



Notes of Meeting: South West Headteacher Board 22 March 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

- 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

- Nikki Edwards, CEO, Bath and Wells MAT

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

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

General discussion points

An update from Nikki Edwards (CEO), Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust

- Nikki Edwards introduced herself as the CEO of Bath and Wells MAT (BWMAT).
- Nikki shared with HTB an update on her trust. She covered the Trust's governance arrangements, safeguarding practices and school improvement model. The discussion included school improvement and growth, approach to financial management, 'hub' model and BWMAT's links and collaboration with Local Authorities and other local Trusts..
- Hannah Woodhouse thanked Nikki and reiterated that HTB members and RDD are available to the Trust as sources of support if needed.

Representations

No representations were received for this meeting.

Update from RSC, Hannah Woodhouse

- Hannah updated HTB members on the current work of the team, issues in the region and upcoming policy developments.

Other points discussed included:

- Concerns about children struggling with behaviour and resilience following lockdown.

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 Stockland Church of England Primary Academy (SAT), Devon to The Redstart Learning Partnership

HTB discussion:

- Headteacher Board (HTB) noted that the current headteacher has experience of working in several small schools.
- HTB were advised that the Regional Delivery Directorate (RDD) are confident in the trust's capacity to support Stockland, based on the delivery team's knowledge of the trust and informed by recent external reviews of schools and the trust.
- HTB members commented that Redstart Learning Partnership have worked hard support their schools.

RSC decision: approve.

Conflicts of Interest: Suzanne Flack and Paul Jones left the meeting and did not receive the papers for this item.

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

Project: Whether to approve the following schools converting to academies and joining Pickwick Academy Trust:

- Winterslow CofE (Aided) Primary School, Wiltshire
- Pitton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Wiltshire
- Greentrees Primary School, Wiltshire

HTB discussion:

- HTB noted that the outcomes in Pickwick Academy Trust needed improvement however the trust have implemented action plans, an updated School Improvement (SI) model and a change in leadership to address issues in the underperforming schools.
- An executive head is being put in place to drive up standards by benchmarking progress and to look at and learn from best practice at other trusts.
- The Diocese of Salisbury is supportive of the conversion and the trust will take on mixed Articles of Association as part of the conversion to ensure that the faith ethos of two of the three joining schools is addressed.
- HTB noted that the trust's desire to expand into Salisbury is due to a long relationship with Greentrees Primary in particular and small church schools in and around Salisbury will benefit from a MAT in the area.
- HTB members questioned the performance of some of the schools in the trust, and were keen to see the trust further develop its trust and school improvement model.
- HTB members suggested the new CEO should be provided with support.
- HTB members discussed the potential of this trust and that the trust should engage with experienced MAT leaders, alongside support from Diocese, to ensure successful growth.

RSC decision: approve with conditions

Conditions:

- CEO should be paired with an experienced CEO for support.
- DfE to hold an early trust review with Pickwick Academy Trust (once these are reinstated)

Conflicts of Interest: none

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

Converter academy orders

Project: Whether to approve the following schools converting to academy status and joining St Barnabas Church of England Multi Academy Trust

- St Dominic Church of England VA School, Cornwall
- St Mellion Church of England VA School, Cornwall

HTB discussion:

- HTB noted that both St Dominic and St Mellion are Ofsted “Good” schools. St Barnabas is a six-school MAT, of which 3 schools are “Good”, 3 are “Requires Improvement”.
- HTB noted the following in support of approving the proposal:
 - Sensible match in terms of ethos and geography of MAT and schools
 - St Barnabas’s reformed governance structure.
 - Appointment of permanent CEO and deputy.
 - Positive assessment of trust capacity and cohesion by Education Expert (EE).
 - Diocese support for the proposal.
- However, HTB members also questioned some of the following aspects:
 - The nature of the revised leadership and governance structures are currently unproven – not yet seen measurable impact on standards.
 - Profile of trust’s performance in terms of Ofsted and outcomes at some of its schools.
 - Significant unspent financial reserves.
- HTB agreed that the schools would benefit from joining a MAT but wanted more reassurance that St Barnabas was strong enough to provide that support.
- RSC asked for more information about this proposal and decided to defer decision pending further review.

RSC decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

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

Project: Whether to approve the following schools converting to academies and joining Wessex Learning Trust

- Sandford Primary School, North Somerset
- Winscombe Primary School, North Somerset

HTB discussion:

- HTB members commented on the trust’s good performance and capacity to support both schools and that the match is sensible geographically and educationally.
- HTB members were informed that the trust is in the process of recruiting a new foundation trustee.
- HTB members queried leadership capacity and were satisfied that plans are in place to appoint permanently.

RSC decision: approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: An SRMA visit to seek assurance that there is capacity in the trust to sustain the recent growth.

Decisions taken between HTB meetings

Project: Whether to approve a significant change application from Troon School, Cornwall (Rainbow MAT) to expand the age limit of the schools nursery to be able to accommodate 2-year-old children.

RSC decision: approve via RSC correspondence log on 19 March 2021

Conflicts: None

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