

Membership Agreement September 2021

Jesus grew in wisdom and stature

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 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Trust Prayer

We thank you, God of Love, for the gift of children,

 bless the work of our Trust, that in all we do

young people may grow in wisdom and stature,

 and so come

 to know you,

 to love you

and to serve you

 as Jesus did.

We make our prayer in his name who is God

with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen

Vision and values

The Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust welcomes young people of all faiths and none and is committed to providing each of them with a high-quality education and environment where Christian values and principles permeate all that we do.

Core Purpose of LDST

- To ensure that Jesus is at the heart of our schools.
- To keep the family of schools together.
- To ensure that all schools in the Trust and in the Diocese provide an excellent and distinctively Christian education.

Our family of schools in the Diocese of Liverpool has a long history of excellence combined with nurture, developing in young people the resilience and character needed for life.

The Trust will support and develop the character of the Church of England within schools as they strive for continuous improvement and educational excellence for all pupils. The Trust aims to foster social justice and enhance social mobility by delivering a high-quality education which will ensure the best possible outcomes for all its pupils.

LDST seeks to extend, enrich and improve our family of schools. We believe that as a diocesan led MAT we can, for the system as a whole, create stronger bonds of collaboration and cooperation, sharing good practice, addressing areas of weakness and offering increased opportunities for professional development.

We believe that we can create a Trust in which our schools will thrive under the leadership of headteachers, supported and challenged by local governing bodies and accountable to the board of directors. We are confident that this can be achieved whilst at the same time ensuring that all of our family of schools benefit from high levels of collaboration.

Central services ensure value for money with systems and processes that enable schools to focus on their core purpose. Our strong school improvement function provides the capacity to evaluate schools and intervene where needed.

Our core values reflect this vision:

- Collaboration
- Valuing the local
- Valuing difference
- Inclusion

In line with the Church of England's "Vision for Education – Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good", the Trust's vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people, **so that they can live life in all its fullness**. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements which permeate our vision for education: Wisdom, Hope, Community and Dignity.

Our vision reflects that of the Church of England and recognises that, in order in for our schools to be distinctly Christian with Jesus at the heart of them, and for our pupils to grow in wisdom and stature, we should educate for:

- Wisdom, knowledge and skills
- Hope and aspiration
- Community and Living well together
- Dignity and respect

Strategic Aims

To support our vision, we have set the following strategic objectives within the Church of England's vision for education:

Through Educating for Community and Living well together and Educating for hope and aspiration we aim to improve pupil outcomes through highly effective schools which:

- Ensure that Jesus is at the heart of each of our schools, and that each school has an excellent Christian character in accordance with the Church of England vision for education.
- Pursue academic excellence for all and to continually strive to improve progress and raise attainment.
- Tackle disadvantage and raise aspirations in order that our young people achieve their maximum potential.
- Ensure that all schools in LDST provide an exceptional education that enables children to grow in wisdom and stature - academically, socially, spiritually.

Through Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills, we aim:

- To secure outstanding leadership and management in all of our schools.
- To embed a curriculum that will enable our children to develop and build on a deep body of **knowledge** so that they can grow in **understanding**, ensuring they know more and remember more.

Through Educating for dignity and respect, we aim to ensure the safety of our pupils:

- To ensure that effective safeguarding keeps all of our young people safe at all times and respects the value of individuals.

Sustaining this through a financially, sustainable and outward- looking MAT is essential:

Finance

- To ensure a financially viable and sustainable Trust

Service Offer

The LDST has established a range of services to support all the schools within the Trust. The services that are provided will be kept under constant review by the Trust and, in discussion with member schools, be developed and amended as required.

