

# Schools and Academies Strategy

## Introduction

The vision is that as many schools as possible within the Diocese of Guildford become academies overseen by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE).

The diocesan umbrella trust, Guildford Diocese Educational Trust (GDET) acts on the DBE's behalf in appointing, training and developing the role of members and overseeing, through its members, the governance of Single Academy Trusts (SATs) – or just Academy Trusts – and Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) in which church schools are located.

The expectation is that all diocesan church schools in Surrey and Kingston, and the majority of Hampshire schools, will one day become academies. Within this, it is hoped that the vast majority of church schools will join the Good Shepherd Trust, the diocesan MATs. However, it must be noted that, at the present time, there are a number of diocesan schools that are academies outside the Good Shepherd Trust. These exist either as (Single) Academy Trusts or small church-minority Multi Academy Trusts. This 'mixed economy' of church schools will continue for the foreseeable future and should not be regarded as unhealthy.

In his book, *What Methodists believe*, Rupert Davies spends the first 90% of the book explaining what all Christians believe, before devoting the last 10% to distinctive 'Methodism'. In the same way, **90% of what makes an outstanding Christian Academy is the same as what makes an outstanding VA or VC school within the Diocese of Guildford**. Viewed in this light, the first few pages of the education handbook outlining the rationale, vision and plan for church schools are highly relevant. What is written below needs to be viewed in the light of the axioms, theology, plan and advantages of diocesan church schools articulated there.

## What are church schools and academies striving to be?

Within the diocese of Guildford, the vision is that all church schools and academies will be characterised by the following four traits:

1. **Great places to learn.** Within diocesan schools and academies everyone is special, made in the image of God and needs to be treated with respect (axiom 4). As everyone is uniquely made in God's image, church schools and academies avoid 'pigeon holing' pupils (and staff). The phrase: 'the kids here are all like this' is avoided and the unique attributes of every child are explored, cherished and developed (axiom 5). As such, assessment is, as far as possible, personalised and every pupil is on their own trajectory of progress. The curriculum seeks to promote life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It is about educating the 'whole person'. This encompasses not only intellectual and physical development but also spiritual, moral, social and cultural development too.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These words were first coined in the Education Reform Act of 1988 and remain in force today.

2. **Great places to work.** Diocesan schools and academies are rooted in the conviction that we are created and sustained by God to live well together in community. God Himself lives in community- Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus embodies the centrality of relationships in love, compassion, generosity, truth-telling and forgiveness. These qualities should be made manifest in the relationships amongst the staff in all our schools and academies. Each school is to be a hospitable community that seeks to embody an ethos of living well together. Here the flourishing of the pupils goes along with the flourishing of the teachers and other staff. The starting assumption for all staff in diocesan schools and academies is that they are all highly competent professionals, eager to develop their professional skills and dedicated to the success of the children at their school (axiom 7).
3. **Great places to develop your career.** Church of England schools and academies within the diocese of Guildford are very diverse and include many examples of outstandingly good practice. In terms of pedagogy, the diocese is continually brokering networking opportunities as well as providing bespoke training courses which are 'needs-led' and cover the latest 'hot topics' confronting schools. In terms of leadership, system leaders are identified and supported in setting up federations and networks of schools. The diocese also maintains a database of school leader vacancies and suitable candidates so as to maintain the highest standards of leadership within all our schools.
4. **Great places to grow spiritually.** All church schools and academies have the opportunity to seamlessly 'plug into' a local worshipping community and draw from this as well as the wider diocese. God inhabits the worship of His people and, in putting worship at the forefront, church schools and academies facilitate spiritual growth amongst all members of the community. In addition, the education department at Guildford diocese has schools officers who specialise in equipping schools and their parishes with resources and ideas that will deepen and enrich worship and spiritual understanding and engagement.

## What is unique about church academies?

Everything that is good and praiseworthy in Church VA and VC schools, as recorded above, should also be found in church academies. In addition there are further opportunities:

1. **Freedoms.** As well as structural freedoms around times of the school day, contracts, pay and employment of unqualified teachers, there are also curriculum freedoms. Although schools are still accountable for their 'headline statistics', it is hoped that fruitful opportunities to explore an alternative curriculum would be seized. There are a plethora of ways in which this may be done but one possible avenue, currently topical in Christian education, is with regard to wisdom. Wisdom is deeply rooted in Christianity and the wisdom literature in the Bible – Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs – was known by Jesus and informed his own teaching on wisdom. In contrast, the present regime of continual measurement and assessment is often too limited. Wisdom is about ethics as well as cognition, values and purposes as well as facts, and above all tries to make sound

judgements that do justice to the whole 'ecology' of life. In the Bible, the natural world is seen as a place of wonder, exploration, reflection and self-discovery. In the present world of multiple ecological challenges and increasing disconnection between many people and first-hand experiences of nature, it is more important than ever. (CofE, 2016, p.14).

