

Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust

Academisation - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Journey with Emmaus CAT... great schools, strong in faith, serving society.

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. Please contact the school 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 CAT 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.

Emmaus CAT exists to provide great Catholic education across Greater Manchester.

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. What is a Catholic Academy Trust?

The Church provides Catholic schools to contribute to the creation of a society that is highly educated, skilled and cultured. The Bishop of Salford, Rt Revd John Arnold, has the overall responsibility for education across the Diocese of Salford. It is the Bishop's expectation and wish that all Catholic schools within the Diocese of Salford will join one of three Catholic Academy Trusts by 2030. It is also Bishop John's wish that academisation takes place to ensure that the individual character and charism of each school is protected and, indeed enhanced, giving Catholic education a more effective voice.

The Bishop appoints the Members and then Trust Board Directors are appointed on his behalf by the Diocesan Members (Trustees), these then form the Board of Directors, overseeing all CAT related matters on behalf of the Members. All three Catholic Academy Trusts within the Diocese of Salford also work with the Catholic Education Service, and firmly remain part of the Catholic family nationally.

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

There are many advantages, and opportunities of being part of a Catholic 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. A Catholic Academy Trust will provide services which may in time no longer be available from the Local Authority and allow for the sharing of research, best practice and the efficient development of ideas and resource.

Emmaus CAT Values; Humility. Faithfulness. Service.

Emmaus CAT culture; we are 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. What does a healthy Catholic organisation look like?

- Aligned mission, strong in faith and Christ and child centred.
- Minimal politics
- Minimal confusion
- High morale
- High productivity
- Low turn-over of the best people

Our Vision; As Catholic leaders, we are here to support and deliver the Diocesan strategy in working towards the common good in rebuilding the Church and renewing faith formation to preserve and protect high quality, excellent Catholic education. The aligned vision of Emmaus CAT is to provide great Catholic education across Greater Manchester, working collegially as a family of great schools, serving local parishes and communities to ensure children and young people get the very best Catholic education and formation. We know our core business and pupils are at the heart of Emmaus CAT. We believe that all pupils are entitled to a rich ambitious curriculum and to the powerful knowledge which maximises life chances. It is fundamentally important to us that we share the same mission. We do not want a culture of conformity that kills innovation and drives away the best staff.

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 believe it is the concept of aligned autonomy that is to be the foundation of our success: we are aligned in our mission; these are our non-negotiables. School improvement is strongest when schools work together so we bring a sense of collaboration and constructive challenge, and summon concrete, positive change, when we work together. We support our headteachers as they are best placed to make decisions ensuring that schools are developed through evidence-based learning, we passionately believe in schools maintaining their own identity underpinned by Emmaus CAT 'Guiding Principles'.

Emmaus CAT has adopted a partnership approach however, some areas benefit from clear alignment and consistency across Emmaus CAT:

- One common approach to self-evaluation form (SEF);
- One common approach to school development planning (SDP);
- One common approach to headteacher performance management;
- One common approach to headteacher reports for LGBs;
- One common approach to governance and clerking arrangements;
- One common approach to financial policies, procedures and reporting.
- One common approach to safeguarding;
- One common approach to HR and recruitment practices;
- One common approach to health and safety, estates compliance and GDPR

This enables schools to focus on the key priorities of teaching and learning, whilst the Central Team leads on financial, operational and resource management and provides high quality support plus a core offer for school improvement. With the educational landscape changing at such an unprecedented rate, our CAT 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. Emmaus CAT is one legal entity and organisation.

7. Will the school change its name?

The bishop controls the name of schools in his diocese and Bishop John requires the school's legal name to include the words: 'Roman Catholic' and 'Voluntary Academy' (e.g. St Kentigern's RC Primary School, a Voluntary Academy). There is no requirement or expectation that the headteacher will be called 'the principal'. The school's uniform would not need to change as a result of joining Emmaus CAT.

8. Will all schools have to have identical or similar structures?

There is no 'template' of staffing, curriculum, or teaching style. This will be a decision for the governing body and the headteacher. The school's ethos and culture will be the responsibility of the governing body and the headteacher. Emmaus CAT has a clear vision and principles which all the schools actively support. These principles are based on the themes of Catholic Social Teaching and Bishop John's vision for education.

