



Archdiocese of Birmingham
Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy
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19th September 2024

Dear Parents, Carers, and Parish community,

Academisation Development Consultation about the Vision

On 11th July 2024, Archbishop Bernard Longley outlined a new plan for our Catholic schools. The goal is to move from collaboration to shared responsibility by bringing all Catholic schools into a smaller number of stronger, flourishing Catholic Multi-Academy Trusts (CMATs). After consulting widely, the Trustees have approved the formation of a new CMAT, merging some existing academies and voluntary aided schools.

What is being proposed?

The first CMAT will be in the north of the Archdiocese. It will merge 6 MACs and 7 VA schools as follows:

CMAT1	Number of Schools	Secondary	Primary	Pupils 2023 census
All Saints Catholic Collegiate	5	1	4	2150
Christ The King Catholic Collegiate	6	1	5	2637
Newman Catholic Collegiate	9	1	8	2731
Painsley MAC	16	3	13	5214
St Francis and St Clare MAC	12	2	10	4618
St John Bosco MAC	8	2	6	2969
VA Schools				
Holy Name, Great Barr; St Bernadette's, Wombourne; St Mary's Cannock; St Joseph's, Hednesford; St Joseph's Rugeley, St Joseph's and St Theresa's, Chasetown; St Thomas More, Gt Wyrley;	7	0	7	1327
Totals	63	10	53	21646



The new CMAT will serve its children and communities through the creation of structures that will reduce the workload for staff and schools, ensure the delivery of the highest quality Catholic education and provide the economies of scale needed in these challenging times.

Why merge schools into a larger Trust?

By combining schools into a bigger Trust, staff workload can be reduced, resources can be shared, and schools can focus on delivering high-quality Catholic education. This setup can also create cost savings, which will benefit all schools involved.

How will a larger Trust benefit the schools?

Large, well-managed trusts have several advantages for the students, staff, parishes and communities:

Catholic mission and values: The Trust will maintain and develop a strong focus on our Catholic mission and values including outstanding chaplaincy across all schools.

More resources: Larger Trusts can access more funding and manage it more effectively. This can mean new buildings, better teaching resources, and more support for students and staff.

Support for school communities: Strong Trusts can quickly provide extra staff or resources to schools that need them.

Career development for staff: Teachers and staff will have more opportunities for growth without leaving the classroom.

Who will lead the new CMAT?

The new Board of the CMAT, supported by Archdiocesan Trustees and the Director of Education, will lead a recruitment process for the appointment of the leaders for the new Trust.

How have the schools been allocated to the new CMAT?

DES officers, working with Archdiocesan Trustees and the Department for Education and the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA), have considered a range of factors including Local Authority, parishes, number and phase of schools and pupils, finances and current academy and voluntary aided status. Primary feeder schools will continue to be allocated to the same Trusts as their Catholic secondary school



How will we be able to influence decisions in such a large Trust? Will we lose our identity?

No. Schools will remain deeply connected to their communities, and the Trust will ensure that each school's individuality is respected and celebrated. Local governing bodies will continue to play a key role in making sure the school's needs and voices are heard.

Will our school feel lost in the larger organisation?

To the contrary, successful Trusts are rooted in the communities that they serve. CMAT leaders will be required to engage with school communities.

What will be the role of the local governing body?

As stated above, successful Trusts and schools are rooted in their communities. In the larger CMAT, the role of the local governing body becomes even more important as a means to ensuring the local community are represented and listened to. Local governing bodies are the eyes and ears of the Board in ensuring the school and CMAT are meeting the requirements of a strong CMAT.

Will there be more money for my school?

Money for school buildings is paid directly to larger Trusts and that opens many doors for the CMAT to work with their schools to grasp the opportunities of managing their estates.

In addition, the significant economies of scale will result in a more effective use of funds across the Academy Trust leading to additional resources for schools and pupils where required. This support can be provided in different ways: SEND, pupil premium, education performance, estates management, administration support, parish and community engagement, and will vary depending on need.

What is the timescale for the new vision?

Trustees, the DfE Regions Group and the ESFA will work together for the CMAT to open in September 2025.

Next steps

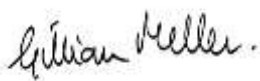
We are pleased to inform you that our Board of Directors have signed a resolution to join the CMAT on 1st September 2025.



As part of the process, we are now consulting the parents, parishes, and community of our school for the period 19th September, 2024 to 24th October, 2024. If you would like to make a comment about the proposal, we invite you to submit these through this link to the [Comments Form](#), by 12pm on 24th October, 2024.

As we look forward, we pray for the success of the new CMAT so that we can all work together in order for diocesan schools, their pupils and communities to flourish.

Yours sincerely,



Dr G Meller
Chair of the Board of Directors



Mr I Beardmore
CEO



Mrs S Rathbone
Principal

