



LINCOLN ANGLICAN
ACADEMY TRUST
DIOCESE OF LINCOLN



Infinity Academies Trust

Ready to learn, Prepared to flourish.



St Lawrence
Academies Trust
Stronger Together



Abbey
Academies
Trust



KEYSTONE
ACADEMY TRUST



Sustaining Church School Education

A guide to MATS in the Diocese of Lincoln

Foreward

Dear Colleagues,

I know that central to your commitment to your church school is the desire for children, adults and communities to flourish now and into the future. The Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education shares this desire and so we have been working to provide our church schools with the opportunity of choosing to join one of our Church

Multi-Academy Trusts. As you consider the current pressures and how the future is unfolding in your context, we invite you to consider whether now is the time to join one of our Church MATs.

We have a picture of the burning bush, out of which God spoke to Moses, as the centre of our DBE logo. God called Moses to lead the people into a new land where they could be free to flourish. God continues to Call us to work for flourishing and to be Aspirational for our schools and communities. Each school is unique and Rooted in its own context. Belonging to a wider family, to a Church MAT, in addition to other partnerships Empowers and more deeply roots and honours each school community and what it represents, so that there is mutual CARE in times of plenty and times of difficulty.

As you prayerfully consider how best to plan for the present and future flourishing of your schools, I hope that you will know, as Moses did, that God promised to go with him on his journey (Exodus 3:12). God promises to be with us too in the decisions that we make, none of which we make alone, but as we work together as part of the family of church schools in our diocese.

With my prayers for you and your school communities.....

The Ven Dr Justine Allain Chapman

Archdeacon of Boston, Chair of the Lincoln DBE



We pride ourselves on celebrating the uniqueness of each of our partner schools.



**Schools are stronger when working together.
Collaboration is at the heart of our offer.**

Help to shape the future direction of the Trust.

Be part of something new, exciting and different!

Freedom to develop a curriculum that meets the needs of your children.

Receive excellent Trust support for finance, budgeting and facilities services.

Have opportunities to collaborate.

Benefit from having school leaders freed up to focus on the education of pupils.

Be supported by a Trust central team of experienced school leaders.

Community

Integrity



Aspiration

Hope

Please contact our CEO, Mike Adnitt

madnitt@slatrust.co.uk
www.slatrust.co.uk

01724 747310

Strength for Today, Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this publication is to provide governors and school leaders with up to date and accurate information about the Lincoln Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust Strategy and the benefits of church MATs in the Diocese of Lincoln.

The Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education's key aim is to sustain high quality education so that all pupils and adults are able to flourish.

We recognise that the education landscape constantly changes and the pressure upon all schools continues to increase. For the Lincoln DBE to ensure that all schools get the support they need to succeed in the future, it has been important for us to create a robust and supportive MAT infrastructure.

This infrastructure provides school leaders and governors with a choice of up to six church MATs, which have the capacity to support schools to thrive whilst retaining their distinctive ethos and unique identity.

To ensure a real choice, the MATs do not operate in exactly the same way. Whilst they are all church MATs, and they must ensure that they preserve the Christian character of every church school, they do have different vision statements, different leadership models, systems and policies. It is not for the LDBE to direct schools to a particular MAT but it is LDBE's duty to ensure there is a good choice of successful MATs for schools to consider.

This publication highlights a wide range of benefits that are available to schools in MATs. As MATs are basically a group of schools that formally come together under a shared governance model, the schools have greater capacity to further improve in key areas including school performance, finances, leadership capacity, property, staff recruitment and

retention. In each MAT, there is a central team of dedicated professionals to support schools in these key areas which in turn enables school leaders to do what they are trained to do and what they are best at – leading teaching and learning.

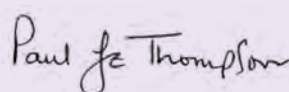
The LDBE believes that by formally working together within MATs, this gives church school education the best chance possible to thrive in the future. Whilst the LDBE respects it is the Governing Board's decision to join a MAT, the LDBE is explicit in stating that it is their 'desire and preference' for all church schools to join a MAT.

