



# LDBS Annual Summary 2023

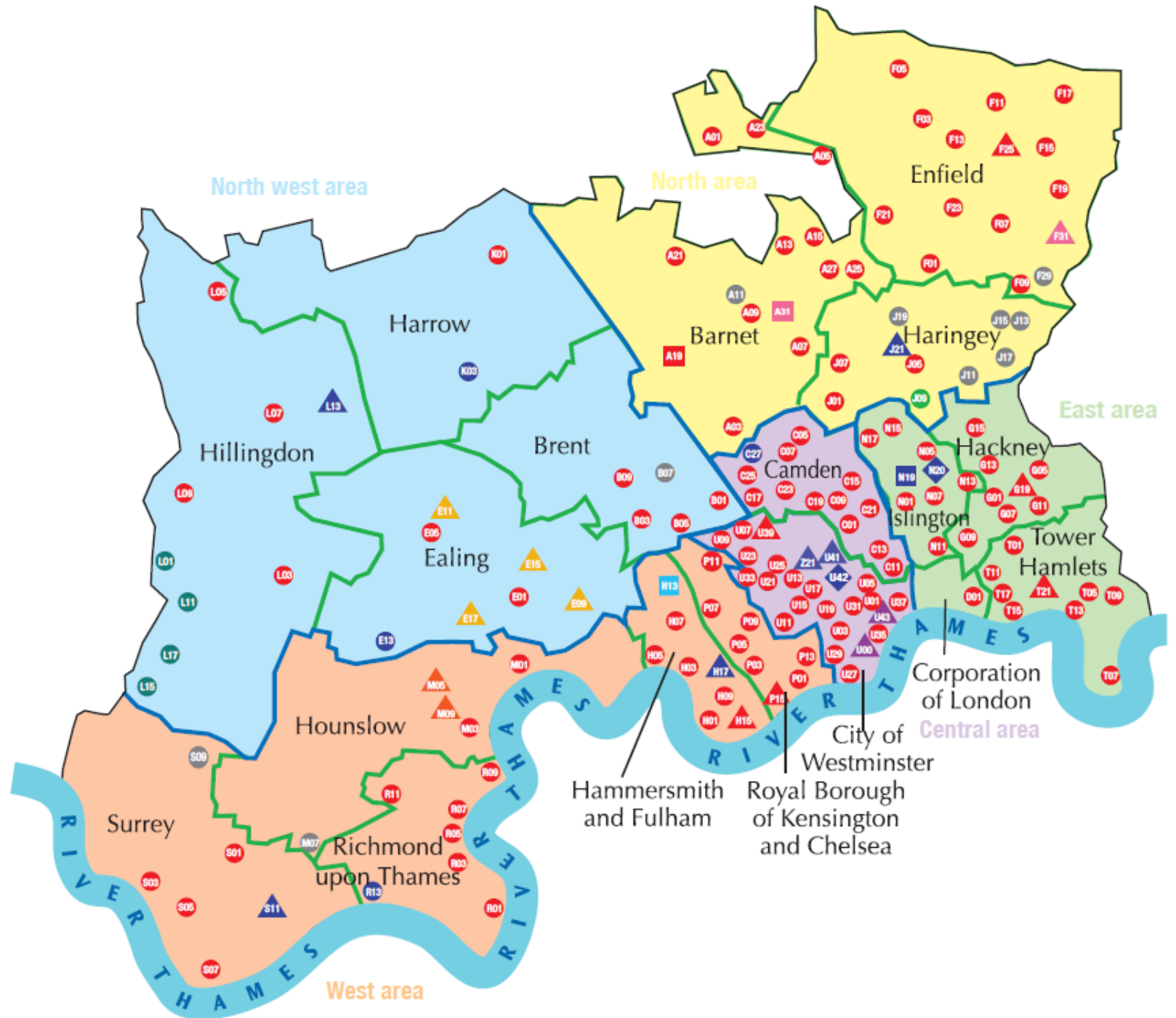
**Report for the London Diocesan Synod 05.12.23**



## LDBS context:

A diverse community of 155 Church schools serving 58,000+ pupils.

