

## Notes of Meeting: North Advisory Board

Thursday 17 February 2022

### 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 school commissioner (RSC) chair

- Katherine Cowell (RSC)

### Advisory board (AB) members

- George Beveridge (AB)
- Lesley Powell (AB)
- Sir Michael Wilkins (AB)
- Zoe Carr (AB)
- Andy Bayston (AB)
- Chris Clarke (AB)

### Guests

- None

### Apologies

- Nick Hurn (AB)
- Elizabeth Horne (AB)

### DfE senior civil servants

- None

### Representations received

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

## General discussion points

Points discussed in the meeting.

RSC welcomed board members to the meeting and explained as part of Future DfE we are aligning the department's regional operation from eight RSC regions to the nine regions. RSC confirmed that Advisory Board election results will be announced shortly. RSC thanked Advisory Board members for their ongoing support.

## Significant Change

Points discussed in relation to approving significant changes to academies.

**Project:** This is a significant change application from The Enquire Learning Trust to add an additional SEN higher needs base for up to 8 places to Stokesley Primary School, North Yorkshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- The board was advised that the trust and local authority (LA) have identified an increased need for pupils with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the area, to enable children to attend mainstream education. The trust would therefore like to add new provision which will increase over time to a maximum of 8 places.
- This change will increase the provision at a small rate initially and gradually increase over time.
- The Enquire Learning Trust has successfully provided for pupils with existing higher needs bases (HNB) in other schools within their trust and they would like to replicate this at Stokesley.
- The board was advised that the trust will work with the LA to provide these additional places and will deploy trained staff from within the trust to support the resource provision.
- The board questioned whether the school had the physical space for this provision, the board was advised that the trust did not envisage any issues with space and had dedicated areas marked out within the main building for this provision.
- Formal consultation has been carried out; the response was positive, and no objections were received.
- The board supported this proposal; however, they recommend the trust have further discussions with the LA in relation to capital funding.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision

## Trust Change

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

**Project:** This is a proposal for Great Smeaton Academy Primary School Trust, North Yorkshire to voluntary transfer to Lingfield Education Trust.

### **AB discussion:**

- Great Smeaton is a small primary academy which has operated as a single academy trust (SAT) since opening as an academy in 2011.
- Great Smeaton was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in December 2019.
- The board agreed that by joining a strong MAT, Great Smeaton will receive the necessary support it needs to improve its long-term viability.
- The board was advised that Lingfield has a strong track record of supporting schools and improving outcomes. Joining Lingfield will, therefore, provide additional school improvement support and central team support to Great Smeaton.
- Lingfield will review the leadership structure at Great Smeaton at the end of the summer term when a replacement headteacher is required.
- The board was advised that pupil numbers at Great Smeaton remain a concern, however, the trust believes they will be able to stabilise numbers and plan to undertake a marketing campaign to help increase pupil numbers.
- Great Smeaton is located in close proximity of Hurworth primary school, which is in a strong position to help support Great Smeaton.
- The board supported this proposal.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision

## Trust Change

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

**Project:** This is a proposal for Meadowdale Academy, Northumberland to voluntary transfer to North East Learning Trust

### **AB discussion:**

- The board was advised that Meadowdale Academy has operated as a single academy trust (SAT) since opening in September 2012. They were at the time a four-form entry middle school, in 2020 they became a one-form entry primary school.
- Meadowdale was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in May 2017, when it was last inspected as a middle school.
- Between 2017 and 2019 KS2 performance was consistently above national average.
- The board was advised that by joining NELT, Meadowdale will benefit from closer links with Bedlington Academy where many Meadowdale pupils transfer to for secondary provision. Being part of the same trust will enable the schools to develop closer links to further aid transition and outcomes.
- NELT has a strong track record of school improvement, the board agreed that the addition of Meadowdale will add capacity to the trust.
- The board supported this proposal.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Lesley Powell was not present and did not receive papers for this item

