



Catholic Academy Trust Consultation

Monday 26th January 2026





St. Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School

Welcome and Introductions

CAT Strategy in Context



- Nationally across England (January 2025)
 - 46.1 % of primary schools are now academies or free schools.
 - 83.0 % of secondary schools are academies or free schools.
 - 49.6 % of state-funded special schools are academies or free schools.
- CATs not MATs – Catholic values at the heart of all we do!
- There are currently 60 Academies in 9 CATs across the Diocese of Westminster, with growing engagement.
- All 18 Catholic Diocese in England have a plans in place to form Catholic Academy Trusts for all their schools to protect Catholic Education.
- The DfE has stated (in the 2022 white paper 'Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child') that all schools in England should have plans to join a MAT (Multi-Academy Trust) by 2030.
- It is a Diocese of Westminster requirement that all schools will have plans to join a CAT. Latest communication from Cardinal December 2025.

Foreword from the Cardinal...

“Now we are living through times of considerable hardship for many We have to see, be clear, and readjust. This means taking difficult decisions, marked by realism, about resources. In such circumstances it is right to look for economies that can be achieved by structures of cooperation, between schools within the same locality and within the wider family of schools. This is not an enforced 'master-plan', as you well know. It is a measured and appropriate response to the reality we face. **The alternative, individual schools in isolation, will lead not only to conflict but also to the decline that eventually accompanies isolationist policies.** “

*Extract from Cardinal Nichols' address to the Diocese of Westminster
Headteachers Conference February 2018*

The Diocesan Vision for the CAT programme



Diocese of Westminster

- To be inclusive and open to all Catholic schools
- To provide pupils with the best life chances and educational outcomes in Catholic communities rooted with gospel values and with Christ at the centre.
- Develop the professional expertise by recruiting and retaining the best staff
- Develop existing links and partnerships with other schools.
- Benefiting from increased resilience, shared economies of scale and efficiency savings
- School leaders, teachers and Governors can combine skills, share thinking and tackle challenges together;
- Protect, secure and develop Catholic education

Our Proposal....

Is that St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School convert to an academy and expand the existing Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust (DOWAT) a school-led CMAT.

The DOWAT opened in 2012 and currently consists of

Secondary Schools	Primary Schools
Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School	Our Lady Catholic Primary School
St Claudine's Catholic School for Girls	St Catherine of Sienna Catholic Primary School
St Mark's Catholic School	St John's Catholic Primary School
St Michael's Catholic School	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
The Douay Martyrs Catholic Secondary School	St Thomas More Catholic Primary School
The Saint John Henry Newman Catholic School	Holy Family Catholic Primary School
	St Vincent De Paul Catholic Primary School
	St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

In time all Catholic schools in Hillingdon and North Hertfordshire will be expected to join DOWAT. DOWAT will grow to a scale of 32 primaries and 8 Secondary schools within the next few years.



“To achieve excellence in the service
of the Gospel to build a better world”

