



## Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Regions Group

20 October 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 Director (RD) chair

- Andrew Warren

### Advisory Board (AB) members

- Dame Mo Brennan
- Mike Donoghue
- Guy Shears
- Sarah Finch
- Amarjit Cheema
- Dan Parkes
- Lizana Oberholzer
- Tom Leverage

### Guests

- None.

### Apologies

- None.

### DfE senior civil servants

- Dawn Dandy

## **Representations received**

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

## **General Discussion Points**

### **Safeguarding**

- Members discussed the current Safeguarding processes in place within the system, and what factors within a concern would trigger the start of departmental process.

### **Local Update**

- The RD and AB members discussed the current climate in schools across the West Midlands Region.

### **AB member reflections**

- AB members reflected on the current climate regarding Covid and where educational settings have seen a rise. There was also a discussion on teacher recruitment, Ofsted judgements and a forward look to winter, and the current economic climate.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** Whether issue an Academy Order to Hollywood Primary School, Birmingham, to convert and become an academy and join The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, Birmingham.

### **AB discussion:**

- Hollywood Primary School (HPS), Birmingham, is an Ofsted rated 'Good' school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust comprises of 32 schools, 6 which are based in Birmingham. The trust have proposed using HPSs strengths in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Mathematics and Early Years.
- TEFAT will offer the school strength through good governance and leadership, as well as providing assurance through financial benefits gained via central support.
- The Governors acknowledge that TEFAT offer the opportunity to become part of a strong MAT whilst maintaining the individual ethos and identity of Hollywood Primary School.
- The board discussed the governance and school improvement.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of the decision.

**Project:** Whether to issue an Academy order to Oak Meadow Primary School, Wolverhampton, to convert and become an academy and join St Bartholomew's Multi Academy Trust, Wolverhampton.

### **AB discussion:**

- Oak Meadow Primary School, located in Wolverhampton, are an Ofsted rated 'Good' primary who are wanting to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to continue its journey of excellence.
- St. Bartholomew's is a 7-school trust, with a footprint across Staffordshire and Wolverhampton.
- The school and Trust have not previously worked together. However, they believe that their ethos and values align.
- The Headteacher is keen to contribute to the Trust's leadership team to support the Trust in raising standards. The trust will strengthen the successes of the school further, with a medium-term plan to support the school in becoming outstanding.
- The consultation has so far received two responses, both of which mentioned the favourable reputation of the Trust as the basis for their support.
- The board discussed governance and facilities seeking assurances that there had been a discussion with the Diocese.
- The board supported the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Amarjit Cheema

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of the decision.

## Sponsored Route:

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

**Project:** Whether to approve a sponsor for Mary Elliot School, Walsall.

### **AB discussion:**

- Thrive Education Partnership, Birmingham, are proposed as a sponsor for Mary Elliot School, Walsall, after receiving an Ofsted Inadequate judgement in March 2022.
- Thrive Education Partnership Trust is a 3 school trust that specialises in SEND provision.
- The trust has a proven track record of turning around schools that are in special measures, and has provided extensive School Improvement support to schools outside of the trust at the request of the Local Authority.
- The board spoke on the current board members and sought assurances that board members will be reviewed.
- The board agreed with the recommendation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the LA and Trust.

## Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

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

**Project:** Whether to approve the LAs recommendation of a sponsor for a Free School, Worcestershire

### **AB discussion:**

- Oasis Community Learning are proposed as a sponsor for Worcester City Secondary Free School in Worcestershire..
- There is an increasing demand for year 7 places in Worcester City due to population increase and significant housing development planned over the next 6 years.
- The local authority's preferred sponsor is Oasis Community Learning. Nine submissions were assessed, scored and moderated on responses to specification-based questions. Areas of focus included school community, vision, the education plan, capacity, and capability.
- The board discussed the geographical distance and school improvement plans, and the Faith Ethos of the trust.
- The board recommends to approve.

**RD decision:** Recommend to approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the LA and Trust.

## Significant Change

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

**Project:** Whether to approve a physical expansion at St Gabriel's CofE Academy, Warwickshire.

### **AB discussion:**

- St Gabriel's CofE Academy, in Warwickshire, is proposing to add an additional six-classroom teaching block to be built onsite to accommodate increase of capacity to a two form entry school.
- There is a high demand for school places from the local area with a rapidly growing population sustained by a large-scale housing development surrounding the school.
- Warwickshire LA approached St Gabriel's to take on classes of 15 pupils in both 2021/22 and 2022/23 to accommodate increased demand for places.
- The growth will positively impact the school with increased opportunities for collaboration across classes and additional leadership opportunities allowing for retention of high-quality staff.
- The proposal will positively impact the local community where there is strong support for additional places.
- The board discussed St Gabriel's not yet receiving an Ofsted judgement and sought assurances that this would be followed up.
- The board agrees with proposal and the Regional Director recommended the Department for Education identify a mentor for the Chief executive Office (CEO).

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.