

Leadership issues in emerging multi-academy trusts (MATs)

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The route to academisation

- Education Action Zones
- Specialist Secondary Schools
- Fresh Start Schools
- City Technology Colleges
- City Academies (2000)
- Academies (2002)
- Sponsor academies (2004 - 2002)
- Converter academies and primary schools (2010)
- Academies Act (2010)
- Special schools (2011)

The cost and impact

- 2002 = 3 academies opened;
- 2006 = 46 academies at an additional cost of £1.3bn;
- 2010 = target of 400 academies; 207 reached;
- 2010 new government - open to all schools;
- Jan 2011 – 407 academies, 254 in process;
- Sept 2011 – 1300 academies
- now "a larger pool of great schools to build chains and improve under-performing schools" ... the best way to "breach the educational Berlin Wall between private and state education."

2010 Academies Act

The act moved the focus of the academies programme away from addressing underperformance in deprived areas and towards a system-wide policy ostensibly aimed at increasing school autonomy and reducing the role and influence of Local Authorities in education.

Academies in England

Only 207 academies in place before 2010

Phase	Open	Applied	Total
Primary	3707	921	4628
Secondary	2109	213	2322
Special	212	71	283
Alternative	59	33	92

A total of 7325 by March, 2017

Maintained Schools

Type of establishment	Primary	Secondary	Total
Academies	22%	69%	29%
Free/studio schools & UTCs	1%	7%	2%
LA Maintained	77%	31%	71%

*Multi-academy
trusts*



Multi-academy trusts (MATs)

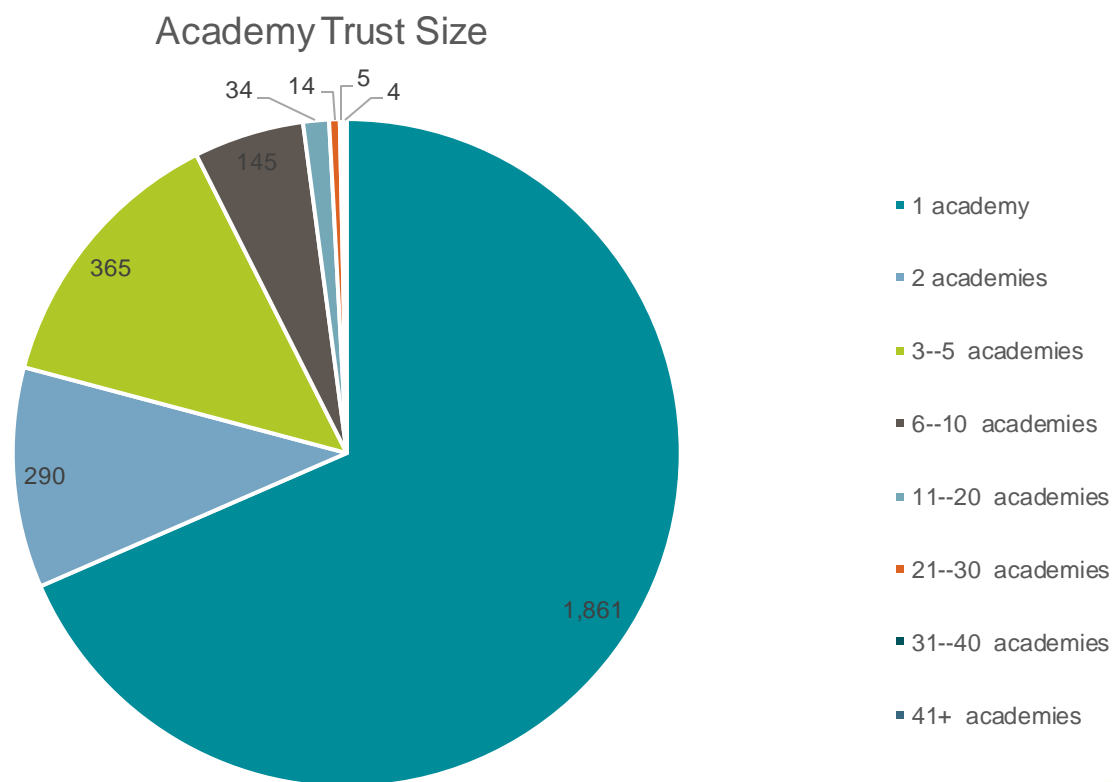
- A multi-academy trust (MAT) is established to undertake a strategic collaboration across a number of schools;
- The MAT is accountable for the performance of each school in the group, although each can still have their own governing body which operates subject to delegation of power from the MAT;
- All staff will be employed by one employer and the trust can share the additional reporting responsibilities required of an academy.

MAT structure(s)

- Academies are established as companies limited by guarantee with a Board of Directors that acts as a Trust;
- The Academy Trust has exempt charity status, regulated by the Department for Education;
- The Board of Directors, or Trustees, will sit at the top with ultimate responsibility for the governance of the trust;
- One academy will be the MAT sponsor;
- Directors normally include the CEO;
- MATs will operate a central trust function, employing the CEO, Finance Director and incur other central costs which are shared across the trust.

Growth of MATs

2011 = 391
 2017 = 1786 (857)





Research and findings



Research Design

- Opportunity sample from MAT leadership development programmes;
- 24 semi-structured interviews with CEOs to date;
- Interviews explore 4 themes:
 - purpose and driving force
 - infrastructure
 - governance
 - relationships

Purpose and driving force

- Variety of reasons for creating MAT
 - Expediency ('manic' and 'mates' MATs)
 - Independent-maintained school alliance
 - Avaricious
 - World faiths working well together
 - Majority = school improvement and enhanced social capital

Infrastructure

- Typically embryonic - “like a train hurtling down the tracks for which we are laying the lines just before we arrive”;
- Two main functions (5% management fee):
 - Back office
 - School improvement
- Admin and policy dominant in early stages;
- Main approach to improvement was spreading good practice across MAT.

Governance

- Fundamental change to role of governing bodies:
 - “governing bodies are disingenuous - governance is with trust board as the MAT is a formalised business”
- Reduction of local governing body size - often renamed committees;
- Perceived purpose is to set up data collection and feedback systems for each school which showed the MAT to be making a positive difference.

Relationships

- CEO (or equivalent) coming to terms with demands of role = One Step Beyond!
- Sometimes heads of school/school improvement officers favoured over individual headteachers;
- Dealing with consequences of underperformance in partner schools;
- How will next generation of CEOs be developed?

Scaling up

- Main emerging issue in relation to themes is the switch to a bigger frame of reference, particularly for former headteachers;
- Secondary issue, but still very important, is governance;
- Issue of RSC intervention/overview did not feature often.

Addendum: Church of England MATs

- Memorandum of understanding with the DfE which stipulates that the diocese owns Church of England schools and has the first opportunity to show it is capable of providing a solution if a school is struggling;
- Diocesan board(s) of education (and DDE) central to establishing and running MAT;
- DBEs actively exploring hubs and umbrella trusts (with NSC support).

Follow up

- Project updates to be found on ResearchGate;
- Papers and presentations also to be found on AcademiaEdu and LinkedIn;
- Notification of publications and updates will be on Twitter = @maletrevor
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Thank you!

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