

Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust

Academisation, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



1. Introduction

The aim of this document is to provide a response to some of the frequently asked questions that have been raised during conversion to an Academy Trust. The aim is to give some clarity to all school stakeholders prior to and during the application and conversion process. You are still more than welcome to contact any of the Trust leaders at the end of this document if you still feel you have any unanswered questions.

2. Who are Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust?

Emmaus CAT is a growing Catholic Academy Trust with a footprint covering Manchester, Oldham, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford. We believe that as a trust we can contribute significantly to the strategic direction of schools within our footprint over the coming months and years, and we are excited for the future of the Emmaus Catholic family of schools. Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust is one of three Catholic Academy Trusts serving the Diocese of Salford. The Diocese of Salford provides Catholic Academy Trusts, schools and colleges for the following reasons:

- To assist in the mission of making Christ known to all people;
- To assist parents, who are the prime educators of their children, in the education and religious formation of their children;
- To be of service to the local Church – the Diocese – the Parish and the Christian home;
- To be of service to society.

3. What is an Academy?

An academy is a state funded school, independent from the local authority who become part of an Academy Trust.

4. How are Diocesan CATs different from other Academy Trusts?

The Bishop, has overall responsibility for education across the Diocese of Salford. He is what is known as the “person of significant control”. The Bishop appoints the Members and then Trust Board Directors are appointed on his behalf by Diocesan Trustees, these then form the Trustees Schools Committee and oversee all CAT related matters on behalf of the Members. Our CAT’s also work with the Catholic Education Service, and we firmly remain part of the Catholic family nationally.

5. What are the benefits of joining the Emmaus CAT?

There are many advantages of being part of an academy trust, our schools are aligned in our mission and share our philosophy of working collegially to develop meaningful relationships between schools, parishes, families, communities, and the Diocese of Salford by continually supporting school improvement, faith formation and serving society. **Emmaus Culture;** Creating a healthy Catholic organisation. Why? Simply because the smartest organisation in the world, the one that has mastered strategy and finance and marketing and technology, will eventually fail if it is unhealthy. It happens again and again. But a healthy Catholic organisation will always find a way to succeed, because without politics and confusion, it will inevitably become smarter and tap into every bit of intelligence and talent that it has. **Our Vision;** To work collegially as a family of great schools, strong in faith, serving society. The key strength of all the schools is that they are all distinctive and rooted within their parish communities. We intend to maintain the distinctive nature of each of the schools whilst sharing recognised good practice across the board to build an established Trust of excellence. The Emmaus CAT will enable a school to continue its journey in a truly collaborative and collegial environment with like-minded schools where children and young people come first, are nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop fully, contribute positively to society and acquire a true sense of responsibility and freedom. We are proud to work both with our fellow Catholic CATs across the Diocese of Salford and a wide range of other schools, local education partners, and MATs (Multi Academy Trusts) across the region. In our CAT we share our unconditional support of the vulnerable and the challenged. Our commitment to parents is to care for, support and educate their child to the highest possible standards. By joining our CAT, we support school leaders, working collegially, sharing collaborative strategies on school improvement, curriculum, staff development, initial teacher training, resource planning and strengthen the capacity of individual schools. The Emmaus CAT reflects the journey that Jesus made after his resurrection. The Walk to Emmaus offers today's disciples, our whole CAT community, a parallel opportunity to rediscover Christ's presence in our lives, to gain fresh understanding of God's transforming grace, and to form friendships that foster faith and support spiritual development.

6. How will schools in the CAT be linked?

It is fundamentally important to us that we share the same mission, vision, virtues, and values. All Emmaus students and staff should benefit from our best collective practices. And we will all benefit from the collective resources, brand, and reputation of the Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust. At Emmaus CAT we think it is the concept of aligned autonomy that is to be the foundation of our success: we are aligned on our mission, vision, virtues, and values – these are our non-negotiables. But because we are determined to create a healthy Christ centred and child centred organisation, the people who serve and work for and with us must also have agency and self-determination. At Emmaus CAT, we passionately believe in schools having their own individuality underpinned by common principles, schools' benefit from maintaining their own identity with access to shared best practise across a range of schools. This enables schools to focus on the key priorities of teaching and learning, whilst the Trust leads on financial, operational and resource management and provides high quality support and quality assurance for school improvement. With the educational landscape changing at such an unprecedented rate, the Trust aims to work by means of collegiality to ensure that each school within Emmaus CAT continues to thrive, leading to improved educational outcomes and formation for all.