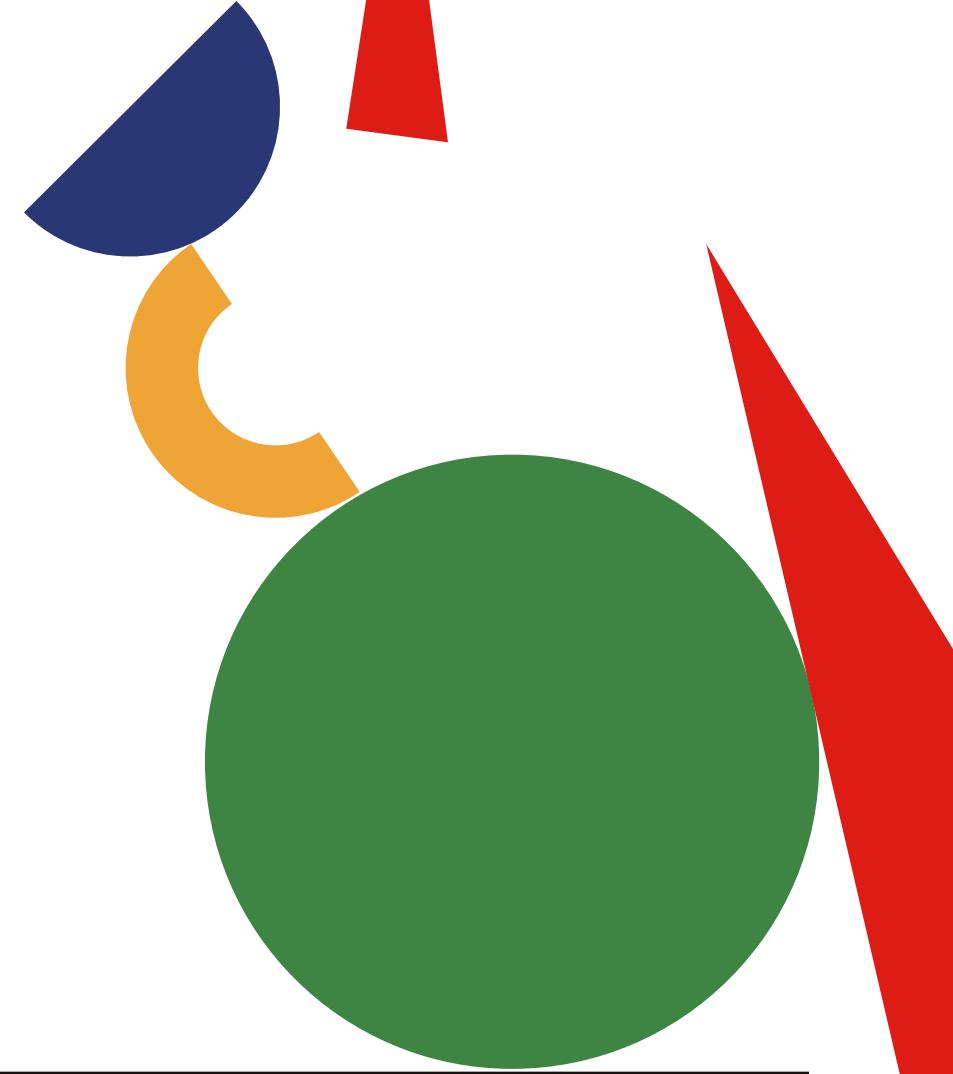


Christ Centred
Child Centred
Catholic Educational Excellence

OUR WEBSITE
<https://www.dowat.co.uk/>



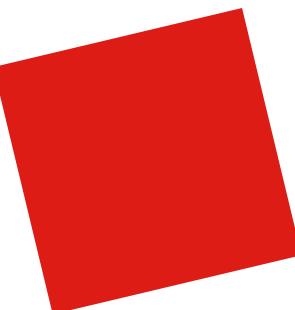
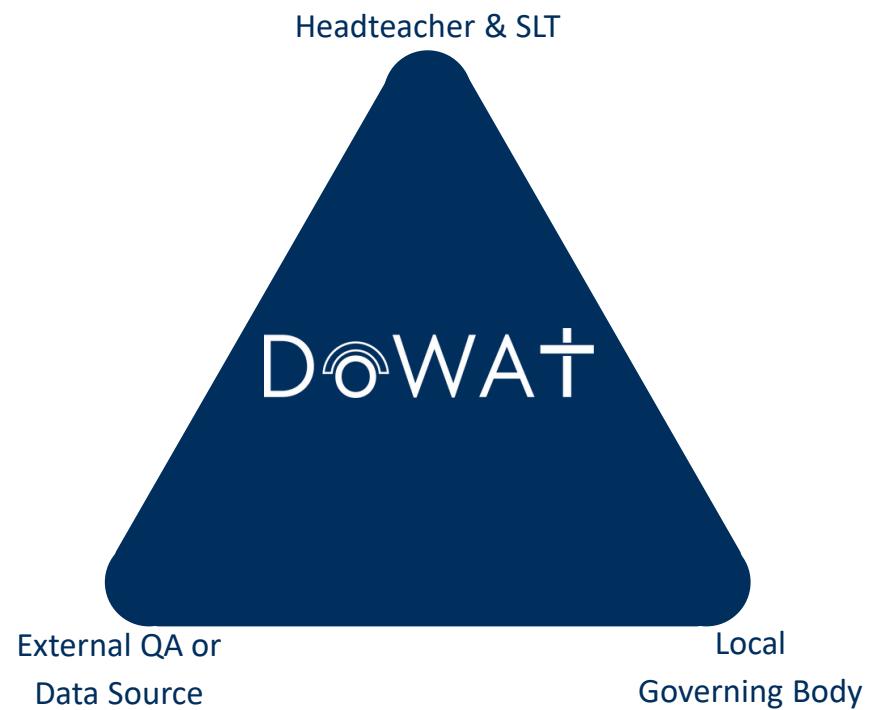
@DoWATuk