We are stronger together and not standing alone.

*Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.*

*A cord of three strands is not
quickly broken.*

With my prayers for you and your school communities.....



Paul Thompson, Diocesan Director of Education



The Current Climate

The Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education has developed a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) Strategy to secure high-quality church school education for the future. The Strategy has involved creating a strong church MAT infrastructure which provides school leaders and governors a good choice of successful church MATs. With the support and challenge of the DBE, the church MATs will provide support and rich opportunities to all schools ensuring that they maintain and protect the unique and distinctive ethos of individual schools including church schools and community schools.

The MAT strategy has been shaped to meet the changing needs and demands of the local, diocesan and the national landscape in education.

Changing National Landscape:

- Previous government's ambition was for all schools to become academies by 2030
- New Labour government in summer 2024 and new policies are emerging.
- 1st Nov 2024 - The DfE stated that it valued "the vital role academy trusts play in our school system".
- "We want to work with you to ensure the collaboration and leadership, that high-quality trusts bring to the system, helps to deliver exceptional results for children and young people including those in disadvantaged areas."
- DfE continues to ask MATs to deliver government funded school improvement to eligible schools.

Changing Local Landscape:

- Lincolnshire has been identified an Education Investment Area, with pupil outcomes stubbornly sticking below the national average
- Less funding and resources for Local Authorities to support school improvement
- DfE has directed funding to MATs so they can play a fundamental role in school improvement
- DfE has supported the diocese with the growth and development of church MATs to support church schools



Pressure Facing Church Schools

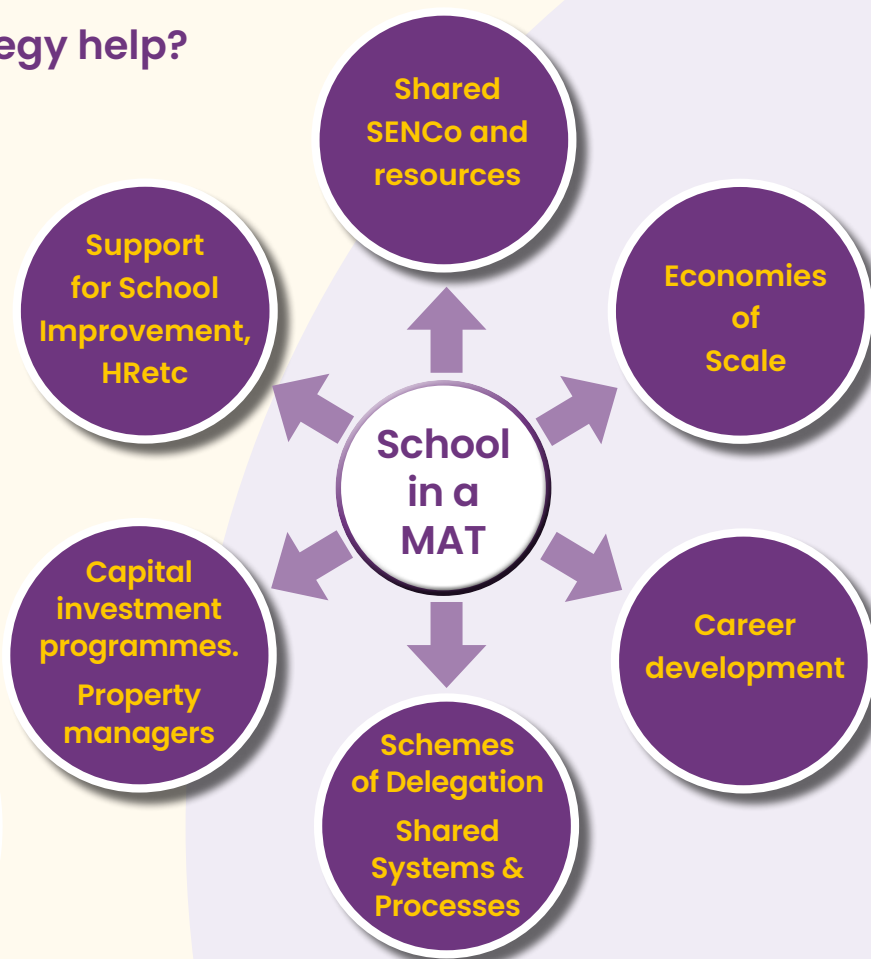
Locally and nationally there are a lot of pressures that schools are facing, as detailed below



