



Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

16 December 2021

Attendance

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

AB 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

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Kate Brunt
- Dame Maureen Brennan
- Sinead Smith
- Sir Mark Grundy
- Mike Donoghue

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Margaret Yates
- Sajid Gulzar

DfE senior civil servants

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

Representations received

- 6; Whether to approve Bursley Academy, Staffordshire, to transfer to Collective Vision Trust, Staffordshire, Trust Change.

- 6; Whether to approve Manifold Church of England Primary School, Staffordshire, to transfer to The Moorlands Primary Federation, Staffordshire, Trust Change.
- 6; Whether to approve Hollinsclough Church of England Academy, Staffordshire, to transfer to The Moorlands Primary Federation, Staffordshire, Trust Change.
- 3, Whether to approve a sponsor for Kings Norton Junior and Infant School, Birmingham, Sponsored Route.

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 AB members discussed the current climate in schools across the West Midlands Region.

AB member reflections

- AB members reflected on their plans for the new year and January openings. There was particular focus on supply teacher availability and remote learning.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to issue an Academy Order to Redhill Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and join The Shaw Education Trust, Stoke on Trent.

AB discussion:

- Redhill is a primary located in Cannock Chase with a current Ofsted judgement of “Good” given in 2016.
- The Shaw Education Trust is a large Trust currently comprised of 25 schools, with 4 in the pipeline.
- The primary wish to join a trust with strong school improvement records and values mirrored to their own.
- The Trust and Primary held a meeting in 2020 after previous talks with the Local Authority (LA), since then they have held introductions with various members of the senior executive team and head teachers.
- The board discussed the governance with the trust, challenging both the performance and governance at Fortis Academy. It was confirmed that conversations on these subjects continue with the academy in strategic meetings.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: Moorhill Primary School, Staffordshire

AB discussion:

- Moorhill Primary School, situated in Cannock Chase, Staffordshire, holds a current Ofsted judgement of “Requires Improvement” as of 2018.
- The Shaw Education Trust is a large Trust currently comprised of 25 schools, with 4 in the pipeline.
- The primary feel that the Trust’s focus matches the vision for Moorhill Primary children and will enable them to achieve this. Leaders within the trust have a wide range of educational expertise with a strong improvement record.
- The school feels that the Trust has the experience, capacity, and expertise to facilitate appropriate, high quality, shared professional development, support and challenge for staff and governors.
- The board discussed the governance within the trust and the number of trustees it holds, whether it was best practice. There were also discussions held on the capacity of some of the trust’s schools, focusing on KS4.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: Westminster Community Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester.

AB discussion:

- Westminster Community Primary is a small primary school located in Ellesmere Port with a current Ofsted judgement of “Requires Improvement”.
- Weaver Trust consists of 4 primary schools, all within close proximity.
- The Primary’s demographics closely mirror those of another of the Trusts schools. The school that the Trust have recently transformed from the bottom 20% of schools nationally to the top 1% for progress, with outcomes that now exceed the national average. The Trust therefore believe that they could have a similar positive impact at Westminster.
- The board discussed the Trust’s record of school improvement and the extent to which their capacity can reach.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve with a condition of the Education & Skills Funding Agency being sent an updated 3 year forecast inclusive of the new school.

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: Kings Norton Junior and Infant School, Birmingham to be sponsored by The Elliot Foundation (TEF).

Reason for Academy Order: Ofsted Category 4.

AB discussion:

- Kings Norton Junior and Infant School is a primary located in the south of Birmingham, with a current Ofsted Judgement of 'Inadequate' as of Sep 2021.
- The sponsor, Elliot Foundation, is a trust consisting of 29 schools across London, Birmingham, and the East of England.
- The rationale for the sponsor is due to the strength of TEF's locality to the primary, with the educational performance of these schools exceeding the primary on a consistent basis since 2017. The proposal will enable TEF to create a local hub to support Kings Norton.
- The trust will also offer capacity support to the primary utilising its research school, Billesley.
- The 3 responses from the public were discussed and considered by the board. There were opposed views to academisation of the primary and the recent Ofsted judgement.
- The board discussed the diversity of the trust's membership board, their future strategic plans, and the current stance of the community.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform the school and trusts.

Project: Frodsham Vale Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester to be sponsored by Warrington Primary Academy.

Reason for Academy Order: Ofsted Category 4.

AB discussion:

- Frodsham Weaver Vale Primary School is a primary located in the market town of Frodsham in Cheshire West and Chester. The school was rated 'Inadequate' in July 2021 due to safeguarding concerns.
- Several potential sponsor matches have been considered, with Warrington Primary Academy Trust (WPAT) identified as the most suitable option.
- The sponsor Warrington Primary Academy Trust consists of 7 schools, sharing the same ethos and values as the primary.
- The rationale for the sponsor is due to the strength of WPAT's experience with schools similar to the primary.
- The board discussed the capacity of the Trust and its school improvement strategy. Further talks focused on the number of Trustees and whether the number needed to be increased with the growth of the Trust.

- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform the school and trusts.

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

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

Project: Allscott Meads Primary, Telford and Wrekin.

AB discussion:

- The Local Authority have proposed that the Learning Community Trust (LCT) is appointed as a sponsor of a new Free School, Allscott Meads Primary.
- LCT have a strong presence in the local area.
- The new Free school will act as a feeder school. The proposal for the project is due to a community need to accommodate an isolated, rural development of 470 properties. There is no school within 2 miles walking distance. The closest school is 2.2 miles and this site is not suitable for expansion.
- The board discussed the school's financial concerns including current forecasted deficits; further information was provided showing balance across the school's year.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust and School to be informed.

Significant Change

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

Project: Monks Coppenhall Academy and Day Nursey, Cheshire East – to approve the inclusion of extra provision.

AB discussion:

- Monks Coppenhall Academy and Day Nursery is a primary school set on the outskirts of Crewe, the school holds a current Ofsted judgement of 'Good' as of July 2021.
- The proposal is for the primary to include a resource provision on their site, this is in line with the LA's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision plan. The plan was created after a large proportion of required places were identified across the LA.
- The provision will hold an extra 7 pupils within an already identified area of the school which is ready to be utilised after some adaptations.
- The board discussed the LA's SEN plan, looking into how the plan will roll out further.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform school of decision.

Project: Shavington Academy, Cheshire East – to approve the inclusion of a resource provision and increase in capacity.

AB discussion:

- Shavington Academy is a secondary school set in the south of Crewe, the school holds a current Ofsted judgement of 'Good' as of 2018.
- The proposal is for the school to establish a resource provision on their site and to increase their capacity by 150 places. This is in line with the LA's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision plan. The plan was created after a large proportion of required places were identified across the LA.
- The extra provision will create 14 places with an increase of capacity rolled out across years 7-11; this is due to a rise in demand for places driven by new housing developments.
- The board discussed the LA's SEN plan, looking into how the plan will roll out further.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform school of decision.

Project: Macclesfield Academy, Cheshire East – to approve the inclusion of a resource provision and increase in capacity.

AB discussion:

- Macclesfield Academy is a secondary school set just outside of Macclesfield; the school holds a current Ofsted judgement of 'Requires Improvement' as of 2020.
- The proposal is for the school to establish a fully funded resource base for 14 students, this is in line with the LA's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision plan. The plan was created after a large proportion of places were identified across the LA.
- The provision will create 14 places for students with autism.
- The board discussed the LA's SEN plan, looking further into how the plan will roll out further; the board also reviewed the current Ofsted judgement however were provided with the monitoring visit notes which highlighted effective measures were in place.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform school of decision.

Trust Change

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

Project: Lordswood Girl's School, Birmingham, to join King Edward VI Academies Trust, Birmingham.

AB discussion:

- Lordswood Girls' is a secondary school in the constituency of Edgbaston in Birmingham. The school holds a current Ofsted rating of "Outstanding".
- King Edward VI Academies Trust (KEVI) is a 10-school secondary trust located in Birmingham.
- Lordswood Girls' and KEVI have a strong shared ethos of helping disadvantaged pupils achieve strong outcomes.
- The school will benefit from joining KEVI in a number of ways. New opportunities will be made available to the academy's staff and leadership, it will gain access to central financial and support services, and the Trust will be able to aid Lordswood Girls' in increasing its pupil intake.
- The board discussed the Trust's finances and their school improvement strategy.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sajid Gulzar.

Further actions required: To inform both trusts of the decision.