Our Approach

Support and Challenge

“To support and challenge our schools towards Catholic excellence in forming young people”.



Leadership in Focus



'Headstogether' and Heads Forum

Head Teachers from DoWAT schools meet half termly to collaborate and share best practice

School Business Leads Together

School Business Leads from DoWAT schools meet half termly to collaborate and share best practice

Governors

DoWAT provides training and professional development opportunities for Governors so they can best serve their school communities

Leadership days

Leaders attend face to face days to focus on the development of Trust and School strategy

Leadership Training and Coaching

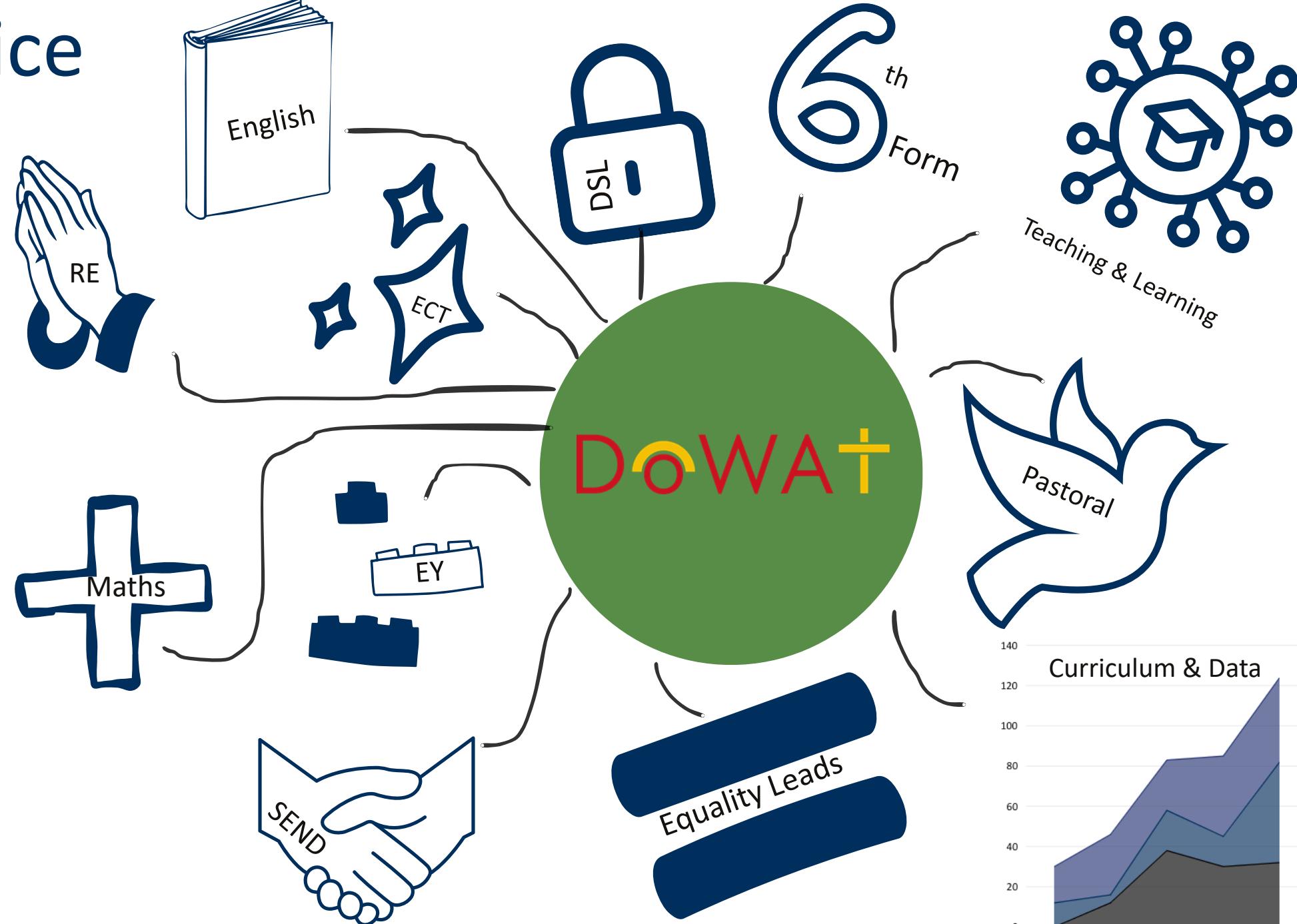
DoWAT offers National Professional Qualifications to leaders at all levels. Coaching is offered to every participant

