



Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Headteacher Board

Date of meeting – 15 July 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

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Claire Trewartha (Deputy Director)
- Dawn Dandy (Deputy Director)

Representations received

- One representation received regarding The Brookfield School Ltd, Herefordshire.

These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

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 in schools regarding the consultation on exam assessments, face coverings and contact tracing.

Sponsored Route:

Points discussed in relation to school's sponsor status.

Project: Whether to approve a sponsor for The Brookfield School Ltd, Herefordshire.

Reason for Academy Order: Ofsted category 4

HTB discussion:

- Mercian Education Trust (MET) has one 'Good' and one 'Outstanding' primary school located within a short radius, who will work with Brookfield to support curriculum development and pedagogy in the primary phase.
- MET has stable governance with a good breadth of expertise in health and safety, education, finance and safeguarding. The trust is financially healthy and has a track record of robust financial management.
- The aim of Key Stage 2 provision at Brookfield is to reintegrate pupils into mainstream, where possible, by the time they reach secondary age. It is therefore important that the school's primary curriculum and pedagogy support this aim, and this is one of the reasons cited by stakeholders as to why Brookfield wish to have a mainstream provider be considered for them, rather than a SEND specialist MAT.
- Despite the academy's current 'Inadequate' judgement, MET recognise the progress made by the new leadership of the school since September 2019 and view Brookfield as a potential capacity-giver in the near future.
- The transfer will support the overall development of MAT capacity in Herefordshire. MET's current footprint is close to the Worcestershire/Herefordshire border and the trust are keen to grow a Herefordshire hub over time. Herefordshire is currently a cold spot for MAT capacity.
- The board discussed the need for capital, the Trusts funding, and the need within the community for a solution to be found.
- The board supported the recommendation and the RSC set a condition of an SRMA visit.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: The school and trust to be informed of the decision.

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to approve a physical expansion at The Telford Langley School, Telford and Wrekin

HTB discussion:

- The school submitted a significant change application to physically expand The Telford Langley School from 1050 to 1200 pupils to meet local basic need requirements, with effect from September 2021.
- The school has supported the LA's request to admit bulge classes - admitting to a PAN of 210 this year and to 240 in September 2021 to meet a rising forecast basic need requirement.
- The Telford Langley is rated Good (Ofsted Jan 2019). It is a popular school with the number of first preferences for the school exceeding the number of places on offer in recent years.
- The LA has now approached the school with a proposal to a) fully fund and build a new two storey teaching block comprising of 17 classrooms to accommodate an additional 300 pupil places b) to alter and refurbish the school's existing internal design layout to enable the school's current practical capacity to be realised.
- Within the new build block there will be a dedicated LA operated SEN hub for 8-pupils to attend with MLD needs from Southall School (LA maintained special). An SLA will be put in place with the LA to facilitate this.
- A full public consultation was carried out between 10 March 2021 and 7 April 2021 and no objections were raised.
- The project is financially sound and there would be no capital cost to the build. The freehold land is owned by the LA with a license to occupy obtained by Telford Langley.
- The board discussed the pupil admissions, the SEND provision and the Trust finances.
- The board members supported the recommendation as presented and the RSC recommended an SRMA visit.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve a physical expansion for Holmes Chapel Comprehensive School (HCCS) and Sixth form College, Cheshire East

HTB discussion:

- A significant change application was submitted to request an expansion of capacity from 1250 to 1400 and establish a 14 Place Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Resourced Provision (RP) on the school site, to open on 1 April 2022.
- The school will gradually increase Public Admissions Number (PAN) by 30 pupils a year over 5 years starting from September 2023. The expansion will likely consist of a standalone building of 8 new classrooms.
- This is driven by the LA's Sufficiency Duty in the Cheshire East area owing to nine approved housing developments.
- A consultation on increasing PAN was open for 8 weeks, from the 8 December 2020 to 1 February 2021. All stakeholders were contacted, and consultation completed in line with guidance.
- Application from HCCS to add RP on school site, to open on 1 April 2022. As above, approached by the LA as there are no schools in the local area that provide this provision. This is part of Cheshire East's wider review of its Special Educational Needs (SEN) sufficiency. In summary, these proposals outline nine additional specialist SEN provisions identified through an expression of interest. This equates to a 48% increase in local SEN provisions. This would provide approximately 211 additional SEN places.
- No planning permission is required to make the proposed changes to the school buildings or grounds.
- The construction of the RP will commence in October 2021. The whole project will be completed in February 2022. Consultation completed between 11 May 2021 and 14 June 2021, responses overwhelmingly positive.
- The board discussed the governance structure and number of Trustees.
- The board members supported the recommendation and the RSC recommended an SRMA visit, together with a review of the governance structure.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve an increase in Physical capacity for Kingsbury Academy, Coventry.