LDST schools will contribute a percentage of their General Annual Grant (excluding, for clarity, Pupil Premium and Top-Up Funding) to the Trust to fund central services. From September 2022 this will be 6.0% for Primary Schools and 3.5% for Secondary Schools. For Primary Schools this will be formed from a 0.5% increase in September 2021 to 5.5% and a 0.5% increase in September 2022 to 6.0%. For the current Secondary School, this will be formed from a 1.0% increase in September 2022 to 3.5%. The remaining school budget is ring-fenced to the school as will be any surplus or deficit.

Each school within the Trust will retain a Local Governing Body (LGB) that will operate under the terms of the Scheme of Delegation. All LGBs will operate under the same level of delegated responsibility, noting that any school in a category, or where the LGB does not have the capacity to operate effectively, will be subject to appropriate intervention and support by the Trust to resolve any difficulties.

Where appropriate, the Trust, in consultation with the LGB, may consider creative models of leadership to provide the best possible school effectiveness, and make the best possible use of available resources.

The academy conversion grant (currently £25,000) is provided by the DfE, and is paid to the LDST. The DfE impose strict parameters for the expenditure of the grant, and the monies will be used to pay for services and tasks such as legal advisors, licences and due diligence exercises. The LDST undertake to obtain best value when procuring these services.

1.1 Part 1 – Diocesan Board of Education support:

This Membership Agreement will include all the services already provided by the DBE Service Level Agreement, including:

- Administration of Section 48 SIAMS Inspection process
- Attendance at School Leavers Services
- Provision of regular updates from the Education Department with relevant information about wider services available to schools.
- Representation to the Diocesan Board of Finance in relation to land/buildings/finance/trust issues.
- Briefing sessions on important matters relating to Church of England schools
- Representation of Church Schools on regional Diocesan groups such as SACRE, School Forum, Scrutiny Committees, LA School Strategy Support meetings etc.
- Liaison with various bodies at local, regional and national level on behalf of Church Schools, to include Department for Education, Education Funding Agency, OFSTED, The National Society, Teaching Schools Alliances, Professional Organisations and the Regional School Commissioner
- Representing schools on interim executive boards
- Providing guidance, model procedures and other resources
- Protecting and promoting the Church of England status of church schools and academies

- Promoting excellence and Christian distinctiveness within the family of church schools
- Working in partnership with schools and local authorities to support effective school improvement
- Promoting active partnerships between schools and their parish churches
- Providing assistance with the recruitment of Heads and Deputies.
- Providing pastoral and professional support for leaders of church schools and academies
- Providing SIAMS support, including 'Keeping on Track' sessions
- Providing assistance with the recruitment of Foundation Governors.
- Providing training and support opportunities for all governors
- Supporting the academy conversion process, where this is appropriate.

1.2 Part 2 –Diocesan Multi Academy Trust Services

The LDST will provide a range of high-quality services to the schools within the Trust, in exchange for the membership fee.

1.2.1 General

All LDST schools will benefit from:

- An expert Board of Directors
- Support with any negotiations with the LA on individual school matters
- The outcomes of positive relationships with the LA, DfE, ESFA and RSC at a strategic LDST level
- Regular communication and updates
- Annual conference or equivalent
- Facilitated school to school networks
- Risk management
- Advice and guidance arising from membership with:
 - The Confederation of School Trusts
 - Forum Strategy
 - Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership

1.2.2 School Effectiveness and Improvement

All LDST schools will benefit from a school effectiveness service which will build capacity within and across schools, by providing:

- A graduated level of support, challenge and intervention to schools based on accurate categorisation of strengths, needs and priorities
- A detailed data analysis of school performance to inform self-evaluation and school improvement
- Access to a whole school and Trust assessment and attendance data analysis package (AskEddi)
- Quality assured professionals to act as trusted partners
- Facilitated networks and school to school support
- Support LGBs with Headteacher performance management
- Support for Headteacher and senior leadership recruitment
- Leadership development to aid succession planning

- Opportunities to work in collaboration with existing centres of educational excellence
- Opportunities to share best practice, research and evidence to promote excellent teaching and learning across all schools
- Advice and support before, during and after an Ofsted inspection
- Support to enable Local Governing Bodies to fulfil their core purpose.

