



Notes of Meeting: East Midlands and The Humber Advisory Board

18 May 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

- Carol Gray.

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Inderjit Sandhu.
- Paul Stone.
- Andy Child.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- Paul West.
- Anne Martin.

DfE senior civil servants

- ESFA representative.
- Kelly Hughes (Deputy Director).

Representations received

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

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve the conversion of Dove Bank Primary School, Leicestershire, to LiFE Multi-Academy Trust, Leicestershire.

AB discussion:

Dove Bank Primary School is a small rural community school with a capacity of 210. It is situated in the village of Nailstone, serving the catchment areas of Bagworth and Battram. It received a good Ofsted (short) judgement in December 2017.

The governing body of Dove Bank Primary School has passed a resolution to convert to academy status and join LiFE Multi-Academy Trust. The school has been working in partnership with LiFE Multi-Academy Trust across several areas. A consultation has been carried out with relevant stakeholders and no concerns were raised.

LiFE Multi-Academy Trust is currently formed of 8 academies, 2 of which are primaries. The addition of 2 local Ofsted good primary schools (the other being Desford Community Primary School) will add additional capacity to the trust and allow for increased collaboration.

The board agreed with this proposal.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance at LiFE Multi-Academy Trust, and the impact on the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul West. Paul was not sent any project papers in advance of the meeting, nor was he present for it.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Academy order to be sent to the school's Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire County Council.

Project: Whether to approve the conversion of Desford Community Primary School, Leicestershire, to LiFE Multi-Academy Trust, Leicestershire.

AB discussion:

Desford Community Primary is a large community school situated in Desford (7 miles west of Leicester). The school serves not only Desford but also the surrounding villages of Peckleton, Kirkby Mallory, and Botcheston. It received a good Ofsted judgement in July 2017.

The governing body of Desford Community Primary has passed a resolution to convert to academy status and join LiFE Multi-Academy Trust. The school has been working in partnership with LiFE Multi-Academy Trust across several areas. A consultation has been carried out with relevant stakeholders with no concerns raised.

LiFE Multi-Academy Trust is currently formed of 8 academies, 2 of which are primaries. The addition of 2 local Ofsted good primary schools (the other being Dove Bank Primary School) will add additional capacity to the trust and allow for increased collaboration.

The board agreed with this proposal.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance at LiFE Multi-Academy Trust, and the impact on the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul West. Paul was not sent any project papers in advance of the meeting, nor was he present for it.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Academy order to be sent to the school's Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Leicestershire County Council.

Project: Whether to approve the conversion of Leadenham Church of England Primary School, Lincolnshire, to Infinity Academies Trust, Lincolnshire.

AB discussion:

Leadenham Church of England Primary School is on the outskirts of Grantham. The school retained its Ofsted good judgment via a short inspection in March 2017.

The school has an established working partnership with Infinity Academies Trust and the governing body has passed a resolution to convert to academy status and join the trust.

This proposal would contribute towards the trust's planned growth of their Grantham hub. The board acknowledged the increase in capacity in the trust's central team to support the proposed growth.

The board agreed with this proposal.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance at Infinity Academies Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Andy Child. Andy was not sent any project papers in advance of the meeting, nor was he present for this part of it.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision. Academy order to be sent to the school's Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Lincolnshire County Council. An external review of governance was recommended.

Sponsor Application

Points discussed in relation to applications for sponsor application.

Project: Whether to approve the sponsor application from Odyssey Collaborative Trust, Derbyshire.

AB discussion:

The Odyssey Collaborative Trust was formed in 2018 with 6 primary academies. Oakwood Junior School joined in April 2021. The academies are all located within 30 minutes' drive of each other. There have been no new Ofsted outcomes for the trust's academies since joining the trust.

The trust has applied for sponsor status.

The trust's school improvement strategy is in its infancy, having been developed by the new CEO since his arrival in 2021.

The board was not satisfied that Odyssey Collaborative Trust has robust operational plans, systems and processes for operating as a sponsor at this time. The board therefore advised that this application should be declined.

It was recommended that if the trust wishes to grow, a school resource management adviser should be commissioned, along with an external review of governance.

RSC decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the trust of the decision.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Bishop Ellis Catholic Voluntary Academy

AB discussion: Proposed School Opening Date – 01 June 2022.

Further actions required: No action required.

