

Manchester Diocesan Board of Education

Service Level Agreement April 2023/24



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Our Vision

The vision of the Diocese of Manchester is to be a worshipping, growing and transforming Christian presence at the heart of every community. Church schools are central to this vision as they seek to be places where Christian values and practices are at the centre of all that happens there. The Manchester Diocesan Board of Education (MDBE) fully supports this vision through its work with church schools, across the diverse landscape of Greater Manchester and Rossendale.

The vision has three fundamental principles; growing, nurturing and serving, as we strive every day in our local ministry to be a Church for a Different World. MDBE works in partnership with schools and churches to enact and support these principles.

Growing: MDBE grows and cultivates healthy relationships with staff and governors across the family of church schools. We encourage good leadership through providing training and advice in areas such as mental health and wellbeing, admissions, Head Teacher recruitment and development as well as effective management of school buildings.

Nurturing: MDBE strives to nurture its relationships with schools, just as, we believe, God nurtures His relationships with His children. We support schools in the journeys they have with each of their children, from early years through to sixth form; walking alongside schools during transition points, academic experiences and community events. We work across churches and schools to establish reciprocally beneficial relationships. We communicate with school leaders, staff, governors and clergy teams, uniting us as we work together to lift up the children and young people in schools and churches.

Serving: MDBE seeks to serve schools with love, kindness and action, enacting the commandment to 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself.' (Luke 10:27). We work in communion with people, children and families from all faiths and backgrounds, celebrating the diverse landscape of our great city and region and the communities that come together within it. We help to maintain the Christian distinctiveness of Church of England schools through the facilitation of training and resourcing in the areas of vision and values, Religious Education, Collective Worship and the requirements of SIAMS.

MDBE's overarching vision is for Church of England schools to be places where all involved can be introduced and supported to reflect on Jesus' promise in John 10:10 that He 'came so that you might have life in all its fullness.'

The Importance of Partnership

This Service Level Agreement represents the partnership between MDBE and the 192 Church of England schools within the diocese. The concept of partnership or covenant relationship is one that resounds throughout the Bible. In Genesis we see how the Lord made a covenant with Abraham, to bless his descendants, and to give them a land. This covenant resulted in Moses, then Joshua leading the People of Israel to the promised land. In the New Testament through the life of Jesus we see him in relationship with the 12 disciples as He taught about the Kingdom of heaven.

The idea of partnership is especially important as we seek to:

- Retain and strengthen the family of Church of England schools ensuring a Christian presence in all communities.
- Prioritise the distinctive Christian character of Church of England schools to support their inclusive yet distinctive nature.
- Enable the flourishing of all connected with Church of England schools so that all can experience 'life in all its fullness.'
- Strengthen covenant relationships between the Diocesan Board of Education and schools with the relationship resulting in reciprocal benefits.

Through the Service Level Agreement, Church of England schools and the Diocesan Board of Education demonstrate a working partnership based on a covenant relationship. We are committed to each other and our actions testify to this. The relationship is not transactional in that it is not about what one party can do for another. It is a commitment to working together, to supporting together, to celebrating together, to flourishing together.

What do we do?

Manchester Diocesan Board of Education (MDBE) exists to support and serve the 192 Church of England schools across the diocese. We are privileged to serve VA, VC, Foundation, SATs and MATs across the school estate. We continue to prioritise and develop a programme of support that best meets the needs of school leaders, staff and governors, whilst placing the wellbeing and care of those leading in schools at the heart of our provision in order to support the nurturing of healthy resilient leaders. Our board and its officers also work with external partners such as Local Authorities, and both local and national government as appropriate. The Board's statutory functions are set out legally through 'The Measure' (2021). However, there are also aspects of our work, in particular concerning children's and youth ministry, that sit within the department's remit at the request of the Board. This is a strength of MDBE in that explicit links are recognised and supported between the ministry and work of both schools and churches.

How do we do this?

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

Person Responsible: Diocesan Director of Education

Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 sets out the legal framework and scope of inspections for all schools with a religious character. The current schedule for CE schools is based on the Church of England's Vision for Education (2016) 'Deeply Christian, serving the Common Good.' The evaluation schedule has one overarching question: 'How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?' Schools are evaluated on how their vision is lived out to enable adults and pupils to flourish. SIAMS includes academic standards, wellbeing, local, national and international partnerships, inclusion and diversity, spiritual development, Religious Education and Collective Worship. The school's vision is to pervade all areas. MDBE continues to develop a suite of training and support for schools that focusses on Christian vision and distinctiveness. The diocesan SIAMS lead is the Diocesan Director of Education who co-ordinates support for schools as well as delivering training to staff and governors. Recent developments include a half day visit from a Diocesan Schools Adviser taking the form of a professional dialogue/constructive conversation with school leaders in preparation for a school's SIAMS inspection. During each SIAMS inspection a member of the Board of Education team will speak to the inspector as required as part of the inspection process. A Diocesan representative will attend the feedback session as support for schools. Following inspection support is offered in addressing any areas of development.