The Diocesan Strategy is not a strategy to force or direct LA schools to join a church MAT. It is a strategy that acknowledges the range of challenges schools are facing and provides opportunities for schools to join MATs to help alleviate these pressures.

How can the MAT strategy help?

A school within a MAT will gain greater capacity to ease pressures which impact on the quality of education.



MATS within the Diocese as of January 2025



Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust

23 church schools across the geographic region of the Diocese of Lincoln.

Primary and secondary.

4592 pupils



Infinity Academies Trust

13 schools based around Boston, Grantham and North Lincolnshire.

Church and community primaries.

2527 pupils



St Lawrence Academies Trust

2 church schools and 1 community school.

Based in North and North East Lincolnshire.
Primary and Secondary pupils.

1252 pupils



Abbey Academies Trust

3 primary church schools.

Based in south Lincolnshire.

1024 pupils



Keystone Academy Trust

6 community primary schools.

Based in south Lincolnshire.

2064 pupils

Why Consider Joining a Church MAT?



Workload and Wellbeing

Collaboration and networking across all roles

Central Teams of experts to lead and manage key areas

Shared curriculum expertise and planning

Collective use of resources and professional development

Different models of working to avoid duplication and repetition

Multiple sources of support/advice

Employee support packages & enhancements

Supportive reviews, flexible working & shared accountability

Recruitment and Retention

Dedicated services of Qualified HR Advisors and Business Partners to support on site or via email with all recruitment and safer recruitment queries in person or via email/teams to provide advice and guidance on all recruitment processes

Core set of evaluated JDs, Person Specifications, adverts and bespoke advertising to ensure best coverage for all vacancies, taking cumbersome administration processes away from school leaders

Centralised management of all recruitment administration processes and safer recruitment processes in line with KCSIE to ensure compliance, streamlined and seamless coordination

Access to health and wellbeing services to include online GP counselling, 24/7 helplines, wellbeing working parties and networks to ensure that Trust approaches meet need in schools and resource is targeted where needed

Access to Trust CPD and clear pathways for Growth and Development



FORGING STRONGER FUTURES FOR ALL

INTEGRITY

SERVICE

RESILIENCE

COMPASSION



A Church of England Multi-Academy Trust

A flourishing, open-minded and resilient family of schools, inspired by others to live life in all its fullness.

☎ 01778 424152 (option 3)

🌐 www.keystoneacademytrust.org.uk

✉ enquiries@kestonemat.org

Why Consider Joining a Church MAT?

Strategic Financial Leadership

Strategic financial and budgetary expertise allows benchmarking and 3-5yr plans

Fiscal responsibilities fulfilled and longevity of church school education protected

Engage in targeted marketing and promotion - fair share/competitive marketplace

Centralisation of services creates saving through economies of scale

Adds capacity, flexibility and solutions in and around schools

Expertise is accessible that otherwise would not be possible/affordable.

More schools benefit from individual experience and expertise - sharing the load!

Progression routes and succession planning - you don't "lose" staff

Allows budget to be freed up to spend on the increasing needs of children

MATs can't plant money trees or increase the birthrate

..but can mitigate risk and add capacity

No Magic Wands - But MATs do help to shoulder the responsibility of difficult decisions

Getting MORE for LESS for our schools means we can prioritise our most valuable assets - our children and our staff



Estates

Services of a qualified Estate Manager who oversees the Trust estate and acts as first point of contact for building related queries

Funding for capital projects across all schools. This includes new heating systems, roofs, windows, playgrounds, decoration and fire alarms

Annual condition surveys of all schools to ensure that spend is prioritised according to need

Specification, tendering and management of capital works, servicing and maintenance projects ensuring that schools are legally compliant and obtain best value for money

Procurement of specialist advice/risk assessments including asbestos, legionella and fire



Infinity Academies Trust

Ready to learn; Prepared to flourish.

