



Department  
for Education

## Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 21 March 2024

### Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

AB members who sent their apologies for the meeting have, where possible, been consulted on all projects before the meeting. Their views are reflected in the discussion at the meeting (where appropriate). This excludes items where that member declared a conflict of interest.

### Regional Director (RD) chair

- Dame Kate Dethridge

### Advisory Board (AB) members

- Sarah Bennett
- Dame Yasmin Bevan
- Sarah Brown
- Sir Andrew Carter
- Stuart Gardner
- Paul James
- Claire Lowe
- Sue Samson MBE

### DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield, Deputy Director South East Regions Group

### Representations received

- No representations were made for any items discussed at this meeting.

### General Discussion Points

- A temperature check was completed for the region.

## **Free School Presumption**

### **Project: To discuss Buckinghamshire's preferred trust option for the Hampden Fields Primary School project.**

#### **AB discussion:**

- AB members discussed the geographical location of the preferred trust, Reach2.
- The performance results of Reach2 were discussed.
- Input was provided regarding the trust's surplus and financial projections by SFSO.
- The potential admissions structure of the school was highlighted.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Sarah Bennett. CEO of Inspiring Futures Through Learning. Papers were not provided for this item and Sarah was not present during the discussion.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Free School Presumption**

### **Project: To discuss Buckinghamshire's preferred trust option for the Kingsbrook 2 Primary School project.**

#### **AB discussion:**

- AB members discussed the preferred trust option – Inspiring Futures Partnership.
- AB members discussed the geographical location of the preferred trust and other options from Buckinghamshire LA.
- Governance capability of the trust was discussed.
- The potential admissions and Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) specialism of the school was highlighted.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Sarah Bennett. CEO of Inspiring Futures Through Learning. Papers were not provided for this item and Sarah was not present during the discussion.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Free School Presumption**

### **Project: To discuss Buckinghamshire's preferred trust option for the South West Milton Keynes Primary School project.**

#### **AB discussion:**

- AB members discussed the preferred trust option, Inspiring Futures Through Learning.
- Governance capability of the trust was discussed.
- AB members discussed the capacity of the trust.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Sarah Bennett. CEO of Inspiring Futures Through Learning. Papers were not provided for this item and Sarah was not present during the discussion.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss the application for St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Bicester, to join The Pope Francis Multi Academy Company (PFMAC), Oxfordshire.**

### **AB discussion:**

- The AB members noted that PFMAC is the only Catholic trust in Oxfordshire.
- The board discussed the trust's finances, strengths, and capacity and whether this would sustain further growth.
- The board agreed that feedback should be provided to the trust that there is disappointment with its finances and the lack of legal expertise and a primary school practitioner on the board.
- The trust should implement the School Resource Manager Adviser recommendations.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss the application for Willen Primary School to join The Denbigh Alliance, Milton Keynes.**

### **AB discussion:**

- The governance of the trust was discussed and the build-up of capacity to support primary provision.
- The feeder links were discussed.
- The board discussed the trust's growth and improvement plans, and it was noted that work had begun between the primary schools and the trust.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Sarah Bennett. CEO Inspiring Futures Through Learning. Sarah was provided the papers but was not present for the discussion and did not provide any written comments on the papers. Sarah collaborated with The Denbigh Alliance Trust.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss the application for St Bartholomew's School to add a satellite site, West Berkshire.**

### **AB discussion:**

- The board considered the application from St Bartholomew's school.
- A question was asked as to why the school was still a SAT.
- The board agreed that feedback should be provided to the trust board that there were concerns with the fragility of the finances and if they had considered joining a MAT.
- RD was happy to approve in principle subject to a School Resource Management Adviser deployment.

### **RD decision:** Approve with condition:

- To deploy a School Resource Management Adviser to the trust before the satellite site opens.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss the application for Trevelyan Middle School to open a Resourced Provision, Windsor & Maidenhead.**

### **AB discussion:**

- AB members discussed the application from the Trevelyan Middle School.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss the application for Thames Valley School to host a SEN Satellite provision at The Ridgeway Primary School, Reading.**

### **AB discussion:**

- AB members discussed the complexities of setting up and running an off-site SEN satellite provision for children with complex needs.
- The trust's specialist experience and capacity to successfully deliver a SEN satellite provision was discussed.
- The demand for SEND places in Reading was mentioned. The proposed pupil build-up of the satellite provision was discussed.

- The life span of the satellite provision was discussed.
- The school's preparations for an upcoming Ofsted inspection and their self-evaluation was discussed.
- The early findings of the recent external review of governance which explored the trust and school governance arrangements was discussed.
- The previous attempts at a satellite provision were discussed, including whether lessons had been learned from these.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Significant Change**

**Project: To discuss the application from Uplands Academy to close their sixth form provision, East Sussex.**

**AB discussion:**

- The implications for existing pupils were discussed.
- The output from the consultation was reviewed.
- The board considered the knock-on effects in the local area of the closure proposal.
- The board discussed the potential risk to the academy's viability, given the reduction in pupils on roll that would result from the closure of the sixth form.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss the application for St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Burgess Hill to join Bosco Catholic Education Trust, West Sussex.**

**AB discussion:**

- The trust's capacity and the benefits that this application would bring were discussed.
- The trust's growth plans and the importance of showing evidence of impact on pupil outcomes over time were discussed.
- The RD was happy to approve in principle, subject to the condition that the trust commissions a School Resource Management Adviser and an External Review of Governance to aid the trust's development considering their current and anticipated growth.

