



Notes of Meeting: North

Thursday 17 June 2021

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 school commissioner (RSC) chair

- Katherine Cowell (RSC)

Headteacher board (HTB) members

- Zoe Carr (HTB)
- George Beveridge (HTB)
- Lesley Powell (HTB)
- Nick Hurn (HTB)
- Elizabeth Horne (HTB)
- Andy Bayston (HTB)
- Chris Clarke (HTB)
- Sir Michael Wilkins (HTB)

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Kim Mitchell (Deputy Director)

Representations received

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

General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

RSC welcomed board members to the meeting. RSC carried out a temperature check, inviting members to share their views on school transition and plans for September return.

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to lower the age range at Highfield Academy, Sunderland

HTB discussion:

- The Highfield Academy was judged by Ofsted to be Good in April 2013.
- Highfield Academy has applied to change the age range of the school, the board was advised that they wish to extend the provision to accommodate 2 year olds.
- The board was advised that Highfield will be replacing the provision provided by a PVI nursery which has recently vacated the premises.
- The board was informed that the academy has the physical capacity to meet the increase in numbers.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the responses received were positive and supported the proposal, parents have already expressed an interest in using the provision.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to change the age range at Ingleton CofE Primary School, Durham.

HTB discussion:

- This is a proposal to lower the age range of the school from 4-11 to 3-11 to formally bring the onsite pre-school provision into Ingleton C of E Primary School.
- Ingleton has not been judged by Ofsted since conversion, however, under its previous URN was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' via a short inspection in December 2016.
- The board was advised that existing arrangements for the number of children catered for in the pre-school will remain unchanged.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the responses received were positive and supported the proposal.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to change the age range at Discovery Special Academy (DSA), Middlesbrough.

HTB discussion:

- Discovery Special Academy, which is part of Tees Valley Education Trust, is a special free school catering for primary aged pupils with severe learning difficulties.
- The board was advised that the LA has agreed to create several small assessment hubs within the existing specialist settings in Middlesbrough.
- Discovery was identified as a suitable setting and subsequently six nursery places have been commissioned for Sept 2021.
- The board was informed that the trust already has assessment nursery places within its SEND units.
- The board was advised that the nursery provision will be delivered by DSA but temporarily the nursery will be accommodated across two of the trust's other primary academies, until DSA relocates to its permanent accommodation.
- Formal consultation has been carried out by the LA and trust; the responses received were positive.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to change the age range at Rosebrook Academy, Stockton on Tees.

HTB discussion:

- This is a proposal to lower the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 to allow the school to offer 2 year old provision.
- Rosebrook is an Enhanced Mainstream School and, as a result, also has a higher than national average number of SEN pupils.
- Rosebrook was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in October 2019.
- The board was advised that there is a need for 2 year old provision in the area.
- The introduction of this provision would allow Rosebrook to identify specific needs from an earlier age and ensure the necessary support is implemented.
- The board was informed that the school already has the physical capacity to accommodate the additional 12 places.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the responses received have been positive, parents have already expressed an interest in using the provision.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to increase capacity at Abbey Hill Academy, Stockton on Tees

HTB discussion:

- Abbey Hill was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good with an 'Outstanding' sixth form in January 2020.
- The board was advised that demand for pupil places is continuing to increase, therefore, the trust is requesting an increase in capacity from 311 to 357 places.
- Within the Tees Valley there is a shortage of high needs places for secondary aged students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- The LA is requesting further places from the academy. Abbey Hill is the only specialist secondary school in Stockton Borough Council and the proposed increase in capacity is essential to meet the need for these places. In addition, other LAs have indicated their need for additional secondary ASD places which could result in a need for further places.
- The board was advised that the additional places would allow Abbey Hill to meet the current demand forecast and would allow some flexibility for potential growth.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the responses received have been positive.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Elizabeth Horne was not present and did not receive papers for this item.

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to increase capacity at Dallam School, Cumbria

HTB discussion:

- Dallam School is a mixed academy catering for pupils aged 11-18.
- Dallam was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in April 2013, in December 2017 a short inspection took place and the school remained 'Good'
- The board was advised that this academy is located close to the Lancashire border and therefore admits 50% of students from Cumbria and 50% from Lancashire.
- Dallam has applied to increase the capacity from 1050 to 1150 including a 250 place 6th form, this proposal is based on the need to formalise what has been practice at the academy for several years.
- The board was advised that formal consultation has been carried out; the academy did not receive any responses or feedback.
- Dallam is the only school in the South Westmorland Multi Academy Trust, the board discussed the potential for future growth and was advised that the trust is considering its strategic vision and will continue to be part of a strong collaboration in South Lakes.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to de-amalgamate NCEA Bishop's Primary School into 5 primary schools, Northumberland

