

Exeter Diocesan Education Network (EDEN)

An Introduction

The Diocese of Exeter established the Exeter Diocesan Education Network (EDEN) to discharge many of its functions for Church of England academies. EDEN was required, in part, due to the unincorporated nature of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education (EDBE). Although EDBE is a statutory body, formed under the Diocesan Board of Education Measure 1991 legislation, it is not a company in its own right and it functions as part of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd, which has a much larger role. In order to identify the DBE function from the wider EDBF function in matters pertaining to academies, EDEN was developed as the ‘vehicle’ to enable this corporate separation.

EDEN was formed on 20th July 2011. It is a private company limited by guarantee. The Trustees (who are both Shareholders and Directors of EDEN) comprise the Director of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education together with 6 appointees of the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education (EDBE), of which 4 must be members of the EDBE. EDEN’s Objects include;

“establishing and maintaining Academies (primarily but not exclusively Church of England Academies) under the direction of the Diocesan Board of Education”

Every Academy Trust which includes a Church of England school has the Diocese of Exeter as part of that Trust’s corporate ownership (the Members). EDEN is essentially ‘the Diocese of Exeter’ in terms of church academy education.

EDEN is a corporate body and needs to have a representation at each Academy Trust who can attend meetings, represent the Diocese’s viewpoints etc. EDEN appoints a named representative to each Academy Trust; they are appointed by EDEN to represent EDEN (and as such, to represent the Diocese) in addition to the more general roles and function of Members in Academy Trusts. Diocesan consent for a church school to convert to academy status requires a named EDEN representative to be in place ahead of conversion.

The responsibility of the EDEN Member representative at each Academy Trust includes;

- To be a ‘guardian’ of the Academy Trust.
- To ensure the Academy Trust acts within its Objects as set out in the Articles.
- To support the Academy Trust and be an advocate for it.
- To carry out the business effectively, including attending meetings, working with and supporting the Foundation Directors and LGB governors.

- To support the induction of new Academy Trust Members and commit to the continued professional development of the Members.
- To work within established Diocesan processes to enable EDEN to appoint (and where necessary remove) Directors of the Academy Trust.
- To safeguard and promote the values of the Academy Trust and its Christian ethos and to support, foster and nurture an open and inclusive relationship between the Academy Trust and the Church of England through the Diocese of Exeter and its officers, local clergy and parish organisations and through the academy's Foundation Trustees.
- Through its actions, to be mindful of, and minimise risk to, the Foundation/Land and Buildings Trustees of the Church schools in the Academy Trust.

EDEN Representatives are required to attend training and receive briefings to support their particular role in representing the Diocese of Exeter in the life of a Church of England academy at Member level.

Academy Trust Members have the power to 'wind up' the Academy Trust, amend the Articles, change the name of the company, appoint other Members and appoint and remove Directors.

As a corporate Member, it is EDEN (*and not the EDEN Representative*) who appoints the Foundation Directors on the particular Academy Trust / MAT Board. An individual academy / MAT Trust Board may also have other Foundation Members (depending on the schools' original category and overall number of Members) and all appointments must be undertaken in accordance with the company's Articles. The appointment of EDEN Member representative, Foundation Directors and other Church of England Foundation appointments (where appropriate) are progressed through the Diocesan Admissions and Governance Adviser at the Exeter Diocesan Board of Education governance@exeter.anglican.org