations, LDBE normally expects majority church governance to apply within the proposed MAT. This will however depend on local

circumstances (e.g. a VA secondary school is a different issue from a small VA First school), and proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where a VA school is permitted to join a VC (or in very exceptional circumstances a non-Church MAT), the Members' Agreement will apply.

- **VC schools:** whilst Church school-only MATs are a sound way for CE VC schools to collaborate, this may not always be possible (or desirable), and LDBE will therefore permit "mixed-mode" (Church/Community school MATs) subject to rigorous safeguards about religious character being written into the legal documents, in line with nationally agreed documentation and protocols.
- For some MATs (especially "mixed-mode" MATs), the DBE may require a Members' Agreement to be in place, which commits the Members (i.e. legal owners of the MAT) to ensure the implementation of the Church of England objects of any CE school in the MAT.
- Where a CE school is underperforming according to national criteria (or placed in an Ofsted category, triggering the Secretary of State's duty to issue an academy order), LDBE will consider the following options:
 - (1) CECET becomes the Sponsor and the school converts into a diocesan MAT (St Chad's; Wulfrun; or another MAT established for this purpose);
 - (2) Another established CE-based MAT acts as the Sponsor, and the school converts into that MAT;
 - (3) A new MAT is constructed, with CECET as a corporate member. Where this is a "mixed-mode" MAT, the normative Church provisions and the Members' Agreement will apply;
 - (4) The school converts into an existing non-Church MAT, subject to (a) CECET becoming a corporate member of that MAT, with the ability to appoint an appropriate number of directors; (b) the application of the Members' Agreement; and (c) the application of the normative national model documentation with robust protections for the religious character of the school.

- LDBE will not normally permit CE schools to be sponsored by non-Church (secular) national academy chains. If this is proposed by the RSC (because no other solution is potentially available), the Board (at a quorate meeting) will consider the merits of the case and make a determination, using its statutory powers if necessary.
- If there is a disagreement about the basis of LDBE consent to an academy proposal, or if a CE school wishes to convert into an arrangement outside LDBE policy (or outside arrangements envisaged by the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Society and Secretary of State), then the governors proposing this can make an approach to the Diocesan Board of Education to discuss this. The Board may request that a written case is produced, and that the governors meet with representatives of the DBE before a decision is made.

This policy was approved by the Lichfield Diocesan Board of Education on 9th February 2016.



St Mary's House, The Close, Lichfield, WS13 7LD Tel: 01543 306 040,
Email: education@lichfield.anglican.org Web: www.lichfield.anglican.org