Peer to Peer support

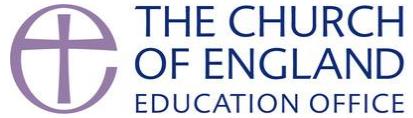
Joint INSET days and opportunities to moderate classroom practice are organised on a termly basis

Best Practice Networks

DoWAT host over 400 best practice meetings annually.



National Professional Qualifications



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
EDUCATION OFFICE

FOUNDATION FOR
EDUCATIONAL
LEADERSHIP



Department
for Education



NPQ for Leading Teaching
For Subject/Curriculum/Key Stage leaders



NPQ for Senior Leadership
For aspiring/current Senior leaders



NPQ for Headship
For aspiring/new Headteachers/Principals



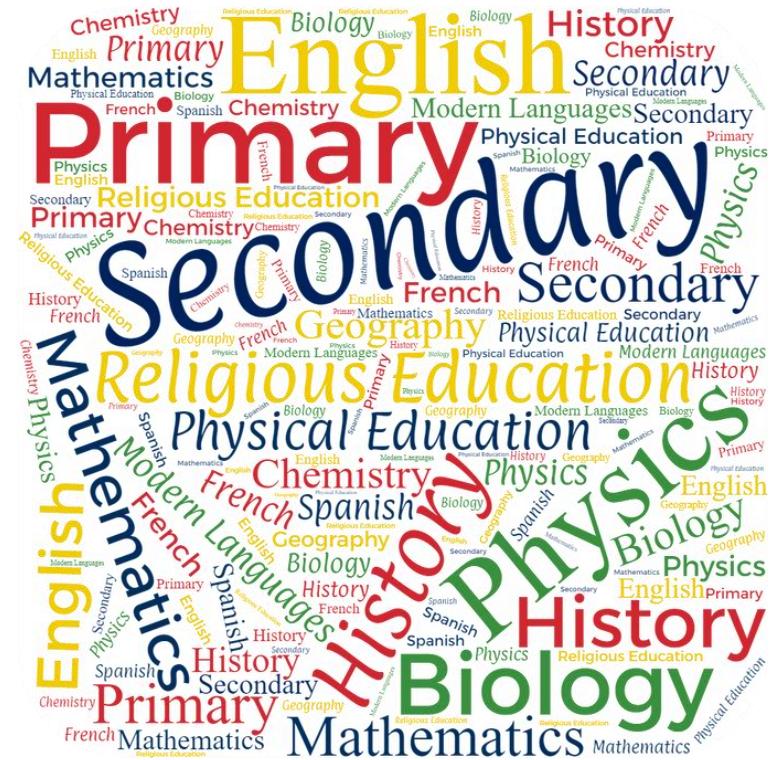
NPQH delivered in partnership with Saint
John Southworth Catholic Academy Trust

