



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

26 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

- Claire Burton

### Advisory Board (AB) members

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

### Guests

- None

### Apologies

- Jon Chaloner
- Andrew Carter

### DfE senior civil servants

- Anna Barker

### Representations received

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

## **General Discussion Points**

### **RSC Update**

- The RSC gave an update on feedback and questions arising from Schools White Paper briefings and webinars. The RSC's office is organising a webinar for LA maintained schools. This will be the final event in the series.
- AB members discussed LA interest in developing LA trusts.

### **Ofsted**

- AB noted a generally positive picture for SESL Academies overall.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Four schools: Coloma Convent Girls', Croydon, Notre Dame Roman Catholic Girls' School, Southwark, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School (George Row), Southwark, and St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, Bexley, to join South East London Catholic Academy Trust

**AB discussion:** SELCAT is a multi-phase MAT, offering all-through education to pupils from 3-19 years old. Allowing the additional four schools to join SELCAT will ensure greater financial sustainability and school improvement capacity. This project will support the Schools White Paper ambition for all schools to become academies in a strong trust by 2030.

SELCAT is bringing in additional central capacity to support these schools joining and recognises it will need a period of consolidation to ensure its systems and approaches are fully implemented before growing further.

**RSC decision:** Approve with condition

**Conflicts:** Paula Farrow declared a conflict as Nick Tildesley is a trustee and will be an employee of NEST as of September.

**Further actions required:** Condition for two additional trustees to be appointed by September 2022. Recommendation for a period of consolidation. RDD to maintain monthly conversations with the trust as it develops.

**Project:** The Priory CoE Voluntary Aided School, Surrey - to join Enlighten Learning Trust (ELT)

**AB discussion:** ELT has been collaborating with the Priory in a partnership arrangement since January 2022 and as the relationship is well established, both parties are happy to formalise the arrangement.

ELT's vision and ethos are aligned with Priory's with close links to the Dorking community of schools and parents.

AB discussed the trust's governance.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Recommendation to deploy an NLG to consider opportunities to strengthen trust governance.

**Project:** Town Farm Primary School & Nursery, Surrey – to join The Galaxy Trust

**AB discussion:** Town Farm Primary School & Nursery (Surrey) has been working with The Galaxy Trust (Dartford, Kent) since 2019. Given the benefits of the existing collaboration and the alignment of their values and ethos, growth philosophy, approach to teaching and

learning, model for governance and model for support and challenge, they are now seeking to formalise the relationship.

There was a discussion about the trust's growth plans, including the planned establishment of Surrey and Gravesend hubs.

The board raised concerns about the risk of isolating Town Farm due to the distance from the Dartford-based Galaxy schools. It was noted that having commitment from more Surrey schools to join the trust would reduce this risk.

**RSC decision:** Defer

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Any further applications in relation to Town Farm Primary School & Nursery joining The Galaxy Trust should be accompanied by written resolutions to convert (and join the trust) from more Surrey schools in order to minimise the risk of isolation posed by the distance. Any requests to set up a Surrey hub by The Galaxy Trust should be submitted after the planned establishment of the Gravesend hub.

**Project:** Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School, Croydon - to join Apostle Trust. (And six SATs: St Mary's Catholic Infant School, St Mary's Catholic Junior School, St James the Great RC Nursery & Primary School, St Aidan's Catholic Primary School, Good Shepherd Catholic Primary & Nursery School, St Chad's Catholic Primary School, St Thomas Becket Primary School – to join Apostle Trust)

**AB discussion:** All schools are currently within the Croydon Catholic Umbrella Trust and have formed effective working arrangements and collaboration, and now wish to move to a more formal MAT arrangement.

Noted that the schools will bring capacity to the trust including shared training, experienced leadership team, and experienced middle leaders.

Noted that a recruitment process is underway for a CEO and CFO.

**RSC decision:** Approve in principle with condition

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Condition to ensure the Archdiocese is content with the timing of establishment of the MAT and its governance and leadership arrangements. Condition for CEO and CFO to be appointed by 01/09/2022. Recommendation for governance review.

## Significant Change

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

**Project:** Shenstone School (SEND), Bexley – expansion onto satellite site and extension of age-range

**AB discussion:** The project relates to Shenstone School, which is an Ofsted ‘Good’ special school designated for learners with severe, complex and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties alongside other needs including autism and physical disabilities.

