



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

The Trust's engagement with the 2023 SIAMs Schedule for our church schools.

Our strategic vision is:

"The MAT provides support and challenge to all of its schools so that its entire community of children and young people can achieve their best. The unique character of each school is celebrated and nurtured to ensure choice and variety in educational provision. The Trust is determined that all children should be able to attend a good or better school regardless of where they live.

"The MAT is committed to providing a broad, balanced and aspirational curriculum in all of its schools, so that all children and young people develop the character and qualifications needed to open doors to their future success. A strong focus on developing and providing inspirational teaching and leadership in all schools, through school-to-school improvement, ensures outstanding progress and educational enjoyment for all members of the partnership's community."

For our **church** schools this vision links clearly to the [Church of England Vision for Education](#). Each of the four pillars of the Vision (educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills; hope and aspiration; community and living well together and dignity and respect) are clearly evidenced within our vision.

The biblical underpinning of the CofE Vision is taken from John 10:10 'life in all its fullness' and again, this is clearly evidenced in our vision as an ambition for all children attending school in the MAT. For our church schools we have adopted this biblical underpinning to our own vision, to help our church schools link their own school vision to the MAT's.

The full version of our strategic vision with further detail can be found [here](#).

Following are the questions that the new SIAMS schedule poses for trusts, and the trust board's responses:

1. In having church schools join the MAT, the Trust committed to protecting the

foundation and upholding the Christian Distinctiveness of these schools. How does the Trust do this?

- A. 40% of Trustees are appointed as Foundation Trustees and Members. Representatives are selected and approved by the Trust and are then submitted to the Diocesan Governance Committee for consideration. The only exception to this is the Diocesan Board of Education's Corporate Member who is selected by the Diocesan Board of Education and is presently the Diocesan Director of Education.
- B. There is an annual meeting between the Trust and the Diocese to discuss the more strategic matters relating to Church Schools in the Trust and future plans.
- C. Diocesan Advisors are always part of the recruitment process for Heads and available subsequently to support Heads in their role as spiritual leader of their Church School. The Diocese is also available to support on governance matters, building and legal issue training and development, etc.
- D. The Trust has a Christian Distinctiveness Committee (CDC) composed of Foundation Trustees, one non Foundation Trustee, CEO, Christian Distinctiveness Lead, and a governance professional which reports to the Trust Board on all matters related to Church Schools. The committee is one of only three committees that the Board has set up to ensure sufficient focus on Church School matters.

2. How does the Trust own its responsibilities?

- A. Annual meeting with Diocese
- B. The Trust Board is meeting 6-8 times per annum when progress at all schools, including Church Schools, is discussed and reviewed.
- C. The CDC is meeting twice per annum and discusses the progress of Church Schools as well as other matters relating to Christian Distinctiveness/SIAMS etc.
- D. Minutes of Church School LGB's are allocated to specific Foundation Governors for review and comment within Trust meetings.
- E. The Trust has appointed a Christian Distinctiveness Lead (0.5 FTE) to assist Church Schools with their SIAMS preparation and with their Christian Distinctiveness.

3. How does the Trust hold itself accountable?

- A. The CDC meets twice per year with a focus on Church Schools. Meetings of the CDC are frequently held at Church Schools to see and hear what is happening 'on the ground.' These visits may be supplemented with additional visits to schools including attending collective worship and meeting with Foundation Governors. Additionally minutes of all Church Schools are available to all Trustees and Foundation Trustees are asked to take a particular interest in a number of Church Schools.
- B. The Executive of the Trust monitors and reports back to all Trustees on all aspects of schools including Church Schools.
- C. Scrutiny of LGB minutes of Church Schools.
- D. SIAMS inspections. Supporting preparation for inspections, participating as required, and then reviewing findings and integrating into school's ongoing SEF and SIPs.
- E. Many aspects of OFSTED inspections are relevant to delivering the Christian Distinctiveness of Church Schools.
- F. Visits to Church Schools by the Trust's school improvement team and Christian Distinctiveness Lead to focus on preparation for SIAMS inspection and Christian Distinctiveness matters. Generally to spread best practice.