The school effectiveness offer is led by the Trust Director of Education supported by Trust Associate Education Officers, the Trust Inclusion Lead, the Trust Curriculum Lead and the CEO.

1.2.3 Safeguarding

All LDST schools will benefit from:

- Agreed child protection and safeguarding policies in line with current legislation
- Leadership Support and Training for Headteachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs)
- Access to training materials for all staff
- Advice and guidance including dealing with allegations against staff etc.

Safeguarding is led by the CEO supported by an SLA with School Improvement Liverpool (SIL).

1.2.4 Finance and Business

The LDST finance team offers professional support to enable schools to plan and manage their budgets effectively, and to ensure compliance with statutory regulatory and legislative requirements as well as good financial practice. The team will work with schools to achieve effective financial management and assurance in governance, leadership and management.

LDST schools will receive:

- Strategic financial guidance from a qualified chartered accountant and an experienced central finance function
- Support for financial, back office and business support functions.
- Provision of financial regulations and policies in line with the Academies Financial Handbook
- Liaison with the ESFA on finance related matters.
- Support in using the Trust's financial ledger
- A bank account and use of a bank charge card facilities, including online banking access for payments and reporting.
- Annual finance software licences, including cloud based financial ledger.
- Financial training and support
- Management accounts to track current and future spend against budget
- Medium term budgeting support
- Procurement, best value and contract negotiation advice and guidance
- Support with applications for additional grants and funding opportunities
- Support for month end procedures and submission
- Provision of statutory audit functions (external and internal audit)
- Provision of statutory Companies House requirements
- Provision of statutory pensions returns

- Completion and submission of all reports and returns required by DfE and ESFA (e.g. Gender Pay Gap Reporting)
- Membership of a school business managers forum for networking and training opportunities
- Amazon Business Prime membership

1.2.5 Payroll

The LDST works with an external payroll bureau to provide all payroll services. Services will include:

- Monthly payroll processing within agreed timescales
- Production of payslips and other pay documentation (e.g. P60s, P11Ds etc.)
- All applicable statutory returns to HMRC and other bodies
- LGPS and TPS support including annual certificates and audit administration
- Auto-enrolment notifications and administration
- Updates on changes to national pay scales, National Insurance etc.
- Administration of the Apprenticeship Levy
- Automated payroll journal for uploading to the finance system
- Online portal for staff to access payslips and other pay related documentation

The Finance support function is led by the Director of Finance and Operations, and supported by the Trust Finance Manager, the Trust Operations Manager, external consultants, and auditors. The Payroll function is currently delivered through an external SLA with Sefton MBC.

1.2.6 Human Resources / Staffing

The HR function offers experienced and professional advice and guidance enabling schools to manage and support staff to achieve the highest quality education for pupils. HR work collaboratively with school improvement, finance, local authorities, external agencies, HR and legal professionals and trade union colleagues to ensure schools are equipped with the knowledge and services to run effectively and successfully.

LDST schools will receive:

- A designated HR Business Partner that will provide the school with advice and support in respect of all HR related issues including employment law, policies and procedures, local and national terms and conditions of service and casework related to; discipline, grievance, performance, absence management. This includes the attendance of HR representatives at formal meetings / hearings.
- Advice and guidance on restructuring and re-modelling ensuring compliance with legal requirements in respect of consultation, redundancy, redeployment and TUPE, offering practical, hands on support through such processes.
- Provision of best practice model policies and procedures following Trade Union consultation, as well as model and bespoke letter/documents as required for all HR procedures.
- Experienced education HR practitioners that can provide specific advice and guidance on all HR matters relating to the safeguarding of children including the screening of DBS disclosures and the provision of advice in relation to positive traces. Bespoke advice on disciplinary processes involving child protection allegations including liaison with the LADO, and support with the completion of referrals to the DBS and the National College of Teaching and Learning.

