

Diocese of Westminster Education Service

Academies Briefing Paper

20th October 2017

1. Since the publication of the document **Families of Schools: The implementation of CATs September 2017** there has been significant work undertaken to move the strategy forward.
 - The Trustees have provided conditional consent for two Families of Schools to move forward with Academy conversion for April 2018.
 - They are the Harrow Family of Schools and the expansion of the All Saints Trust, Brent.
 - The DfE & the RSC are working closely with the diocese to help expedite the application.
 - The diocese is pleased to announce a new round of FOS meetings to examine closely in each local area what the best way forward should be. This meeting is open to the Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Vice Chair of Governors and your School Business Manager.

Family of School	Host School for Meeting	Date & Time of Meeting
Family 8: Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham & Westminster	Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, Kensington	Monday 6th November at 4.30pm
Family 10: Barnet	St Catherine's Catholic Primary, Barnet	Tuesday 14th November at 4.30pm
Family 9: Hackney & Tower Hamlets	Our Lady's Catholic High School, Hackney	Monday 20th November at 4.30pm
Family 4: Richmond, Hounslow & Surrey	St Paul's Catholic Secondary School, Sunbury	Tuesday 28th November at 4.30pm
Family 3: Harrow & Watford	St Catherine of Sienna Primary, Watford	Monday 4th December at 4.30pm
Family 7: Camden & Islington	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Islington	Tuesday 5th December at 4.30pm
Family 1: St Albans	John F Kennedy High School, Hemel Hempstead	Monday 15th January at 4.30pm
Family 5: Ealing & Hillingdon	Botwell House Catholic Primary	Tuesday 16th January at 4.30pm
Family 11: Enfield & Haringey	St Ignatius College, Enfield	Monday 22nd January at 4.30pm
Family 6: Brent	Our lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary	Tuesday 23rd January at 4.30pm
Family 2: Lea Valley & Stevenage	St Mary's Primary School, Royston	Monday 29th January at 4.30pm

PHONE

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Summary

- Schools have expressed to the diocese their desire to start in local hubs before moving into the wider FOS as published. This is perfectly acceptable and actively encouraged.
- Schools have requested testimonies from existing Catholic Academies as to their experiences so far to be made available. This document will be completed before Christmas and sent to schools in the December Briefing Paper.
- The diocese has met with all 17 Local Authorities and 2 Shire Counties to discuss the conversion costs and liabilities to any new Trust of the local government pension scheme. These meetings have proved insightful and findings will be presented at the forthcoming FOS meetings.
- Each of the existing 5 Academy Trusts has sought reassurance and clarity on their future, and role to play, with the expansion of more Trusts. A Strategy Paper will be presented to the Education Commission in November following discussions that have taken place with each of them as to the best way forward.
- Any current Foundation Governor who is interested in finding out more about what it will involve to be a Foundation Director is requested to email adrianleggett@rcdow.org.uk
- Many Deanery meetings and individual Governing Body meetings have taken place this term so far to discuss what has been presented to schools.
- Schools are keen to have more time to discuss together what would work locally for them and how the structures proposed would happen in practice.

All Saints Trust

- On 25th September, the Academy Implementation Officer met with the Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of **Our Lady of Grace Catholic Infant School, Our Lady of Grace Catholic Junior School, St Joseph's Catholic Infant School, St Joseph's Catholic Junior School, St Margaret's Clitherow Catholic Primary School and St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School, together with the existing All Saints Schools of St Gregory's Catholic Science College and St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School**
- The Academy Implementation Officer presented a high level project plan which illustrated how conversion could be achieved by 1st April 2018. The activities between now and the end of term would include the project board review of the Due Diligence forms, approval of the Diocese's Trustees and the associated letter of consent to accompany the application to the DfE and the DfE review and approval of the conversion application likely to take 1-2 months. This should see the Schools receive the Academy Order to commence conversion work in January 2018.
- It was agreed to hold a further meeting once the Diocese Trustees had approved the Schools' applications and submitted these to the DfE to put in place plans for conversion.