Collective Worship

Person Responsible: Assistant Director (Religious Education and Christian Distinctiveness)

All schools are legally required to provide an act of worship for all pupils each day that is 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.' In VC and VA schools such arrangements are made by governors in line with the school's trust deed. In Church of England schools this means Collective Worship must reflect the Anglican status of the school. This can be achieved through celebrating the Church year as well as including liturgy and Christian symbols for the Trinity within Collective Worship. Church school worship should be 'inclusive, invitational and inspiring.' It is central to the life of the school, with all being invited to take part.

MDBE supports schools to develop their understanding of the requirements for Collective Worship, offers support for planning and delivery as well as providing regular resources that can be used as a basis for Collective Worship. This work involves a team of diocesan officers. All are involved in regular visits to schools to support and deliver Collective Worship. A programme of Worship2Go resources, including videos and activities, are available for all schools by request.

Religious Education

Person Responsible: Assistant Director (Religious Education and Christian Distinctiveness)

Within Church of England schools Religious Education is viewed as a core element of the curriculum. It should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It is intrinsic in the outworking of a Church school's Christian vision. It also supports schools to educate for dignity and respect through encouraging all to live well together. Central to Religious Education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. MDBE has responsibility to promote, or assist in the promotion of, religious education in schools in the diocese.

MDBE offers advice, support, training and resources to enable Church of England schools to provide a rich, inspirational RE curriculum. Regular visits are made to schools by the RE and Christian Distinctiveness Adviser evidencing the high priority MDBE places on RE. Continuous Professional Development sessions are provided to support teachers' subject knowledge, theological understanding and pedagogy appropriate to RE. The Understanding Christianity resource is recommended alongside the Diocesan Syllabus. Local RE hubs are also in place to support RE leaders in schools. These meet termly as a means of offering additional advice and guidance as well as sharing good practice. Policy guidance on withdrawal issues and the relationship between Christian and British values is also provided.

Governor support and development

Persons Responsible: Diocesan Director of Education, Assistant Director & Administrator

MDBE is committed to offering rigorous support, advice, guidance and training to governing bodies so that leaders can work together for the flourishing of all. All governors of a Church of England school commit to and work collaboratively to ensure the effectiveness of the school where a Christian vision is established and all are supported to 'live life to the full' (John 10:10).

MDBE supports the appointment of PCC and Diocesan appointed Foundation Governors and seeks to address vacancies in a timely, efficient manner. Guidance for recruitment and induction is made available to all governing bodies. An annual programme of training is delivered and is open to all governors as well as an annual governor conference. Details of the training programme are available via the Diocesan website or from the Governance Officer.

Recognising the value of the Chair of Governors and responsibilities associated with this role a Chairs' network is facilitated where support and good practice can be shared. Chairs of Governors are also invited to a termly Head Teacher and Chair of Governor Diocesan meeting to ensure updates are shared, as well

as providing further opportunity for learning from and supporting each other as a family of church schools.

Advice is provided on an individual basis on a range of contextual issues to support the functioning of effective governing bodies. Where a governing body has a particular need for enhanced support a Diocesan Schools Adviser can be commissioned, in agreement with the Director, to the role of Associate Member for a short period of time. Such a role is reviewed annually in response to school needs.

Recruitment of School Leaders

Person Responsible: Diocesan Director of Education

VA schools are required to invite the Diocesan Director of Education or their representative to offer advice and support regarding securing school leadership in the form of appointment of head teachers/heads of school as appropriate. This is particularly important if a representative of the Local Authority has been invited. For VC schools and academies MDBE provide the same level of support throughout the process.

The Director should be informed, by the Chair of Governors, of a Head Teacher vacancy as soon as a resignation is received by a governing body. Support will be provided throughout the process. This begins with discussions regarding options for future school leadership, to supporting the production of recruitment documents, advising on interview process, providing appropriate resources through to the appointment offer being made. Guidance documents are also provided as a means of informing governors of the process, considerations and legal requirements. Where a school requires support for Deputy Head Teacher appointments MDBE will provide this in line with school needs.

Leadership Training/Continuous Professional Development

Person Responsible: Diocesan Director of Education

MDBE supports the induction and ongoing professional development of school leaders in various ways. All new Head Teachers are invited to be part of Diocesan led Head Teacher induction sessions throughout their first year of the role. The Director visits all new Head Teachers as a welcome to the role and the wider family of diocesan schools. School leaders within their first two years of appointment are also encouraged to partake of the Additional Support Offer provided in partnership with the Church of England Education Office (CEEEO).