HTB discussion:

- Full business case for Kingsbury Academy, a primary phased special school within Coventry and the applications seeks to increase capacity from 84 to 120.
- The Trust intended to accommodate 90 places this year via internal remodelling, however it has been concluded that would not provide value for money and so two modular classrooms will be on site from September
- Coventry LA have paid £150k to the cost of the two modular classrooms and the Trust will pay the remaining balance of around £80k.
- Coventry LA confirmed that there is a forecasted demand of specialist placements in the LA over the next 5 years. The LA outlined that Kingsbury is the preferred site for the expansion and any pupil funding will be provided accordingly.
- A section 8 Ofsted inspection in 2019 outlined that the school's rating should remain 'Good' in all rated areas, as previously marked at full inspection in 2015.
- The board were supportive of the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve a Physical expansion and increase in Published Admission Numbers for Finham Park School, Coventry.

HTB discussion:

- A full business case for Finham Park School to increase its PAN by 30 pupils, taking their overall PAN from 240 to 270. To accommodate this increase the school is proposing to build a two-storey block and provide further expansions on site.
- The project is being managed by Coventry LA and the Secondary Headteacher Partnership to ensure enough secondary places in Coventry, as demand grows in the city.
- Coventry is seeing significant growth in secondary school pupil numbers as substantial primary cohorts move into secondary schools, the LA has identified Finham Park School as a suitable option to increase capacity.
- A two-storey building will be constructed and be built on the school's playing fields; planning permission has been sought for the 'change of use' of the playing fields.
- The consultations took place in September 2020 for a four-week period, only nine responses were received and subsequently addressed. No objections were raised.
- The board supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve the addition of a special resource provision to Henley in Arden CofE Primary, Warwickshire

HTB discussion:

- Henley in Arden CofE Primary School (HIAPS) wish to add a 14 place Special Resource Provision (SRP) catering for pupils with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) need from 1 September 2021.
- The proposed establishment of a special resourced provision at HIAPS aligns to LA strategic SEN plans to secure sufficient high need places in mainstream settings to enhance the local offer. The LA intention is to reduce the number of SEND pupils in independent schools in Warwickshire. The LA chose HIAPS as the CEO has the expertise to deliver the SRP. The Diocese of Coventry and trust have consented.
- HIAPS is an age 2-11, Ofsted 'Good' rated school with falling pupil numbers on roll (58% full) that transferred to Arden Forest MAT in June 2020.
- Arden Forest is a strong trust of seven schools (three converters joined in April 2021) with the potential and aspiration to grow further in line with the Diocese strategy to have all church schools in a MAT.
- The Trust board had a lack of primary expertise, the Trust are aware of this and have now identified an ex-primary Headteacher to be appointed.
- The board discussed the Trust's finances.
- The board supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve a physical expansion for John Kyrle High School (JKHS) and Sixth Form Centre Academy, Herefordshire.

HTB discussion:

- JKHS and Sixth Form Centre Academy's proposal is to physically expand its premises and increase its capacity from 1050 to 1200 with effect from 1 September 2021 in the age range 11-16, and to retrospectively approve the school's previous permanent expansion in December 2014 to increase the school's physical capacity by 300 places.
- This is an Ofsted rated "Good", well performing, popular, oversubscribed school, situated in the semi-rural market town of Ross-on-Wye

- The school has been oversubscribed since 2009 and due to a strong parental preference for places at the school and local demographic growth supported by new housing developments nearby, the LA have approached the school to expand to meet basic need. Recent Pupil Place Planning Engagement supports this.
- PAN will increase from 210 to 240 and places have already been offered and accepted for Sept 2021. Growth by 150 pupils will occur gradually over a five-year period.
- The board discussed the governance structure of the Trust, in particular the parent elected trustees.
- The board supported the recommendation and the RSC set a condition of an SRMA visit.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve a decrease in age range for Dines Green Community Academy, Worcestershire.