Project: Hollinsclough Church of England Academy and Manifold Church of England Primary School, Staffordshire, to transfer to The Moorlands Primary Federation, Staffordshire.

AB discussion:

- The Praxis Trust is a primary phase MAT based in North Staffordshire. The MAT was founded in September 2015 (formerly the Bursley Multi Academy Trust) and incorporated Bursley Academy, Manifold CofE Primary School and Hollinsclough CofE Academy.
- The proposal is for both Hollinsclough and Manifold to transfer to The Moorlands Primary Federation (TMPF) and 1 school (Bursley) to transfer to Collective Vision Trust (CVT).
- The rationale for the proposed change is due to Praxis identifying that is not able to offer the support and challenge required to move the academies within the trust to the next level of success due to geographical distance and size of Trust.
- Hollinsclough Church of England Academy and Manifold Church of England Primary School are both based in Staffordshire and both hold an Ofsted judgement of "Good".
- The 6 responses from the public were discussed and considered by the board. There were many positive responses to the merger.

- The board discussed the governance strategy and viability with the suggestion of a School resource management adviser (SMRA) visit. They also reviewed the responses received, gathering an overview of the current stance of the community.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform both trusts of the decision.

Project: Bursley Academy, Staffordshire, to transfer to Collective Vision Trust, Staffordshire.

AB discussion:

- The Praxis Trust is a primary phase MAT based in North Staffordshire. The MAT was founded in September 2015 (formerly the Bursley Multi Academy Trust) and incorporated Bursley Academy, Manifold CofE Primary School and Hollinsclough CofE Academy.
- The proposal is for 2 of the schools to transfer to The Moorlands Primary Federation (TMPF) and 1 school (Bursley) to transfer to Collective Vision Trust (CVT).
- The rationale for the proposed change is due to Praxis identifying that is not able to offer the support and challenge required to move the academies within the trust to the next level of success due to geographical distance and size of Trust.
- Bursley Academy is based in Staffordshire and holds an Ofsted judgement of “Outstanding”.
- The 6 responses from the public were discussed and considered by the board. There were many positive responses to the merger.
- The board discussed the governance strategy and viability with the suggestion of a School resource management adviser (SMRA) visit. They also reviewed the responses received, gathering an overview of the current stance of the community.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform both trusts of the decision.

Project: TrustEd School Partnership, Shropshire, to transfer to Central Shropshire Academy Trust, Shropshire.

AB discussion:

- Trust Ed Schools’ Partnership consists of 6 schools, all are either Ofsted “Good” or “Outstanding”.
- Central Shropshire Academy Trust (CSAT) is a small trust formed of three Shropshire academies, all 3 schools are Ofsted “Good” or “Outstanding”.
- The proposal is for CSAT to close and merge with TrustEd. A new name has been proposed for the MAT which is ‘Shropshire Partnership Trust’. Both trusts will be equal partners in the new MAT, with TrustEd being the lead trust for the merger.

- The rationale of the project is that it will build on the existing strengths of both trusts, bringing together two likeminded trusts within the same area, enabling them to share resources.
- This will form a partnership that operates cross-phase and will add additional capacity for future local growth.
- The board discussed the school improvement strategy of both trusts and how they will be working together, enabling capacity, and ensuring viability.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform both trusts of the decision.

Project: Highfields Academy, Cheshire East, to transfer to Concordia Multi Academy Trust, Cheshire East.

AB discussion:

- Highfields academy is based in Cheshire East and is part of the Star Academy Trust which currently stands as empty.
- Concordia Multi Academy Trust is also Cheshire based and consists of 4 academies, all rated either “Good” or “Outstanding”.
- Merging both trusts will establish development opportunities for all staff and leadership including teaching and learning.
- The CEO’s from both trusts have a previous working relationship across the last few months which has confirmed the practice they could share.
- The board discussed the trustee board and finances across the 2 trusts.
- The board members supported the recommendation.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform both trusts of the decision.

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 AB meeting.

Project: Endon Hall Primary School, Staffordshire.

Type of decision: Converter Academy Order

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

Project: Broad Oak Primary School, Manchester / Aspire Educational Trust, Cheshire East.

Type of decision: Trust Change

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

Project: King Edward VI High School, Staffordshire.

Type of decision: Sponsored Route

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

Project: Bredenbury Primary School, Herefordshire.

Type of decision: Sponsored Route

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