

Notes of Meeting: Lancashire & West Yorkshire Advisory Board

24th 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 Schools Commissioner (RSC) chair

- Vicky Beer (RSC)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Duncan Jacques
- Karen Bramwell
- Julie Bradley
- Jonathan Nichols
- Lesley Gwinnett
- Chris Melia

Apologies

- Julian Appleyard

DfE senior civil servants

- ESFA Representatives

Representations received

- 1 received; Discussion to consider the sponsor options for Wakefield Greenhill Primary School, Wakefield (Sponsored Route)

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

General Discussion Points

- The RSC provided an update on the Regional Group Model, Advisory Board elections and the Schools White Paper.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Discussion to consider Whitcliffe Mount School, Kirklees, to convert and join Share Multi-Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board agreed that this was a positive example of associate partnership.
- The board shared no concerns regarding this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Park View Primary School, Bury, to convert and join Bury College Education Trust

AB discussion:

- The board considered and queried the impact of the trust's overall school performance.
- The board agreed that the trust requires a stronger School Improvement plan to demonstrate robust accountability at trustee level. Trust must provide a robust School Improvement plan.
- The board suggested that mentoring support be offered to the Interim Executive Headteacher.
- The board agreed the trust should begin to make the necessary changes stated above and to present its case again at a future Advisory Board meeting. This will also be post publication of the Schools White Paper and may give the trust a better opportunity to substantiate its future vision.
- Project lead to organise a follow-up conversation with the trust to examine these conditions and provide additional support.

RSC decision: Decline

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to organise a follow-up conversation with the trust to examine these conditions and provide additional support

Project: Discussion to consider Sacred Heart Roman Catholic School, Lancashire, to convert and join Romero Catholic Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the trust's constructive work within the local area and the strength of their collaborative working with the Diocese of Salford.

- The board also acknowledged the work undertaken by the leadership team to work collaboratively with local trusts who have experience in supporting smaller primary schools in the area.
- ESFA have requested a 3-year surplus forecast to ensure the trust will be financially stable to take on this and the other schools.
- The board suggested that the trust's governance structure may need to be revisited once schools have joined to ensure there aren't any skills or expertise gaps.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Holy Trinity Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and join Romero Catholic Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the trust's constructive work within the local area and the strength of their collaborative working with the Diocese of Salford.
- The board also acknowledged the work undertaken by the leadership team to work collaboratively with local trusts who have experience in supporting smaller primary schools in the area.
- ESFA have requested a 3-year surplus forecast to ensure the trust will be financially stable to take on this and the other schools.
- The board suggested that the trust's governance structure may need to be revisited once schools have joined to ensure there aren't any skills or expertise gaps.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Christ The King Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and join Romero Catholic Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the trust's constructive work within the local area and the strength of their collaborative working with the Diocese of Salford.
- The board also acknowledged the work undertaken by the leadership team to work collaboratively with local trusts who have experience in supporting smaller primary schools in the area.
- ESFA have requested a 3-year surplus forecast to ensure the trust will be financially stable to take on this and the other schools.
- The board suggested that the trust's governance structure may need to be revisited once schools have joined to ensure there aren't any skills or expertise gaps.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Thornton Cleveleys, Lancashire, to convert and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the sound work and preparation undertaken to underpin this next strategy of trust growth in readiness to take on the schools.
- The board reflected on the number of schools joining the trust simultaneously, taking into consideration how the trust will balance future risks.
- No further concerns raised by the board.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, Blackpool, to convert and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the sound work and preparation undertaken to underpin this next strategy of trust growth in readiness to take on the schools.
- The board reflected on the number of schools joining the trust simultaneously, taking into consideration how the trust will balance future risks.
- No further concerns raised by the board.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Great Eccleston, Lancashire, to convert and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the sound work and preparation undertaken to underpin this next strategy of trust growth in readiness to take on the schools.
- The board reflected on the number of schools joining the trust simultaneously, taking into consideration how the trust will balance future risks.

- No further concerns raised by the board.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, to convert and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the sound work and preparation undertaken to underpin this next strategy of trust growth in readiness to take on the schools.
- The board reflected on the number of schools joining the trust simultaneously, taking into consideration how the trust will balance future risks.
- No further concerns raised by the board.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider St Wulstan's and St Edmund's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, Lancashire, to convert and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the sound work and preparation undertaken to underpin this next strategy of trust growth in readiness to take on the schools.
- The board reflected on the number of schools joining the trust simultaneously, taking into consideration how the trust will balance future risks.
- No further concerns raised by the board.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Cardinal Allen Catholic High School, Fleetwood, Lancashire, to convert and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the sound work and preparation undertaken to underpin this next strategy of trust growth in readiness to take on the schools.
- The board reflected on the number of schools joining the trust simultaneously, taking into consideration how the trust will balance future risks.
- No further concerns raised by the board.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform Trust and DCS of decision and Academy Order to be sent.