9. How will the CAT be funded?

Emmaus CAT receives a central contribution from each school which provides the necessary capacity of the Central Team and services offered to support all the schools within the CAT. It also covers other costs including legal support, administrative support, and costs of audit. As the number of schools increases, additional support and services will be provided. The central contribution is taken from the money allocated to schools based on its pupil numbers (for academies, this is called the General Annual Grant or GAG). Funding for SEND, Pupil Premium, Sports Premium or some other grants awarded to schools are not part of the central contribution and remain wholly with the school.

10. What happens to a school's reserves?

All funding is the responsibility of the CAT however, schools retain all their budget apart, from the central contribution. Schools will not be responsible for the financial deficit in another school, although combined reserves could potentially be used to deliver a project if required. The CFO and central finance team provide additional support to school business managers and provide additional assurance to the Trust Board of Directors and the Accounting Officer that money is being used appropriately. As a Limited Company and Charity, the CAT must publish audited accounts each year.

11. Who is responsible for the running of the school?

The day to day running of schools remains with the headteacher with support and challenge from the local governing body. The CAT is very clear that headteachers are responsible for their schools. Legal responsibility for the schools lies with the headteacher and Trust Board of Directors. However, through the scheme of delegation, key responsibilities are apportioned to the local governing body.

12. Who appoints staff to the school?

The Emmaus CAT Trust Board of Directors is the employer of all staff in the schools. The appointment of senior posts, including the headteacher and deputy, will have the involvement of the Trust Board of Directors, usually through the CEO, who works with the local governing body. The appointment of the key Catholic leadership posts (Headteacher, Deputy, Head of RE and Chaplain) will continue to have the involvement of the Diocese. For other appointments, the schools will be responsible using the established scheme of delegation. The CAT can provide support with the recruitment process, removing an administrative burden from schools.

13. What happens if the school's performance is a cause for concern?

The CAT, through the CEO meets annually with the Regional Director (formally the RSC) to review the performance of all the schools in the CAT. There is an expectation that being part of an academy trust will improve schools' performance. As is now the case, robust actions plans would be agreed and support and challenge for rapid improvement if required. The trigger for serious concern about a school from the Regional Director is primarily Ofsted judgements.

14. How will conversion affect Ofsted Inspections?

Academy schools are inspected in the same way as all schools. During inspection, the lead inspector will want to speak to the Chair of Governors and the CAT representatives. The CEO and central executive team are also involved as part of the evidence gathering on the leadership and management of the school. Schools that become academies are treated by Ofsted as new schools. Schools that are subject to Direct Academy Orders (DAO) will not be inspected for three years after conversion. Schools that become convertor academies in the CAT, and were most recently judged good or outstanding, are treated as new schools for inspection purposes and are usually subject to an ungraded inspection (formally known as Section 8 inspection) as their first inspection; this will normally take place within three years of the school becoming an academy, but this is not a hard and fast rule. Section 48 Inspections/CSI will take place in CAT schools as they do now.

15. What terms and conditions will school staff work under in an academy trust?

Teachers and support staff remain under their current terms and conditions (ie Burgundy and Green Book) and the CAT follows current and future schoolteachers pay and conditions and national agreed public sector pay. Pensions (TPS and LGPS) remain unchanged as they are now and are underwritten by the government. The main teacher and support staff unions are recognised and part of ongoing consultations on policy. Staff transfer to the CAT on the same conditions as their previous post and maintain their existing rights and benefits (this is known as TUPE).

16. Can the CAT change staff terms and conditions once the school converts?

The CAT is governed by a legal document called Articles of Association, as well as Diocesan Protocols, which cannot be changed by the Trust Board of Directors or the CEO. They are the responsibility of the Bishop and have to be followed by all CATs in the Diocese.

17. Will staff be forced to move to other schools in difficulty?

Although staff are employed by the CAT, their contract will specify the school they are working in and they will not be forced to move to another school. It is possible that a member of staff could be employed under a joint appointment but this will be agreed in advance between the schools and the employee, and be part of their contract. Being within the CAT may allow staff opportunities for professional development in other schools and in so doing improve talent development and succession planning, but this will only be done with the agreement of all parties.

18. Will the school remain part of the Diocese of Salford?

The Articles of Association and the Memorandum of Understanding make it clear that the school and the CAT remain within the Diocese of Salford (these documents are available on the CAT's website). The Members of the CAT (which include the bishop) are also the Trustees of the Diocese. The schools joining the CAT will all be from the Catholic family of schools and have the commitment to the liturgical life of the school and the centrality of religious education. In relation to current governance structures for VA schools, joining a Catholic Academy Trust significantly strengthens the relationship between the school and the Diocese of Salford.

