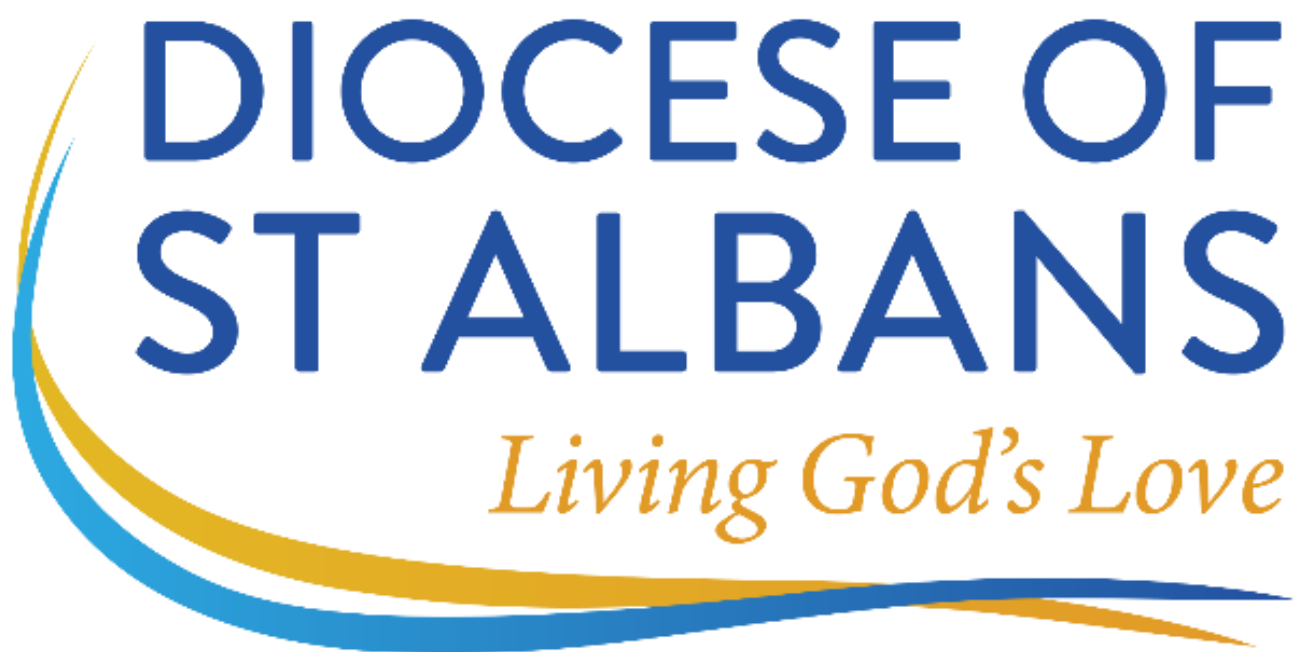




**Delivering Educational Services to Church Schools:
The Diocese of St Albans Service Level Agreement**

September 2026 – August 2027

Bishop's Preface

I am delighted to commend to you the Diocese of St Albans Service Level Agreement – Delivering Educational Services to Church Schools. This scheme continues to help support church schools in a time when education is changing rapidly.

In the Diocese we have a set of priorities under the heading *Living God's Love*. We have been inviting people, parishes, schools and chaplaincies

- to journey deeper into God
- to go out in partnership
- to bring transformation to communities
- to make new disciples

This programme has run for a number of years and we are now taking it forward with renewed energy.

Church schools have always encouraged young people to journey deeper into God - an offer open to young people of all faiths and none. For Christian young people, church schools can help them as they learn more about God.

Church schools have also always had a key role in local communities, and many have played a significant part in helping transform the community in which they are based. The Church of England is the leading national provider of academies and we seek to build on our family of schools across all phases and age ranges, whether they be academies or a local authority voluntary aided or controlled school. Many of our schools are in areas of social deprivation as the church recognises that opportunity is for all and seeks to support, develop and encourage all its young people whatever their background. Working with all faiths and none, our schools have sought to be centres for community growth and have worked at bringing people together.

Above all, church schools are not only places where we aim to provide a first-class education in each local community but also where we have a holistic approach to every child so that they can develop to their full potential.

I am happy to commend this service to you, as it will offer support to those responsible for taking church schools into the future. We want to ensure that they continue to provide an excellent education for the young people of this Diocese.

The Right Revd Richard Atkinson
Bishop of Bedford

The Diocese of St Albans

The Diocese of St Albans is the Church of England in Hertfordshire, Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton and part of the London Borough of Barnet. There are over 336 parishes in the 1008 square miles; there are 235 paid clergy, and around 80 self-supporting (unpaid) ministers. These are supported by 300 Readers (or lay preachers, as they are sometimes popularly known). The Diocese is led by the Bishop of St Albans, assisted by the Bishop of Bedford, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson, and the Bishop of Hertford, the Rt Revd Jane Mainwaring. Our 136 Church of England schools are part of the Anglican family in this area.

