



Department  
for Education

## Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Headteacher Board

**Date of meeting – 18 March 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 Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Andrew Warren

### Headteacher Board (HTB) members

- Kate Brunt.
- Mike Donoghue.
- Dame Mo Brennan.
- Sir Mark Grundy.
- Sinead Smith.
- Sajid Gulzar.
- Margaret Yates.

### Guests

- None.

### Apologies

- Claire Trewartha (Deputy Director).

### DfE senior civil servants

- Dawn Dandy (Deputy Director)

### Representations received

- No representations were made for any items discussed at this meeting.

## **General Discussion Points**

### **Local Update**

- The RSC and HTB members discussed the current climate in schools across the West Midlands Region.

### **HTB member reflections**

- HTB members reflected on their experiences of schools reopening after the pandemic including the subject of face coverings and tutoring programmes.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Bosely St Marys Church of England Primary, Cheshire and Chester, to convert and become an academy and join Chester Diocesan Academy Trust.

### HTB discussion:

- Bosely St Marys Church of England Primary is a small primary school located in the village of Bosley, Cheshire. At their latest Ofsted inspection in 2011, the school was judged to be “Good”.
- There is a pre-existing relationship between both the school and the Diocese.
- The trust have a well-established School Improvement offer and this will be implemented at the school aiding to address pupil numbers and performance data.
- The board discussed capacity including school improvement officers and the sustainability of this plan. There was also a discussion on financial viability and school to school support.
- The board members supported the recommendation, and a condition was set in place by the RSC stating the trust is to submit 6 months of management accounts.

**RSC decision:** Approved with a condition.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of decision.

**Project:** Rufford Primary School, Dudley, to convert and become an academy and join Invictus Education Trust.

### HTB discussion:

- Rufford Primary School is a small primary school located in Stourbridge, Dudley. The school was judged “Requires Improvement” by Ofsted in March 2019.
- The School met with the trust to discuss the support offered in the local area. The trust have expressed their interest in moving into the Primary sector by offering support from their resources.
- The board discussed how the trust had limited expertise in primary schooling and improvement despite them exploring primary education further. Further discussion clarified the trust have now hired staff to provide School Improvement support to primaries.
- The board discussed capacity and performance outcomes for the schools within the trust.
- The board members supported the recommendation along with the three conditions set in place by the RSC including that the trust provide both a secondary improvement strategy for 2021/22 with improvement aims and targets; an improvement strategy for Rufford primary for 2021/22 with improvement aims and targets; and the trust are to meet with the RSC office at an agreed date to review trust progress against the strategies.

**RSC decision:** Approved with conditions.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors.  
Trust and DCS to be informed of decision.

## **Sponsored Route:**

Points discussed in relation to a school's sponsor status.

**Project: Christ the King Catholic and Church of England Primary School, Cheshire and Chester, to be sponsored by Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Academy Trust.**

**Reason for Academy Order: Ofsted Category 4.**

### **HTB discussion:**

- Christ the King is a primary school based in Macclesfield, Cheshire. The school was rated "Inadequate" by Ofsted in May 2018.
- The trust has been identified as the preferred sponsor by the Diocese of Shrewsbury as the trust is looking to expand its capacity and develop its school improvement capability to support additional Diocesan schools.
- The board reviewed the proposal and talked about trust educational performance; school improvement plans for Christ the King and the trust's financial stability.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

**RSC decision:** Approved.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Sponsor and School to be informed of outcome.

**Project: Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, Cheshire and Chester, to be sponsored by Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Academy Trust.**

**Reason for Academy Order: Ofsted Category 4.**

### **HTB discussion:**

- Ellesmere Port Catholic High School is a smaller than average sized secondary based in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire West. The school is within the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury. The school was given its most recent Ofsted rating of "Inadequate" in 2019.
- The trust has been identified as the preferred sponsor by the Diocese of Shrewsbury as the trust is looking to expand its capacity and develop its school improvement capability to support additional Diocesan schools.
- Pupil numbers and school improvement strategy were discussed by the board, maintaining a conversation around the future plans of the archdiocese.
- Whilst finances were shown as sustainable, there was a focus on a partially completed School Management Resource Advisor (SMRA) visit before Covid 19.
- The board members did not support the recommendation at this time and the RSC deferred the project until the next meeting.

**RSC decision:** Deferred

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Sponsor and School to be informed of outcome.

## Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

**Project:** Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Academy Trust, Cheshire and Chester.

### HTB discussion:

- Holy Family of Nazareth Catholic Academy Trust is a 4 school Multi Academy Trust in Cheshire East; all four schools are Ofsted Judged “Outstanding”.
- The trust wish to expand their capacity by becoming a sponsor to help support future development of diocesan schools.
- The board discussed the assurances offered about capacity for sustained improvement and what the impact of the Teaching Schools Hubs will have on capacity for the trust.
- The board members supported the recommendation.
- Whilst approving of the sponsor application, the RSC set in place the following conditions. The trust to prepare and submit a costed school improvement strategy incorporating priorities for improvement with current trust schools and the introduction of Christ the King, by 31 October 2021. To prepare and submit a financial improvement strategy with full consideration of the previous SMRA recommendations and development of the centralised CFO position, by 31 October 2021. For the trust to work with a mentor from a strong trust and to provide the ‘terms of reference’ and timescales for a mentor arrangement by 31 May 2021. Finally, for the trust to secure a permanent full time Chief Executive Officer (CEO) by 1 September 2021 and provide a set of timescales to appoint by 31 May 2021.

**RSC decision:** Approved with conditions

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the trust.

## Significant Change

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

**Project:** Broadmeadow Special School, Wolverhampton, to increase the age range to enable them to become a primary school.

### **HTB discussion:**

- Broadmeadow Special School is based in Wolverhampton, with a current Ofsted rating of “Good” from their last inspection in October 2019.
- The school would like to change their age range and become a primary school, by increasing their number on roll and following a three phase plan.
- A 4 month consultation took place between December 2019 and March 2020 with Wolverhampton LA and other SEND specialist settings across the city meeting face to face with Headteachers and LA officers. This was followed by a six week online survey for parents, professionals, governors and members of the community. No objections were voiced.
- The board members supported the recommendation, with the RSC only approving phase 1 of the expansion of Broadmeadow.

**RSC decision:** Approved (in part).

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

## Trust Change

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

**Project: UTC Crewe, Cheshire and Chester, to join The Learning Alliance.**

### HTB discussion:

- UTC Crewe was formed in September 2016 and caters for pupils between the ages 14 -19. The UTC is currently rated as Ofsted “Good” from a decision made in 2019.
- A joint working group have identified a strong vision and values fit between both organisations and have been working together at school level in Crewe for some months including sharing resources and planning.
- The board discussed the trusts plans for viability and the support plan in place for the UTC, intended to lead to successful student numbers and data.
- The board members supported the recommendation.
- Whilst approving the project, the RSC set in place a condition of an SMRA to be deployed post transfer to support the UTC into the trust.

**RSC decision:** Approved with a condition.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Trust and UTC to be informed of outcome.

**Project: Mesty Croft Academy, Sandwell, to join Perry Hall Multi Academy Trust, Sandwell.**

### HTB discussion:

- Mesty Croft Academy, is a Single Academy Trust (SAT) located in Sandwell. The academy is a large primary school located in Wednesbury. The Academy is currently Ofsted rated “Good” from a full inspection in 2017.
- Mesty Croft have developed a strong working relationship with Perry Hall MAT in the past year, benefitting from the school to school support offer and closer working during the pandemic. This has led them to submit a voluntary application to transfer to the trust in Wolverhampton.
- School improvement and school to school support were discussed as well as the trust’s structure going forward.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

**RSC decision:** Approved.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Trust and UTC to be informed of outcome.



## Decisions taken between HTB meetings

List of decisions taken by the RSC outside of HTB meetings.

**Project:** Stuart Bathurst Catholic High School, Sandwell

**Decision type:** Sponsor Route – Full sponsor funding granted.

**RSC decision:** Approved.

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Inform the school.

**Project:** St. Joseph's College Edmund Rice Academy Trust, Stoke-on-Trent

**Decision type:** Grant Payments – Write off of previous payments.

**RSC decision:** Approved.

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Inform the Trust.

## List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting

List of projects that were on the published draft agenda but not discussed at the HTB meeting.

**Project:** Birches Green Junior School, Birmingham

**Type of decision:** Converter Academy Order

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** Insufficient information to present at HTB.

**Project:** Health Futures UTC, Sandwell

**Type of decision:** Trust Change

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** Insufficient information to present at HTB.