Infinity Academies Trust is a family of Lincolnshire-based primary schools, working together in partnership to provide the very best for our pupils, our staff and our communities.

As a deeply Christian Church Trust aiming to serve the common good, we enable both Church and Community schools to flourish.

All our children need and deserve schools with loving cultures, aspirational curriculums and inspiring provision. We provide children with the skills, knowledge and experiences to thrive academically, socially and spiritually so that they are prepared for a future full of opportunity.

"This is what quality cross-school collaboration is all about. I'm so grateful for the time, support and guidance from colleagues across the Trust."

Headteacher



For further information and to find out how we could support your school, please get in touch:

T: 01205 345101 | E: enquiries@infinityacademies.co.uk
W: www.infinityacademies.co.uk

Why Consider Joining a Church MAT?

Governance

Clear governance framework with defined roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication and increasing efficiency in decision-making

Benefit from the expertise and resources of a dedicated governance team

Access to ongoing professional development opportunities for all Governors and briefings for Clerks, Chairs and Heads.

Termly briefings for Heads, Clerks and Chairs

Resource Bank including model documents for all aspects of governance - agendas, HT report, governor recruitment, compliance

Central support for panel hearings by experienced Governance Leads including complaints, exclusions, admissions

Standard policies created centrally ensuring legal compliance and reducing the administrative burden on schools



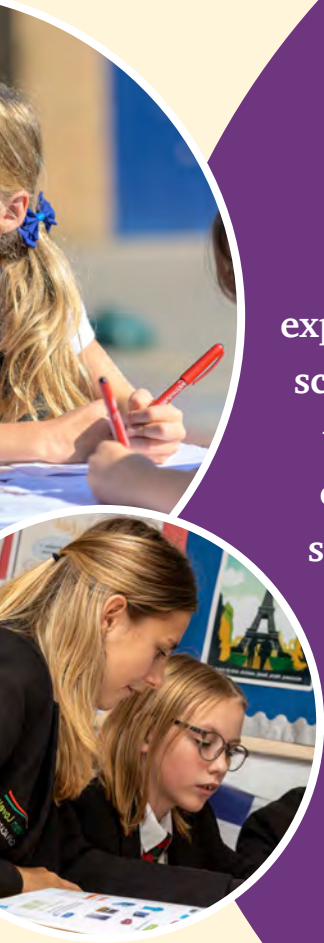
School Improvement

The development of education as a lever for improving social mobility and improving outcomes for all children should be at the heart of any Trust's Education offer

Some larger Trusts, will be fortunate to have a dedicated team of experienced educationalists who have led schools themselves, to support schools. Smaller Trusts may have a hybrid offer of school-based leaders to help with school improvement and a smaller central team. In any event, the school improvement should be broad and varied, and you should be able to shape the support to meet the needs of your school.

Any school improvement should also include access to ongoing professional development across all roles within a school. Again, depending on the size and makeup of a Trust, this could be delivered via centralised services such as education, finance or HR, or may follow a school-based leader model

All of this will support the delivery of an education which will transform life chances for pupils



Be part of something bigger

The Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust (LAAT) is dedicated to supporting school improvement and Christian distinctiveness, whilst maintaining each school as a special and individual place in the heart of its unique context.

www.thelaat.co.uk



Why Consider Joining a Church MAT?