Professional training is provided through the Christian Leadership Programme, run in collaboration with Blackburn, Carlisle, Chester and Liverpool Dioceses. MDBE provides support towards costs. For information contact the Director.

Ongoing support is provided through termly Head Teacher and Chair of Governor meetings. The Director also provides and facilitates professional and pastoral support for serving Head Teachers through a programme of visits to schools. A programme of regular spiritual retreats for serving Head Teachers supports the spiritual and mental wellbeing of leaders.

Further support by Diocesan Schools Advisers (DSA) can be arranged following such visits in response to need. For schools involved in additional support/monitoring from their LA a DSA is also invited to attend meetings as diocesan support.

Premises and Capital Projects Management

Persons Responsible: Diocesan Capital Buildings Officer

Trustees of Church of England schools are legally required to take note of diocesan advice and guidance prior to making or agreeing to make any alterations to school estate/premises. MDBE is classified as a 'responsible body' by the DfE to manage and deliver the School Condition Allowance (SCA) fund for VA schools. MDBE also oversees and administers the school maintenance scheme. These processes involve inviting and prioritising school capital work proposals, advice and support for bid applications, project delivery, processing capital bids as well as administration of payment for building projects. MDBE also works in partnership with DBE Services and individual building consultants to ensure services to schools are of a high standard and in line with MDBE policy. Training is also available to school leaders and governors to support their understanding of school buildings management.

Within the area of estate management MDBE also advocates for schools with external partners, such as the 12 Local Authorities within the diocese, as well as the DfE to ensure School Condition Surveys reflect the school estate and support development of said estate. MDBE also liaises with the DfE/EFSA regarding any queries related to estate management guidance and legislation ensuring schools are fully supported.

Site visits are undertaken as a means of supporting school building projects by the Diocesan Capital Buildings Officer and members of DBE Services as appropriate. DBE Services also offers Total Property Management (TPM) and MDBE is pleased to recommend TPM to its schools.

Admissions

Person Responsible: Assistant Director of Education

In accordance with the legal framework for school admissions set out in the School Admissions Code (2021) schools are required to consult MDBE before public consultation regarding proposed changes to their admissions arrangements. For VC schools the Local Authority are responsible for ensuring

this happens. For VA schools and academies this remains the responsibility of governors and academy trustees.

MDBE provides advice and support to schools on all aspects of admissions, including an annual briefing open to all. Guidance is provided to ensure all school policies remain code compliant and access to the Church of England School Admissions Builder is made available. MDBE responds to queries from the Schools' Adjudicator, assisting schools as necessary. MDBE represents the needs of schools on various admissions and school place planning groups involving partners such as LA admission committees, school place planning forums and the National Diocesan Admissions Group.

Support for schools wishing to convert to Academy status

Persons Responsible: Diocesan Director of Education

MDBE recognises the changing educational landscape and is committed to supporting schools wishing to convert to an academy and join a Multi Academy Trust. Church of England schools are required to obtain consent of the DBE before applying for an Academy order under section 3 of the Academies Act 2010.

The Diocesan Director of Education provides support at all stages, including to those governing bodies who are at the initial stages of considering the pros and cons of academisation through attendance at relevant governing body meetings to support discussions and deliberations. Guidance is also offered regarding the process to academisation.

Within Manchester Diocese there are a number of Church majority and minority MATS. MDBE works to support and represent the family of church schools across the diocese through being represented at member level within each Multi Academy Trust. Various officers of MDBE are also either members or trustees within Church of England MATS across the diocese.

Where a Single Academy Trust wishes to become part of a Multi Academy Trust or two MATs wish to merge/transfer they must first obtain MDBE consent. MDBE will consider all such requests carefully and with consideration for all children and families involved before liaising with representatives of the Regional Schools Commissioner's Office to support such requests.

Advocacy

Persons Responsible: Diocesan Director of Education, Assistant Directors of Education & Capital Buildings Officer

Officers of the Board of Education are involved in advocacy on behalf of church schools across the diocese through communication with various groups. The Director meets regularly with representatives of 12 Local Authorities as a means of advocating for support where appropriate. Such meetings also involve discussions around school place planning and securing adequate places within CE schools. The Director represents the CE family of schools on other bodies such as the Greater Manchester Learning Partnership, as well as representing the needs of schools and school leaders with such bodies as unions. A proportion of MDBE officer time is spent representing MDBE schools at national as well as local level, ensuring a collective benefit to all MDBE schools.

MDBE also communicate with Ofsted as part of school inspections, emphasising school strengths and practices as a means of supporting schools with external inspections. A Diocesan representative is available to attend feedback sessions, at a school's request.

Church School Chaplaincy

Persons Responsible: Assistant Director of Education (Youth) & Diocesan Children's Officer

MDBE have a commitment to supporting both Primary and Secondary school chaplaincy through the work of the Diocesan Children's and Youth Officers as well as the Diocesan chaplaincy coordinator. Regular meetings and communications enable the work of chaplains and sharing of local and national practices.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Person Responsible: Assistant Director of Education (Youth)

MDBE recognises the importance of mental health and wellbeing and supports schools to engage with this important area for the benefit of children they serve. Schools are invited to attend half day MWB champions training as well as the 1 day and 2 day Mental Health first aid training courses. Within the suite of Renew resources to support schools with mental health and wellbeing MDBE provides a primary and secondary version as well as a half termly resource for Head Teachers focusing on mental wellbeing issues.

What does this support cost?

The rate remains the same as 2022-23. For April 2023-April 2024 the annual rate (due July 2023) is as follows:

VA schools: £5 per pupil

Academies: £4.60 per pupil

VC schools: £2.65 per pupil

Joint Foundation & Joint Diocese schools: 50% of VC rate

Costs will be capped at maximum of £5,800 per school

MDBE offers these costs as remaining the same for a two-year commitment, recognizing rates will remain the same until a review in 2024.

It is important to note if 100% of CE schools across the diocese were involved in this SLA the true costs of diocesan support would remain not fully covered. MDBE offers a subsidised service to schools for support due to various other income streams such as investment income as well as a synodical grant from Manchester Diocesan Board of Finance to support Diocesan Children's Officer and Youth Officer posts. We value schools who support the partnership financially as all schools benefit.

For schools not financially committing to the SLA partnership charges will be applied for various activities and will be discussed as and when they are commissioned. These include, but are not limited to, a professional conversation visit prior to SIAMS inspection, site consultancy regarding buildings developments, attendance at meetings to support school improvement, associate member support, consultancy advice regarding ethos, worship and SIAMS, admissions support. Such services will incur costs of £250 per half day/twilight.

What support does MDBE offer to schools through events/communications?

- Annual Schools conference,
- Year 6 Leavers Services,
- Head Teacher and Chair of Governors meetings,
- Meetings with MAT and Academy CEOs,
- RE hub meetings,
- New Head Teacher Commissioning and Evensong,
- Retiring Head Teacher Evensong,
- Thanksgiving Evensong for Governors,
- Termly School newsletter and E-news update
- Eco schools information and Plant Savers Award
- MWB resource for Head Teachers
- MWB resources for Primary and Secondary Schools
- RE Syllabus

Who are we?

Diocesan Director of Education (DDE): Deborah Smith

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School support also involves a team of Diocesan Schools Advisers who are commissioned for individual pieces of work by the Director of Education, specific to school need.

What enhanced services do we offer?

MDBE is keen to continue to develop support packages in response to school need. For 2023 and 2024 the following enhanced support packages are offered. It should be noted additional costs for such services will be incurred at a rate of £250 per half day/twilight.

Religious Education Review (Full day)

Using the Church of England Statement of Entitlement as a benchmark for high quality RE, the review will identify good practice and highlight areas for development as appropriate. The day may include a variety of monitoring activities including scrutiny of work and planning, learning walks as well as discussions with staff and pupils. The impact of any RE specific CPD for all staff involved in delivering RE and for leaders of RE will be considered alongside monitoring and assessment processes and RE standards across the school. In addition, leaders will be consulted regarding the impact of RE to the wider curriculum.

Collective Worship Review (Half day)

Using the Church of England Collective Worship Guidance: Inclusive, Invitational and Inspiring (2021) as a benchmark for expectation, the review will explore how Collective Worship is an expression of the school's Christian vision. It may include discussion with pupils, staff, clergy and governors as part of an agreed programme. Attendance at and feedback from an act of Collective Worship will be facilitated. It could also involve an audit of relevant school policies, evidence of monitoring and evaluation, the contribution of worship to spiritual development and the impact of worship across the school community.

Head Teacher Performance Management

MDBE can provide an external adviser to support Head Teacher Performance Management. Several DSAs are recently retired Head Teachers who are well placed to support governors throughout the process.

What other services do we recommend?

Total Property Management (TPM)

DBE Services offers a comprehensive support package for schools for all aspects of school maintenance. The service is well established and currently serves over 300 schools across several dioceses. MDBE is pleased to recommend the service to schools and can arrange for a representative to visit or for a contact with a school already being supported by the service to be provided.

<https://tpm4.com/information-about-our-total-property-management-scheme/>

School Improvement Service

DBE Services has developed a School Improvement service that, although a relatively new service, having been established in 2021, continues to receive wide acclaim. By January 2022 102 schools across several North West dioceses

and LAs were benefitting from the service. We are delighted to recommend this service to you. Schools can purchase the full package and have the option of purchasing bespoke options according to need.

<https://dbeservices.co.uk/school-improvement/>

The Measure (2021)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukcm/2021/1/contents/enacted>