- A team of solution focused professionals with a creative approach to securing alternative exit strategies as a resolution to your complex personnel issues.
- Advice and guidance on a wide range of Pay and Reward elements from a team of experienced professionals who have been externally recognised.
- The evaluation of new and redesigned school support roles by a team of experienced Pay and Reward specialists.
- Guidance in relation to Local Government and Teachers Pension Scheme membership with particular relevance to retirements and redundancies.
- Regular briefings aimed at Headteachers providing useful updates on changes in employment legislation along with practical advice on the implications for your school people management practices.
- Unlimited telephone advice available Monday–Friday 8.45am–5.00pm. In exceptional circumstances access to HR Business Managers will be available beyond 5.00pm in order to facilitate the conclusion of urgent advice and guidance.
- A dedicated HR business partner that is fully CIPD qualified or working towards.
- A HR business partner/manager will be available to attend any formal meeting or appeal at an agreed time.

The HR support function is led by the CEO, and supported by the Director of Finance and Operations, the Trust HR Lead and HR Business Partners. The HR business partner function is currently delivered through an external SLA with Warrington BC.

1.2.7 Health and Safety

The LDST works with an external consultant to provide strategic health and safety advice to the LDST and schools. All LDST schools will benefit from:

- A qualified and dedicated Health and Safety Adviser who will act as the school's 'competent person' and will be on call, to deal with any matters arising and whose work when completed, will guarantee total compliance with all aspects of the Health and Safety at Work Act.
- Up to date policy documentation through the development and coordination of common policy and sharing of best practice.
- Risk assessments for each school covering: premises; all employee activities undertaken in the performance of their duties; all equipment within school; all substances used within school to comply with COSHH regulations; manual handling; lone working; events; remote working; residential visits; working at height expectant mothers and illness (such as diabetes, epilepsy and stress).
- Fire risk assessments in accordance with the Fire Workplace Regulation and a PEEP for any employees or pupils with a disability.
- Bi-monthly health and safety site inspections
- Assistance and support on fire drills, lockdown procedures and back to work interviews.
- Accident reporting and investigations carried out in accordance with RIDDOR requirements.
- Liaison with external agencies on schools' behalf (e.g. HSE, Environmental Health, Fire agencies, Insurance companies).
- Provision of a Health and Safety Handbook including an induction process.

The Health and Safety Support Function is led by the Director of Finance and Operations and supported by the Trust Operations Manager. The Competent person and specialist H&S support is currently delivered through an external SLA with Compliance Education Ltd.

1.2.8 IT Systems and Data

The LDST works with an external consultant to provide strategic IT support and advice to LDST schools. Schools will benefit from:

- An @LDST.org.uk email account hosted on a cloud Microsoft Office 365 tenancy with unlimited email and file storage capacity, accessible securely from any internet enabled device.
- Access to a central SharePoint repository hosted in the cloud with unlimited storage capacity and accessible securely from any internet enabled device.
- An annual website audit and support to ensure school websites include all necessary and statutory information.
- Access to strategic advice and support from trained IT professionals.
- ICO Registration
- A trained and highly skills Data Protection Officer (DPO) to support with subject access, freedom of information and other data related issues.

The IT Support function is led by the Director of Finance and Operations and supported by the Trust's Data Protection Officer/Operations Manager. Specialist IT support is currently delivered through an external company, The Little IT Support Company.

1.2.9 Governance

All LDST schools will benefit from:

- Support, advice and training for local governing bodies
- Model structures, including an annual work plan and term of reference
- NGA membership
- GovernorHub Membership
- Support when processing LGB appointments
- Clear accountability through the Scheme of Delegation
- Telephone support and advice
- Maintenance of governor database
- Support with skills audits
- Attendance at LGB meetings as required.

Governance support is led by the CEO and supported by the central Trust team and the Diocesan Adviser for Governance.