Project: Discussion to consider Whitley Village School, Cheshire West and Chester, to convert and join The Rowan Learning Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the challenges regarding the geographical distances between Whitley Village School and the current schools in the trust.
- The board discussed the lack of clarity in the trust's growth plan and the risk of these two schools becoming outliers.
- The board also noted that the trust have yet to fully embed and evidence substantial improvement with schools they have recently taken on. The board suggested that the trust would need to demonstrate the progress and impact they have had with their sponsored academies so far.
- The RSC has requested a robust growth strategy which explains the vision and targets they have within this sub-region (Cheshire West and Chester) and can provide the clarity and confidence in their future growth strategy.
- This plan must also show an understanding of how they will manage future risks and provide assurances regarding their mitigation strategy.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform trust of this decision and communicate the conditions set during the meeting.

Project: Discussion to consider The Acorns Primary and Nursery School, Cheshire West and Chester, to convert and join The Rowan Learning Trust

AB discussion:

- The board reflected on the challenges regarding the geographical distances between Whitley Village School and the current schools in the trust.
- The board discussed the lack of clarity in the trust's growth plan and the risk of these two schools becoming outliers.
- The board also noted that the trust have yet to fully embed and evidence substantial improvement with schools they have recently taken on. The board suggested that the trust would need to demonstrate the progress and impact they have had with their sponsored academies so far.
- The RSC has requested a robust growth strategy which explains the vision and targets

they have within this sub-region (Cheshire West and Chester) and can provide the clarity and confidence in their future growth strategy.

- This plan must also show an understanding of how they will manage future risks and provide assurances regarding their mitigation strategy.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform trust of this decision and communicate the conditions set during the meeting.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Discussion to consider Manorfield Infant and Nursery School, Kirklees, to convert and join Batley Multi-Academy Trust

Reason for Academy Order: Ofsted Category 4

AB discussion:

- The board suggested that the trust develops its board by taking on more members with expert backgrounds. This is to also include a financial trustee.
- The board agreed that this is a logical move and recognised the positive impact and added value the trust will have on the school.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform trust of decision

Project: Discussion to consider the sponsor options for Wakefield Greenhill Primary School, Wakefield

Reason for Academy Order: Ofsted Category 4

AB discussion:

- The board were provided with a summary of the representation and reflected on the concerns raised in the letter.
- The board recognised how educational leaders in the Wakefield area have worked collaboratively to strengthen the trust network and its impact within the sub-region over recent years.
- The board also acknowledged the opportunities the proposed sponsor could bring to this school based on previous track record and the specific needs of the school, including its EAL cohort. They also recognised the strategic sense given the proximity of the primary school to the trust.
- The board discussed further opportunities for local MATs in the area to grow.
- The board agreed to the following actions before the project could be approved (all are now completed):
 - RSC to attend a meeting with Outwood Grange Academies Trust to discuss the representation and gain further clarity in terms of their engagement with local MATs.
 - RSC to attend a meeting with the correspondent.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform trust of decision

Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

Project: Discussion to consider the sponsor application for The Priestley Academy Trust, Bradford

AB discussion:

- The board recognised both the positive impact the new CEO and the leadership team have had since taking on the school and within the wider sub-region.
- The board reflected that the trust should revisit their School Improvement plan to provide the clarity and confidence in their ability to take on vulnerable schools.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Duncan Jacques

Further actions required: Project lead to inform trust of decision

Trust Change

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

Project: Discussion to consider New Islington Free School, Manchester, to transfer to The Co-Operative Academies Trust

AB discussion:

- Thenboard agreed this consolidation made sound strategic sense with benefits for both trusts.
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RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform trust of decision

Project: Discussion to consider Parrs Wood High School, Manchester, to transfer to Education and Leadership Trust

AB discussion:

- **Thenboard agreed this consolidation made sound strategic sense with benefits for both trusts.**
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- The board have suggested that the trust complete a skills audit to identify any expertise gaps on the trust board.
- SRMA to be deployed.
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- The board supported this proposal with the conditions set out above.

RSC decision: Approve with conditions.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Project lead to inform trust of decision

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