HTB discussion:

- The board was advised that this is a proposal to de-amalgamate NCEA Bishop's Primary School into five individual primary schools based on their existing campus locations. NCEA Bishop's Primary will continue on the main campus whilst individual primary schools will be established on the other 4 campuses.
- The board was informed that NCEA Bishop's has yet to be inspected and we do not have any recent performance data to draw on.
- The board was advised that this proposal would lead to changes in leadership and governance. The board were also advised that the trust has been in receipt of a number of SRMA deployments and in line with the report outcomes the trust has strengthened its financial governance.
- The department has been working with NCEA Bishop's on producing a financial plan, progress to date has been positive, the financial benefits of implementing this change would be valuable to the trust.
- The board agreed that moving to five schools would improve levels of accountability and the admission arrangements would be clearer for parents.
- The board was advised that this model would ensure school improvement capacity is targeted where it is needed most.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the responses received have been positive.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to increase capacity at Trinity Academy Newcastle

HTB discussion:

- Trinity Academy Newcastle is a special school which caters for students aged 7 to 16 years with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) issues and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).
- Trinity was judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted at its last Section 5 inspection in November 2018.
- The board was advised that Trinity has applied to increase the number of planned places from 160 to 180 in response to increased demand (SEMH) school places from Newcastle LA.
- The academy has the physical capacity to meet the requirements of the proposed increase and does not need to recruit any additional staff to facilitate this change.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the responses received have been positive.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Springwell Village Primary School, Sunderland to convert and join Oak Learning Trust

HTB discussion:

- Springwell was judged to be 'Good' by Ofsted in July 2015. However, a short inspection in October 2019 suggested that standards may be declining.
- Following a request from Sunderland local authority; Oak Learning Trust (OLT) agreed to provide Springwell with leadership support, the trust began to work with the school in June 2019. Springwell has built strong and effective relationships with OLT and would like to formalise the arrangements.
- The board was advised that OLT has already had a positive impact on Springwell, visible improvements have been made; in particular across teaching and learning, the trust has also supported the school in improving its financial health.
- The board questioned the current trust governance structure and suggested that OLT should undertake a review to ensure it meets DfE expectations.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for St Mary's RC Primary School, Sunderland to convert and join Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.

HTB discussion:

- The board was advised that this proposal is in line with the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese's vision on Catholic education.
- St Mary's RC Primary was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in September 2013, in July 2018 a short inspection took place and the school continued to be 'Good'.
- Educational performance at the school is strong and is, therefore, expected to add capacity to the trust.
- The board was advised that St Mary's feeder schools are already part of the trust which will support transition.
- Trust governance structure is in line with DfE guidelines and includes a good mix of skills.
- The board was informed that as a result of a previous RSC decision, a SRMA has been deployed. The DfE will continue to monitor trust progress to anticipate any possible risks as more schools join Bishop Chadwick CET.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Evenwood CofE Primary School & St Michael's CofE Primary School, Durham to convert and join 1Excellence Multi Academy Trust

HTB discussion:

- St Michael's was judged by Ofsted to be 'Outstanding' in September 2017 and Evenwood was judged to be 'Good' in October 2014, in June 2018 a short inspection took place and the school continued to be 'Good'.
- The board was advised that both schools are part of the Five Stones Learning Federation.
- 1Excellence is a 2 school "mixed" primary multi academy trust, the trust has developed links with Five Stones Federation and believes that the addition of the two schools will expand its capacity for future growth.
- The diocese is supportive of the growth proposal and has given its consent to the federation to apply to join the trust, the diocese recognises that further schools will want to join the trust, the mixed configuration will allow the trust to expand with both church and community schools, giving it further potential for growth.
- The board discussed the trust governance structure and was advised that the trust will consider working with Academy Ambassadors to help fill the current vacancies.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: St Aidan's RC Primary School, North Tyneside St Bernadette's RC Primary School, North Tyneside, St Columba's RC Primary School Aided, North Tyneside, St Oswald's RC Primary School, Newcastle St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle & St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle to convert and join Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust

HTB discussion:

- The board was advised that this proposal is in line with the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese's vision on Catholic education.
- The six schools converting are rated Ofsted 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- The board discussed the challenges of inheriting 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools, and the impact this could have on the trust due to its rapid growth.
- The board was advised that as a result of a previous RSC decision the trust has provided updated financial forecasts for the next 3 years.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school/trust of decision