Harrow Hub

- The 6 Schools (**Sacred Heart Language College, St Anslem’s Catholic Primary School, St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, St Teresa’s Catholic Primary School, St George’s Catholic Primary School, and St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Harrow**) proposing to form the Harrow Hub have held meetings to advance their plans.
- The first meeting was attended by School Business Manager from DOWAT, the Academy Implementation and the Bursars/Finance staff from the 6 Schools. At the meeting, School Finance colleagues were offered support in completing the Diocese Due Diligence forms and given an overview of the financial and administrative requirements of the conversion process.
- Schools confirmed that they had completed the Due Diligence forms and that they were awaiting sign off by Headteachers and Governors in order to submit them during the week ending 21st October.
- The second meeting was attended by the 6 Headteachers and The Academy Implementation Officer (AIO). At the meeting the Headteachers shared the decision taken by their respective Governing Bodies to target a 1st April conversion date.
- The Headteachers Group also approved 3 terms of reference for; (i) The Project Steering Group (PSG) of Headteachers and Chairs of Governors to have strategic oversight of the project; (ii) The Headteachers Working Group (HWG) which would be responsible for delivering the conversion work streams; and (iii) A Finance Sub Group (FSG) of Bursars/Finance staff that would be responsible for the Finance and Administration work stream.
- The PSG would meet twice a term to review project progress and risks. The HWG and FSB would meet at least monthly during the process and more frequently during key periods.

Purpose of the Project Steering Group

1.1 The Project Steering Group is responsible to the individual Governing Bodies of each School

1.2 The purpose of the PSG is to;

- Provide strategic leadership to the project, including
 - Overview of project tasks and timeline
 - Management of risks and issues.
 - Approval of legal documents necessary for conversion
 - Strategic Decision making
 - Recommend conversion and establish the CAT to the Governing Bodies of each School

- Undertake this role across all key work streams including;
 - Project Management and Governance
 - Pre-Application
 - Land and Legal
 - Finance and Administration
 - Leadership and Governance
 - Stakeholder Consultation
 - TUPE

A Headteachers Working Group (HWG) will be established with delegated powers to deliver defined conversion outputs for the CAT.

A Finance Sub Group (FSG) will be established with delegated powers from the (HWG) to deliver defined conversion outputs for the Finance and Administration work stream.

Harrow Family of Schools Workstreams

A) Conversion Date

Headteachers and Governors are working towards an opening date of 1st April 2018.

Such a date has the following advantages for schools and staff in the CAT;

- Realistic and achievable date to have completed all project deliverables by.
- Only 1 close down of budgets with Harrow Council at 31st March 2018 – with funding from ESFA for remaining 5 months of academic year commencing on 1st April 2018.
- Easter Holidays commence on 29th March 2018 – Schools will return from Easter break as a CAT.
- Work on FMIS can be completed during term time.
- Key signatories to legal documents should be available in March to execute documents.

B) Conversion Activities

The Diocese's conversion process contains the following 7 work streams which are explained in more detail below;

1) Project Governance and Management

Purpose	To establish a Project Steering Group (PSG) of Headteachers and Governors to oversee the establishment of the CAT. To plan and deliver the project work streams, review project progress against the project plan, and mitigate risks and issues. To ensure Governors give the necessary approvals to the conversion project at appropriate points in the process
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree delegated PSG term of reference ▪ Agree schedule of regular meetings ▪ Approve the project plan ▪ Assign work stream leads ▪ Review and update risk register and issues log ▪ Produce agendas, notes and actions for each meeting ▪ Maintain and update the Action Tracker ▪ Plan and review work stream progress against project plan taking corrective action if necessary. ▪ Producing an audit trail of key decisions and approvals ▪ Securing Governor approval at necessary points in the process
Likely Work Stream Lead	Academy Implementation Officer

2) Pre-Application

Purpose	To demonstrate to the Diocese that the School is 'Academy Ready' and receive the Academy Order to convert
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Schools to complete Diocese Due Diligence forms ▪ Schools to complete DfE Registration of Interest ▪ Academy Team to analyse Due Diligence forms and recommend application to Project Board if Schools are 'Academy Ready' ▪ Diocese commission Audit of Schools budget ▪ Project Board recommends application to Diocesan Trustees ▪ Diocese Trustees issue letter of approval to School ▪ Schools submits Academy Application form to DfE with Diocese letter of consent ▪ DfE reviews application and issues Academy Order granting approval to convert ▪ Schools receive £25000 grant funding to cover conversion costs

Likely Stream Lead	Work Lead	Academy Implementation Officer supported by Headteacher and Diocese Academy Team
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3) Stakeholder Consultation