7. Becoming an academy;

7.1 Route

There are two routes towards academisation; Directed Academy Order and Voluntary Application. Schools with a Direct Academy Order (DAO) are matched with a sponsor by the RSC. Emmaus would be the automatic sponsor of a school that received a DAO in our footprint. In terms of consultation, schools with DAOs do not need to legally consult parents or staff (except in consequence of TUPE), there is a legal 'duty to inform' instead. Where schools wish to voluntarily join Emmaus CAT they need to secure Stage 1 and Stage 2 Conditional Consent approval by submitting the appropriate documentation for consideration. The stage 2 application involves Governing Bodies formally resolving to convert to academy status. Once Stage 2 Conditional Consent is approved the school will then work with the CAT to complete the DfE application to convert form which is then presented to the Advisory Board at RSC level for approval. At that point the actual conversion process takes place. It can take around twelve months from stage 1 agreement to conversion.

7.2 Advisory Board

The Advisory board is responsible for advising and challenging RSC's on academy related decisions. Members of the Advisory Board have been elected and tend to be former academy headteachers and CEOs of multi-academy trusts. They meet once, or sometimes twice, a month and they consider applications for academy status and applications relating to CAT growth.

7.3 RSC (Regional School Commissioner)

RSCs work with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to provide oversight and scrutiny of academy trusts' performance, in line with the established framework for academy trusts. RSCs work closely with local authorities in a number of ways, including helping to facilitate school improvement support, working with them on academy conversions and supporting and challenging them to fulfil their statutory duty to secure sufficient school places.

7.4 Do schools need to change their name?

It is a requirement of our Bishop that the words Catholic, Voluntary and Academy are included in the formal name of any new academy. The Diocese has adopted a naming convention which requires the school name, current and post conversion to include RC as the formal abbreviation for Roman Catholic and then include at the end of the name, a Voluntary Academy. This is the registered school name linked to a new URN number, but there is no expectation that "a voluntary academy" is used in day to day branding.

7.5 How will a school keep its unique identity?

Each school will become an academy in its own right and will be part of the Trust. The scheme of delegation protects the uniqueness of each school. Under this scheme of delegation, the Local Governing Body's responsibilities include ensuring that the Catholic ethos is strong and the voice of the parish is maintained. The Trust recognises the distinct nature of the communities each school serves and is committed to retaining these unique identities. Directors and the CSEL are very much aware that each school serves and works within its own local context. It is this unique charism of each school that is so important.

8. How is the Trust structured?

The Trust governance model consists of Members, Trust Board of Directors and Local Governing Bodies. The Members are appointed by the Bishop who has ultimate control over the academy trust. The Trust Board of Directors are responsible for the same three core governance functions as any other Governing Body: setting the direction, holding the executive leaders to account and ensuring financial probity and value for money. As charity trustees, they must also ensure that they are complying with charity law requirements. A distinctive feature of the CAT governance structure is that the diocese has created the retention of governance at school level. Salford Diocese regard local governance as the corner stone for the very important principles of 'Subsidiarity and Solidarity'. Individuals who sit on local governing bodies (LGBs) are referred to as 'local governors'. Directors delegate certain governance functions to local governors and this is detailed in the Trust scheme of delegation and then outlined in LGB terms of reference.

The Local Governing Body will be responsible for the Catholic Life of the academy, day to day oversight of the management of the academy and compliance with the Trust and the academy's policies and practices, standards, and ensuring the academy fulfils its responsibilities to pupils and their families.

The Trust Board and Senior Executive Leader determine the strategy for the Trust, secure school improvement and academy turnaround overseeing performance and standards, ensure good practice holding leadership to account. The Trust Board will be supported and advised by an Executive Team led by the Chief Executive Officer, also known as a Catholic Senior Executive Leader. Every MAT must also have a Chief Financial Officer who is responsible for the day-to-day management of financial processes.

9. How will converting to an Academy effect our children and young people?

There is no day-to-day difference for our children and young people. The educational experience for children would continue to improve through initiatives that are developed or supported by the teaching staff at your school, supported by the expertise, networking and best practice being part of Emmaus will bring. Each school will still be led and managed by the headteacher and local governors.

10. How will converting to an Academy effect the staff at our school?

One of the 'freedoms' afforded to academies is the right to set their own terms for staff pay and conditions. Although academies have the freedom to set their own pay and conditions, the Emmaus Board have no plans to move away from the present nationally agreed pay and conditions and will follow the burgundy and green book conditions for staff. All staff have the right to retain their present posts, as well as conditions of service, should the school become an academy as a result of the TUPE regulations. Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE), ensures that staff retain all of their existing rights, terms and conditions and pension arrangements, including continuity of service. The pension arrangements for staff would be unaffected by the transfer. Staff will not be moved to other schools within the Trust.

