

Criteria for a new Church MAT to serve the Diocese of Lincoln.

Criteria based on:

- The Diocesan Vision for Education
- Lincoln Diocesan Strategy for Academisation (Updated March 2026)
- The DFE High Quality Trust Framework (July 2023)
- The White Paper, 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' (February 2026)
- The need for the DBE to enhance church MAT capacity to address the three key areas:
 - Capacity for MATs to accept schools judged by Ofsted to be in a category of concern.
 - School improvement capacity for 'stuck' schools
 - Options and capacity for voluntary conversions.

No	Criteria
1.	Diocesan Vision and Strategy
1.1	Demonstrates a good understanding of the Diocesan Strategy for Academisation and shows a strong commitment to work collaboratively with the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education and other church MATs to implement the Strategy.
1.2	Shows a good understanding of the Diocesan Vision for Education and that the vision for the new Church MAT is shaped by the diocesan vision.
1.3	Willing to adopt the majority-Church Articles of Association, ensuring the Diocese is the majority appointing body at Member level and committed to develop local foundation governance in church schools.
1.4	The new church MAT main central office is based within the Diocese of Lincoln to enable LDBE to provide robust church school oversight through subscribing all church schools to the Diocesan MAT Partnership Agreement.
1.5	There is evidence of commitment and ability to support schools in multiple districts across the diocese – coastal, rural, market town and city.

1.6	There is a strong leadership capacity to establish a church MAT within a two year timeframe.
1.7	Has demonstrable ability to preserve and develop the Christian distinctiveness of church schools including providing a strong provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship. If not a church school/MAT, can demonstrate good capacity for developing Christian distinctiveness of church schools.
1.8	Is committed and capable of implementing the Religious Education Statement of Entitlement for Church of England Schools from September 2026 and will 'look towards the expertise provided by the diocese for support and guidance with RE'.
1.8	Has demonstrable ability and commitment to supporting schools in different contexts including small rural schools.
2	High-Quality & Inclusive Education
2.1	Achieves good outcomes for all pupils, especially SEND and disadvantaged pupils, by delivering an education that is both high-quality and inclusive. Has a proven track record of enabling all children to flourish.
2.2	Has a strong behaviour and attendance record to demonstrate that pupils are kept safe, feel calm and supported and able to fully participate in school life, including enrichment activities.
2.3	Evidence that the schools/Trust works collaboratively with other key educational partners, external agencies, parents, the church and the community.
2.4	Evidence that the Trust/schools have played their part as civic institutions, looks outwards with purpose to share expertise and supports others to improve.
3	School Improvement
3.1	Has a strong track record in school improvement with capacity to support and improve outcomes in underperforming schools.

3.2	Has shown a commitment to support the wider system in sharing excellence, spreading innovation and lifting outcomes across communities.
3.3	Can demonstrate a strong ability and expertise to support in school finance.
3.4	Can demonstrate a strong ability and expertise to support in areas of SEND, inclusion and safeguarding.
4	Workforce
4.1	Has created a culture where all staff are able to flourish with evidence of effectively managing workload, supporting well-being, providing high quality professional development, and providing opportunities for career progression.
5	Finance
5.1	Is in a secure financial position and has a clear financial strategy to support the establishment and growth of a church MAT.
5.2	Has good capacity to deliver strong central functions to support schools and deliver economies of scale (HR, estates, finance, IT, procurement etc).
5.3	Can evidence how an equitable pooling of resources has effectively unlocked innovation and maximised value for pupils.
6	Governance
6.1	Evidence of an effective Governing Board / Trustees to strategically lead the growth and development of a church MAT in line with the Diocesan Vision for Education, the objects of the church MAT Articles of Association and DFE statutory requirements.
6.2	Can demonstrate robust accountability and reporting systems to support governors/trustees and leaders to monitor, challenge and support the development of the schools/Trust.