HTB discussion:

- Mercian Educational Trust has submitted a Significant Change request for a change to the lower age range at Dines Green Community Academy - from 2- to 4-year-olds following the removal of the school's nursery provision for 2-3 year olds.
- Demand for the nursery places offered by the academy has declined.
- Continuing to operate will incur a significant financial loss and will not meet the educational and social development needs of the children.
- The RSC set a condition that the trust must be willing to reopen the nursery provision should, either the local private nursery withdraw its services, or demand increase so that the private provider cannot meet the demand. In the latter case, that the trust should consult the local community on that basis.

RSC decision: Approved with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve an increase in age range at St Thomas More Catholic First School, Worcestershire.

HTB discussion:

- St Thomas More Catholic First School have applied to lower the age limit by one year to introduce a nursery provision.
- Improvement to level of entrants to Reception where current levels are often below 20% of expectation.
- There is local demand for nursery places whereby this provision will enable other suppliers to offer more places to two-year olds.
- No new building work required and cosmetic work will be covered by the trust's budget.
- This is supported by Worcestershire LA.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve a physical expansion including a nursery for Bengeworth CE Academy, Worcestershire.

HTB discussion:

- Bengeworth CE Academy had applied for a significant change to expand its existing premises to include accommodation for a pre-school nursery for 60 pupils aged 3-4 and in doing so will also change its lower age limit.
- There is strong local demand with little further opportunity for expansion other than at Bengeworth.
- Local councils Wychavon and Worcester have encouraged local providers to supply places for 3-4 year olds.
- There would be greater support for the local community through enhanced facilities.
- The proposal enhances the structure of the existing school building.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Project: Whether to approve the retrospective closure of a sixth form to increase PAN at Q3 Academy Langley, Walsall.

HTB discussion:

- Q3 Academy Langley have requested to increase their PAN from 240 to 300 due to the increased demand for KS4 pupil places, as outlined by the local authority.
- The Academy will use the physical space designed for a sixth-form to accommodate this change.
- The sixth form was due to admit students in September 2021 but will not as there is a greater need for secondary school places.
- Quaerere Academies' Trust has a strong track record across all three of their academies. There is no additional funding or planning permission required.
- A fair and open consultation took place, where feedback was taken onboard by the academy and the LA are supportive.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school of the decision

Trust Change

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

Project: Whether to approve The Silk Academy Trust, Cheshire East, to transfer to The Aspire Educational Trust, Cheshire East

HTB discussion:

- Ivy bank academised in 2015 to create The Silk Academy Trust. Ivy Bank (IB) would like to join Aspire Educational Trust (AET) and in turn, close The Silk Academy Trust.
- No issues had been raised via the consultation.
- AET's vision is led by schools with the same community ethos that matches the culture at IB; therefore, the strategy for AET identifies key priorities that match those of IB.
- AET includes a diverse group of schools which will enhance maths and English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision at IB and support others with rich curriculum, disadvantage, leadership and SEND.
- There is evidence that already being geographically close, IB and AET have benefited from collaboration on writing, disadvantaged and maths projects resulting in improved teaching and learning experiences for pupils.
- Both AET and IB are financially sound and centrally sourced services such as HR, legal and finance will benefit the financial performance of IB and are attractive in terms of procuring key support services needed.
- Since the paperwork was completed, the Trust has appointed another member, taking the total to five.
- The board discussed the finances of the Trust.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the trusts

Project: Whether to approve The Derwent Trust, Cheshire East, to transfer to Chancery Multi Academy Trust, Cheshire East

HTB discussion:

- Willaston Primary Academy is a SAT looking to join Chancery MAT, a three school primary trust in Cheshire East.
- Chancery has plans to grow steadily over the coming years. It wishes to develop a hub model (Nantwich area and Alsager/Stoke). Taking on Willaston will begin establishing the Nantwich model.
- All four schools are within a 20-minute drive of each other. They are of a similar size and the two trusts have an established working relationship (school to school support, staff coaching). This relationship has grown stronger over the COVID pandemic.