19. What is the timeline for conversion?

The timing of the process is determined by the local governing body although the Diocese and the CAT can provide support for this. There are several stages and consultations before any application is approved by the Diocese and the DfE. The CAT will assign a member of the Central Team to support headteachers and schools through the conversion process and leads on all the administration.

20. Becoming an Academy.

20.1 Routes

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 Department for Education Regions Group (RG). Emmaus CAT is the automatic sponsor of a school that receives 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 join Emmaus CAT as part

of the Diocese of Salford's Academy Growth Strategy, 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 Regions Group level for approval. At that point the actual legal conversion process begins. It can take around twelve months from Stage 1 agreement to conversion.

20.2 Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is responsible for advising and challenging Regions Group 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.

20.3 Regions Group

Regions Group work with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to provide oversight and scrutiny and performance of academies, in line with the established framework for academy trusts. They 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.

20.4 How will a school keep its unique identity?

Each school will become a school in its own right and will be part of the CAT. 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 CAT recognises the distinct nature of the communities each school serves and is committed to retaining, protecting and preserving these unique identities. Directors and the Emmaus CAT Central Team 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.

21. How is the CAT structured?

The CAT 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 CAT. 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 CAT scheme of delegation and then outlined in the LGB terms of reference.

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

The Trust Board and CEO determine the strategy for the CAT, secure school improvement and school 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 CEO. Every Catholic

Academy Trust must also have a Chief Financial Officer who is responsible for the day-to-day management of financial processes.

22. How will converting to an Academy effect our pupils and students?

There is no day-to-day difference for pupils and students. The educational experience for pupils would continue to improve through initiatives that are developed or supported by the teaching staff at your school. Staff are supported by the expertise, opportunities for networking and the sharing of best practice that being part of Emmaus CAT brings. Each school will still be led and managed by the headteacher and local governing body.

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

It is different, with some changes around standard systems and processes, however none of these change the charism of the school. There will be a period of adjustment, with some headteachers and local governors recognising this. Joining Emmaus CAT makes you part of one organisation, aligned with the same mission. One of the 'freedoms' afforded to schools is the right to set their own terms for staff pay and conditions. 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 CAT, unless this is something that is agreed by all parties and as part of a secondment for example.

24. 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 pupils and students 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 internal 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.

25. What happens now?

Action	Date
Stage 1 Approval given by Trustees	Term 2
Due Diligence collation	May – June 2024
Stage 2 Approval by Governors	July 2024
Diocesan Trustee Approval	Autumn 2024

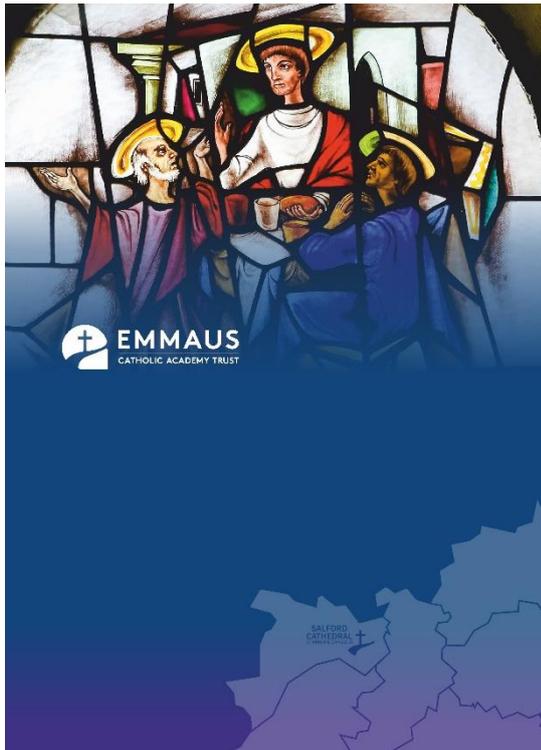
School submits DFE convertor form	End of Autumn Term 2024
School appears on DFE Advisory Board meeting	November 2024
DFE approves conversion and appoints project manager	November 2024
Project Meetings begin	November 2024
School appoints Browne Jacobson as solicitors	November 2024
TUPE Process begins and is completed	Term 2 2025
Conversion	Term 3 2025

26. Central Team Services

Further information can be found at www.emmauscat.com with further information regarding the professional services available via the central team can be found in our [Professional Central Services Brochure](#).

27. Central Team Structure





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.