**RD decision:** Approve with conditions:

- The trust commissions a visit from a School Resource Management Adviser.
- The trust commissions an External Review of Governance.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss application for Foundry Lane Primary School to join Gateway Multi Academy Trust, Southampton.**

**AB discussion:**

- The lack of primary expertise on the board was raised.
- The School Improvement Plan (SIP) was discussed.
- RD was happy to approve in principle, subject to the condition set.

**RD decision:** Approve with condition:

- That the trust appoint someone with primary experience to the board.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss application for Frogmore Community College to join Weydon Multi Academy Trust, Hampshire.**

**AB discussion:**

- The capacity of the trust was discussed.
- Performance and pupil intake was discussed.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss application for Beacon Hill Community Primary School to join Weydon Multi Academy Trust, Surrey.**

**AB discussion:**

- AB members discussed the application from Beacon Hill Community Primary School.

- The capacity of the trust to take on several schools at the same time was discussed.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Sir Andrew Carter. CEO South Farnham Educational Trust. Papers were provided but Sir Andrew was not present during the discussion. South Farnham was approached as a possible transfer option.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss application for Clifton Hill School to join Weydon Multi Academy Trust, Surrey.**

**Project: To discuss application for Brooklands School – Split Site to join Weydon Multi Academy Trust, Surrey.**

**AB discussion:**

- The capacity of the trust to take on several schools at the same time was discussed.
- SEND management in the local authority was raised.
- RD was happy to approve in principle, subject to the condition set.

**RD decision:** Approve with condition:

- The 3 conversions in Surrey will need to be staggered due to local authority capacity.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## **Converter Academy Order**

**Project: To discuss the application for St Francis Catholic Primary School to join Xavier Catholic Education Trust, Surrey.**

**Project: To discuss the application for St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Redhill to join Xavier Catholic Education Trust, Surrey.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board discussed the pipeline of schools converting and the capacity of the trust.
- AB members discussed the available training for CEOs to take on large MATs.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

## Significant Change

**Project:** To discuss application from Guildford County School to add an ASD and Communication Interaction Unit, Surrey.

**AB discussion:**

- The board discussed the strengths of the application.
- The timeline was discussed and the potential risk to pupil placements in the event the building is not ready.
- The board recommended that the trust appoints an individual with practitioner experience in the special school sector.
- The board asked that feedback be provided to the school about their concerns that the financial plans for year 1 of the unit projected a deficit.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

## List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting

**Project:** To discuss sponsor options for Riders Infant and Junior Schools, Hampshire.

**Type of decision:** Sponsored Route

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** The sponsor option agreement was not in place.

**Project:** To discuss the application for Knole Academy Trust (SAT) to transfer to Aletheia Academies Trust, North Kent.

**Type of decision:** Trust Change.

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** The paper was not available by the deadline.

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken by the RD outside of AB meetings.

**Project:** Lightwater Village School, Surrey, GLF Schools

**Decision type:** Significant Change - Fast track: Lower the age range from 4-7 to 2-7 to allow the school to open a nursery provision.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** None.



## **Project: Freeland CofE Primary School, Oxfordshire, Eynsham Partnership Academy Trust**

**Decision type:** Significant Change - Fast track sign change: lower the age range to 2-11 to open nursery provision.

**RD decision:** Defer

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** None.

## **Academy Opening Approved in Principle**

List of academies approved to open on 1 April 2024

- **Project:** Carterton Primary School, **Oxfordshire**, joining Ridgeway Education Trust.
- **Project:** Hugh Christie School, **Kent**, joining Leigh Academies Trust.
- **Project:** Brooksward School, **Milton Keynes**, joining The Denbigh Alliance.
- **Project:** Drayton Park School, **Milton Keynes**, joining The Denbigh Alliance.
- **Project:** Glebelands School, **Surrey**, joining the Learning Partners Academy Trust.
- **Project:** Hagbourne Church of England Primary School, **Oxfordshire**, joining the Ridgeway Education Trust.
- **Project:** Hawkedon Primary School, **Wokingham**, joining the Orchard Learning Alliance.
- **Project:** Hurst Green Infant School, **Surrey**, joining the Tandridge Learning Trust.
- **Project:** Little Chalfont Primary School, **Buckinghamshire**, joining the Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust.
- **Project:** Powell Corderoy Primary School, **Surrey**, joining the The Alliance Multi-Academy Trust.
- **Project:** South Lake Primary School, **Wokingham**, joining the Orchard Learning Alliance.
- **Project:** St Francis Church of England Primary School, **Oxfordshire**, joining the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust.
- **Project:** St Martin's CofE Controlled Primary School, Dorking, **Surrey**, joining the The Alliance Multi-Academy Trust.