1.2.10 Insurance and Capital

All LDST schools will benefit from:

- membership of the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) covering unlimited employer's liability, unlimited public liability, unlimited professional indemnity, and Property Damage coverage.
- advice on other insurances required and insurance structures.
- Access to annually guaranteed formula driven capital funding via the ESFA, Schools Condition Allocation (SCA). This funding will be distributed equitably across all schools within the Trust based on need.
- coordinate all payments and claims in relation to capital projects

- monitor all financial aspects of projects to financial close

1.2.11 Media and Communications

LDST will offer a range of support tailored to meet the needs of individual schools including advice on media and communications including crisis management.

1.2.12 Legal

The LDST has a working relationship with a nationally recognised law firm, Michelmores and schools benefit from Quick Call Legal Advice. This includes sound, practical advice to deal everyday legal and commercial queries faced by schools as well as the more obscure challenges, including social media issues.

For more complex legal work relating to Human Resources, the school will have access to 10 hours of legal advice via the HR SLA with Weightmans solicitors.

The Trust also has a working relationship with LBMW on a fee basis for other legal support as required.

APPENDIX A - Constitution of the local governing body

1. In terms of Foundation Governor representation, the Local Governing Body (LGB) composition shall remain as the predecessor school. Should an inspection report indicate that the school and governing body is not achieving as expected, LDST reserves the right to intervene at the appropriate level, including as a last resort to replace the LGB.
2. In the event that the predecessor school has an Interim Executive Board, the LDST will appoint a committee consistent with the Articles to act as the LGB of the school.
3. The Directors (all or any of them) shall also be entitled to attend any meetings of the LGB. Any Director attending a meeting of the LGB shall not count towards the quorum for the purposes of the meeting and shall not be entitled to vote on any resolution being considered by the LGB.
4. All persons appointed or elected to the LGB shall give a written undertaking to the Directors to uphold the objects, ethos and mission of LDST.
5. Any governor vacancies must be notified to the LDST as soon as they arise and noted in LGB minutes.
6. Subject to the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the LDST Articles of Association, every member of the LGB or other officer or auditor of the LDST acting in relation to the school shall be indemnified out of the assets of the LDST against any liability incurred by him/her in that capacity in defending any proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which judgement is given in favour or in which he/she is acquitted or in connection with any application in which relief is granted to him/her by the court from liability for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the affairs of the LDST.

APPENDIX B - Scheme of Delegation

The Scheme of Delegation for the LDST, and the schools that are included within, is as attached. Each LGB within the LDST will operate under the terms of this Scheme of Delegation, which is subject to review by the Directors of the LDST on an annual basis.

Subject to the school achieving progress as expected, the LDST will operate a 'light touch' approach. Where an Inspection report (or any other report as defined by LDST or the DFE) indicates there are weaknesses in governance at the school, the LDST will trigger appropriate intervention. In such a case, the LGB will continue to have the same level of delegation but will be subject to greater scrutiny and evaluation about how it operates.

APPENDIX C – Agreed Trust Policies

LDST works closely with teaching and support staff union colleagues to agree policies through the Joint Consultative and Negotiation Committee (JCNC). The following policies have been agreed:

- Child Protection Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Data Protection
- Dignity at work policy
- Disciplinary, Capability, and Grievance Procedures
- Equal Opportunities
- Flexible Working Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Regulations
- Pay Policies
- Performance Management Policies
- Privacy Notice
- Protection of Biometric Information Policy
- Supporting Staff Attendance
- Whistleblowing Policy

Glossary

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

COSHH – The Control of substances hazardous to health regulations.

CPD – Continuing Professional Development. This would be available for all members of staff and governors within LDST as appropriate.

DBE – Diocesan Board of Education. Appointed by the Diocese to oversee the education of all children in church schools in the Diocese of Liverpool. Members represent a variety of interests around church and schools. The DBE reports to the Diocesan Synod annually. There are 119 schools/academies (110 primary and 9 secondary) in the Diocese of Liverpool.