The Diocese is divided into three Archdeaconries. The Archdeaconry of Bedford is served by the Ven Dave Middlebrook. Hertfordshire roughly to the west of the A1(M) comprises the Archdeaconry of St Albans and is served by the Ven Charles Hudson. The Archdeaconry of Hertford consists of East Hertfordshire and Barnet and is served by the Ven Janet MacKenzie.

Our Cathedral is the wonderful Abbey in St Albans, which has been a place of Christian worship for hundreds of years.



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Foreword from the Director of Education

This document sets out the services that will be provided to Church of England schools by the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) through the Service Level Agreement (SLA).

At the heart of the Board's work is a commitment to serving our family of Church schools across the diocese. We work alongside schools to support them in delivering high-quality education that is rooted in, and shaped by, a distinctive Christian ethos. The services described in this document form an important part of that commitment, helping schools to flourish and to make a meaningful difference in the education and wellbeing of every pupil.

Since the introduction of the SLA, we have continued to broaden and strengthen the range of services available. Alongside the expertise of the Schools Team, we also work with a strong network of independent educational consultants who bring additional experience and specialist knowledge. For the coming year, we have maintained the high standard of the core offer available to schools that participate in the SLA, ensuring that it remains a highly effective and cost-efficient way of supporting school improvement and effectiveness.

We are very grateful for the continued support shown by schools, with 99% choosing to subscribe to the SLA last year. The positive feedback we have received about the support provided is greatly appreciated, and it is encouraging to know that schools value the service offered.

By participating in the SLA each year, schools help to ensure that trusted advice, guidance and expertise are available when they are most needed.

Through this agreement, we aim to provide a service that is:

- committed to supporting the Christian character of church schools
- distinctive in addressing the particular needs of church schools, complementing the services provided by local authorities
- delivered to a high professional standard
- good value for money

We look forward to receiving your application.

Duncan Gauld
Director of Education

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Service Charter

The St Albans Diocesan Board of Education

Church schools subscribing to the Diocese of St Albans Service Level Agreement described in this prospectus are entitled to expect the Schools Team

- to have a pastoral concern for our Anglican church schools
- to provide professional information, advice and assistance in the areas listed
- to deliver the services listed upon request to a high professional standard
- to respond promptly and courteously to requests for assistance
- to act with discretion and safeguard confidentiality
- to be responsive to individual schools and their distinctive ethos
- to act with integrity and in accordance with Christian beliefs and values
- to promote at all times the Church of England foundation and Christian ethos of the school
- to deal promptly and courteously with complaints about the level of service provided

Subscribing schools

In return, church schools subscribing to the Agreement are expected

- to keep the Schools Team informed of the current situation in relation to the service required and developments at the school
- to be available, given adequate notice, for meetings and/or visits to ensure progress is maintained
- to give adequate notice when requesting visits, meetings, training, etc
- to provide updated school information as requested
- to respond appropriately to the professional advice given
- to pay invoices promptly, in line with the terms and conditions

The Service Level Agreement

Church schools that sign up to the Service Level Agreement will receive the following free of charge:

- A mid-point SIAMS health check
- Attendance for one teacher or governor at the following events:
 - RE Surgeries
 - Headteacher updates
 - Governance briefings
- Headteacher networking breakfasts

Additionally schools will be entitled to:

- Minimum of a 50% discount on all diocesan courses
- Minimum of a 20% discount on all diocesan conferences

Church schools and their community school partners which sign up to the Service Level Agreement can also access:

- Enhanced support with RE curriculum development across all phases
- Advice and support on leadership, management and pastoral issues
- Support and guidance on school improvement and school development
- Pre- and post-inspection support
- Attendance by an education consultant at meetings in relation to the appointment of senior leaders at the school
- Specialist support from our team of consultants on areas including vexatious parental complaints, Headteacher well-being support, pastoral support for governors
- Training in connection with admissions policies and procedures

In negotiation with the Schools Team, groups of schools may request the opportunity to cluster together in order to facilitate a larger piece of work, on any of the above or in areas of specific curriculum support. We have in the past supported areas such as three tier to two tier planning in English and Maths across groups of schools.

The skill set of our consultancy team has strengthened and widened over the past 2 years, should you have any queries about any potential support we can offer through the SLA please do get in touch.