Falling pupil rolls remain a significant issue. There were 1,600 fewer primary-age pupils attending Church schools in London in Oct 22 compared to Oct 19.



# LDBS service: Supporting our school community in three ways



## Advocacy

LDBS represents school concerns, promotes the interests of church schools and highlights the key difference they make to the education system.



## Collaboration

LDBS provides the network through which individual schools, partnerships, federations and trusts can work together to strengthen education.



## School Support

LDBS offers bespoke support to individual schools so that they can provide the best possible education for students.

# Deeply Christian Schools:

Looking back to  
2022-23 and ahead  
to 2023-24

## Supporting the Christian character of schools

- In 2022-23 LDBS provided training for schools to prepare for the new SIAMS framework (the statutory inspection for Church schools) which came into effect in September 2023.
- The whole SIAMS inspection is now framed around the school's vision, which must be a theologically-rooted Christian vision.
- SIAMS inspection outcomes for LDBS schools continue to far exceed national norms.
- In 2022-23 the LDBS RE adviser provided three whole-day training sessions for RE leads and a well-received video training resource.
- The LDBS school adviser team has been reorganised to include, from September 2023, a full-time SIAMS partner whose role is to support schools to develop their Christian character and theologically-rooted vision.

## Supporting church-school relationships

- Clergy-headteacher network meetings are well established now across the diocese. They are used to inspire and equip clergy and headteachers to develop their partnership working, to deal with general issues that arise from time to time, and for clergy as well as heads to provide feedback to LDBS.
- In some settings, Living in Love and Faith has highlighted stark differences of opinion between school leaders, governors, parents and/ or clergy. LDBS understands its role as being to ensure that every Church school has the opportunity to receive ministry and support from its parish, and for every Church school to be equipped for SIAMS inspections, which include consideration of 'how well school leaders work with local churches'. Consequently, LDBS has started to offer mediation support to churches and schools where relationships have become strained.
- The scheme to provide 2<sup>nd</sup> year curates with a four-day placement in a church school is developing well. In 2022-23, 11 curates from 3 Episcopal Areas and 6 schools took part. In 2023-24, more than 40 curates from all Episcopal Areas and 15 schools are due to take part.

“A lovely opportunity for clergy and headteachers to get together and talk openly with like-minded people.”

Clergy-Headteacher network meeting feedback

“Keeping communications open between school, clergy and LDBS is really important so we can share ideas, provide support and resolve any issues.”

Clergy-Headteacher network meeting feedback

“It had an amazing impact on me. I now feel that I would welcome some role in a church school, as this placement has shown me what can be achieved with good school vision and the Christian ethos.”

Curate

# Excellent schools with excellent leaders :

Looking back to 2022-23 and ahead to 2023-24



## Supporting school improvement

- 75% of LDBS Church primary schools choose to purchase additional school improvement support services from LDBS through our traded service, Grow Education Partners Ltd.
- The proportion of LDBS Church schools rated by Ofsted as Good or Outstanding has risen to 95%.

## Training and nurturing a generation of diverse leaders

- The LDBS SCITT (School Centred Initial Teacher Training) has been successfully recredited by the government and judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding in every category.
- More than 50% of trainees have a global majority heritage.
- 10% of LDBS Church schools are led by someone with a global majority background; this means there is significant under-representation. From September 2023 LDBS has launched 'The Platform'; a programme of mentoring and development for middle leaders with a global majority heritage.
- From September 2023 LDBS has been appointed as a delivery partner for the Church of England Foundation for Education suite of NPQs (National Professional Qualifications).

## Governor and trustee recruitment and development

- LDBS is grateful to synod members for support with recruitment of school governors. The vacancy rate is higher than we would wish, currently at 17%. Our policy remains that LDBS appoints Foundation governors who are active members of a Christian Church, because Foundation governors are responsible for preserving and promoting the religious character of Church schools. We are keeping this policy under review in the light of vacancy rates.
- 25% of new school governors appointed in 2022-23 have a global majority heritage.
- LDBS has published advice for governors in relation to school Partnerships and Federations. In 2023-24 we will be publishing a Diocesan Academisation Strategy as required by government.
- Our new Head of Governance took up her post in June 2023 and is currently reviewing training materials to make sure they equip governors to develop deeply Christian schools.