11. Who will be the employer of staff?

The Trust will become the employer of staff. Regarding appointments, the level of the appointment will determine who is responsible for the recruitment procedures. Members of any Catholic Academy Trust must ensure that all appointments to academies within a CAT comply with the Bishops' Memorandum of Understanding regarding key appointments and Trust leaders work in liaison with the Diocesan Department for Education all reserved posts. At Emmaus CAT we believe Talent is key. We want to recruit and retain the best people; leaders, teachers, and staff. We want to ensure we know where our next talented staff are coming from. We fully support and encourage career development opportunities and experiences for our staff. Our talented people are our most significant resource. We want a healthy Catholic organisation where all our staff feel fully valued and excel; professionally, personally and in faith.

12. Will our Headteacher have autonomy?

There have to be some aligned processes, this is to ensure that the Board of Directors and Executive Leaders can fulfil their statutory responsibilities. However, Headteachers are still the lead school improver, and are expected to act with autonomy to ensure they are serving the children and young people in their communities as they should be. Decisions will always be taken at the most appropriate local level. Each Headteacher continues to develop their own quality assurance cycles. Headteacher, and Heads of Subject continue to choose appropriate phonics or reading schemes or Exam syllabi, again based on their context. In key employment matters Headteachers would, as now, be expected to follow agreed policies and take sound HR advice prior to taking any action.

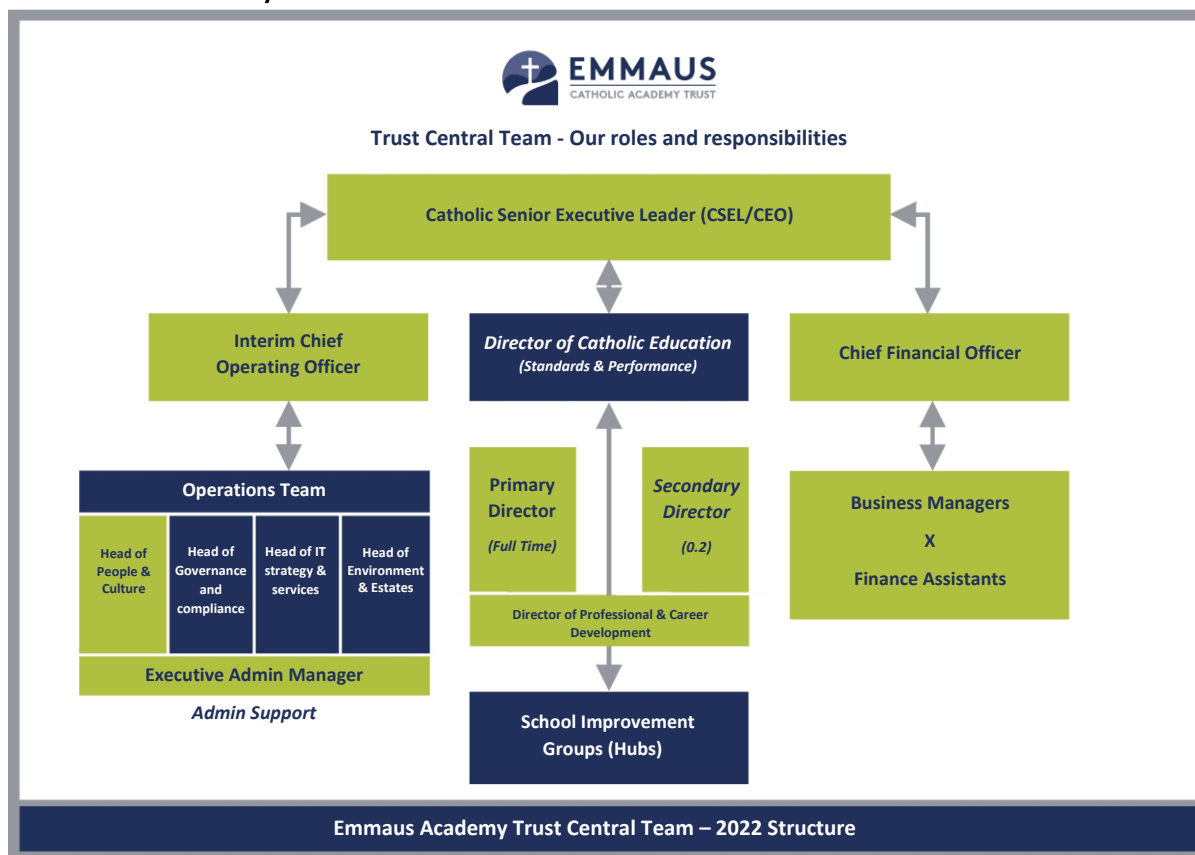
13. Why is there an increase in focus on academisation?

