Notes of Meeting: West Midlands headteacher board
10 March 2020

Attendance

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

HTB members who apologised have been consulted on all projects, where available, before the meeting. This excludes items where there were conflicts. Their views are reflected in the discussion at the meeting (where appropriate).

Regional school commissioner (RSC) chair

- Andrew Warren (RSC)

Headteacher board (HTB) members

- Kate Brunt (HTB)
- Sinead Smith (HTB)
- Mike Donohue (HTB)
- Dame Mo Brenan (HTB)
- Sajid Gulzar (HTB)
- Sir Mark Grundy (HTB)
- Margaret Yates (HTB)

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Claire Mycock (Deputy Director)
- Claire Trewartha (Deputy Director)
- ESFA Representatives
General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

RSC Update

- Temperature check of region
- Significant changes made between HTB meetings
- Conflicts of Interest

Discussion of projects, including decisions made by RSC with advice from HTB

All decisions are made in reference to relevant legislation and the published criteria.

Trust change

Project: Whether to approve the transfer of Northern House School, Solihull, from Northern House Academy Trust to Manor Hall Academy Trust.

HTB discussion:

- Northern House school based in Solihull, is a special school that caters for pupils aged 4 to 16.
- Manor Hall trust is a special school trust who have evidenced strong finances with good school improvement capacity and links.
- Governance, performance and finances were all discussed during the presentation of the project and were considered by the board.
- The Local Authority is sighted on the current progress of the project and have confirmed the continued need for special school provision in the area.

RSC decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: School and Trust to be informed.

Converter academy orders

Project: Whether to issue an Academy Order to All Saints Bedworth CE School & Nursery, Warwickshire, to convert and become an academy and join Diocese of Coventry MAT

HTB discussion:

- All Saints is a CofE Primary school which was recently Ofsted rated ‘Requires Improvement’, the decision to convert is supported by the diocese.
- The school and Trust have an existing relationship, The Diocese and Foundation Charity are in full support of the schools academisation and have provided consent letters.
- The trust sees All Saints as a potential capacity giver in the future, with clear long-term benefits to both trust and school.
RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None
Further actions required: School and Trust to be informed.

Project: Whether to issue an Academy Order to Perdiswell Primary School, Worcestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Tudor Grange Academies Trust.

HTB discussion:

- Perdiswell is a two form entry primary school in the north of the city of Worcester. It is a larger than average primary and a main feeder school to Tudor Grange.
- There was a short inspection carried out in June 2018 and Ofsted noted that the school remained “Good” following improvements brought in by the new head teacher after her appointment in 2016.
- The trust has 10 academies and following a recent trust review has benefitted from the deployment of SMRA.
- Joining the trust would increase and strengthen the school improvement capacity, enabling greater school and staff development.
- Educational performance, proximity and finances were all considered by the board and members were content with the project as presented.

RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None
Further actions required: School and Trust to be informed.

Project: Whether to issue an Academy Order to Castlechurch Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an academy and join Children First Learning Partnership.

HTB discussion:

- Castlechurch has a pre-existing relationship with Children First Learning Partnership and are benefitting from their CEO offering NLE support and mentoring.
- The Primary was judged ‘Requires Improvement’ in 2016.
- Since CFLP’s involvement with the school, they have seen substantial improvements that have been noted by Ofsted in a positive light.
- CFLP is made up of 4 schools, two of which are the strongest performing schools in the area. All schools are judged as at least Ofsted ‘Good’, with one of their schools being ‘Outstanding’.

RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None
Further actions required: School and Trust to be informed.

**Sponsored route**

Project: Whether to approve an appropriate sponsor for The De Montford School, Worcestershire

HTB discussion:
• De Montford was judged ‘inadequate’ in November 2019 and issued a dAO in December 2019, with a forecasted capacity decrease and slight increase in their in year deficit.
• Four Stones Academy Trust is the recommended sponsor as they are an established teaching school with good progress level across its schools as well as good capacity and strong staff retention.
• The Trust will be offering school improvement support at KS2 and KS4 whilst also reviewing De Montford’s deficit recovery plan.

RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None
Further actions required: School and Sponsor to be informed.

Project: Whether to approve an appropriate sponsor for Alsager Multi Academy Trust as an appropriate sponsor of Alsager Highfields Community Primary School, Cheshire East.

HTB discussion:
• The Primary school is currently undersubscribed and has seen little progress made across all levels and leadership at the school after being Ofsted judged ‘Requires Improvement’ in 2017.
• The Trust is in very close proximity to the school, with the suggested sponsor already familiar with the school’s staff.
• Following the recent submission of financial reports, further reassurance and due diligence is required.
• Project deferred due to financial concerns.

RSC decision: Deferred to next meeting
Conflicts: None
Further actions required: School and Sponsor to be informed.

Projects listed on the published draft agenda but were removed before the meeting

List of projects that were on the published agenda but not discussed at the meeting:
• Youth Engagement Schools Trust, Cheshire East – project not ready to be discussed at board meeting.

Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: Whether to approve a Capacity increase from 800 to 878 at Bishop Milner Catholic College, Dudley

HTB discussion:
• Retrospective Significant Change project for a capacity increase from 800 to 878 through repurposing an old gymnasium into classrooms. The school is rated ‘Good’ as of July 2015
and Progress 8 scores are average in 2019.

- The school was oversubscribed in 2016 and required a small-scale building project to convert the old gymnasium into classrooms but were unaware of the significant change process. The LA and the Diocese supported the increase due to it being a popular and successful school.

RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None
Further actions required: School to be informed.

Project: Whether to approve a capacity increase from 84 to 210 at Sutton Primary Academy, Herefordshire

HTB discussion:
- A retrospective capacity increase from 84 to 210 (plus a 20-place nursery). The school has now carried out the required 4-week formal consultation on proposed changes.

RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None
Further actions required: School to be informed.

Project: Whether to approve an age range at Croft Academy, Walsall

HTB discussion:
- Increase in Age Range from 3-11 to 2-11. The Academy is currently Ofsted rated as ‘Requires Improvement’ however received positive feedback about the early years provision in their report. The Academy has an existing Nursery Provision and will utilise existing staff. The LA have approached Croft due to the level of demand in the area. No objections in the consultation.

RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None
Further actions required:

Project: Whether to approve an age range change from 2-11 to 3-11 at Fibbersley Park Primary Academy, Walsall

HTB discussion:
- Change in age range from 2-11 to 3-11, Ofsted judged ‘Requires Improvement’. The reasoning for lowering age range is due to a lack of demand in the area, no formal objections from the LA as there is other capacity in the area. The existing children will go to the other good provisions in the area, the LA have been consulted on this and have no objections.

RSC decision: Approved
Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Project: Whether to approve a capacity increase and physical expansion at Coudon Court, Coventry

HTB discussion:

- School to physically expand and increase its 11-16 capacity by 300 (1425 to 1725). Results are above local averages, the project was the result of Coventry LA's "One Strategic Plan", which identified a need for additional secondary school places in the area and the LA will fund a new building on the site. The new building will be ready to open in September 2021.

- All consultations have been held.

RSC decision: Approved

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: