

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

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



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way in which the Trust articulates the implementation of the DBE Memorandum of Understanding</li> <li>• How the Trust and the school’s vision will make a difference to what the Member Group and the Trust Board actually do</li> <li>• The Members, Trust Board and CEO understanding of the implications for their Trust of the national vision of the Church of England Education Office</li> <li>• The Members, Trust Board and CEO understanding of the implications for their Trust of the DBE vision</li> <li>• The Members, Trust Board and CEO understanding of the implications for the Trust of SIAMS underpinned by a description of the <b>support for the ongoing SIAMS self evaluation process</b> in church schools</li> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way in which the national and diocesan vision is reflected in the application to the RSC and to the DBE</li> <li>• The inter-relationship between the school and Trust vision</li> <li>• The Trust documentation which articulate the expectations of the MOU</li> </ul>
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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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Trust’s articulation of its school improvement strategy and how it is applied to school type and phase</li> <li>• The Trust’s demonstration of a blend of monitoring and diagnosing improvement whilst securing the improvement needed (Stabilise – Repair – Improve – Sustain)</li> <li>• The Trust’s Ofsted record and SIAMs record</li> <li>• The Trust’s executive lead for Christian character</li> <li>• The leadership expertise in primary and secondary education</li> <li>• The capacity of the Trust to support schools in difficulty (e.g. the balance of ‘capacity givers’ and ‘capacity takers’)</li> <li>• The Trust’s record for school performance: floor standards met for each Key Stage. Do pupils make good progress through each KS?</li> <li>• The Trust’s record for schools’ attendance figures</li> <li>• The Trust’s identification of any groups of pupils falling behind or making inadequate progress, and interventions in place to address such groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Improvement Strategy</li> <li>• Ofsted reports</li> <li>• HMI reports</li> <li>• ASP reports</li> <li>• The Ofsted data dashboard</li> <li>• The school’s internal tracking systems</li> </ul>



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

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

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



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

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