“It’s great to have LDBS on the front foot.”

Headteacher

“I have enrolled on this course because I am passionate that we recruit and support greater numbers of strong leaders from all backgrounds.”

Headteacher

“All trainees receive exceptional training and pastoral support.”

LDBS SCITT Ofsted March 2023

“The advice provided by our LDBS link adviser and HR adviser was insightful and allowed us to make an informed decision. They attended meetings and supported us throughout.”

Governor



# Inspiring places to learn:

Looking back to 2022-23 and ahead to 2023-24

Ensuring pupils have inspiring, safe places to learn LDBS is the Responsible Body for VA school sites. This means that each year LDBS receives a government grant which is ringfenced for school maintenance projects.

- LDBS prioritises potential projects and allocates funds according to parameters set by the DfE. Urgent projects relating to compliance, health & safety and safeguarding are the top priority. Urgent maintenance is that which, if not addressed, will lead to the closure of all or a part of the school building.
- LDBS has been successful in applying for SALIX grants to support the decarbonisation of the school estate.
- Property grants are the most significant element of the LDBS budget.
- In 2022-23 LDBS oversaw 150 projects with a total value of £9 million. Projects ranged in value from less than £10,000 to a £1.5 million SALIX-funded decarbonisation project.
- LDBS is accountable to government for use of funds.
- Looking ahead, we will be reviewing the way we prioritise and manage projects and developing creative approaches to enable us to achieve our Net Zero Carbon ambition.

## RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete)

As the Responsible Body, over the last 12 months LDBS has invested in surveys of each VA school building to identify any RAAC after it was determined to be life-expired and at risk of sudden collapse.

- Two LDBS Church schools have been identified with RAAC: Stepney All Saints, Tower Hamlets, and St Mary Magdalene and St Stephen's School, Westminster.
- Evolving DfE policy from the end of August to mid-September 2023 led to the temporary closure of one school and the relocation of two cohorts at the other.
- LDBS has worked tirelessly to advocate, mitigate, and support schools to minimise the impact for pupils.
- This work will be ongoing through 2023-24 as we partner with the schools and DfE to develop permanent solutions.

“The support I have received has been phenomenal. LDBS exudes passion for Church schools and support for Headteachers, and I have been a grateful recipient of that support especially since the debacle of RAAC unfolded.

Throughout the summer, as things developed, LDBS were constantly in touch and signposting me to various avenues of support. Over recent weeks they have been ‘hands on’, helping me navigate the communications with DfE, providing top-quality support and ensuring a swift and efficient remediation strategy.”

Paul Woods  
Headteacher, Stepney All Saints

# The challenge of school closures:

## Looking back to 2022-23 and ahead to 2023-24

### Support for schools with falling rolls

LDBS has been advocating for Church schools with stakeholders and strategic partners including Ofsted, the Regional Director's Office, London Councils, DfE, and individual Local Authorities. We have been on the front foot in making the case that an overall strategic approach is needed. There are no easy answers, and many councils are grappling with painful decisions about school closure.

LDBS now includes advice about marketing and communications within our core service. The People & Culture Team provide support for staff restructure.

Our approach to Partnerships and Federations is more consistent, with clear advice and protocols. More than half of Church primary schools are now in some form of formal collaboration. There is good evidence that this strategic support is having a positive impact on the stability of vulnerable schools.

### School closures

Two primary schools in Westminster amalgamated in August 2023 (St Mary Magdalene & St Stephen's). Great credit is due to the Executive Head and Governors who ensured that the process ran smoothly and the painful impact on the community was minimised.

There are no further closures or amalgamations planned at this stage but several very vulnerable schools.

Some local authorities are talking publicly about a need to reduce school places by 10+ forms of entry into Reception. This would mean that further school closures and amalgamations are inevitable. School closure is a significant risk for any school that can't provide a good education within a balanced budget.

