

EMMANUEL MULTI-ACADEMIES TRUST

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

Information for Staff, Parents, PCCs and Community

1. Who is this MAT for? Who is creating this MAT?

This MAT is for community and church schools in the region in and around Warrington and East diocese.

It is a diocesan multi-academy trust for Liverpool Diocese. As a Diocesan Trust, all members all appointed by DBE.

The MAT is being formed from nine schools who already work together for school improvement. All schools are in receipt of approval from DfE to become an academy in Emmanuel DLAT.

Schools: Bewsey Lodge CPS, Cinnamon Brow CEPS, Sankey Valley St James CEPS, St Andrew's CEPS, St Elphin's CEPS, St Margaret's CEPS, Warrington St Ann's CEPS, Warrington St Barnabas CE, Winwick CEPS.

The lead school is St Margaret's CE Primary School. The DBE/DfE identified lead officer and CEO designate as Chris Metcalfe.

2. Why become an academy?

The number of academies in Warrington LA area has been increasing over many years, and conversions had continued, despite the removal of the compulsory white paper that was to require all schools to become an academy.

There are now over six multi-academy trusts operating within Warrington, the majority of these cannot take Church of England schools.

Each school will have their own particular set of circumstances that lead them to want to become an academy but some common reasons are:

- Closer alignment in school improvement processes and support from executive leaders to enable better sharing of the most effective practice
- Well-developed professional development and opportunities for cross-school project leadership
- Moral commitment to improving the life chances of more children
- More flexible financial arrangements gaining better value for money
- Dedicated opportunities for pupils to work together between schools
- Expertise across schools developed such as for inspections, subject leadership
- Succession planning is thought into the development of schools

The above might respond to:

Where will our next leaders come from with a shortage of teachers?

How can we ensure our school has subject leadership support in staff absence?
How can we attract and retain the best staff?
How can children take part in events that we can't do as a single school?

3. Who owns the building and land?

The Warrington Borough Council usually owns the playing fields.
The buildings and the land on which the buildings are situated usually owned by Warrington Church of England Education Trust (WCEET) for CofE schools in Warrington.
The buildings and land on the which the buildings are situated usually owned by Warrington Borough Council for community schools.

4. What happens when a community school joins a Church of England MAT? Why would a community school join a Church MAT?

The community school is a full part of the MAT, however the funding agreement has different clauses in it removing some key requirements such as Local Governing Board/Committee membership without foundation representation, removal of Section 48 inspection, RE curriculum different (i.e. maintaining the community ethos of the school).

There are a number of reasons why a community school may choose to join a church MAT. Usually it is because they consider that the church background offers an additional dimension for the school, which it would not have to overtly embed.

There are examples in Liverpool diocese where there are more community schools in the church MAT than CofE schools.

Being a community school in a church MAT provides a unique opportunity and identity for the community school, that may not be available in a community school MAT.

5. What happens with staff terms and conditions?

The DBE require all terms and conditions to be TUPE to the MAT in their current contractual terms.

The DBE require all teachers to be paid on the national teacher terms and conditions.

Support staff will move over with the local authority terms and conditions.

Advice on staff terms and conditions will initially come from Warrington Borough Council.

Where local agreements are in place such as informal wellbeing arrangements, these will be determined at local school level.

6. Who decides what in a MAT?

Some decisions are set by the government in the trust's Articles of Association (this is usually about governance arrangements).

The Scheme of Delegation is agreed by the directors for the trust, in association with Headteachers and Local Governing Boards/Committees. It sets out the decision making process with identification of those responsible for decisions and those accountable for

decisions. Generally the trust is accountable for decisions, even if LGB/Cs or Headteachers are delegated decisions.

Members ← Directors ← Governors ← Headteachers

Where trusts have strong LGB/Cs this strengthens the trust and means the main trust responsibilities are reduced. Where there are weak LGB/Cs the trust responsibilities maybe increased.

7. How will the trust know the views of the schools and local boards/committees?

There will be formal structures to ensure that the views of schools and their boards/committees are heard.

This will be through the Headteacher's Reference Group and the Chairs of Boards/Committees Reference Group.

There will also be arrangements where by the CEO/Governance Professional will visit local boards/committees and arrange for reviews of governance as appropriate.

8. Some schools have falling rolls. How will this be managed in the MAT and other schools protected?

Where schools have falling rolls the HT will work with the CEO and CFO/Finance Officer to model options and establish a way forward. A shared plan will be developed so that there is a recovery should the school head towards deficit.

The MAT will hold sufficient reserves to manage short term deficits, though these will be actively avoided where possible.

9. Who pays for the conversion?

The Department for Education provides a Conversion Grant of £25,000 to pay for any conversion costs.

10. Will the school have more money as an academy?

Most multi-academy trust suggest that it is cost-neutral or that there is a slight increase in available funds.

This multi-academy trust is looking to provide as much money as is practicable to headteachers as a key driver to its decision making.

Working as a multi-academy trust can enable greater economies of scale, saving schools money.

11. School identity

The school will not change its logo, its uniform or its name unless it chooses to do so. This will normally be a local governing board decision.

12. Will the school day change?

No. The school day is set by the Local Governing Board and they will continue to be responsible for this.

13. Who sets Term Dates and Holidays?

The holiday pattern is set by the Local Governing Board and they will continue to be responsible for this.

14. Will we have the same curriculum?

No. All schools will have their own curriculum design and implementation. The exception to this is where a regulator has identified failings in curriculum, such as the school is inadequate in the relevant areas.

15. Will this affect admissions of individual schools?

The Trust Board is responsible and accountable for the school's admission policy. The Trust Board would work with the Local Governing Board to ensure that policies continue to meet the needs of the community and the school. Any changes would require statutory consultation. There is no intention to change any admission policies that already exist.

16. Will staff have to work across schools?

Whilst staff will have a new contract with the multi-academy trust, a place of work will be identified as their current school. The default will be staff working in their current school, however there is the opportunity to work in different settings such as for promotion.

17. Who decides what a school's staffing structure is?

When working within a balanced budget with the maintenance of sufficient carry forward, the local governing board/committee and headteacher will establish the staffing structure. The CEO would expect involvement at senior staff positions. Directors would be involved at some stage regarding Headteacher positions.

18. What will the role of the PCC and Incumbents be to Emmanuel church schools?

The diocese encourages great partnership working between churches, schools and communities. The Growing Faith Adventure specifically supports this. The Trust would encourage this to continue and develop.

PCCs will be asked to support the nomination of governors to the Local Governing Board to promote Christian distinctiveness at a local level.

Clergy are encouraged to continue their pastoral and service ministry as they do now to schools and their communities. It is hoped that there will be mutual even closer working between schools and churches as Fit for Mission develops and as Emmanuel's vision is realized.

19. Will the MAT grow and how?

The DfE expects all MATs to grow.

It is expected this will happen from Warrington, Halton and Wigan schools, from CofE and community schools.

The MAT is open to secondary school academies, with arrangements in place to prevent isolation in school improvement. There are no specific secondaries at this stage involved.

MAT growth may occur through academy sponsorship or voluntary conversion.