

Notes of Meeting: North Advisory Board

Thursday 14 July 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

- Katherine Cowell (RSC)

Attendees

- George Beveridge (AB)
- Nick Hurn (AB)
- Elizabeth Horne (AB)
- Zoe Carr (AB)
- Lesley Powell (AB)
- Sir Michael Wilkins (AB)
- Andy Bayston (AB)

Apologies

- Chris Clarke (AB)

Observers

- Jason Brine
- Maura Regan
- Nicola Stephenson
- Anita Bath
- Colin Lofthouse

DfE senior civil servants

- N/A

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

RSC welcomed current board members to the meeting. The new Advisory board members were invited to this meeting to observe ahead of formally taking up their roles in September.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Petteril Bank School, Cumbria to convert and join Cumbria Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- Petteril Bank Community School in Carlisle was judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' in June 2016, although pupils' outcomes were judged 'Requires Improvement'.
- In November 2021 Cumbria Local Authority applied to put in place an Interim Executive Board due to concerns with the quality and effectiveness of governance. This was approved by the Regional Schools Commissioner and commenced in January 2022.
- The school has been receiving support from Cumbria Education Trust. The trust includes 3 secondary and 8 primary schools. The school will have access to the trust's support networks and benefit from executive leadership from CET's primary director and SLT.
- Petteril Bank School has seen a decline in pupil numbers and is currently under capacity however Cumbria Education Trust is confident they can increase pupil numbers through school improvement strategies and engagement with the local community.
- The board discussed Cumbria Education Trust's governance structure and recommended some minor changes.
- The board agreed that the trust has the capacity and capability to support this school and, therefore, supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: George Beveridge was not present and did not receive papers for this item.

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a proposal for Middlestone Moor Primary School, County Durham to convert and join Advanced Learning Partnership (ALP).

AB discussion:

- Middlestone Moor Primary School was judged 'Good' by Ofsted in January 2020.
- ALP currently has 6 secondaries and 5 primary schools in the trust with both a secondary and primary school recently approved in the pipeline. All of these schools are in County Durham.
- The trust is developing its primary capacity which has seen the recent conversions of some local primary schools. Middlestone Moor is expected to add to this capacity.
- Middlestone Moor is a feeder school to a secondary school within ALP and has already begun working with the trust. Governors and the headteacher are therefore keen to make this a permanent arrangement.
- The board acknowledged that ALP is a growing trust which has increased its number of schools quickly over the past year, however due to its proximity to other schools in the trust and added capacity it would bring it was sensible for the school to join ALP. The Board therefore supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: This is a sponsor match for Middleton-in-Teesdale Primary, County Durham to North East Learning Trust (NELT).

AB discussion:

- Middleton-in-Teesdale Primary was inspected by Ofsted in March 2022 and judged to be 'Inadequate'.
- The school is currently under capacity with pupil numbers expected to decline further over the next two years.
- There are also potentially some building issues which will be explored further and discussed with County Durham Local Authority.
- NELT includes 11 schools which operate across 4 local authorities. The trust has a strong record of school improvement with its schools that have been inspected having all judged to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding.'
- The board discussed NELT's current governance structure and acknowledged the trust are in the process of updating their website to reflect the latest position on members and trustees.
- The board agreed that NELT has the capacity and capability to support the needs of this school and its rural context. Middleton-in-Teesdale is also a feeder primary for Teesdale Secondary Academy which is already part of NELT.
- The board therefore supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

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

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Carleton Endowed CofE Primary School, North Yorkshire

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/08/2022

Further actions required: No further action required

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Dacre Braithwaite Church of England Primary School, North Yorkshire

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/08/2022

Further actions required: No further action required

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Fountains Church of England Primary Academy, North Yorkshire

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/08/2022

Further actions required: No further action required

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Grewelthorpe Church of England Primary Academy, North Yorkshire

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/08/2022

Further actions required: No further action required

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to increase physical capacity and pupil numbers for Thomas Bewick School, Newcastle.

AB discussion:

- The board was advised the trust has applied to increase the number of pupils by 24 and the physical capacity of the school to accommodate more children with autism at Thomas Bewick School in Newcastle.
- The school is a special school for children and young people aged 3-19 with autism and significant learning needs and is based over three sites.
- Thomas Bewick converted into Prosper Learning Trust in April 2019 and has not yet been inspected.
- Newcastle LA support this proposal due to an increase in demand for autism places in the area.
- To increase the physical capacity of the school, three unused classrooms require refurbishment. Newcastle LA have indicated that the required capital works can be carried out quickly and that Thomas Bewick will be able to occupy the space in time for new places to be available from September 2022.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to change the SEN provision for Sunnyside Academy, Middlesbrough

AB discussion:

- Sunnyside Academy is a mainstream primary school for pupils aged 3-11 and offers SEN provision for hearing and vision impairment and moderate learning difficulties.
- The board was advised that Middlesbrough Local Authority (LA) has identified a growing need for additional provision for pupils with SEMH requirements and an increased number of younger pupils with complex speech, language, communication and learning needs.
- This proposal is therefore to re-designate the SEN provision at Sunnyside and increase the overall SEN places by 3. The trust has undertaken a consultation and received no negative comments.
- Sunnyside Academy joined Ad Astra Academy Trust in April 2022, to benefit from being part of a multi academy trust. While wanting to help the local authority with its SEN place pressures, Ad Astra was rigorous in assessing if this was right for the academy. It concluded it was and subsequently consulted on the proposals: no negative comments were received.
- The board advised that these proposed changes to the SEND provision would not impact upon governance structures at the academy but will require some changes to staffing which the trust and school have planned for.
- The board supported this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.

Significant Change

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

Project: This is a proposal to increase the age range for Village Primary School, Stockton on Tees.

AB discussion:

- Village Primary School is a 3 – 11 primary academy, judged 'Good' by Ofsted in July 2017. The school joined Prince Regent Street Trust in October 2018.
- The school has applied to expand their age range from 3-11 to 2-11 to enable them to provide earlier interventions with children joining the school. Currently the school has some children with developmental delays up to KS1 who need support and assistance with basic skills. The pandemic has only heightened these difficulties therefore the introduction of 2-year-old provision and intervening in the development of these children at an earlier age will help address these issues.
- The school have confirmed there will be no changes to leadership or governance because of this proposal and both the school and trust have early years' experience and expertise.
- The board were advised that the new 2 year old provision will be accommodated in a new bespoke classroom which will be completed over the summer break.
- The trust has undertaken a consultation with most responses being positive. Stockton LA are also supportive of the change in age range.
- The board agreed this proposal.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project Lead to inform school and Multi Academy Trust of decision.