

The Agape Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)

Executive Summary – Robert Piggott Infants & Robert Piggott Juniors

Spring 2024

Agape Trust Vision

To be a collaboration of schools which enhances 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.

Benefits

The sharing of staff experience, expertise and skills across schools within the Trust leads to improved outcomes for students and professional development opportunities for staff at all levels. Staff have an increased level of support through collaborative work, mentoring and coaching. This develops a stronger synergy and connectedness across the schools in the MAT. School improvement strategies and expertise are shared between schools.

Staff in the MAT benefit from healthy working initiatives such as lap top computers, 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.

Group of schools find it easier to source specialist personnel and expertise, and provide richer curricular and extracurricular activities. Shared professional development opportunities are increased. Economies of scale and collective purchasing also lead to financial savings.

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**.

Admissions

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

Risk Management

A process of due diligence will take place before any schools join the MAT. This is a process of several months.

Financials, staffing, facilities, contracts & site issues are reviewed.

The legal costs for schools joining will be covered by the MAT.

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.

OfSTED, SIAMS & Accountability

Each school is inspected and reported separately for OfSTED.

Each school is inspected and reported separately for SIAMS (where relevant).

Each school 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.

Headteacher and SLT Appointments

The CEO & Trustees would interview and recommend HT appointments.

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

People and Leadership

Current senior roles and staff would remain at all schools.

School 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. Trustees report to the Members.

The Trustee board comprises 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 is Derren Gray, Executive Headteacher at The Piggott School. 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, who is a senior business leader with over 16 years of experience in accounting roles across multiple industry sectors. As School Business Manager she has overall responsibility for support staff, HR, IT management, and premises

² Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)

management. She has extensive experience as a CFO, working with a range of stakeholders, managing diverse relationships in a school setting, and communicating effectively with staff, colleagues, and third parties to achieve beneficial working relationships along with maximizing the school's income and budget balances.

The Governance Professional will be Mrs Marr LLB PDLP. Mrs Marr qualified as a solicitor in 1999 and has over 12 years' experience working in legal services, nearly 10 of those as a qualified solicitor. She remains on the Law Society's roll as a non-practicing solicitor. She has previously been a Director of Legal Practice as well as Head of a Civil Litigation Department. Mrs Marr has been a governance clerk for several schools for over 10 years, currently being Governance Professional/Clerk for three schools including The Piggott. One of the other schools is part of a MAT which has provided her with experience of how Local Governing Committees operate within a MAT.

A MAT timeline is available showing key dates within the strategic development plan.

The anticipated date for formation of The Agape Trust is 1st March 2024.

The anticipated date for Robert Piggott Infants and Robert Piggott Juniors to join the Trust is by 1st September 2024.

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 and the two site staff at Altwood School, subsuming any existing caretaking staff at other schools to enhance this highly skilled localised provision. This will reduce expenditure on external contractors and improve reactive maintenance agility and site facilities for schools within the MAT.

IT systems oversight and maintenance, together with remote support would be based at Piggott and Altwood. The team of five staff will support IT provision for other schools within the MAT.

Project management

The conversion will be led by Owen Rees, Derren Gray and Vanessa O'Byrne.

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

Financial information (YTD, 3 year and reserves), building surveys and staffing structures will be confidentially shared as part of the due diligence process. Financial information for each school in the MAT 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 involvement with Wokingham Borough Council and the Diocese of Oxford in regards to site specific issues (land, existing contracts & buildings) and academisation.

Admissions & Term dates

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

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

Curriculum

Each school is responsible for setting and delivering its own curriculum. Whilst academies do not have to follow the national curriculum, the OfSTED inspection framework is clear that academies are expected to meet or exceed the requirements of the national curriculum.

Complaints, Disciplinary and Appeals Processes

The Complaints process 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.

Financial position

Shared MAT services would be costed through a combination of top slicing and internal recharging to obtain the fairest model. The model would be reviewed regularly. Top slice is provisionally set at 5%, to be reviewed following due-diligence processes (headcount & FTE/ skills/ experience).

GAG income would be distributed via the MAT directly to individual schools following top slice.

Schools will nominally retain any existing surplus restricted and non-restricted reserves (or deficits) on joining and be responsible for managing any in year surpluses and deficits.

Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) applications remain for schools within a MAT until the MAT grows beyond a certain level³ and then the MAT qualifies for School Condition Allowance (SCA) funding. Once a MAT reaches the SCA level it automatically receives this funding each year.⁴

Sixth form income and any regular non-GAG funding including, but not limited to, Pupil Premium, Sports Premium, Capital funding, SEND, Recovery premium, and one off DfE funding would be directed towards the relevant school and **not** be part of the top slice.

Self generated income (such as lettings) and any donations would be directed towards the relevant school and would **not** form part of the top slice.

Growth funding for Basic Need Growth, Sixth-form expansion, or any funding in regards to Pupil Number Adjustments (PNA) would be **not** form part of the top slice.

³ For 2023/24 applications this was 5 schools and 3000 children.

⁴ For four schools this would equate to £1M per annum; accessible once a fifth school joined the MAT.

Scheme of Delegation Overview – The Agape Multi-Academy Trust

This Scheme of Delegation overview is a summary of overarching specific high level responsibilities. The Scheme of Delegation, with detailed and specific committee roles within the committee structure, is available.

Members:

- Appoint and/or remove trustees
- Amend the articles of association (subject to DfE and Charity Commission rules) and has the power to change the constitution of the Academy and Trustee body
- Ensure the religious character of the Church Academy is preserved (hence the requirement a report on how the school is upholding the Christian character is given at each AGM)
- Appoint Members
- Determine the name of the Trust

Subject	Reserved to the Trust Board	Delegated to Local Governing Committees
Governance & Strategy	Review & approve the governance process for the Board. Scheme of delegation Recommendation of Trustees (for approval by the members) Vision, Values & Mission. Strategic Direction. Trust Improvement Plan Approval of School Development Plans MAT expansion Trust KPIs	LGC meetings LGC sub-committees School Development Plans School Self Evaluation OfSTED & SIAMS preparation

Finance & Facilities	<p>Top slice</p> <p>EFA submissions including annual accounts</p> <p>Investment & reserves strategy</p> <p>Risk management</p> <p>Auditing & internal controls</p> <p>Finance & MIS software</p> <p>Appointing responsible officer</p> <p>Appointing accounting officer</p> <p>Approval of budgets</p> <p>Trust wide facilities development</p>	<p>School budget plan for delegated funding</p> <p>Submissions to Board</p> <p>Asset management</p> <p>School facilities development</p> <p>Health & Safety</p>
Pay & People	<p>Remuneration of CEO</p> <p>Remuneration of HTs</p> <p>Appointment of CEO</p> <p>HT appointments</p> <p>Recommendation and Nomination of Trustees</p> <p>Complaints policy</p> <p>HR Oversight</p> <p>CEO Appraisal</p> <p>Headteacher appraisals (led by CEO)</p>	<p>Recommendations for HT remuneration</p> <p>Remuneration of SLT</p> <p>Recommendations for HT appointments</p> <p>Teaching staff appraisal</p> <p>Support staff appraisal</p> <p>Individual school risk register</p>
Curriculum	<p>Monitoring curriculum provision</p> <p>Trust's educational performance</p> <p>School improvement</p> <p>Monitor Safeguarding</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Curriculum</p> <p>Curriculum aligned with school vision, ethos, values and culture</p> <p>School examination performance</p> <p>SEND, Disadvantaged Children & Vulnerable Children</p> <p>British Values, character education and cultural capital</p>