SEND

A clear approach to the identification, assessment and provision for children and young people with SEND

A cohesive and well communicated 'first and best' approach to teaching and learning for children and young people with SEND

A way of supporting SENDCos that is meaningful and developmental to ensure they are then able to improve and develop the offer back in school

Knowledgeable central staff, across directories, with a commitment to ensuring resources are deployed effectively to meet the needs of the children and young people

A strong CPD offer for those colleagues working directly with children and young people with SEND



IN LINCOLNSHIRE

57%

of all primary schools are LA maintained.

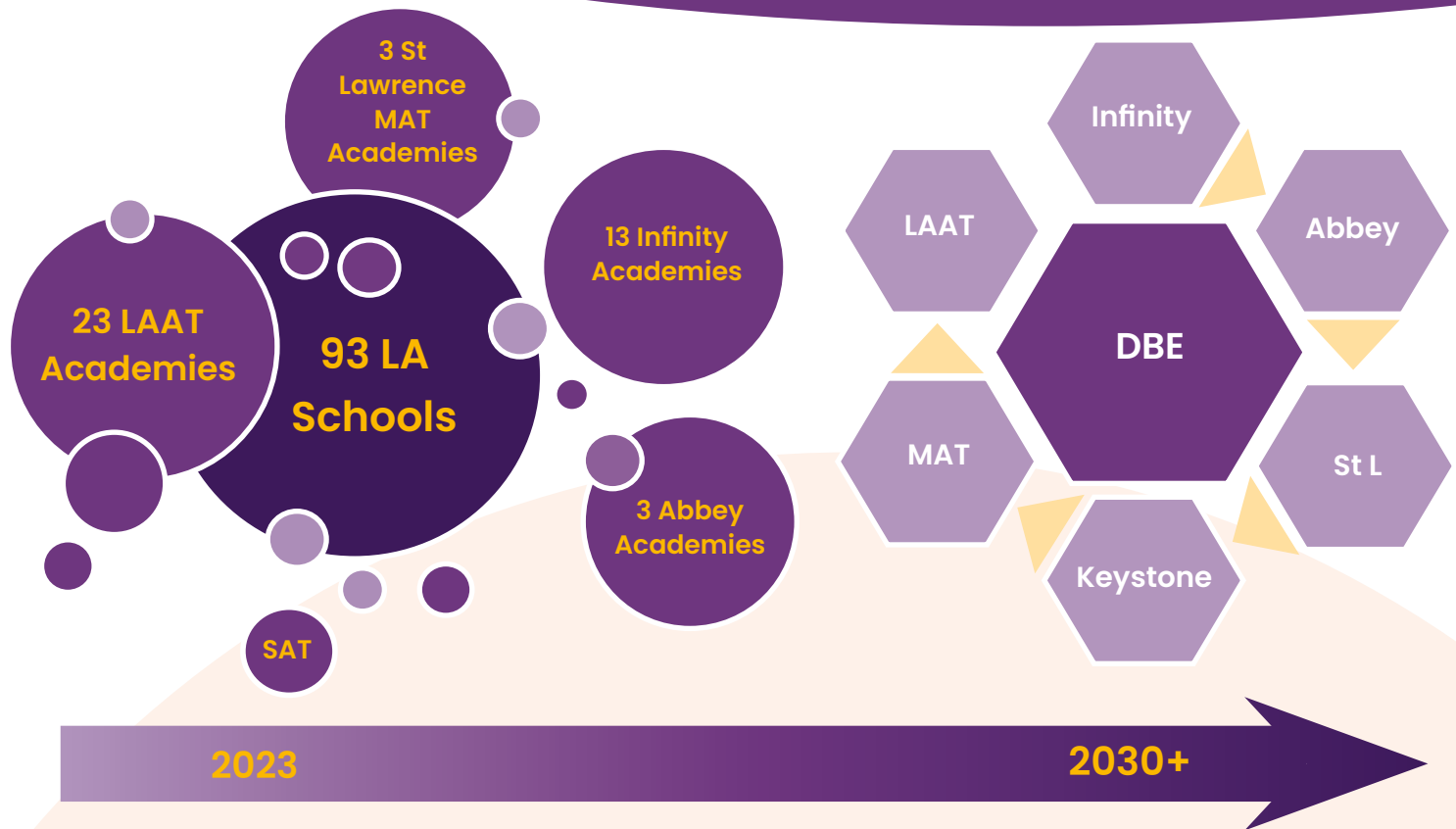
43%

are academies.