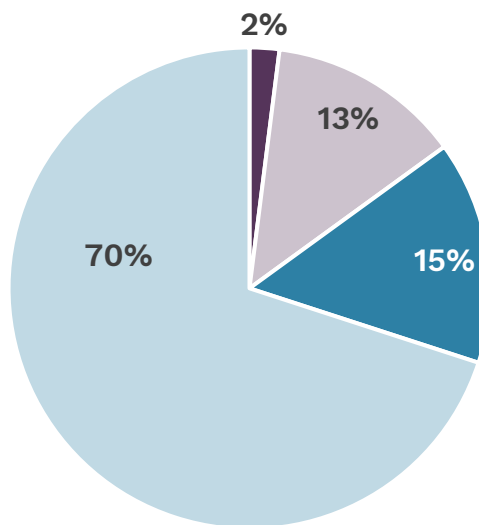
### Land ownership

- Usually, the site of a Church school is held by site trustees for the purposes of education.
- Site trustees may be the LDF, LDBS, Vicar & Wardens or a separate trust.
- The closure of a school usually means that the Trust on which the land is held fails.
- Where this happens, LDBS must follow a legal process to make a Section 554 application to the Secretary of State for Education.
- The process assumes a land transfer to the Uniform Statutory Trust (UST). LDBS must invest UST assets for the benefit of children in other church schools.
- The process is complex and site ownership can also be complex. It is difficult to navigate amid a school closure that itself will be a painful and challenging experience. Therefore, in dialogue with the national church, LDBS hopes to publish guidance in 2023-24 to provide clarity for schools and parishes that may find themselves in this position in the future.



# Financial Summary 2022-23

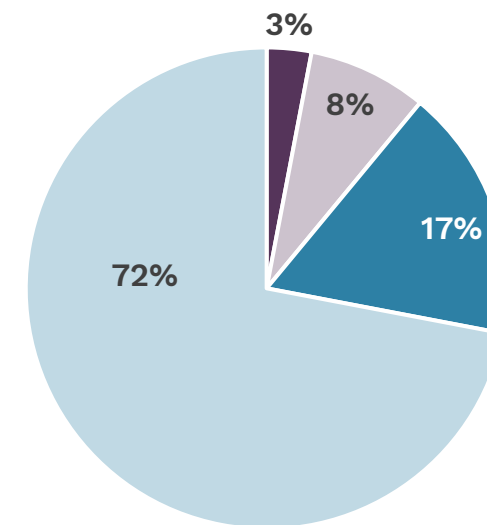
## TOTAL INCOME 2022-23 £19,560,000



■ LDF ■ Investments ■ Schools ■ Public bodies

- Grants from public bodies mainly comprise ringfenced capital and maintenance funds for schools, and funds for initial teacher training.
- Income from schools includes receipts from Church schools for the Core service and receipts from Church, Roman Catholic and community schools for school improvement, HR and data protection services provided through GROW (the LDBS trading arm).
- The majority of the LDF grant is an in-kind grant to reflect Causton Street costs.
- Investment income is generated by the Uniform Statutory Trust (UST). Each Diocesan Board of Education has a UST. It is a statutory trust fund which holds property that is transferred by the s554 process and other investments.

## TOTAL EXPENDITURE 2022-23 £15,000,000



■ Causton St ■ Operational ■ Staff ■ School property

- LDBS is accountable to ESFA (Education and Skills Funding Agency) and other government bodies for expenditure of public funds, including funds allocated for property maintenance and development.
- In 2022-23 there were 30-35 members of LDBS staff, including some part-time. Staff costs on the chart above include the additional cost of consultants whose work includes initial teacher training and GROW support.
- LDBS staff are experts in their field. Education advisers are current or former headteachers and include two Ofsted and two SIAMS inspectors. Three are RE specialists. Three are trained mediators. Three are Members of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.



**London Diocesan Board for Schools**  
**[www.ldbs.co.uk](http://www.ldbs.co.uk) 020 7932 1100**

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Registered Address: London Diocesan House, 36 Causton Street, London, SW1P 4AU