

Doc 4: Due diligence for matching to MATs (that already have Church Articles)

Joining a Multi Academy Trust: a model of a due diligence process

Good questions to consider when seeking a strong match to your context

In determining whether it is appropriate to join a specific Multi Academy Trust (MAT), it is important to seek to understand the capacity of the Trust across a range of key areas. This includes the vision of the Trust and its strategic and operational capacity to protect and to progress a Church school's Christian Foundation and vision.

SDBE believe that a good matching process would involve a detailed consideration and analysis across all of the areas outlined in the six key questions below:

1. How will/does the Trust exercise leadership, responsibility and accountability?

| Areas for consideration | Evidence |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The separation of roles of Members, Trustees (or Directors) and Local Governing Boards (LGBs) or other local equivalent • The provision of SDBE Corporate Member representation and of 50% foundation representation of Members and Trustees • The provision of a Foundation proportion on the successor LGB (or equivalent) to that of the predecessor school • The role of the Member group in ensuring that the Trust is adhering to its own vision and ethos • The capacity and commitment of the Trust to source strong foundation Members; foundation Trustees and foundation appointees of LGBs (e.g. the role of Foundation Governance Champion/s) • The Trust's committee and decision making structure • The clarity of the Trust's accountability framework • The arrangements for the Trust to hold the CEO and executives to account • The arrangements for the CEO to hold the executive team to account • The clarity of the Trust's scheme of delegation • The evidence of effective and robust safeguarding processes and procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational charts • Scheme of delegation • Performance management policy • Safe guarding policy and records; Single Central record • Member, Trust Board and LGB minutes • Annual General Meeting • Deanery/Benefice/Parish links • Foundation Governance Champion/s • Risk register |

2. Is the Trust able to give a cohesive articulation of its understanding of what it means to embrace, protect and progress church schools within the MAT?

| Areas for consideration | Evidence |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision of the Trust for being a 'mixed' MAT • The way in which the Trust embraces the 'church school Object' in word and action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust vision statement • Trust structure • Articles of Association |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which the Trust articulates the implementation of the DBE Memorandum of Understanding • How the Trust and the school’s vision will make a difference to what the Member Group and the Trust Board actually do • The Members, Trust Board and CEO understanding of the implications for their Trust of the national vision of the Church of England Education Office • The Members, Trust Board and CEO understanding of the implications for their Trust of the DBE vision • The Members, Trust Board and CEO understanding of the implications for the Trust of SIAMS underpinned by a description of the support for the ongoing SIAMS self evaluation process in church schools • The Trust’s commitment to partnership with the DBE and what this will look like e.g. Partnership Service Agreement (PSA), , living out the MoU annually, commitment to sharing strong church school practice and requesting support where necessary to rejuvenate development areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way in which the national and diocesan vision is reflected in the application to the RSC and to the DBE • The inter-relationship between the school and Trust vision • The Trust documentation which articulate the expectations of the MOU |
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3. Is the Trust able to demonstrate a school improvement strategy which meets all schools needs and has the capacity to deliver improvement?

| Areas for consideration | Evidence |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust’s articulation of its school improvement strategy and how it is applied to school type and phase • The Trust’s demonstration of a blend of monitoring and diagnosing improvement whilst securing the improvement needed (Stabilise – Repair – Improve – Sustain) • The Trust’s Ofsted record and SIAMs record • The Trust’s executive lead for Christian character • The leadership expertise in primary and secondary education • The capacity of the Trust to support schools in difficulty (e.g. the balance of ‘capacity givers’ and ‘capacity takers’) • The Trust’s record for school performance: floor standards met for each Key Stage. Do pupils make good progress through each KS? • The Trust’s record for schools’ attendance figures • The Trust’s identification of any groups of pupils falling behind or making inadequate progress, and interventions in place to address such groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Improvement Strategy • Ofsted reports • HMI reports • ASP reports • The Ofsted data dashboard • The school’s internal tracking systems |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Trust will improve life chances of children that are disadvantaged: the Trust’s strategy and record for supporting children that are disadvantaged • The Trust’s ability to identify the key areas for Trust wide school improvement (e.g. cycle of external reviews, Trust Improvement Plan) | |
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4. Is the Trust financially viable?

| Areas for consideration | Evidence |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust’s capacity to establish core services funded through an appropriately agreed schools’ contribution • The Trust’s record of engagement with TCaF (Trust Capacity Improvement Fund) and future plans • The Trust’s approach to ‘pooling’ of GAG (general annual grant) • The Trust’s reserves policy • The Trust’s growth strategy and its financial implications over the next three years • The view of the Trust of the financial viability of the school/s wishing to join the Trust, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s budget projections for this financial year • The school’s budget projections for the next three years • Viability of the current staff and leadership model • Additional income streams that affect the budget • The financial implication of the MAT agreed financial contribution • Financial implications of the school’s fabric and condition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust accounts • Trust core service offer • Budget statements for the current year, and the past five years • Staff lists and/or staffing structures • Forward planning budget projections |

5. Does the Trust have an understanding of and vision for their place as a key stakeholder in the evolving education landscape?

| Areas for consideration | Evidence |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship with Teaching School Hubs and their regional delivery partners • The relationship of the Trust with the Regional Delivery Directorates and office of the Regional Schools Commissioner • The Trust’s record and reputation as a school improvement partner for schools in the region that are not currently part of the Trust; • Relationships with other key stakeholders: curriculum hubs; LAs; dioceses; NLGs; NLEs - the Trust’s role as a system leader | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust vision • Trust growth strategy • Trust CPD policy • Trust letter/s from RSC annual meetings • Trust funding bids • Minutes of meetings with a range of partners |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationships with local communities: PCCs, community hubs; the Trust's role as a civic leader• Relationships with other MATs• Relationships across the South West region• National relationships• Vision for joint practice development; joined up bidding for funding streams | |
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6. Has the Trust considered all of the necessary legal issues?

| Areas for consideration | Evidence |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complaints or appeals against the school currently pending from:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Staff○ Parents○ Neighbours• Land registry issues that may affect the school• Current partnerships or legal agreements• Associations with another Trust• Current contracts the school have with services and suppliers• Conflicts of interest (refer to Conflicts of interest: a guide for charity trustees (CC29) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's records of complaints• Land registry documents and deeds |