



Notes of Meeting: North Headteacher Board

Thursday 15 July 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)
- Elizabeth Horne (HTB)
- Chris Clarke (HTB)
- Sir Michael Wilkins (HTB)

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Nick Hurn (HTB)
- Andy Bayston (HTB)

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 current attendance issues caused by the current spike in Covid cases.

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to lower the age range at St Chad's Catholic Primary School, Durham

HTB discussion:

- St Chad's Catholic Primary School was judged by Ofsted to be Good in September 2014, a short inspection took place in May 2018 and the school remained 'Good'.
- St Chad's reception children join the school from a variety of private providers, the board was informed that there is no school based nursery setting local to the school.
- 2019 attainment and progress at the school was above national and LA average.
- The board was advised that the trust already has early years and nursery expertise within the trust, therefore this proposal does not require any changes to the trust's governance structure.
- The school already has the physical capacity and facilities to accommodate the increase in numbers.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the responses received were positive and supported the proposal.
- The board supported this proposal; however, they would like the school to provide some further clarity on the rationale behind the proposed number of nursery places.

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 George Hastwell School Special Academy, Cumbria.

HTB discussion:

- This is a proposal to change the age range of the school from 2-19 to 3-19. The board was informed that the school has not provided 2-year-old provision in the last ten years.
- There is no need for entry to start for 2 year olds as local nursery providers manage this currently, the board was advised the school will continue to provide outreach support where required. The proposed change will also bring the age of entry of George Hastwell in line with the majority of other Cumbrian special schools that cater for early years.
- George Hastwell was judged by Ofsted 'Requires Improvement' in June 2018; however, early years and 16-19 provision were both regarded as 'Good'.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; no responses were received.
- 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 lower the age range at Sowerby Primary Academy, North Yorkshire.

HTB discussion:

- The proposed change is for Sowerby Primary Academy to lower its age range from 4-11 to 2-11.
- Sowerby was judged by Ofsted 'Good' in December 2014.
The board was advised that there is an existing nursery at Sowerby run separately from the primary school, the committee managing the nursery has confirmed they no longer want to continue running the provision. The existing nursery is classed as a charity, they are struggling to engage suitably experienced volunteers onto the committee and are unable to provide wraparound care required to make the prospect financially viable.
- The academy recognises they are at risk of losing the nursery provision if they do not expand the age range.
- The board was advised that the leadership of the nursery will remain the same, however, they will benefit from having the support of an experienced headteacher and an EYFS lead teacher.
- The board was advised that the trust has completed due diligence on staffing and finances. There are 5 members of staff from the nursery who will be transferred over to the trust.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; 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

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for St John Vianney Roman Catholic Primary School, Hartlepool to convert and join Bishop Hogarth 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 John Vianney was judged to be 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in October 2008.
- The board was advised that St John Vianney is a designated teaching school hub and has established close links with Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET).
- The board was informed that St John Vianney is keen to facilitate greater sharing with other schools across Bishop Hogarth CET and the local area, ensuring that all schools are supported and included.
- 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 Our Lady & St Joseph's RC VA Primary School, Brooms, Durham, St Joseph's Catholic Infant School, Birtley, Gateshead, St Joseph's Catholic Junior School, Birtley, Gateshead, St Mary's RC VA Primary School, South Moor, Durham, St Patrick's RC VA Primary School, Consett, Durham, St Philip Neri RC Primary School, Gateshead, St Pius X RC VA Primary School, Durham to convert and join Bishop Wilkinson 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 Joseph's Catholic Infant, St Patrick's, St Philip Neri and St Pius were judged by Ofsted to be 'Good', St Joseph's Catholic Junior was judged 'Outstanding' and St Mary's and Our Lady & St Joseph were judged 'Requires Improvement'.
- Both RI schools will require tailored support from the trust's primary school improvement team. The board was advised that the trust already has a strong primary team in place, however, the trust is appointing a new deputy CEO with responsibility for primary improvement.
- The board was advised that the schools converting work closely with their feeder schools who already form part of the trust, supporting transition.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Nick Hurn was not present and did not receive papers for this item.

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 Howden Le Wear Primary School & Brandon Primary School, Durham to convert and join Advanced Learning Partnership (ALP)

HTB discussion:

- Howden-Le-Wear Primary school was judged 'Outstanding' in January 2015 and Brandon Primary School was judged to be 'Good' in February 2019.
- The board was advised that the main secondary feeder schools already form part of the trust and therefore joining ALP was a natural fit for both the schools and trust.
- The trust would like to establish a primary hub and therefore plans to appoint a School Improvement Director with a specific focus on primary education and leaders of literacy and numeracy for development and improvement.
- The board was advised that Brandon Primary school is currently 65% full; there have been discussions around reducing the PAN, but agreement has not yet been reached. The board accepted that this was not a viability issue and if this conversion was approved the trust would review the size of the school going forward.
- Trust governance structure is in line with DfE preference.
- 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 Langley Park Primary School to join Stanley Learning Partnership (SLP)

HTB discussion:

- Langley Park Primary School was judged to be 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted in May 2019.
- Langley Park has been considering converting to academy status for some time, joining SLP will strengthen existing working arrangements.
- The board was advised that the geographic location of Langley allows them to work closely with other schools within the trust.
- The board agreed that joining SLP will help improve the school's financial position
- SLP provided details of an initial school improvement strategy that will be expanded upon following RSC decision.
- The board discussed the trust governance structure and recommended that the trust should review its current skills mix and work with Academy Ambassadors to broaden the variety of skills on the trust board.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Trust Change

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

Project: This is a proposal for Penny Bridge CofE School, Cumbria to transfer into The Good Shepherd Multi Academy Trust (GSMAT)

HTB discussion:

- Penny Bridge CofE School was judged to be 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in November 2011.
- The single academy trust was involved in a financial management and governance review, following a financial management and governance visit from ESFA in 2019, with findings published January 2021. A number of issues were identified which required rapid action and resolution.
- The board was advised that changes have been made to the governing body and through the use of Academy Ambassadors a chair and vice chair were recruited to support the trust.
- The board was advised that the trust CFO and chair have worked collaboratively with the DfE to seek resolutions, remedial action is ongoing and any remaining issues are likely to be resolved prior to transfer.
- Good Shepherd MAT is currently the only MAT choice for CofE schools in Cumbria. It has established a good track record in supporting schools.
- Joining GSMAT will ensure the school benefits from being part of a larger trust with robust governance. If the RSC approves the decision to transfer, GSMAT will continue with its due diligence and preparations for transfer.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

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