The proposal is for the school to expand from 160 pupils (aged 2-11) to 300 pupils (aged 2-19) by developing a third site to meet an immediate and ongoing shortfall in secondary SEND provision.

Discussed the phases of the project.

Noted that Bexley LA has committed to fund the whole project.

Discussed sufficiency risk if project is not approved.

Discussed PMLD provision and how the school will implement the significant change.

Discussed TKAT’s local experience with special schools.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** RDD deputy director to arrange a discussion with LB Bexley on strategic planning for SEND; and to seek project oversight assurances.

**Project:** The Matthew Arnold School, Surrey – expansion to include SEN provision

**AB discussion:** Application to temporarily expand Matthew Arnold School for a period of two academic years to create additional Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) designated Special School provision for up to 80 pupils: 50 pupils at Hurst Road, Molesey and 30 pupils at Wentworth Road, Ripley.

Surrey Council are proposing a new specialist school to reduce reliance on the non-maintained independent (NMI) sector and meet changes to both diagnostic and demographic patterns to open in Sept 2024. The expansion at Mathew Arnold will help meet the need up to that point.

Bourne Education Trust (BET) was identified as the trust of choice after an open competitive process. The trust benefits from experience in SEN provision.

Recommendation is that the request be approved for two years on the condition that the land issue at Hurst Road is resolved.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** A conflict of interest was identified for Sir Andrew Carter who was not present for this item.

**Further actions required:** No action required.

**Project: Edward Bryant School, West Sussex (part of Schoolsworks Academy Trust) – SEN extension**

**AB discussion:** The proposal is to build an extension to house a special support centre for pupils with communication and interaction needs (COIN).

The LA approached Edward Bryant School and the Trust because they have a strong reputation for effectively supporting pupils with SEND, including having a group of experienced SEND managers as part of the trust, and experience running an SCC at River Beach Primary School for hearing impaired pupils.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** No action required

**Project: Arundel Court Primary Academy, Portsmouth (part of University of Chichester (Multi) Academy Trust) - addition of a SEN inclusion centre for 24 pupils**

**AB discussion:** Capacity increase and physical expansion of Arundel Court Primary School to add a SEN inclusion centre. The SEN centre will comprise of three learning spaces, a sensory room and support rooms and dedicated outside space for up to 24 pupils. The building work is due to take place from September 22 with the inclusion centre completed by September 23. The work is fully funded by Portsmouth City Council (PCC).

The centre will offer 24 places for pupils with communication and interaction needs and the school are expecting 16 pupils to start in September 23, with a further 7 pupils joining in September 24. The school's capacity will increase by 24 places from September 23 and the school will also increase their PAN by 20 places in 2023.

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Recommend that the CEO be the only employee on the Board.

## Trust Change

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

**Project:** St Thomas Catholic Primary School, Croydon - SAT to MAT (new trust name - Apostle Trust)

**AB discussion:** See discussion under Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School, Croydon - to join Apostle Trust, above.

**RSC decision:**

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:**

**Project:** Six SATs: St Mary's Catholic Infant School, St Mary's Catholic Junior School, St James the Great RC Nursery & Primary School, Good Shepherd Catholic Primary & Nursery School, St Chad's Catholic Primary School, St Thomas Becket Primary School – to join Apostle Trust

**AB discussion:** See discussion under Margaret Roper Catholic Primary School, Croydon - to join Apostle Trust, above.

**RSC decision:**

**Conflicts:**

**Further actions required:**

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

**Project:** South Bank UTC to temporarily pause its Y10 admissions for 2022/23

**Decision type:** Significant Change

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** No action required

**Project:** Charing Church of England Primary School - to add a nursery class

**Decision type:** Significant change

**RSC decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** No action required



## 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:** St Joseph's RC Infant School and St Joseph's RC Junior School, Croydon - to join Apostle Trust.

**Type of decision:** Converter Academy Order

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** Awaiting further information needed for the paper.

**Project:** St Aidan's Catholic Primary School, – to join Apostle Trust

**Type of decision:** Trust change

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** Awaiting further information needed for the paper.

**Project:** St Joseph's RC Infant School

**Type of decision:** Converter Academy Orders

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** Awaiting further information needed for the paper.

**Project:** St Joseph's RC Junior School, Croydon

**Type of decision:** Converter Academy Orders

**Reason for why it was taken off agenda:** Awaiting further information needed for the paper.