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to approve the growth of Becton School (Nexus Multi Academy Trust) Sheffield, from a capacity of 170 across 4 sites, to 220 across 5 sites and a further increase to 268 by 2023/24.

AB discussion: Becton School is a special academy and is part of Nexus Multi Academy Trust. The academy joined the trust in April 2020. It received a good Ofsted judgement in March 2022.

Since academy conversion, Becton School has grown due to a 10-place increase in the academy's medical needs provision and a 40-place increase in the size of its special provision. This growth has taken the academy from 4 sites and a total capacity of 170 in April 2020 to 5 sites and a total capacity of 220 in September 2021. The academy is expected to grow further to reach a capacity of 268 by 2023/24. A decision is sought on whether to approve this retrospective change and the proposed future increase in capacity to 268 to accommodate increasing demand for special school provision.

It was noted that a significant change application should have been made prior to the formation of the fifth satellite site. The proposed growth is required to help the local authority meet their sufficiency duty.

The board agreed with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Andy Child. Andy was not sent any project papers in advance of the meeting, nor was he present for this part of it.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision. The supportive deployment of a School Resource management Adviser was recommended. An external review of governance was also recommended and is scheduled to take place in the Autumn.

Project: Whether to approve the number of planned places at Tulip Academy (Community Inclusive Trust), Lincolnshire.

AB discussion:

Tulip Academy is due to open in September 2022 and will provide special provision for pupils aged 2-19. The academy is being formed from the merger of two special schools within Community Inclusive Trust, The Priory School, and The Garth School. The proposed change forms part of Lincolnshire County Council's strategy to make all special provision within the local authority area all-through and all-needs.

Community Inclusive Trust is seeking approval to increase the planned number of places from 177 to 202. This proposal is fully supported by Lincolnshire County Council and is required to meet local and regional demand for special provision.

Both academies have been judged outstanding by Ofsted (The Garth School in June 2015 and The Priory School in February 2020). Since 2018 there has been a steady growth in pupil numbers to 202 across both academies and forecast to remain at this number following the merger. No physical expansion is required to accommodate the pupil numbers and no additional staff or leadership posts will be required.

The board agreed with this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the schools and trust of the decision. The supportive deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser was recommended.

Trust Change

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

Project: Whether to approve the Diocese of Hallam to form a new trust – St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

There are 50 faith schools (including 3 independent schools) in the Diocese of Hallam, spanning 6 local authorities (Barnsley, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Nottinghamshire, Rotherham, and Sheffield).

Of the 47 state-funded schools, 19 are maintained schools, 23 are single-academy trusts and 5 schools are in The Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust.

In December 2021, the proposal of converting and transferring all 47 of the Diocese of Hallam's schools into 2 new trusts (St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust and St Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust) was presented to the Advisory Board. The proposal was approved, and academy orders issued. These academy orders were later withdrawn.

Ten schools (9 academies and one academy conversion) have now passed resolutions and will join St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust in September 2022. The following individual decisions were considered:

- Whether to approve the transfer of All Saints Catholic High School (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of Notre Dame High School (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of Sacred Heart School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of St Ann's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of St Marie's School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of St Mary's Primary School, A Catholic Voluntary Academy (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of St Catherine's Catholic Primary School (Single Academy Trust), Hallam, Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of St Thomas of Canterbury School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve the transfer of St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School (Single Academy Trust), Sheffield, to St Clare Multi Academy Trust.
- Whether to approve St Alban's Catholic Primary and Nursery School, Doncaster, to convert and join St Clare Multi Academy Trust.

The board was satisfied that the issues that arose following the December Advisory Board had been resolved and therefore agreed to approve this decision.

The financial health of the single academy trusts, the strength of financial management and governance at St Clare Multi Academy Trust and the impact on the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform; the Diocese, Director of Children's services for Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council and the trust, of the decision made. Academy order to be sent to the schools' Chair of Governors and Director of Children's Services. The supportive deployment of a School Resource Management Adviser was recommended. An external review of governance was recommended after a 12- to 18-month period.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Discuss and agree the sponsored academy pre-opening funding route for Brierley Forest Primary School to join Transform Trust.

RSC decision: Approve – fast track funding.

Conflicts: N/A

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision.

Project: Whether to retrospectively approve the growth of The Joseph Whitaker School from a capacity of 1250 to 1370 (120 Y7 to Y11 places) and an increase in PAN from 211 to 235.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: N/A

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school of the decision.