2. **Greater influence on pedagogy.** This is linked to the point above. Under the 1991 Measure, the diocese was responsible for the Christian distinctiveness of its schools whilst the Local Authority was responsible for just about everything else – standards, curriculum, pastoral care, teaching and learning and safeguarding. As schools become academies with, for example, the Good Shepherd Trust, the diocesan multi-academy trust takes responsibility for all these things from the Local Authority. It is not only what is taught but HOW it is taught. How can the Christian principles of hospitality, for example, be infused into pedagogy? Although there has been some work done on this, there is scope for further work. The capacity for leverage through the diocese with regard to all aspects of schooling is significantly higher with Christian academies sponsored by the diocese than it would be under the old system, dominated by Local Authorities.
3. **Developing People within a tight-knit cluster of schools generated by a MAT.** Common processes, systems and resources (including people) within the MAT affords greater opportunities for sharing resources and developing people. The MAT will be able to easily identify talented individuals and promote them to suitable posts within the organisation. In this way the MAT will be able to more easily retain key staff and develop all its people. That is, the MAT will be able to 'grow its own' in a way that enables staff to have a deeper understanding of the Christian ethos, aims and objectives of the MAT.

## 2020 Vision Statement for the Diocesan Education Team

1. To advocate church schools as places which are inclusive, distinctive and effective
2. To champion the Good Shepherd Trust (GST) as the most 'secure and effective' long-term home for the majority of church schools within the diocese
3. To encourage church school headteachers and all staff who work in them
4. To provide relevant, appropriate and timely staff training of the highest quality for all involved in church school education within the diocese
5. To work symbiotically with LA and other partners so that church schools continue to thrive and the number of church school places increases as population grows
6. To increase the number of schools which choose to affiliate with the Diocese
7. To secure test results at Ks1 which are above both the national and LA averages
8. To secure test results in Ks2 which are above both the national and LA averages
9. To secure exam results in Ks4 which are above both the national and LA averages
10. To secure exam results in Ks5 which are above the national average for similar schools
11. To support governors of all church schools with relevant training to ensure that the governance of church schools is as effective as it can be
12. To ensure that the proportion of church schools within the diocese which are graded as good or outstanding by Ofsted is above the figure for LA schools as a whole
13. To ensure that the proportion of church schools which are judged as good or outstanding according to the SIAMS criteria rises every year and exceeds the national average
14. To ensure that the quality of RE teaching in all diocesan schools is at least good, and in many cases outstanding
15. To assist all church schools and colleges in their efforts to retain and recruit the best teachers and leaders
16. To serve as an exemplar of Christian distinctiveness across the whole diocese and contribute to the diocesan missional goals of Children's ministry (goal 3) and increasing believers (goal 2)
17. To set up networking opportunities within the diocese family of schools to disseminate best practice including, where appropriate, joining the diocesan MAT
18. To ensure that the buildings environment in all church schools is appropriately safe, 'fit for purpose' and in good condition
19. To promote, by all means possible, the highest standards in teaching, learning and assessment across all diocesan schools and colleges
20. To put in place systems and processes to support all diocesan schools who face budgetary challenges

## Draft self-evaluation of our schools and academies as at September 2016 based on the latest Ofsted and SIAMS reports

### The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

The proportion of church schools where Leadership and Management has been judged to be good or outstanding is above the national average and in line with the Surrey/Hampshire average.

The diocese benefits from having a number of effective system leaders within its schools although the large number of relatively small schools within the diocese of Guildford means that the capacity for headteachers to delegate and / or spend much time away from their schools is limited. This inevitably has an impact on the skill levels of headteachers seeking to become system leaders.

### The Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The proportion of church schools where teaching, learning and assessment has been judged to be good or outstanding is above the national average and in line with the Surrey/Hampshire average.

The high cost of living in Surrey, Hampshire and Kingston means that recruitment of teachers from other parts of the country is limited. This sometimes restricts the number of applicants for posts. In some areas recruitment is very difficult. This inevitably impacts on teaching, learning and assessment. The absence of dedicated diocesan teaching schools means that the supply of trainees is less than it otherwise might be, and so restricts the future capacity to improve.

### Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare

In general, the personal development, behaviour and welfare in Church of England schools is very good and this is also true within the Diocese of Guildford. With a large number of small schools in rural areas, the sense of community and strong values is enhanced. Indeed the acute sense of Christian values dovetailing with fundamental British values is a further positive feature of diocesan schools. Overall, statistics for exclusion from school are very low across the diocese with consequent benefits in terms of attendance and other education outcomes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) in diocesan schools is again, in general, very good.