4. Is the Trust's vision one that is easy for church schools to ensure their Christian

Vision resonates with?

- A. The Trust's Vision and Values have been cross mapped to the elements of Christian Distinctiveness and there is seen to be a good correlation of all elements of Christian Distinctiveness with the Trusts' Vision and Values. This correlation supports the view that MNSP is working with all Church Schools in the MAT to deliver its Trust deed with the Diocese and the Christian Distinctiveness requirements.
- B. Whilst the Trust's Vision and Values does not use the language of 'flourishing' its commitment to every young person being able to achieve and be successful; its commitment to leaving no school behind that needs the Trust support and its ongoing commitment to all aspects of development for PP and SEND pupils is in itself a depiction of how the organisation allows pupils to flourish. Importantly its delivery against this Vision and Values is excellent.
- C. With (A) in mind each school can then develop its School Vision secure in the knowledge that the Trust's Vision and Values supports its Trust Deed and Christian Distinctiveness requirements.

5. How does being in the Trust enhance a school as a church school?

A church school can only be a **good** church school if it is both fulfilling the terms of its trust deed and the ambitions of the Church of England Vision for Education. We have set out elsewhere our commitment to upholding the Christian Distinctiveness of our schools. Our single focus with all our schools is that children attending those schools will receive an excellent education. As such we invest in school improvement and ensure that we deliver that excellent education for all children. Our church schools are doubly supported as

they not only have the trust involved, but also the additional support of our Christian Distinctiveness Lead, the Christian Distinctiveness Committee and the Foundation trustees as well as the Diocese.

6. How do structures of governance enhance a school as a church school?

- A. There is clarity of roles within the Trust about what each layer of Governance is responsible for. Roles and responsibilities are set out in writing.
- B. Annual and ongoing commitments to statutory requirements.
- C. Foundation Trustee, Governor and Head appointments reviewed by the Diocese.
- D. Review of LGB minutes by Trustees and periodic attendance at schools by Foundation Trustees.
- E. Preparation for and participation in SIAMS inspection process.
- F. Ongoing training within the Trust available to Governors and Trustees. Governors and Trustees can also attend Diocesan courses.

7. How does the trust engage with the SIAMs inspection process?

- A. The Trust employs a Christian Distinctiveness Lead in a 0.5FTE role to support Church Schools in their SIAMS preparation and with their Christian Distinctiveness. Preparation includes the support for the development of a SIAMS SEF for each school.
- B. The Trust is supporting the current post holder to undertake training to become a SIAMS inspector and support him undertaking future inspections. By undertaking such training the role of the post holder and its impact can only be enhanced.
- C. The CEO attends all SIAMS inspections to support the Head and share the commitment of the Trust Board. Additional Trustee can be available if required.

8. How is the RE curriculum provided for our church schools? Could we do this better?

Each Church School is provided with a progression document, knowledge organisers, lesson plans and resources and assessment materials to support them in providing an RE curriculum for their school. This is based on the Somerset Awareness, Mystery and Values (AMV) syllabus. Each church school is also encouraged to use the church of England resource Understanding Christianity to further enhance their teaching of Christianity in their school and to help children grasp Christian concepts like God, Creation, Fall, Gospel, Salvation and Kingdom of God.

Each Church School also has access to the Christian Distinctiveness Lead to support them with planning, teaching and assessment.

The Somerset AMV is in the process of being updated and the Christian Distinctiveness Lead hopes to be involved with this so that he can help with informing all church schools of the update.

9. What is the impact of the Trust on their schools' curriculum?

The Trust has provided money for RE books and artefacts to support the teaching of the RE curriculum. They have also made it easier for schools to visit places of worship by providing the use of Trust minibuses. The Trust's RE lead, provides three twilight sessions a year of CPD for RE leads in the trust, to further support schools with their RE curriculum and the teaching of RE. The Trust's RE lead has also created RE resources and shared online resources that can be used in the classroom. They also share contact details for people of faith and places of worship and has organised visits to both the Hindu temple in Bath and the Bath Mosque for teachers so they can do a reconnaissance visit, ask questions and find out about potential pupil visits.

