



## Notes of Meeting: South East and South London

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

### 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

- Claire Burton

### Headteacher board (HTB) members

- Alison Beane
- Stephen Carey
- Andrew Carter
- Jon Chaloner
- Mark Ducker
- Paula Farrow
- David Boyle

### Guests

- None

### Apologies

- None

### DfE senior civil servants

- Anna Barker

## General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

Conflict of interest:

- Jon Chaloner

Minutes to previous meeting - agreed

## RSC update

- SESL has been talking to LAs/DCS and trusts on the wider re-opening of schools. The general response has been positive. Issues raised include those around mass testing. We are working with the mass testing team to provide answers on issues raised.
- We are continuing to promote the 2021 School to School Support offer in the region. Common themes have been support around recovery curriculum and remote learning provision.
- SESL RSC hosted a roundtable event on Remote Education provision alongside leaders from the Oak Academy, the Ed Tech demonstrator programme, and a panel of MAT leaders.
- SESL RSC will continue to host short events for trust leaders on a termly basis providing policy updates and fostering relationships across regions.
- Teaching Schools Hub announcements were made and noted that all of the areas in SESL are covered by a TSH.
- SESL RSC will be sending out messages to trust leaders flagging updates and events.
- There was an update by David Boyle on the work being carried out in London on supporting vulnerable children. The project is called Reconnect London and its purpose is to support vulnerable children both through the pandemic and beyond. The network is entirely sector-led and represented by 30 plus organisations.
- Members flagged a concern about industrial action against testing in the region. Though national action is not expected, there may however be more local challenges.

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

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

### Sponsored route

Project: Endeavour Partnership Trust's application for full sponsor grant and Environmental Improvement Grant for Hawksmoor School, Greenwich

HTB discussion: Recommendation for full sponsor funding and Environmental Improvement Grant (EIG). This has been a long-term inadequate LA-maintained school for a number of reasons, mainly due to capital issues and pressures on school revenue owing to falling pupil numbers.

On the question on capital contribution from the LA – the LA has committed to rectifying Health & Safety issues identified at the school, work to fix the drainage and decontaminate the soil where asbestos has been found. On the Governance question as to why three of the trustees were members, it was noted that the trust is currently restructuring and is planning to have a revised, robust structure in place before the conversion of the school.

It was also noted that the trust is taking the school on with significant financial liability.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

None

Further actions required:

To talk to the trust about support and mentoring as they take on another school.

## Significant changes

Project: Greenway Academy to join GLF Schools

HTB discussion: Greenway Academy is an Ofsted good school. It is the only school of Castle Trust. This is a voluntary transfer and if approved, Castle Trust will be closed shortly after. GLF have a plan for a strategic restructuring of the school.

It was noted that Greenway followed a structured process to select a suitable MAT.

RSC decision:

Approve

Conflicts:

Jon Chaloner was not present and did not receive papers for this item.

Further actions required:

None

## Converter Academy Orders

Project: Mundella Primary School, Kent, to join Veritas MAT

HTB discussion: Veritas has shared an action plan as part of their initial due diligence. Recommending approval of this proposal with a condition that the trust add a 5<sup>th</sup> member in line with the department's preference. It was also noted that two employees (the CEO and the Business Manager) sat on the trust board. It was recommended that the trust look to reduce this to one employee in line with the Academies Financial Handbook.

The RSC and HTB were assured by the rigorous process the governing board had followed to identify an appropriate MAT.

RSC decision:

Approve with condition

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Trust to bring governance arrangements in line with department's preferences.

## Sponsored route

Project: Royal Harbour Academy, Kent, Sponsor Match

HTB discussion: Royal Harbour Academy has been supported by Coastal Academies Trust since it received an Inadequate Ofsted rating in 2018. With the support of Coastal Academies Trust the school's rating improved to RI in January 2020.

HTB acknowledged the improvements made and the level of challenge but recommended the RSC should assure herself that the trust had helped the school make sufficient progress and that it has sufficient capacity to secure further improvement alongside supporting their other schools.

The board also flagged the impact the new free school in Margate might have on the trust.

RSC decision:

Defer. RSC to seek further assurance on capacity, school improvement and governance before deciding.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Meeting to be arranged between RSC and CEO of Coastal Academies Trust.

To increase the number of members on the Coastal Academies Trust board from three to five.

## Significant change

Project: Brockhill Park Performing Arts College & The Abbey School (Faversham), Kent, to merge

HTB discussion: Proposal for two SATs to join together to form a new MAT. The SATs are situated in different areas but face similar challenges. Both schools are situated in areas where population is growing.

The HTB questioned the process for determining the composition of the proposed board and the assessment of skills required to underpin it. They also questioned whether there would be an open process for the appointment of the future CEO.

The HTB felt there was a lack of clarity about the school improvement capacity of the proposed new MAT, and questioned the proposed top slicing policy.

RSC decision:

Decline

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

Request that both SATs consider joining an established MAT.

## Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: Lyndhurst Primary School, Southwark, to join The Charter Schools Educational Trust

HTB discussion:

RSC decision: Approve with condition

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Implementation of planned governance changes before the schools join on 1 April 2021

Project: The Dulwich Hamlet Academy Trust, Southwark, to merge with The Charter Schools Educational Trust, Southwark

HTB discussion:

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: None

Project: Saint Cecilia's Church of England School to increase PAN

HTB discussion:

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: None

Project: St James' CE Primary Academy to transfer to Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust

HTB discussion:

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: None



## **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.

- Hailsham College – physical expansion. Does not need to go to HTB.