



Department
for Education

Notes of Meeting: South West Headteacher Board

Tuesday 25 May

Attendance

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

HTB 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 Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Hannah Woodhouse, RSC

Headteacher Board (HTB) members

- Brian Hooper (HTB)
- Suzanne Flack (HTB)
- Sally Apps (HTB)
- Steve Savory (HTB)
- Michael Larsen (HTB)
- Alun Williams (HTB)

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Paul Jones (HTB)
- Joy Tubbs (HTB)

DfE senior civil servants

- Lucy Livings (Deputy Director)
- Matthew Stevenson (Deputy Director)

Representations received.

- One representation was received for the proposal for Dorchester Middle School to academy transfer to Wessex Learning Trust, **Trust change**.

This representation was shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve Morchard Bishop Church of England School, **Devon** converting to academy status and joining Link Academy Trust

HTB discussion:

- **Governance:** HTB members noted the distributed leadership at the Trust and referenced the DfE's small schools' guidance.
- **Finances:** Members noted the strong financial position of the Trust and queried the top slice figure. Members discussed use of reserves and direction of travel of financial leadership of trust.
- **Other:** HTB members were made aware that the Diocese has approved this.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve Sir John Hunt Community Sports College, **Plymouth** converting to academy status and joining Greenshaw Learning Trust

HTB discussion:

- **Context:** HTB members were advised this is the last remaining maintained secondary in Plymouth and is currently RI. It was agreed that support from a strong trust would help the school to improve.
- **Growth:** HTB members discussed the growth plans for this trust, recognising that it would be helpful if the trust grow their existing Plymouth footprint to secure the hub's sustainability but be cautious about growth trust wide.
- **Risks:** HTB members noted that the school is PFI and part of a shared campus, therefore contracts will need to be reviewed ahead of academy conversion. Cornwall Council have agreed to provide legal support to Plymouth due to their expertise, so that conversion can take place as quickly as possible.
- **Other:** HTB members were keen for the trust to continue to have a focus on mobility and inclusion.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve The Purbeck School, **Dorset** converting to academy status and joining Wessex Multi Academy Trust

HTB discussion:

- **Governance:** It was noted that trust will have a review of governance soon.
- **Leadership:** It was noted that trust have put in place a deputy CEO. It was noted that the CEO has stepped down as the Headteacher of Thomas Hardy so he has more capacity to focus on further developing the trust.
- **School improvement:** It was noted that if the trust continues to grow they will need to further develop structures and processes to support school improvement.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

Project: Whether to approve a sponsor application for Cleeve School, **Gloucestershire**

HTB discussion:

- **School improvement:** HTB members noted the sponsor application and supporting documents did not demonstrate robust data to evidence impact of supporting other schools.
- **Results:** HTB members noted the school had the same leadership for both recent Ofsted judgements at the school. Results are consistently average over the past 3 years (2017-2019) for which there is data available, and below average for disadvantaged pupils in the same period.
- **Other:** HTB members noted that the application did not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the wide range of challenges that a sponsored school (e.g. a special measures primary school) may require support with e.g. governance, staffing, finance, pupil number decline as well as improving educational performance.
- HTB members noted that the sponsor application lacked evidence of supporting Alternative Provision, all through and primary phases of education.
- HTB members were provided with the full annex of additional information provided by Cleeve School in support of their application. Whilst members noted the provided examples of working in support in other schools, it was felt that this did not display sufficient evidence to demonstrate the ability to support their application to become a sponsor.

RSC decision: Decline.

Conflicts: Steve Savory was not present for this item and did not receive the paperwork relating to this item.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Wimborne First School, **Dorset**

HTB discussion: No issues identified.

Further actions required: None.

Significant Change

Points discussed in relation to significant changes application(s).

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for St Matthias, **Bristol** (Learn@) to increase age range from 11-16 to 5-16.