- The Trust have recruited a full time CEO and governance is in line with DfE expectations. A revised scheme of delegation is in the final stages of development.
- The school improvement plan within the Trust is monitored by the standards committee within the trust.
- The board discussed finances at The Derwent Trust and the educational expertise within the governance structure, particularly at Trustee level.
- The board members supported the recommendation and the RSC recommended an SRMA visit.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the trusts

Project: Whether to approve Woodfield Academy, Worcestershire, to transfer to Bordesley MAT, Worcestershire.

HTB discussion:

- Woodfield Academy (a SAT) wishes to join Bordesley MAT, a local trust.
- Woodfield has faced challenges since its “Good” Ofsted in 2017 and trustees believe the Academy needs to join a MAT to progress.
- Bordesley is a suitable local MAT as it understands the Redditch pyramid’s challenges, understands the community and Woodfield feeds to Trinity High School.
- Bordesley is already providing support to Woodfield.
- The board supported the recommendations and the RSC recommended the trust seek support for the accounting officer and development of the trust through academy ambassadors.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the trusts

Project: Whether to approve Pedmore CE Primary School, Church of the Ascension CofE Primary School, St Mary’s CofE (VC) Primary School, Christ Church CofE Primary School, Dudley, to transfer and form the Elements Diocesan Learning Trust, Worcestershire.

HTB discussion:

- The proposal was for a formation of a new MAT Elements Diocesan Learning Trust, sponsored by the Diocese of Worcester (The Worcester Diocesan Academies Trust)

- This MAT will initially be comprised of four Church of England Schools in Dudley which is an Archdeaconry of Worcester and was formally in the County of Worcestershire.
- It is envisaged that the trust will grow initially to support other Church of England Schools in the Dudley Local Authority and then to be able to support any school in the LA.
- The board discussed the Diocesan aspect of the project and the funding attached to that.
- The board supported the recommendation and the RSC set three conditions: an SRMA visit; to submit monthly management accounts; for the trust to obtain an external mentor.

RSC decision: Approved with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the schools

Project: Whether to approve The Q3 Academies trust, Sandwell, to transfer to the Mercian Trust, Walsall.

HTB discussion:

- The proposal was for Q3 to close and its three schools to transfer into the Merican Trust.
- The trusts have been working together closely since 2019 and more formally in strategic partnership since 2020. The geographical location of the schools within the Trusts supports the close working relationship that is desired.
- The proposed merger will create a nine school secondary phase trust with mainstream, studio school and AP settings. Most schools within the trust are rated “Good” or “Outstanding”.
- The trust also plans to further collaborate across its post-16 provision to maximise the opportunities for pupils.
- The board discussed the profile of the pupils and the different challenges that would bring.
- The board discussed the governance, locality of the schools, trusts in the area and the faith element of the schools.
- The board did not support the recommendation at this time.

RSC decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Paper to be brought back to HTB at a later date once an External Expert and SMRA have been deployed.

Decisions taken between HTB meetings

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

Project: Meole Brace School, Shropshire

Decision type: Significant change to expand.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school

Project: Titan Education Trust, Birmingham

Decision type: Significant change to expand their lower age limit by two years.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school

Project: Alderbrook School, Solihull

Decision type: Significant change to increase capacity.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school

Project: St Chad's Catholic Primary, Dudley

Decision type: Significant change to lower their age limit.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school

Project: Haslington Primary Academy, Cheshire West and Chester

Decision type: Significant change to their age range.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school

Project: St John's Primary Academy, Staffordshire

Decision type: Significant change for an expansion of premises and an increase in PAN.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school

Project: St. Peter's Church of England Primary School, Staffordshire

Decision type: Significant change to their age range.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: To inform the school