DoWAT



SAINT JOHN
SOUTHWORTH
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Initial Teacher Training



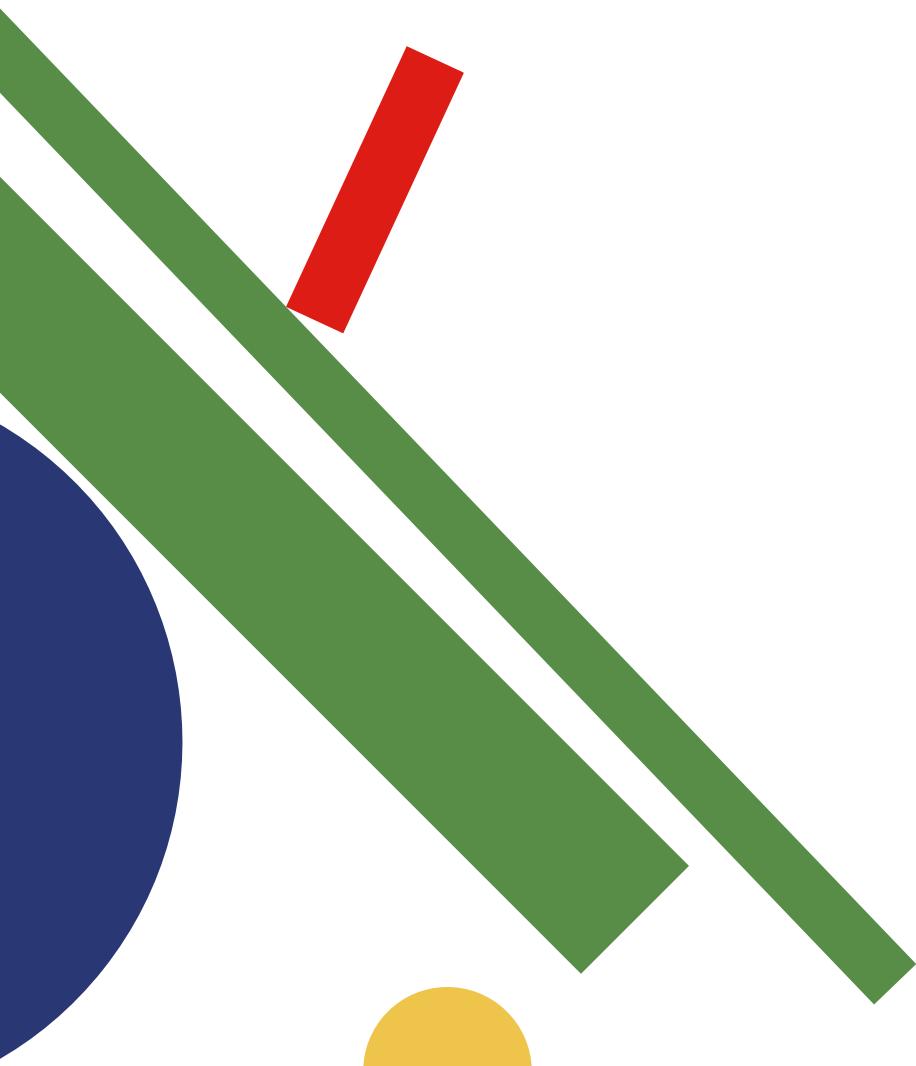
Delivered in partnership with St Mary's University



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

DoWAT

Collaboration with other MATs



CATtColl



How do we benefit?

- Economies of scale and increased resilience
- Greater collaboration
- Coordination, support and expertise from Executive Team
- School improvement support
- Shared back-office functions
- Great access to capital funding
- Able to reclaim VAT
- Recruitment and retaining the best Catholic Leaders and staff
- Protect, secure and develop Catholic Education through a network of Family CATs supporting schools



What will not change....



