

The Agape Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

Executive Summary – June 2023

Our Vision

A collaboration of schools which improves the educational experiences and outcomes for children, maximizing the benefits of working together, whilst maintaining the individual culture and ethos of each individual school.

Background

A MAT is a charitable company, limited by guarantee, and covered by both Company and Charity law.

The set-up and operation of any school-based MAT is determined by the school within models agreed by the DfE. When Church schools are involved, as in this case, the models used are also those agreed by the Church of England.

Members (who are the equivalent of shareholders – their main role is to appoint the directors/trustees)

Directors/Trustees – who sit on the Company Board, set company policy and are responsible for ensuring the company is solvent, and runs the MAT effectively.

Local Governing Committees (LGCs) – these have strategic oversight over individual schools, with delegated authority from the trustees. Each school would have its own LGC.

Local Governing Committees would retain some of the powers of their current Full Governing Board.

Latest available data shows 79% of secondary schools are now academies.

Benefits

Sharing staff experience and skills across schools will lead to improved outcomes for students and professional development opportunities for staff at all levels. Staff would have an increased level of support through collaboration. This would develop a stronger synergy and connectedness across the schools in the MAT. School improvement strategies and expertise would be shared between schools.

Staff in the MAT would benefit from the healthy working initiatives available in each school such as lap top computers for all staff, free gym access, discounted BUPA healthcare, Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme, well-being weeks and well-being days.

The site facilities at each site would be available to schools within the MAT to extend their current provision. Strong collaboration with shared accountability can lead to better educational experiences, progress and attainment for pupils.

Trustees can come together to share strategic thinking, combine skills and support each other. School leaders and teachers can share thinking and planning to spread expertise. School leaders, teachers and other staff could be shared across more than one school, enabling schools to find different solutions to recruitment, retention and flexibility, to retain staff by providing new opportunities within the MAT group and to succession plan more effectively.

Groups of schools can find it easier to source specialist personnel and expertise and provide richer curricular and extracurricular activities. Shared professional development opportunities are increased. The economies of scale and collective purchasing can lead to financial savings.

Risk Management

A process of due diligence will take place before any schools formed or joined the MAT. This is a process of months, not days.

Financials, staffing, facilities, contracts & site issues would be reviewed. There are small legal costs for schools in converting.

OfSTED, SIAMS & Accountability

Each school is inspected and reported separately for OfSTED.

Each school is inspected and reported separately for SIAMS.

Each schools is accountable to the Local Governing Committee, the CEO and the Trust Board for academic and educational performance. MAT performance is accountable to the Trustee Board and the Regional Schools Director.

Admissions

Academies are their own admissions authority. The option is available for schools within a MAT to have preferential admissions arrangements cross phase.

Headteacher and SLT Appointments

CEO & Trustees would interview and recommend HT appointments.

SLT appointments would be made by CEO, HT and LGC of each school.

Ethos, Values and Culture

Each individual school will retain and develop its own vision, ethos, values and culture. These will not be imposed upon any school by the MAT.

Schools' and MAT names

Individual schools retain their own names if they choose to.

The name of the MAT will be **Agape¹ Multi-Academy Trust**.

People and Leadership

Current senior roles and staff would remain at all schools. With Piggott as the lead school, other schools' staff would TUPE² across into the MAT.

Staff would be offered the opportunity to work across schools/ sites by invitation and negotiation. Recruitment processes for teaching and support staff would continue as now.

The MAT would have a Trustee board to oversee the MAT. Each school would have a Local Governing Committee which reports to the Trustee board. Charvil Primary would retain its current primary governance committee. Trustees report to the Members.

The Trustee board would comprise Richard Thiele, Jan McLucas, Derren Gray, plus specialists in school leadership, Curriculum (primary), Curriculum (secondary), Finance, Pay, HR and Facilities. Tony Wilson, director of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, who has significant experience with MAT formation would also be a Trustee. The Trust Board is accountable to the Members and the Regional Schools Director.

DfE requires MATs to have a CEO. This would be Derren Gray Executive Headteacher at The Piggott, with internal senior leadership capacity created at The Piggott. The CEO is accountable to the Trustees and Members.

DfE requires academies to have a CFO. This would be the current Piggott School Business Manager and CFO, Mrs Bhardwaj.

The Governance Professional would be Mrs Marr LLB PDLP.

It will be for the current Governing Bodies of Altwood Church of England School and The Piggott School to decide on the formation of The Agape Multi-Academy Trust, taking into account feedback following consultation with staff, parents and carers. If successful then an application will be made to the Regional Schools Director.

¹ In the scriptures, the love that Jesus talks about and refers to is **agape** love. The term agape refers to unconditional love. Christians believe this is the highest type of love, and it is the love that Jesus has for humans. Agape involves feeling so much love for someone that you put them before yourself.

² Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)

Finance, HR & Payroll systems would be centralised at Piggott with satellite staffing at other schools.

Site maintenance and development would be based around the current Piggott team of premises manager plus three caretakers subsuming any existing caretaking staff at other schools to create a highly skilled localised provision. There will remain onsite provision at each school for site services/ caretaking. This will reduce expenditure on external contractors and improve site facilities for all.

IT systems maintenance and offsite support would be based at Piggott with continuing on site provision at other schools. The IT staff at Piggott currently manage 1250 devices plus email, phones, printing, SIMS, MS Office and curriculum software/ apps. They would support the current IT staff from other schools. There would remain on site provision at other schools for IT services and support.

Project management

The conversion will nominally be led by Richard Thiele and Jan McLucas.

Operational issues will be delegated to Derren Gray, Neil Dimbleby, assisted by Mrs Marr and the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE).

Financial information (YTD, 3 year and reserves), building surveys and staffing structures will be confidentially shared between the two schools as part of the due diligence process. The first part of this due diligence process concerning financials, staffing structures and academic performance has been successfully completed. Financial information for each school is also available through their published annual accounts.

Site maintenance reviews will complement CDC surveys. Live contracts and expiry dates will be reviewed.

There will be some involvement with local authorities and the Diocese due to site specific issues (land, existing contracts & buildings).

Admissions & Term dates

Each school would be responsible for their own admissions policies and procedures. Parents and carers would apply in the usual manner for their child to attend the school of their choice, the MAT would not allocate places.

There are no plans for the de-amalgamation of Wargrave and Charvil Piggotts. The Piggott would remain a single all-through school and so children at Charvil would automatically progress to Wargrave at the end of Year 6.

Term dates will be decided by each school to reflect their local context, as is the current case.

Curriculum

Each school is responsible for setting and delivering its own curriculum. Academies (as Piggott and Altwood are already) do not have to follow the national curriculum. That said, the OfSTED inspection framework is clear that academies are expected to meet or exceed the requirements of the national curriculum, which both schools currently do. Students would not be expected to travel between schools.

Complaints, Disciplinary and Appeals Processes

The Complaints process for each school will be as currently published, with the Local Governing Committees assuming the role of current Local Governing/Trustee Boards. The Trust Board would subsume any complaints against the CEO, CFO or any future Trust specific staff.

The Appeals process for each school will be as currently published, with the Local Governing Committees assuming the role of current Local Governing/Trustee Boards.

The Disciplinary process for each school will be as currently published, with the Local Governing Committees assuming the role of current Local Governing/Trustee Boards. The Trust Board would subsume any allegations against the CEO, CFO or any future Trust specific staff.