55%

of primary pupils in Lincolnshire attend academies.

A Desire and Preference



This diagram shows a direction of travel that the DBE would like to see over the next few years. On the left-hand side of the diagram, you can see a messy landscape with lots of different types of church schools – all with different governance models.

There are voluntary aided and voluntary controlled maintained schools in three very different Local Authorities.

There are stand-alone academies.

There are multi-academy trusts.

The wide variations of governance in these different types of schools makes it difficult for the DBE to monitor, support and challenge the quality of education. The fragmentation and ‘messiness’ in the current system makes it more challenging for schools and academies to collaborate and support one another.

It is the DBE’s desire and preference that we move toward the neater landscape on the right-

hand side of the diagram. Here we can see the schools have come together and joined one of the six church MATs. The DBE is at the centre, and able to provide much more efficient and effective support and challenge for church school education.

The future is cohesive with greater opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

Will the future ever look like the right-hand side of the diagram?

Joining a MAT will be the decision of the Governing Boards. The DBE will never force a school to do what it doesn’t want to do.

Whether your school becomes an academy or not, you will always be a church school and the DBE will always be there for you. Just keep abreast of the changing landscape and the school’s capacity to provide the very best education for all pupils.

A Desire and Preference

It is the LDBE's desire and preference for all its church schools, including good and outstanding schools to join a Diocesan approved church MAT.

LDBE Policy

Church schools may only join a 'majority' church MAT within the Diocese of Lincoln



LDBE policy is to aim for six 'majority' church MATs

These MATs serve schools in different contexts:

- small, medium and large
- urban and rural
- VA / VC / community
- vulnerable and strong
- different Ofsted / SIAMS inspection outcomes

Your choice of MAT is often greater when you are still a 'good' school



Self-Evaluation: The Governing Board

Governors have a duty to evaluate the pressures upon a school – now and in the future

This includes:

- evaluating the school's capacity to manage the pressures so they don't negatively impact on the wellbeing of staff and pupils
- ensuring they have accurate information about the available support (what can MATs offer? What can LAs offer? Will this support be available now and in the future?)
- acting before the pressures 'get a grip' and impact negatively on the quality of education

Do you want to stay as you are...?

Remaining as an LA Maintained school or SAT

- Have you evaluated the pressures and their impact on your school?
- Have you got the capacity to manage the challenges now and in the future?
- Have you reviewed the quality of support structures which sit outside of the MAT arena?
- Have you explored what are the intentions of other local schools? E.g. federations?
- Have you considered what you and your school could contribute to MATs and the DBE MAT strategy?



For more details, LDBE MAT strategy and for our MAT strategy videos please go to

www.lincolndiocesaneducation.com/matstrategy

or use the QR code

For discussions and enquires please contact:

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Mike Adnitt	CEO of St Lawrence Academies Trust	madnitt@slatrast.co.uk
Sarah Moore	CEO of Abbey Academies Trust	sarah.moore@abbeyacademies.co.uk
Helen Joyce	CEO of Keystone Academy Trust	helen.joyce@keystonemat.org

This is our commitment to our church schools and to church school education:

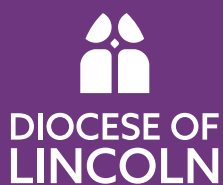
‘Believing we are called into fellowship with God who seeks the flourishing of all, we aspire to strengthen our school communities with wisdom, knowledge and understanding.

Through partnerships firmly rooted in Christian hope and in the love of God, we empower all in our Church school family to love one another with humility, justice and kindness.’



Called Aspirational Rooted Empowering

CARE



The Diocesan
Board of
Education

Edward King House,
Minster Yard,
Lincoln, LN2 1PU

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