



Notes of Meeting: South West Headteacher Board

16 November 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

- Hannah Woodhouse (RSC)

Headteacher board (HTB) members

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

Guests

- Alison Hurley, DCS for Bristol Local Authority

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

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

General discussion points

Bristol LA SEND update – Alison Hurley, Director of Education and Skills at Bristol City Council

- Alison Hurley from Bristol Local Authority gave an update on their plans for SEND provision.

The Regional Schools Commissioner gave a regional update on ongoing COVID-19 response work and the challenges and opportunities in the region.

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 academy transfer of Hayesfield Girls' School (SAT), **BANES** to Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

HTB discussion:

- Officials highlighted, for context, that Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP) is being considered as a MAT option for Bucklers Mead, which is due for discussion next month (December).
- MNSP would gain the additional capacity Hayesfield will bring to the trust by contributing staff and resources to its school improvement offer. Hayesfield would gain access to greater economies of scale and greater support to protect, develop and share what is best about the school. Hayesfield are a key part of plans for the formation of a Bath Hub within MNSP.
- RSC and HTB members were supportive of the transfer.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts of interest: Alun Williams, Brian Hooper, and Sally Apps (all left the meeting and did not receive the papers)

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

Converter academy orders

Project: Whether to approve St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, **Plymouth** to convert to academy status and join St. Christopher's Church of England Primary Multi Academy Trust, **Devon**

HTB discussion:

- Members discussed St Peter's Ofsted judgment (double RI).
- Plymouth Local Authority issued St. Peter's with a Statutory Warning Notice; the LA then selected St. Christopher's MAT to form a management partnership arrangement with the school
- St Christopher's CofE MAT was preferable due to links with the Diocese and Church Schools, and experience of supporting Plymouth primaries.
- Members discussed the new Headteacher due to start in January.
- External Expert has been commissioned.
- ESFA were content to support the project.
- RSC agreed to approve this conversion and transfer into St Christopher's MAT, but would like to see future plans ahead of any further growth.

RSC decision: Approve with the following condition:

- Trust is required to submit budgets to ESFA before the transfer early next year.

Conflicts: none

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

Project: Whether to approve Wimborne First School, **Dorset** to convert to academy status and join Hamwic Education Trust

HTB discussion:

- Members discussed that Hamwic Education Trust have schools in two Regional Delivery Directorate (RDD) Regions (South West (SW) and South East England and South London (SESL)).
- RSC was content to approve with the understanding that further trust growth would require a strategic discussion between Hamwic, RSC SW and RSC SESL.

RSC decision: approve

Conflicts: None

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

Sponsor application

Project: Whether to approve St. Christopher's Church of England Primary Multi Academy Trust, **Devon** as an approved sponsor

HTB discussion:

- HTB members discussed the lack of recent data available due to the pandemic, and that sponsorship approvals require higher levels of detail and evidence.
- Discussion noted a sponsorship approval was not needed for St. Peter's to join the MAT.
- Sponsorship applications are usually submitted in tandem with a sponsorship project; HTB member would welcome an application from the MAT in future once an appropriate sponsorship project was available.

RSC decision: Decline

Conflicts: none

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

Significant change

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Critchill Special School (Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership), **Somerset** to increase capacity from 60 to 80 places

HTB discussion:

- Members discussed that this is a retrospective project, with 80 students on roll at the school from September 2020.
- The increase is in response to rising demand for places and has local authority support.
- HTB recommended approval; RSC was content to approve.

RSC decision: approve

Conflicts: Alun Williams, Sally Apps and Brian Hooper (left the meeting and did not receive the papers)

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

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Perry Court EACT Academy, **Bristol** to increase capacity from 420 to 630 pupils and increase nursery capacity

HTB discussion:

- Members discussed that the significant change involves construction of a new three form entry primary school and 45 place nursery to replace the existing, two FE primary school which will be demolished after the new build is complete. The new build is due to be complete in 2022.

- Current buildings are in poor condition, meaning a new build offers the opportunity for a purpose-built primary school, meeting current educational, building, and environmental standards. The LA have confirmed that these places are required due to new housing in the area.
- HTB members recommended approval; RSC was content to approve

RSC decision: approve

Conflicts: none

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school.

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application for Longspee School, **Poole** to change their age range and increase capacity via a satellite site

HTB discussion:

- Members discussed the significant change as part of sufficiency planning in BCP.
- The consultation received no formal responses.
- HTB members recommended approval, RSC content to approve.

RSC decision: approve

Conflicts: Brian Hooper (left the meeting and did not receive the papers)

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school.

Decisions escalated to the systems minister

Project: Whether to approve Orchard Manor School, **Devon** sponsor match in Principle

- To note, this project will go to the Minister for final review.

HTB discussion:

- Members noted the representations which had been received.
- Key themes of the representations which were received included:
 - Improvements made at the school since the January 2020 Ofsted inspection
 - The support provided by the school's foundation trust – The SENTient Trust
 - The context of the Academy Order being issued during the Covid-19 pandemic
 - Discussions with potential academy sponsors happening prior to the Academy Order being issued
 - Views on the two proposed sponsors
 - The view that academisation and sponsorship is not in the best interests of the pupils of Orchard Manor School
- Members noted the need for the school to receive the support of a strong sponsor given the concerns of Ofsted.

- Members recognised that both trusts were qualified to sponsor Orchard Manor; and that Special Partnership Trust (SPT) would need to complete a successful sponsor application ahead of sponsoring Orchard Manor
- Members felt the case for SPT was stronger, and so decision is in principle pending outcome of the sponsor application which will be taken at December HTB.

RSC decision: approval in principle, pending a successful sponsorship application at December HTB

Conflicts: none

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

Any other RSC decision not covered above (requests from academies to vary their admissions arrangements due to the effects of COVID-19)

Requests were approved by the RSC via the RSC correspondence log for the following schools:

- Beechen Cliff school, **BANES**
- Bishop Aldhelm's CE Primary School, **Poole**
- Heytesbury CofE Primary School, **Wiltshire**
- Great Wishford CofE (VA) Primary School, **Wiltshire**
- The Bishops' CofE Learning Academy, **Cornwall**
- St Michael's Church of England Primary School, **Wiltshire**
- St Vigor & St John Church School, **Somerset**
- Winchcombe Abbey CofE Primary School, **Gloucestershire**
- Sutton Benger CofE Primary School, **Wiltshire**
- St Mark's CofE Primary School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole**
- Rowde Primary School, **Wiltshire**
- Frome Valley CE First School, **Dorset**
- Piddle Valley CE First School, **Dorset**