DBF – Diocesan Board of Finance. The board is responsible for the custody and management of the Diocesan Synod's financial affairs and is charged with a duty to promote and assist the work of the Church of England in the Diocese of Liverpool and elsewhere.

DDE – Diocesan Director of Education. Appointed by the DBF to lead the work of the diocese within schools/academies and to support the SIAMS process. The post is supported by a small team, some of whom are recent head teachers with a wide range of expertise.

DfE – Department for Education. This body is led by the Secretary of State for Education, who is appointed by the Prime Minister. The department is responsible for the education of all pupils in England.

DFO - Director of Finance and Operations.

DPO – Data Protection Officer.

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead.

ESFA – Education and Skills Funding Agency. This is the body that funds academies; money is paid to the LDST and, following deduction of the top-slice as described in Section 1.5, the balance is paid directly to each academy on a monthly basis.

ICO – The Information Commissioners Office. The ICO is the UK's independent regulator set up to uphold information rights. Breaches of information rights may be reportable to the ICO.

HR – Human Resources. Deals with all areas of staffing and payroll.

HSE – Health and Safety Executive. The government regulator of Health and Safety in the workplace.

LA – Local Authority. The body which has responsibility, through the County Council, for standards of achievement in all schools in its locality. Historically, they have provided many of the services which will now be provided by the LDST.

LDST – the Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust (the diocesan MAT). Set up by the DBE to be the operational arm of its work with converting schools. It will have 5 members and 10 directors, each with a particular expertise needed to operate a successful MAT.

LGB – Local Governing Body. It fulfils all the same functions as a full governing body but is answerable to LDST, instead of the LA.

LGPS – Local Government Pension Scheme. Currently all staff, other than teachers, make contributions to their pensions through this body.

MAT – Multi Academy Trust. A group of schools who, through a legally binding agreement, have agreed to work together for their mutual benefit.

NGA – National Governors Association. A national organisation which supports governors through research, information and dialogue.

OFSTED – The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. They inspect services providing education and skills for learners of all ages. They also inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people.

RIDDOR – Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations.

RPA – Risk Protection Arrangement. An alternative to traditional insurance for academies provided directly by the ESFA.

RSC – Regional Schools Commissioner. Academies all fall into a region, ours is the Lancashire and West Yorkshire Region. The RSC is responsible to the Secretary of State for Education for the standards and achievements of all academies in their region.

SCA – Schools Condition Allocation. Capital funding provided directly to the central Trust for distribution to schools to meet major capital project needs.

SIAMS – Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools. Anglican and Methodist schools are inspected once every five years to ensure that they are effective as a distinctive Christian school.

SLA – Service Level Agreement. An agreement between the DBF and a school for the DBE to provide a range of services. It is funded by the school and is based on a lump sum and a per capita payment.

SORP – Standard operating and reporting procedures. These will be uniform across LDST to ensure schools are able to concisely report financial and educational data to the board.

TAEO – Trust Associate Education Officers.

TDoE – Trust Director of Education.

TPS – Teachers Pension Scheme. This body administers the contributions that employers and teachers make to teacher’s pensions.

VA – Voluntary Aided church school. The Governing Body is the employer of all staff and is also the admissions authority. The majority of governors are appointed by the Diocese. The land and buildings are usually owned by a charitable foundation. On conversion to academy status, the designation of VA is removed and staff become employees of the LDST. The land and buildings remain under their existing ownership.

VAT – Value Added Tax. A tax set by central government for a variety of services and goods. It is currently 20%.

VC – Voluntary Controlled church school. The LA authority employs the staff and determines the admissions policy. On conversion to academy status, the designation of VC is removed and staff become the employees of the LDST. If the land and buildings are owned by the LA, these would be leased to LDST.