RE, Collective Worship and SIAMS Support

Subscribing schools will receive advice and information on

- Diocesan guidelines and LA RE Agreed Syllabuses
- Policy documents and schemes of work
- Resources
- Statutory denominational inspections and self-evaluation procedures
- Roles and responsibilities of governors, headteachers and clergy
- Education law relating to RE and Collective Worship (including rights of withdrawal)
- Teaching about faiths and belief systems other than Christianity

Services available

- Telephone and e-mail advice
- Meetings for RE HoDs and primary RE co-ordinators as arranged by the Team
- Pre-/post-SIAMS inspection support including support with self-evaluation
- Specialist RE support at all key stages
- Access to a SIAMS mid-way “health check” (a SIAMS curated conversation)
- Access to a Collective Worship briefing

Leadership and Management; Church School Ethos

Subscribing schools will receive advice and information on

- Leadership and management of a church school
- Establishing and developing a distinctive Christian ethos
- Guidance and support materials on spiritual development in church schools
- Inclusion
- Community links – local, national and global
- Critical incidents, parental complaints
- Leadership development
- School re-organisation and federation

Those new to headship within the diocese will be offered a two-year coaching programme as part of the SLA

Services available

- Telephone and e-mail advice
- Reduced costs for the “in-house” annual programme of training courses organised by the Schools Team
- Critical incident support

Appointment of Senior Staff

Subscribing schools will receive advice and information on

- Recruitment of deputy headteacher and head of RE / RE co-ordinator
- Selection and appointment procedures
- The differences in interview questions permissible in Academy, VA and VC church schools

Services available

- Telephone and e-mail advice
- A member of the consultancy team will work with governors in making appointments, including
 - setting up the recruitment panel
 - advising on the wording and placement of advertisements
 - preparing the job description and person specification
 - guidance on selection methods and interview techniques
- Participation at shortlisting and appointment meetings

Governors, Governance and Admissions relating to a Church School

Subscribing schools will receive advice and information on

- Constitution and membership of governing bodies
- Roles and responsibilities of governors
- Legal matters in relation to responsibilities of governors
- School policy documents reflecting the distinctive ethos of church schools
- Headteacher/governor relationships
- Admissions policies, procedures and appeals for Academies/VA schools

Services available

- Telephone and e-mail advice
- Officer support for advice in connection with admissions policies and procedures
- Support for governors and headteachers responding to parental complaints about the school
- Reduced costs for diocesan-organised training for governors
- Access to briefings relating to school governance and admissions

School Effectiveness

School effectiveness services are undertaken in partnership with the Local Authority and are meant to supplement, not replace, services offered by your local authority.

Services available

- School development support
- School effectiveness (training, advice and support)**
- Governing body effectiveness (training, advice and support)
- Consultant support for school leaders
- Consultant support for school governors
- Consultant support for chairs of governors

*** In the context of the SLA, school effectiveness refers to the quality of education; standards; school improvement; the development of the school's Christian ethos and its contribution to the overall effectiveness of the school*

Services to All Diocesan Schools

All schools will receive advice and support on

RE, Collective Worship and SIAMS

- Administration of the SIAMS inspection process
- Involvement in church services organised by the Schools Team, eg Harvest
- Invitation to an annual course for clergy involved with church schools

Leadership and Management

- Church of England national and regional representation
- Diocesan representation at Local Authority level
- An induction day invitation for all new headteachers

Appointment of Senior Staff

- Attendance by an educational consultant at shortlisting meetings and interviews related to the appointment of a headteacher where possible
- Advice and support with headteacher job descriptions and personal specifications* - in particular with regard to the school's Christian character

Governance and Admissions

- Statutory governance
- Foundation governors
- Admissions policy consultation
- Access to governor training courses organised by the Schools Team

Training and Development

- Access to the vast majority of training courses, conferences and consultancy arranged by the Schools Team
- Phone support from team members

Services to All Diocesan Schools

School Buildings and Diocesan Trust/Land Issues

- Signposting to appropriate professionals regarding diocesan trust deeds and related legal issues
- General building development planning
- General issues regarding school Capital Grants
- Diocesan-approved architects and consultants
- School Condition Allocations (SCA) or replacement capital programmes, if appropriate
- School-controlled Devolved Formula Capital Grant
- Site visits (subject to availability)
- Land Registration process

All Voluntary Aided Schools will continue to have access to the following services

- Administration of School Condition Allocations (SCA) and co-ordination for approved projects*
- Cash flow facilities for approved projects*
- Liaison with project architects, consultants and contractors related to approved projects*

*** An administration charge will be applied to approved projects.**

Support and Information related to Academy / Federation / Trust Status / Free Schools

Charges for support and services associated with the establishment of a Free School or Church of England Academy (including changing status from a Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled to Academy), hard or soft federation issues and/or Trust schools fall outside this agreement and should be discussed separately.