Ethos of our School



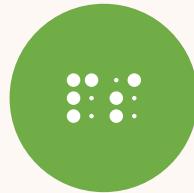
The Staff Team



Our School Uniform
and Curriculum



Governors will
continue to serve on a
Local Governing Body



Co-ordinated
admissions process
through the LA



Current admission
policy will continue to
apply



The timings of the
current school day



The terms and
conditions of
employment

What will change....



The legal status and governance arrangements



The current Governing Body will become the first line of assurance for the Board



The Trust Board will have strategic oversight



Executive Team to lead the strategic development of the Trust



Funding direct from ESFA not through the LA



Some policies and ways of reporting

Governance Structure



Members (5)

Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishop, Vicar General or
A Diocesan Trustee, RCDOE Director of
Education, RCDOE Financial Director

Trust Board (9)

Catholic Foundation Directors appointed on a
skills basis and a Catholic Executive Officer
accountable to the Board

Local Governing
Body

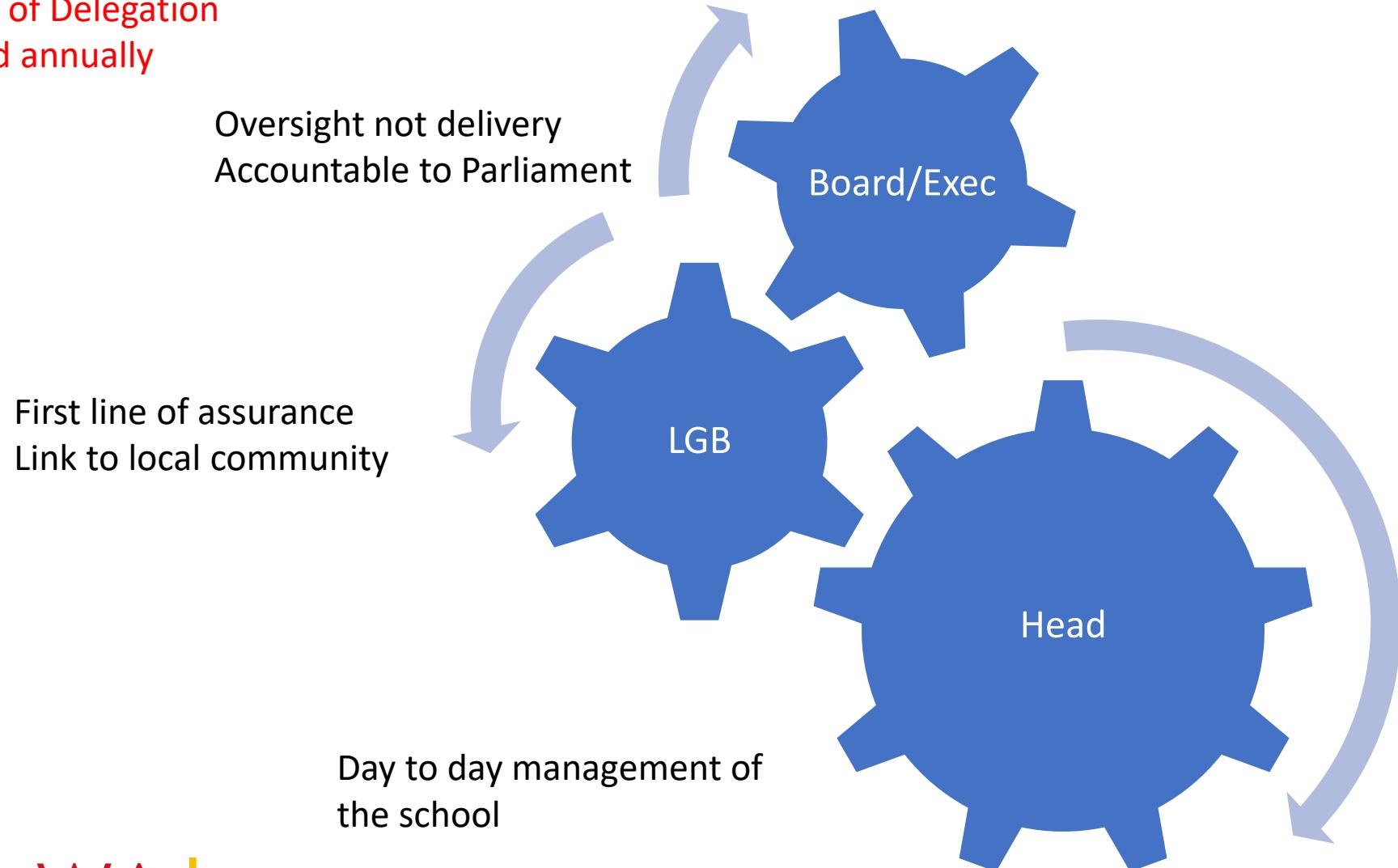
Formed from existing Governing Bodies,
responsible for providing support and
challenge at a local level