The strategic direction, set nationally is towards a more academised system. The recent Government white paper again shared the preference for all schools to be part of a strong academy trust. Each Catholic diocese is now grappling with how best to discern and manage this process.

'There is a compelling narrative emerging locally and nationally, now supported by positive experiences and testimonies direct from our schools, that formal partnerships and alignment with a Catholic Academy Trust provide tangible short, medium and long term benefits. Our challenge as school leaders is to secure high quality, excellent Catholic education for the benefit of our current pupils and build a diocesan system of schools fit for future generations for decades to come. How can this be experienced by all our family of schools in Salford? This is why we are now entering into a period of discernment'.

Simon Smith, Director of Education – Salford Diocese

14. Central Team/Services



- Designated Finance Primary Manager/CFO – Monthly Management accounts provided – more capacity for school office staff
- Designated Central Primary Admin Support to set up Systems and support and train staff – SCR/Every/SAM People – ensure compliancy – more capacity for Headteacher
- Access to HR/Legal Advice from central service
- Access to IT Strategic Planning support
- Internal Audit – Finance, Health and Safety, IT, HR Systems.
- School Improvement – CSEL/NLE/External Provider (Allan Torr)
- Director of Primary Education
- Director of Professional and Career Development – Pathways Programme
- Chaplaincy Support – Emmaus CAT are piloting a Chaplaincy Apprenticeship Programme to work across our schools.
- Access to an aligned SCR and Safeguarding support through Educare
- Membership and CPD for all staff roles
- Access to Trust wide policies and governance support.
- Access to an Emmaus CAT full TES advertising and recruitment package



15. Finance;

15.1 What is 'Top Slice'

Emmaus CAT de-delegates 97% of a schools GAG (General Annual Grant) to the schools. The remaining 3% is referred to as 'Top Slice' and this covers the Central Team and Services previously mentioned.

15.2 What happens to a school's deficit when joining an Academy Trust?

Where a school with a deficit is to open as a sponsored academy, the deficit remains with the LA, to be funded from its core budget. A recovery plan may, in rare circumstances, also need to be agreed with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). At the point a school was considering converting to join Emmaus CAT, the CSEL would support the process of managing deficit reduction.

16. Further questions;

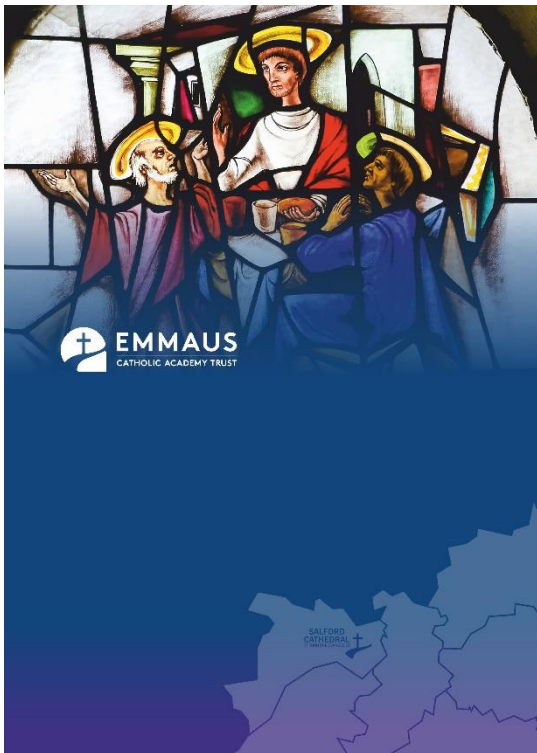
For further information please contact one of the Central Team below;

Daniel Copley, Catholic Senior Executive Leader (CSEL) at Daniel.copley@emmauscat.com

Helena Kelly, Interim Chief Operating Officer (ICOO) at Helena.kelly@emmauscat.com

Alison Smith, Executive Administrative Manager at Alison.smith@emmauscat.com

Or visit our website; www.emmauscat.com



The Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust Prayer

Meet us, Lord, on the road to Emmaus,
Guide us on the path toward our destination,
and renew our strength as we continue to walk
and commune with you.

Open our eyes, so we see the signs of your
presence around us;
open our hearts, so we may receive your peace
and love; and empower us to pass on to others
the grace you have shared with us so freely.

Amen.