Membership of the SLA

The annual charge has been calculated using “number on roll” bands, as shown below.

We feel that the charging rates provide good value for money for the services offered and are generally lower than many other dioceses’. The bandings using grouped pupil numbers are similar to those used in other dioceses and are considered a fair way to calculate the annual charge.

The charges are split between the two sectors to reflect the higher support and advice generally required for our Voluntary Aided schools and Academies. We have also given consideration to our very small schools to ensure that charges are affordable, and to our secondary phase schools that will require secondary level expertise. We believe the SLA continues to offer excellent value for money as we expand and develop the services offered.

Schools wishing to opt in part-way through a year will be charged a fee relative to the months outstanding for that charging period, if requested, and services will be available on a pro rata basis. These schools will also be required to commit to continuing with the agreement for the following full academic year. It will not be possible to refund any payments made after the start of the new charging period. A school wishing to opt out of the agreement prior to the start of the new academic year must advise the Diocesan Director of Education in writing. Notice of a minimum period of half a term, prior to the start of the new charging period, will be required.

The following gives the charge for September 2026 – August 2027, based on pupil numbers on roll.

Number on roll [as of September] (Costs shown exclude VAT)	VA School / Academy	VC School
69 or fewer	£270	£220
70 to 119	£485	£380
120 to 199	£650	£545
200 to 299	£820	£720
300 to 399	£980	£880
400 to 499	£1,155	£1,050
500 to 599	£1,310	£1,210
600 or more	£1,470	£1,370

Other Charged Services

A Charges for Services and Support outside the Agreement

For those schools choosing ***not*** to take up the agreement, or for schools wishing to access further consultancy support, the following charges will apply:

- £300 for evening or twilight sessions
- £600 daily charge
- Training and development courses will be charged at full rate.

(Schools that are part of the agreement will receive a discount on “in-house” courses arranged by the Schools Team. Charges currently start around £35.)

All charges shown exclude VAT.

B Academy / Federation / Trust Status / Free Schools

Costs associated with the establishment of a free school or Church of England Academy, including changing the status from Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled to Academy and issues relating to hard/soft federations or Trust schools fall outside this agreement. For guidance on these issues, please contact David Morton.

Access to the services within this agreement is available to all church schools within the Diocese of St Albans, regardless of legal status.

C VA Schools and Central Government Capital Grant Projects, eg SCA

An administrative charge will be applied to School Condition Allocation Projects (SCA) (or any replacement capital programme) to offset some of the administrative costs incurred by the DBE for accessing, managing and cash-flowing capital projects supported by Central Government Capital grants. Only those VA school projects benefiting from a grant would attract the charge.

D VAT

All prices shown are exclusive of VAT. VAT will be charged at the standard rate and will show separately on requests for payment.

E Complaints Procedure

In the event of a school being dissatisfied with any part of the service, in the first instance personnel should speak to the officer or consultant involved. If this does not resolve the issue, they should approach the Diocesan Director of Education.

Representation and Networking

In providing these services, the officers and members of the Board will be involved in representing the schools of the Diocese in a variety of ways:

- At **national** level - by maintaining close links with the Education Office of the Archbishops' Council and the National Society (including their legal advice scheme)
- At **regional** level - by maintaining close links with the education teams of the other dioceses in the Eastern Region
- At **LA** level - by regular liaison with officers and by membership of the appropriate committees and forums including:
 - Education Select or Scrutiny Committees
 - Admissions forums
 - SACREs (Statutory Advisory Councils for Religious Education)
 - Schools forums
- By a partnership agreement with the National College for Teaching & Leadership and its regional and local offices
- By regular contact with governors' organisations
- By regular contact with bishops, archdeacons and other diocesan advisers, and with the Bishop's Council
- By working in partnership with other denominations involved in education

In representing the educational interests of the Diocese the Officers of the Board will:

- Foster and develop the partnership that exists between the Diocese and the LAs
- Protect the status of church schools and their distinctive nature
- Promote the importance and the continuance of the Church of England sector
- Promote the establishment of new church schools and of partnerships with community schools
- Represent church schools to the wider church and to diocesan groups
- Represent church schools in the press and in public and community debate

In delivering these services, the Officers of the Board will provide schools with regular opportunities for contact, consultation and support, including:

- Annual conferences for headteachers / deputy headteachers / aspiring leaders
- Meetings for secondary headteachers
- An annual Retreat
- Facilitating meetings of local groups of headteachers and chairs of governors

Diocese of St Albans: Schools Team – Contact Details

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Living God's Love in Education: Enabling Life in all its Fullness

Going Deeper into God • Transforming Communities • Making New Disciples

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