



Department
for Education

Notes of Meeting: South-East England and South London Advisory Board

24 February 2022

Attendance

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

AB members who send their apologies for the meeting are, where possible, 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

- Claire Burton

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Stephen Carey
- Mark Ducker
- Paula Farrow
- Alison Beane
- Andrew Carter
- David Boyle

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Jon Chaloner

DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield
- Anna Barker

Representations received

Published: April 2022

- A submission was received from Mick Berry and Alex Treseder regarding the 'The Mead Infant and Nursery School' agenda item, which was shared with Advisory Board members.

General Discussion Points

RSC update

- Minutes from previous meeting agreed.
- RSC thanked members for extending their tenures and gave an update on some of the operational changes in the department. RSC has written to education leaders with an update as well.
- AB discussed priorities for the academy programme in the region.
- AB discussed Ofsted outcomes in the region.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Sedley's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Kent - to join Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust

AB discussion: This is a converter project for Sedley's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to convert to academy status and join Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust (AAAT).

The school is part of the Diocese of Rochester. The RSC Office has received letters of support for the proposed conversion from the Rochester Diocesan Board of Education, the Parochial Church Council of St Nicholas Church, Southfleet, and Cobham Deanery.

AAAT has been supporting the school through a trust partnership agreement.

RSC decision: Approve with condition.

Conflicts: Stephen Carey did not receive the papers and was not present for this item.

Further actions required: Consider SRMA deployment to Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust in light of the trust's recent and planned future growth.

Project: St Richard Reynolds Catholic High School, St Richard Reynolds Catholic Primary School, St Paul's Catholic College, St Ignatius Catholic Primary School, St Michael Catholic Primary School, and Our Lady of the Rosary RC Primary School - forming the Ascension Catholic Academy Trust

AB discussion: The application is for 6 schools across Richmond upon Thames and Surrey to convert and form the Ascension Catholic Academy Trust (ACAT), which will sit under the Diocese of Westminster umbrella of trusts.

The establishment of the trust will support working relationships being established between local catholic schools, assisting with school improvement, leadership recruitment and formation, governance and co-operation to strengthen the Catholic mission.

The development of the trust will move beyond the existing partnerships. The trust will work with and support schools that are both part of the trust and those that remain under local authority control.

Noted that the formation of the trust is supported by the Diocese.

Discussed governance and noted that the CEO is currently principal of two of the schools.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Continue to discuss the trust's growth plan and school improvement strategy as the trust develops.

Project: The Dawnay School, Surrey - to join South Farnham Educational Trust

AB discussion: The Dawnay is mixed 1.5 FE community primary school for pupils aged 5-11 in Leatherhead, Surrey.

The school faced leadership challenges and was judged to require improvement by Ofsted. In May 2021 South Farnham Educational Trust (SFET) was invited by Surrey to provide interim support at the school.

SFET has a strong track record of school improvement and has supported a number of schools out of Ofsted categories. All schools in the trust are OFSTED Outstanding with good leadership capacity.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: Andrew Carter did not receive the papers and was not present for this item. Also noted a conflict for Jon Chaloner who did not attend the meeting.

Further actions required: No action required

Project: Epsom Primary and Nursery School, Surrey - to join Bourne Education Trust (BET)

AB discussion: Epsom Primary and Nursery School is a 2-FE primary school based in Epsom, Surrey. The school caters for 534 pupils, aged 2 to 11, including 54 nursery places.

In September 2019, the school was judged to be good in all areas and outstanding in personal development, behaviour, and welfare of children.

It was noted that the proportion of pupils receiving SEN support is 21.2%, higher than the national average of 12.6%. Percentage of pupils with an EHCP in the school is 2.7%, higher than the national average of 1.6%.

It was also noted that the school had significant financial challenges.

In response to their concerns around financial governance of the school Epsom Primary and Nursery School became an associate partner to BET last year.

The school is keen to join BET as it has experience of working with a large number of schools, allowing them to be part of a collaborative approach to benefit the pupils and staff and to stabilise the fiscal position of the school. In addition, the presence of a number of primary and specialist provision within the trust is a contributing factor in the school's plan to open an SEN unit.

The board discussed the trust's recent growth and growth plan.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

Project: St Wilfrid's, West Sussex – to join Hurst Education Trust

AB discussion: St Wilfrid's CofE Primary School is a high-performing two-form primary school, rated as 'Good' (both in Ofsted and SIAMs inspections), with strong links to several local churches.

Hurst Education Trust (HET) was approved as a trust in October 2021 following two applications to convert from Good local CofE schools, Ditchling and Albourne. St Wilfrid's, has now submitted an application to join the trust.

Discussion on growth plan and capacity.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

Sponsored route

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

Project: The Mead Infant and Nursery School, Surrey - sponsor options

AB discussion: The Mead is mixed three-form entry infant school with a capacity of 348 pupils including 65 nursery children.

Following an Ofsted inspection on 17 November 2021, The Mead Infant and Nursery School (Newbury Gardens, Ewell, Epsom Surrey) was judged to be Inadequate. Ofsted published its final report on February 2022.

Discussed rationale for recommending Bourne Education Trust (BET) as the sponsor for The Mead Infant and Nursery School, due to the sponsor's track record of school improvement.

Discussed representations.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

Significant change:

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

Project: Hayesbrook Academy, Kent - change from boys to co-ed

AB discussion: Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) is applying to vary Hayesbrook Academy's admission arrangements to admit girls and boys from September 2023 into year 7. To reflect its new status as a co-educational academy, the academy would be renamed from the same date as Leigh Academy Tonbridge (LATon).

It was noted that the sixth form at Hayesbrook is already co-educational so no change is required for post-16 students.

Noted that Kent County Council is supportive of the proposal.

Discussed performance at secondary schools and governance of the trust.

Discussed response to consultation and local impact.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

Project: Robin Hood Primary and Nursery School, Kingston upon Thames - to add Specialist Resource Provision unit

AB discussion: Robin Hood Primary and Nursery School is a mixed 2 FE school in the London borough of Kingston upon Thames. Since September 2019, it has been part of Coombe Academy Trust, which has 2 secondary and 3 primary schools in the local area. It was judged as being 'good' by Ofsted in March 2018.

The proposed change is for a Specialist Resource Provision unit (SRP) based at Robin Hood Primary and Nursery School, which is part of the Coombe Academies Trust. The SRP unit would be for 14 pupils with social communication needs, including autism and mild to moderate learning difficulties.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

Project: St Laurence in Thanet Church of England Junior Academy, Kent - to join Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust.

AB discussion: St Laurence in Thanet Church of England Junior Academy is a good school that has had a falling roll in recent years which has put pressure on the school's financial situation.

In November 2021 the Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education approved the proposal for the school to transfer into Aquila. By joining Aquilla, St Laurence's will benefit from a range of shared services and opportunities helping to bring about long-term financial sustainability.

Noted that Aquilla is keen to grow and currently has 14 schools.

Discussion about the trust's SI model.

Discussion on relationship between infants and juniors.

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Project: Invicta Grammar School, Kent - physical expansion

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

Project: Judith Kerr Primary School, Southwark, to extend age range and add nursery provision

Decision type: Significant change

RSC decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: No action required

© Crown copyright 2022