

27 April 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

Consultation on Anthem Schools Trust becoming approved by the Diocese of Lincoln

I am writing to you about some changes we are considering to the make-up of our Trust that we are consulting on. Some of you may not be very familiar with who or what Anthem is in relation to your child's school, so I'll explain a little bit about this before going onto the main purpose of this letter.

Context

Anthem is the multi-academy trust (MAT) that is responsible for your child's school and is the employer of all the people who work there. There are currently 16 schools in our MAT – 11 primary schools and five secondary schools – based in the East Midlands, London and the Thames Valley. It is our responsibility to maintain and improve standards in our schools so they can deliver a high-quality education that meets the needs of the local community.

One of the key ways in which Anthem drives school improvement is through schools working together and sharing resources and expertise for mutual benefit. For some of our schools this can be quite challenging because they aren't very close to other Anthem schools, so we are looking for ways to bring more schools into the Trust to help these schools thrive.

The consultation

To help us grow in the areas that would most benefit our existing schools, we are considering the possibility of becoming a 'Majority Church' MAT in partnership with the Diocese of Lincoln. This would enable Church of England schools in Lincolnshire to join Anthem, which they are currently unable to do because of the way they are governed. We are now consulting all stakeholders about this proposal.

We understand this sounds like a big change and you may have some questions, so we have attempted to provide some more detailed information in the Q&A on the following pages.

Next steps

We are interested to know whether you support the proposal, what you think the benefits would be and whether you have any concerns. You can submit your feedback using the following link before **Thursday, 5 May**: [Click here to submit consultation feedback](#)

Once this consultation has concluded and we have considered all feedback, the next step is for us to make a formal proposal of change to the Department for Education (DfE) and the Church of England. If our proposal is accepted, we hope to become a Majority Church MAT by the start of the next academic year (2022-23).

Kind regards,

Andy Yarrow
Chief Executive

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Changes to Anthem School Trust: Q&A

What is a Majority Church MAT?

Multi-academy trust (MAT) is the term used to describe a single entity – often an education organisation with charitable status - that runs a group of schools. A Majority Church MAT is a multi-academy trust that has been approved to welcome Church of England schools to join it. It may also include non-faith schools.

Anthem currently has one Church of England school, St Mark's Academy in South London, but would like to add more to our cluster of schools in Lincolnshire.

The word 'majority' relates to the Members who oversee the Board of Trustees. It does not mean that the majority of schools in the MAT will be Church of England schools.

How would Anthem become a Majority Church MAT?

For Anthem to become a Majority Church MAT in the Diocese of Lincoln, the Trust would need to adopt model 'majority' Articles of Association approved by the Church of England and Department for Education (DfE). The articles set out the charitable purpose of the Trust and its governance structure.

These articles would ensure that the Christian foundation of church schools entering the Trust would be protected. The articles would also preserve the character and identity of non-church schools in the Trust.

Anthem would also have to have a majority of its Members approved by the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE).

Would my child's school have to become a Church of England school?

No. The Articles of Association will safeguard the individual ethos of non-faith schools.

Are Church of England schools only for children from Christian families?

No. Most Church of England schools seek to be inclusive in their admissions 'serving the common good', welcoming children of all faiths and none.

The majority of Church of England schools are popular and well-regarded, recognised as having high expectations in terms of behaviour and parental support and providing a high quality of education and pastoral care.

How would Church of England schools join Anthem?

The decision for church schools joining Anthem would rest with the Governing Board of the church school. In every case, the LDBE would need to give consent and Anthem and the DfE would need to approve church schools entering the Trust.



The LDBE would require that every church school maintains a strong relationship with the Church and Diocese through the LDBE Service Level Agreement.

Anthem would be expected to work collaboratively with other church MATs in the Diocese.

How would Anthem decide which schools to take on?

Anthem would only take on any school if it met the criteria in the Anthem Growth Strategy and the due diligence process confirmed that it was a good match for the Trust and a school that we have the capacity to support.

Is there a risk that Anthem could take on too many schools or grow too quickly?

No. The due diligence process is robust and the process of onboarding a school takes quite a long time.

In addition, lessons have been learned from the early days of academies about the effects of rapid MAT expansion, and the LDBE and Regional Schools Commissioners that oversee the Trust wouldn't allow this to happen.

Is there a risk that non-faith schools might be put off from joining Anthem if it becomes a Church MAT?

Potentially, yes. But we are confident that the Anthem vision, values and track record with its 15 non-faith schools would reassure other non-faith schools that the Trust remains fully inclusive and able to support both types of school.