



TRUST MERGER NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026 UPDATE

When we wrote to you last term, we shared the vision for education Bishop Peter announced to headteachers and governors at the start of the summer term. At that time, we committed to ensuring all members of our community received updates on the progress towards the planned Trust merger that would fulfil the Bishop's vision for our family of schools. This newsletter is the first of those updates.





Why merge?

At the launch of this process of change, Bishop Peter set out very clearly the reasons for the evolution of the Diocesan vision for education. In each newsletter, we will return to that vision to ensure we do not lose sight of its purpose. He said:

“Our Catholic schools put Christ at the centre of everything that they do by integrating Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the totality of school life.”

Bishop Peter Collins, Vision for Education, 2026

At the heart of our rationale for a single Multi-Academy Trust is a simple but firm belief that we can achieve more together. We share a common goal, seeking to bring Christ to one another and realise the God-given talents of each person. It is a mission that starts from a place of deep connection through Scripture and will be ever strengthened where, as St John Henry Newman says, “heart speaks unto heart”. That is what we must do across our Diocesan Trust.

For our children to flourish, our staff must flourish too. The newly merged Trust will increase our capacity to provide expert support to staff so that they may serve our children, young people and communities as faithful witnesses to Christ.

Establishing the groups for decision-making

We will be careful and deliberate as we discern the design of the merged Trust. There is so much we have learned as individual Trusts over the years that we can apply to what comes next. We have many strengths to carry forward, providing a firm foundation for any changes that lie ahead. We are not starting anew; we are building on what already exists.

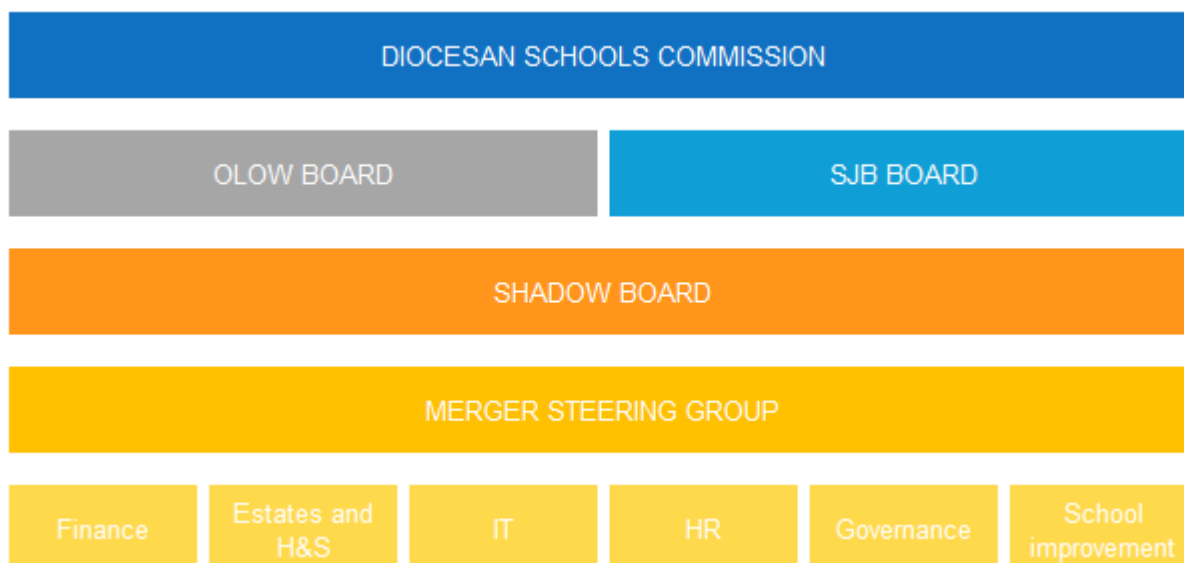
The Merger Steering Group is at the heart of planning for the new Trust. This group is responsible for the merger programme and will draw on six workstreams. Each workstream will undertake the project work necessary to design and implement the systems, processes and ways of working we will need in our new Trust.

“There is much to celebrate in our Diocesan schools and by working together we will ensure that we secure the future of Catholic education for generations to come.”

Bishop Peter Collins, Vision for Education, 2026



Figure 1: Trust merger governance and workstreams



Who reports to whom?

- The Merger Steering Group reports to the Shadow Board of Directors.
- The Shadow Board reports to the two existing Trust Boards.
- The two existing Trust Boards remain the decision-making bodies until the legal formation of the new Trust. The Shadow Board does not have decision-making powers but operates within its agreed terms of reference.
- The Diocesan Schools Commission is consulted on, and approves, decisions of the Trust Boards and defines the arrangements for governance within the Trust.

Who are members of each group?

Diocesan schools commission

This group is appointed by the Bishop.

Trust Boards

You can read about the members of each Trust board on our existing Trust websites:

- [St John the Baptist Catholic MAT - Members & Directors](#)
- [Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust - Governance](#)



Shadow Board

The shadow Board is made up of members from both Trust boards and is co-chaired by the chairs of both Trusts. The members of the shadow board include:

Andrew Herlihy (Co-Chair)	Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT
Mary Sparrow (Co-Chair)	St John the Baptist Catholic MAT
Josephine Barnett	St John the Baptist Catholic MAT
Mark Broadbent	Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT
Angela Bull	Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT
Neville Kyrke- Smith	St John the Baptist Catholic MAT
Julie O'Connor	St John the Baptist Catholic MAT
Charlotte Woodford	Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT
Adam Clayton	St John the Baptist Catholic MAT
Sue Price	Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic MAT

Merger Steering Group

This group is chaired by the Diocesan Director of Education, Kate Pereira. The group also includes:

- Helen Bates, Assistant Director, Diocesan Schools Service
- Clare Clark, interim CEO, Our Lady of Walsingham
- Richard Stevenson, interim Deputy CEO/Chief Operating Officer Our Lady of Walsingham
- Joe Richardson, CEO, St John the Baptist

- Peter Pažitka, Director of Finance and Operations, St John the Baptist

The Merger Steering Group will also draw on the knowledge and expertise of colleagues from across our Trusts and beyond, as and when needed.

How will we get wider views?

Work has already begun on actively engaging with school leaders in both Trusts. Headteachers in both Trusts have had the opportunity to come together and begin the process of articulating their hopes and expectations for the new Trust. Further listening opportunities with Heads, the wider staff group and school governors are planned for after the summer break.

A word about our merger logo

The logo has been designed to reflect important features of our two Trusts and Diocese. The light Marian blue reflects the patronage of Mary in the Diocese and Our Lady of Walsingham Trust. The darker blue represents the water of baptism, drawing on the patronage of St John the Baptist and the identity of St John the Baptist Trust. The vibrant sunshine yellow draws on Jesus as the light of the world and speaks to our position in East Anglia, receiving the first light of the sun each day.

Once the new Trust has been established and a new name chosen, we will adopt a new logo for our new Trust.



Roadmap to merger

Our roadmap to merger is set out below, with key milestones clearly defined. While there is an ambition for the merger to be completed by September 2027, we are equally clear that, above all else, it must be done right—bringing people with us and building hope and confidence throughout the journey.

While we are on the road to completion, there is still much to do and some

important decisions ahead. Our plans, and ultimately your future Trust, will be shaped by the listening opportunities we have set out as part of this programme.

We look forward to hearing your views over the months ahead and will share the key messages from that process in our next update at the end of the Advent term.