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision

## Sponsored Route

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

**Project:** Ashley Primary School, South Tyneside to be sponsored by WISE Academies Trust

**Reason for Academy Order:** 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement

### **AB discussion:**

- Ashley Primary was judged by Ofsted to be 'Inadequate' in October 2021, having previously been 'Requires Improvement'. Ofsted identified significant issues in relation to safeguarding.
- The board was advised that performance data for 2018/19 was below average and attendance at the school is a concern.
- WISE Academies Trust was selected as the preferred sponsor due to the capacity in the trust, their track record in school improvement, their safeguarding expertise and a strong geographical fit with their other schools.
- The board was advised that WISE recognises the need for the rapid improvement of Ashley Primary School and will focus on improving four key areas that were raised as part of the Ofsted inspection.
- Trust leaders are already engaging with the LA to develop a school improvement strategy.
- The board was advised that Ashley will be receiving focused support from WISE curriculum leaders.
- The board supported this proposal.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Zoe Carr was not present and did not receive papers for this item

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision

## Sponsored Route

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

**Project:** Brompton Hall School, North Yorkshire to be sponsored by Venn Academy Trust

**Reason for Academy Order:** 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement

### **AB discussion:**

- Brompton Hall School is a maintained special school for boys aged 8-16 with weekday residential provision. All pupils have an education, health and care plan with SEMH identified as the main area of need.
- Brompton was judged by Ofsted to be 'Inadequate' in June 2021.
- The board was advised that a local authority (LA) IEB of 5 members was approved and has been in place since 1 August 2021.
- Venn is an all-through/special/AP MAT with a good track record of school improvement.
- The board was advised that the trust has completed its initial due diligence. If approved, the trust will focus immediately on working with the IEB to address some of the key areas that were raised as part of the Ofsted inspection.
- Brompton is located an hour away from Venn's nearest school, the trust does not see this as a concern as they would like to consider the possibility of expanding into the surrounding area and there is a need for additional trust choice in the area.
- The board discussed the numerous buildings on site and varying conditions, the board was advised that there are ongoing discussions between the trust and the LA to address any suitability needs and aspects of concern.
- The board challenged the viability of the residential provision, noting that the LA proposes to close this provision at the end of the 2023/24 academic year and that the trust would need a plan to manage this provision up to that point.
- The board was advised that if approved an SRMA must be deployed at the school and the trust will need to provide a robust financial plan prior to signing a funding agreement.
- The board supported this proposal and agreed that Venn can proceed and undertake further detailed due diligence.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision

## Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

**Project:** This is a proposal to approve the sponsor application for Cramlington Learning Village, Northumberland

### **AB discussion:**

- The board was advised that Cramlington Learning Village has operated as a single academy trust (SAT) since opening in September 2011.
- Cramlington was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in February 2017.
- The board was advised that performance data for 2018/19 was above average.
- In addition to obtaining sponsor status primarily focussed on sponsoring secondary provision, Cramlington is keen to build a primary arm and is engaging with several local schools. Cramlington has appointed an ex-head teacher of a primary school to help support this.
- The board was advised that there is a need for additional system leaders within the surrounding areas of Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle, if approved Cramlington is well positioned to help support schools in these areas.
- The board raised questions about the current leadership structure, the board would like to see further clarity around the future leadership of the trust, and clear accountability for performance.
- The board was concerned that the senior leadership team lacked sufficient lines of accountability with all three senior leaders reporting independently to the trust board.
- The board agreed that they would like to continue to encourage and support this trust in obtaining sponsor status, however, at this stage the board is unable to support this proposal. The board agreed that the trust should consider accepting additional support from the department, provide further clarity on their future leadership structure and consider working with other schools in trust partnership arrangements to further develop potential growth.

**RSC decision:** Defer

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision



### **Academy opening approved in principle**

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Alanbrooke School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/03/2022

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No further action required

### **Academy opening approved in principle**

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Moorside Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/03/2022

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No further action required

### **Academy opening approved in principle**

List of academies approved to open.

Project: New Brancepeth Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/03/2022

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No further action required

## Decisions taken by another RSC

List of decisions taken by another RSC.

**Project:** Kenton School, **Newcastle**, Significant Change - increase in ARP numbers

**Name of RSC who made the decision:** Vicky Beer

**AB Discussion:** RSC considered all factors presented in the paper.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Katherine Cowell (RSC) was not present and did not receive papers for this item

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

**Project:** St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, **Middlesbrough**

**Decision type:** Significant Change – increase in physical capacity

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision

**Project:** Ryhope Infant School Academy, **Sunderland**

**Decision type:** Significant Change - Reduction of lower age limit from 3 years to 2 years and the addition of 16 part-time (8 full time) places for 2-year-olds

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform school/trust of decision