

Introduction

Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust (Bishop Bewick CET) is a rapidly expanding multi-academy trust, part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Muckle LLP is a leading commercial law firm based in North East England. Its market-leading education practice has helped over 200 schools convert to academies.

Bloom is an DfE approved procurement marketplace supplier for NEPRO³ and CCS Education based contracts, allowing schools to buy and manage specialist services effectively and efficiently.

Situation

Bishop Bewick CET were seeking experienced legal representation to facilitate their academy expansion to include a total of 39 identified schools from June 2020 through to August 2022.

Bishop Bewick CET approached Bloom as managers of the DfE recommended NEPRO³ framework, a fully compliant route to access cost-effective specialised support for this project. Bishop Bewick CET required legal representation to help facilitate the identified schools to join the Trust as part of the conversion process, as well as to suitably represent the individually identified schools through the process.

With access to a library of standard specifications specifically designed for schools, Bloom provided Bishop Bewick CET with an outcomes-based project specification and held a mini-competition amongst suppliers to drive best value to support the CET expansion. Muckle LLP was identified as an experienced commercial law firm based in North East with extensive experience advising over 200 schools in their conversion to academies.

Actions

Muckle successfully won the competitive tender process which resulted in it being instructed to advise the Trust on its expansion as part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle academisation programme. This will run for 2 years and will result in the MAT growing to 39 schools. This involves all Catholic schools within the MATs' regions being converted into the MATs.

Muckle is advising on the full conversion processes covering a range of issues including employee liability issues and some complex property arrangements. Since the original engagement, Muckle have also supported the Trust on a range of issues separate to the academisation programme.

Bishop Bewick CET

- *Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust* is a rapidly expanding multi-academy trust, part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

Process

- *Bishop Bewick CET* were seeking legal representation to support their academy expansion of 39 schools.
- *Bloom* was engaged as a DfE recommended route to procurement to develop the project specification and identify the most appropriate supplier.
- *Muckle LLP* were identified as a leading commercial law firm who have advised over 200 schools in their conversion to academies.

Next Steps

- To date, there are 13 schools within the Trust, with a further 21 set to join by July 2022.

Savings

- Nearly 20% savings on costs against budget.
- Freeing up staff capacity to focus on supporting students through the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Muckle have provided an excellent service through some complex Trust transfers. This has involved making very tight deadlines and dealing with multiple schools at once, not to mention coping with the issues around COVID-19”

Mrs Anita Bath, Chief Executive Officer, Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust

Benefits

Bishop Bewick CET’s expansion requires navigating complex legal issues surrounding commercial transfer agreements, funding agreements and land transfers from multiple stakeholders. By engaging with an experienced provider, Bishop Bewick CET is able to dedicate their resources internally and respond to issues surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the reassurance of knowing that their expansion would progress as scheduled.

Further, by engaging Muckle LLP through Bloom’s marketplace, Bishop Bewick CET were able to achieve a **near 20% saving** on costs against budget, which was particularly important during the period of uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The team at Muckle are always immediately helpful and demonstrate real expertise in this area, navigating our Trust through what is a very challenging process”

Mrs Anita Bath, Chief Executive Officer, Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust

Summary

Muckle LLP continues to advise Bishop Bewick CET on their expansion with another 21 schools set to join the Trust by July 2022.

Bloom’s experienced education team stand ready to support schools and academies through the unique challenges they face and offer a preferred route for educational institutions to appoint and manage specialist professional services through the NEPRO³ framework.

[Get in touch with the team today to discuss your requirements.](#)