HTB discussion:

- **Leadership:** HTB members noted the change of CEO. Members were assured that all senior executive roles will remain stable going forward, and trustees with terms of office due to expire will be extended.
- **Other:** HTB members noted the wider expansion projects for the trust to open two satellite sites, as part of the Bristol LA SEND capacity workstream. Members noted this was an exciting proposal for the trust.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Peasedown St John Primary School, **BANES** (Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership) to increase capacity.

HTB discussion:

- **Other:** HTB members noted that geographically this makes sense.
- There were concerns about the timing of this proposal: members commented that the school had received an Inadequate Ofsted judgement prior to joining the Trust and that pupil projections were now not expected to require any additional capacity at the school for some time. It would be best therefore to delay the decision on expansion until such time as a better case could be made for need and school improvement at the school was more embedded.

RSC decision: Decline.

Conflicts: Sally Apps, Alun Williams and Brian Hooper were not present for this item and did not receive the paperwork.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Norton Hill Primary School, **BANES** (Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership) to increase age range from 4-11 to 2-11 (to add nursery provision).

HTB discussion:

- **Finances:** HTB members expressed concern at the cost of this project and where the nursery will be located. Members were reassured that the nursery will move to new accommodation on the same site.
- **Other:** Members notes that this proposal has had agreement from the Local Authority.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sally Apps, Alun Williams and Brian Hooper were not present for this item and did not receive the paperwork.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust and ask for clarification of the following:

- Confirm sufficient classroom space to accommodate proposed capacity at the nursery.
- Request details of how accommodation for the nurseury will be funded once the primary school is at capacity.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Avon Valley College, **Wiltshire** (Salisbury Plain Academies) to close its sixth form provision.

HTB discussion:

- **Governance:** HTB members believed that the school would benefit from moving into a new Multi Academy Trust (MAT)
- **Results:** HTB members queried why sixth form pupils were choosing other provision.
- **Other:** Members expressed a need to support existing pupils of the sixth form recognising disruption to their education.
- The negative consultation responses were discussed and that a full response has been received by the Trust. The RSC asked that a note is shared with the Minister.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the trust and the school and draft a note to inform the Minister.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to a new trust.

Project: Whether to approve the academy transfer of Dorchester Middle School, Dorset (SAT) to Wessex Multi Academy Trust.

Governance: It was noted that trust will have a review of governance soon.

- **Leadership:** It was noted that trust have put in place a deputy CEO. It was noted that the CEO has stepped down as the Headteacher of Thomas Hardy so he has more capacity to focus on further developing the trust.
- **School improvement:** It was noted that if the trust continues to grow they will need to continue to develop structures and processes to support school improvement.
- One representation in support of this proposal was received.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Decisions taken between HTB meetings

List of decisions taken by the RSC outside of HTB meetings.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Axminster Community Primary School, **Devon** (Acorn Multi-Academy Trust) to increase age range from 5-11 to 2-11.

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Antony Church of England School, **Cornwall** (St Barnabas Church of England Multi Academy Trust) to change age range from 4-11 to 3-11 and add nursery provision.

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approved with conditions regarding use of Trust's financial reserves.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Padstow School, **Cornwall** (Aspire Academy Trust) to change age range from 4-11 to 2-11 and add nursery provision.

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

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

List of projects that were on the published draft agenda but not discussed at the HTB meeting.

Project: Whether to approve a sponsor for the Bishop's Cleeve Primary Presumption Free School, **Gloucestershire**.

Type of decision: Sponsored route

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: The project had not received the necessary paperwork.

Project: Whether to approve Richard Huish College, **Somerset** converting to academy status and joining Richard Huish Trust.

Type of decision: Converter academy order

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: This item will be discussed at the next meeting (21 June), as more information was required.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Devonport High School for Boys, Plymouth (SAT), to increase published admissions number (PAN) by 30.

Type of decision: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: This item will be discussed at a future HTB meeting.