Key Doc:

DoWAT

Scheme of Delegation

Updated annually



Why now?



Preserve the future
of Catholic Education



Cardinal's wish and
vision for schools in
the Diocese



Growing pressures on
School budgets



Falling roll in parts of
the Diocese

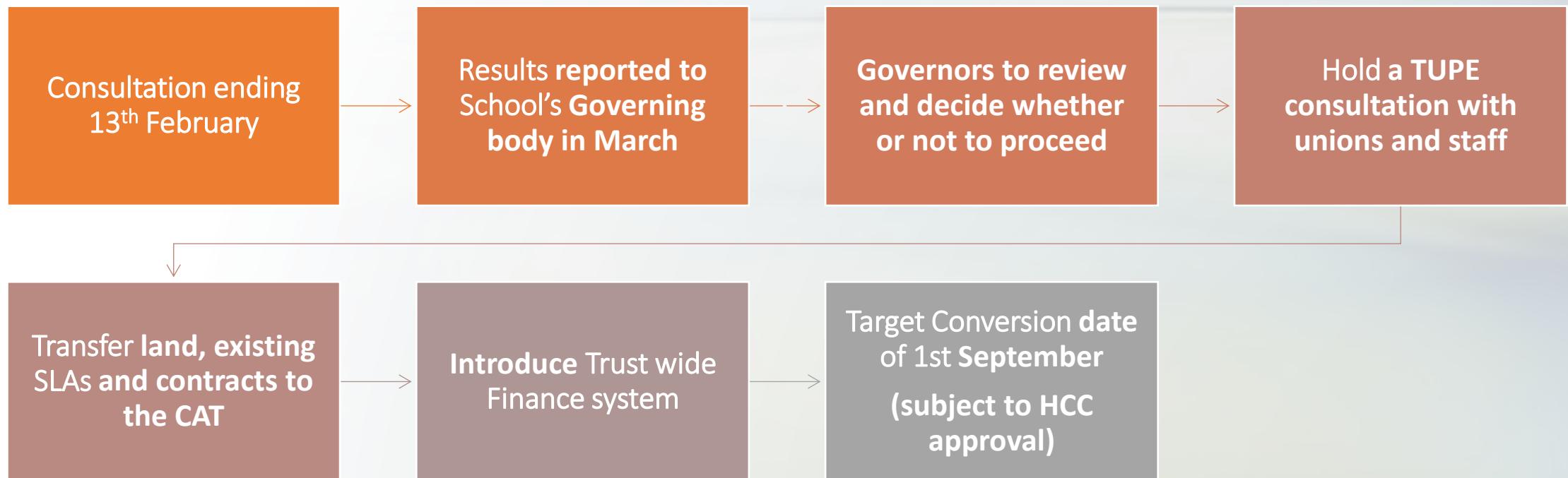


Reduction in capacity
of Local Authorities
to support schools



Central to national
education policy

What are the next Steps?



Any Questions....



Thank you for your time and
contributions