### Outcomes for Pupils

In 2015 and in 2016 diocesan church schools were significantly above the national average at Key Stage 2 for attainment but significantly below the national average for progress. Progress 8 across the three secondary schools in 2016 was broadly in line with the national average:

	2015		2016	
	National Ave	Diocese	National Ave	Diocese
Key Stage 1	APS (Re, Wr, Ma) 16.1	APS (Re, Wr, Ma) 17.3 (Sig +)	% Expected Standard + (Re, Wr, Ma) 60%	% Expected Standard + (Re, Wr, Ma) 67% (Sig +)
Key Stage 2	APS (Re, Wr, Ma) 28.6	APS (Re, Wr, Ma) 29.7 (Sig +)	Ave Scld Sc (Re, Ma) 102.7	Ave Scld Sc (Re, Ma) 104.0 (Sig +)
Key Stage 4	%5+A*-C incl En&Ma 56%	%5+A*-C incl En&Ma 57%	%5+A*-C incl En&Ma 57%	%5+A*-C incl En&Ma 59%
Key Stage 5	% Pass Rate at A lvl 98%	% Pass Rate at A lvl 97%	% Pass Rate at A lvl 98%	% Pass Rate at A lvl 97%

At Key Stage 2 the higher performing pupil groups in 2015 and 2016 were: Indian, Other Asian and First Language not English, with the lower performing pupil groups being: EHC Plan, SEN and FSM.

## Executive summary of draft development plan

Please note that everything within this plan takes cognisance of the diocesan vision of [Transforming Church, Transforming Lives](#).

**Target 1: To support all schools and colleges within the diocesan family with their plans to make teaching the best that it can be by capitalising on the new opportunities emerging from the changing education landscape**

- a. To provide **bespoke consultancy support** with teaching, learning and assessment (including data)
- b. To provide **CPD courses** in line with the wishes of schools and the diocesan SEF based on teaching, learning and assessment
- c. To broker further **networking opportunities** between diocesan schools and groups of schools with regard to teaching, learning and assessment (including data)

**Target 2: To inspire, encourage, empower and support all school leaders and governors within the diocesan family to achieve the best possible outcomes**

- a. To assist headteachers in their efforts to **recruit high quality teachers** and (local) governing bodies in their efforts to recruit high quality headteachers
- b. To provide bespoke **training opportunities for both headteachers** and governors
- c. To provide advice and guidance, where appropriate to schools experiencing **budgetary challenges**

**Target 3: To ensure the development of the GST as a successful, growing MAT and an exemplar of best practice**

- a. To develop the role and **quality of governance**
- b. To develop a **new hub structure**
- c. To **develop the staffing structure**
- d. To ensure that there are simple and efficient **arrangements for managing conversions**

**Target 4: To strengthen links with all key partners as the GDE seeks to expand its role and influence in education across the diocesan area (Surrey, NE Hampshire and parts of Kingston Upon Thames)**

- a. Develop capacity by **forging partnerships** with teaching school networks
- b. Maintain, Strengthen and Further Cultivate fruitful **links with Local Authority** partners
- c. Ensure that the **website** and other forms of communication with stakeholders are 'fit for purpose'

**Target 5: To promote the Christian mission of the diocese and wider church**

**through education and in line with the diocesan vision: *Transforming Church, Transforming Lives***

- a. To ensure that the size, composition and structure of the **DBE provides optimal governance**
- b. To **equip parishes** to be more fully engaged in the life of their church schools and colleges
- c. To extend the **role of chaplaincy** within large schools, FE Colleges and Universities within the diocese

**Target 6: To assist local schools and local governing bodies, where appropriate, in their journey towards 'academisation' within a Christian setting**

- a. To devise a **diocesan strategy for academisation** of schools that are not yet academies, based on best practice nationally
- b. To engage proactively with existing **school networks** in supporting the academisation process
- c. To develop productive **relations with diocesan academy trusts**, other than the GST

**Target 7: To continue to maintain and, where possible, improve the quality of Church school buildings over the next 5 years**

- a. Carry out an assessment of the **condition of each Church school** to address priority needs in accordance with DBE and EFA criteria
- b. Ensure that all **building projects** which are greater than £50k are supported by an appropriately qualified professional and governor team
- c. Ensure that as many diocesan schools as possible are supported by Guildford Diocese Services Ltd. through the **appropriate SLA**.

**Target 8: To expand both the number of church schools and Church school places within the diocese over the next 5 years and in line with Government policy and subject to demographic changes**

- a. Write a '**Free School Strategy policy**' with a clear rationale for making bids
- b. **Monitor all major residential developments** and maintain an up-to-date database of opportunities
- c. **Undertake as many bids as possible** in accordance with the agreed criteria
- d. Dovetail with diocesan strategy of transforming church through '**fresh expressions**' of school / church partnership