Purpose	To ensure that Governors fulfil the statutory element of Section 10 of the Academy Act 2010 by consulting on whether the arrangements should be entered into with appropriate persons.	
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce a consultation plan identifying key consultees including parents and staff for each School ▪ Set up a consultation page on School website ▪ Draft a consultation leaflet and letters to parents and staff inviting them to attended meetings ▪ Inform other key stakeholders of the consultation process ▪ Hold parents and staff consultation meetings for each School and answer questions ▪ Each Governing Body to approve a consultation report summarising process, meetings and response forms and publish on school website 	
Likely Stream Lead	Work Lead	Headteacher sported by Academy Implementation Officer

4) Land and Legal

Purpose	To ensure the necessary legal documentation to establish the CAT and transfer the land and assets of the School to the CAT is completed in accordance with DfE timescales.	
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft and approve Memorandum and Articles of Association ▪ Draft and approve Master and Supplementary Funding Agreements ▪ Draft and agree Commercial Transfer Agreement ▪ Draft and agree Leases ▪ Draft and approve Church Supplemental Agreement ▪ Register CAT at Companies House ▪ Register Trustees with Companies House 	
Work Lead	Stream Lead	Browne Jacobson

5) TUPE

Purpose	To ensure that all staff are informed of their rights under TUPE and that Unions and staff are consulted on any proposed measures associated with transferring their employment to the CAT
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agree a TUPE plan with Headteachers and HR advisers for each School ▪ Undertake due diligence checks on payroll staff records ▪ Agree any necessary measures for inclusion in the Regulation 13 letter and issue to Unions and staff ▪ Hold Union consultation meeting ▪ Hold staff consultation meeting in each School ▪ Report findings to Governors for approval
Likely Work Stream Lead	Delegate deliverables to a Finance Sub Group of Schools Business Managers chaired and supported by the Academy Implementation Officer

6) Leadership and Governance

Purpose	To recruit, train Governors and Trustees to serve on and the CAT Board and Local Academy Councils.
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make all Governors aware of skill requires of Trustee and Governor roles ▪ Invite applications to Project Board from Headteachers for (p/t) CEO position ▪ Invite applications to Project Board from School Business Managers for (p/t) CFO position ▪ Invite applications to Project Board for Governors wo wish to serve as Trustees ▪ Project Board to confirm CEO, CFO and Trustee appointments. ▪ Make Governors and Trustees aware of Diocese Training courses ▪ Hold 1st Members meeting of CAT to appoint Trustees ▪ Hold 1st Trustees meeting of CAT Board to approve key set up decisions necessary for CAT operations
Likely Work Stream Lead	Academy Implementation Officer supported by CAT Company Secretary (when appointed)

7) Finance and Administration

Purpose	To ensure that the Schools/CAT finance and administrative systems and procedures operate independently of the LA and link with Diocese
Key Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare list of contracts for Browne Jacobson for CTA ▪ Prepare list licenses to transfer to CAT ▪ Establish a Finance Sub Group of School Business Managers to prepare the Schools for conversion. ▪ Set up new bank accounts for the Schools and CAT ▪ Adopt new Financial regulations and procedures ▪ Commission a re-evaluation of LGPS of support benefits ▪ Appoint Auditors for the CAT ▪ Draft and approve Academy and CAT budgets and cash flow forecasts ▪ Set up new Financial Management system, train staff and test ▪ Ensure continuity of payroll service ▪ Arrange insurance cover
Likely Work Stream Lead	Delegate deliverables to a Finance Sub Group of Schools Business Managers chaired and supported by the Academy Implementation Officer

The Academy Implementation Officer will work with staff throughout the process to explain the conversion requirements contained within each work stream, guide and support Schools through each of the activities, and where appropriate, undertake delivery of these tasks to reduce work load on staff.

The Diocese has produced a Conversion Toolkit in association with Church Market Place (CMP) setting out the tasks that need to be completed. The Academy Implementation Officer will work with Governors, Headteacher and School Business Managers to ensure that these are completed at the correct point in the process. The Toolkit contains many template documents available to support the delivery of conversion tasks and reduce the need for original bespoke reports and documents.

Furthermore, by working in partnership with staff across other Schools in the Hub converting at the same time it is possible to reduce work load on individuals by sharing this across Schools, particularly through the use of a Finance Sub Group.