10. How does the Trust contribute to and enhance a church school's spiritual life?

The Trust has a Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) policy which states that students will be provided with opportunities to develop their spiritual understanding by experiencing a curriculum which will

- Develop their self-esteem, self-knowledge and belief in themselves
- Allow them to develop a range of personal values and beliefs based on a sense of curiosity and respect towards their own and other beliefs
- Explore the spiritual values of others through, in particular, literature, plays, drama activities, music, art, philosophy and belief (religions and worldviews) and in other areas
- Allow them to express themselves in a variety of ways and give them time to reflect on their own and others experiences
- Allow them to understand, express, use and control feelings and emotions as well as encouraging empathy in terms of relationships with others
- Provide opportunities to appreciate the beauty around them and develop a sense of awe and wonder
- Create the ability to formulate and discuss Big Questions, for example the meaning of life, the idea of death, the concept of the beyond and the nature of God

The Trust's shared curricula for the church schools, as well as other schools, provide opportunities for students to develop their spiritual understanding in all the above ways.

11. How does the Trust contribute to and enhance the inclusion and wellbeing of pupils and adults, ensuring all are treated well?

- a. As for all schools teaching British Values as part of the curriculum and subscribing to the PREVENT programme
- b. Surveys of staff, pupils and parents.
- c. Clarity of support for Disadvantaged pupils and delivery of that support.
- d. Speakers and workshops that support inclusion and wellbeing.
- e. Subscribing and joining the Black Lives Matter.
- f. Making available to pupils and staff an array of organisations that they can contact in case of either not being included or not feeling well.
 - Childline - <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
 - The Princes Trust - <https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/how-we-can-help/who-else/housing-health-wellbeing/wellbeing/mental-health>
 - Mind - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
 - Young Minds - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
 - School Advisory Service (SAS) - <https://schooladvice.co.uk/>
 - The Samaritans - <https://www.samaritans.org/>
 - Anxiety UK - <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>
 - Together All - <https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>
 - Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) - <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
 - Students Against Depression - <https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org/>
 - Ditch The Label - <https://www.ditchthelabel.org/>
- g. Maintaining clarity in schools about acceptable behaviour and taking appropriate steps to deal with those who challenge the norms.
- h. Availability of medical support when required and other external support.

12. How does the Trust make a positive impact on the culture of the school?

Moral values underpin the strategic intent of how the MAT operates. Our priority as shown in our values is that we seek to improve the lives of everyone who goes to school or works in the MAT. To use a Church of England Vision for Education phrase: we seek to ensure that all flourish; that all have life in all its fullness.

The people of the trust are at the heart of our organisation and dignity, respect, inclusivity, tolerance and care for the individual runs through all aspects of our work.

We have fostered a positive culture that ensures school-focussed challenge is provided within a framework of professional support and guidance. The individual identity and character of each school in the MAT is honoured; educational diversity is nurtured within a culture of high expectation and innovation. The growth of our trust to include 5 special schools shows our commitment to the education of all children, and the importance of enabling all young people to achieve an education to help them move into a fulfilling and sustainable adulthood.

Schools work together to support the personal growth and development and academic achievement of all children and young people across the MAT. We know when focussing on attainment is important and when the focus should be on progress.

The wellbeing of staff and students is secured through a safe and happy working environment that is based on team work, courtesy; the growth of educational passion, enthusiasm, optimism, professionalism, leadership and innovation.

We know we are making a difference because all schools in our trust are improving and thriving. Feedback to surveys is overwhelmingly positive both from staff, parents and students.

13. What is the trust's relationship with the Diocese like?

The Trust has a straightforward relationship with the Diocese. The Trust engages fully with the Diocese, supporting initiatives and accepting invitations but also challenging when required. The Diocese in return has supported the Trust with considerable time resources, invites all schools in the Trust (not just Church Schools) to take part in its training programme for governors, advocates for and promotes MNSP as appropriate. The Diocese has backed MNSP to sponsor two Church Schools that had been inadequate and the Trust has delivered. The Trust champions and supports its Church Schools with their SIAMS process and actively shares about results in the same way it supports OFSTED results. The Diocese has provided bereavement support to schools in the Trust whether Church Schools or not.