



Notes of Meeting: South West Advisory Board

21 November 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

- Hannah Woodhouse

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Rachel Howie
- Mark Ducker
- Benjamin Antell
- Jennifer Blunden
- Margaret Simmons-Bird
- Adele Haysom
- Jackie Smith
- Steve Savory

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Lucy Livings – Deputy Director
- Matthew Stevenson – Deputy Director

Representations received

Five representations were received for the proposed merger between Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England School and Shillingstone Church of England Primary School, **Dorset**

(Sherborne Area Schools' Trust).

These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

General Discussion Points

Regional Director Update

- Presentation to AB members on the strategy and priorities of the Region and Sub-regional teams.
- The Ofsted inspection outcomes from the start of this academic year were shared.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to approve Sidmouth College, **Devon** converting to academy status and joining The Ted Wragg Multi Academy Trust.

Points raised in discussion:

Governance:

- The structure of the Trust Board and Members was commented on, and the need to follow best practice to be raised with the Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the schools and trust.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: Whether to approve St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School (SAT), **Bristol** transferring to The Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust.

Points raised in discussion:

Finance:

- The funding options available to the Trust and School were discussed, as well as the need to support the Trust in targeting funding for maximum impact and sustainability. This will be supported through regular review with the Trust by the Regions Group team and the ESFA.

Governance:

- The diversity of the Board and the need to strengthen its education expertise was discussed.
- The Trust is aware of the need for additional education expertise and plans to mitigate this through future recruitment.

- Emphasis on the need for the Trust to work closely with the school's Local Governing Committee and be clear the Trust is accountable for the quality of education.
- The Trust is aware of the need to refine its governance model.

School Improvement:

- The considerable amount of school improvement support to be provided to St Nicholas will need to be co-ordinated and sequenced in a timely manner.
- Assurances were given on this, recognising the need for the level of support to be kept under review with the Trust.

Other:

- AB members commented on the diverse community that the school serves and asked about the plans of the Trust to connect with the local community and to proactively encourage parents and pupils to join the school. This will continue to be discussed with the Trust.
- It was noted that the Trust is recently established (March 2022) and continuing to establish teams and systems. This will need to be taken into account when considering future growth plans and trust capacity.

RD decision: Approve with conditions.

Conditions:

- That the Trust recruit an additional Director to the trust board with current experience at a senior level in primary education.
- That the Trust commission an external review of governance.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the schools and trust.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Whether to approve Christ the King Catholic School Amesbury, **Wiltshire** joining The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust.

Points raised in discussion:

Governance:

- The Trust was approved for sponsor status in October 2022.
- The diversity of the Board and the level of education expertise available to the Board was discussed. Future growth plans need to consider this especially given the potential for schools requiring targeted support to join the Trust.
- It was commented that the approval of new directors is currently pending by the Bishop and confirmation of when this will be approved was requested.

Strategy:

- The schools are some distance from other trust schools. It was noted that the CEO

has a good understanding of the communities that the Trust supports and is committed to developing this further to best serve the local population. The Trust has actively worked to be visible in the communities and schools and have good engagement with local networks.

- The longer-term strategy of the Trust is to operate with a hub model. There was a discussion on the need for the Trust to retain accountability with hubs.

RD decision: Approve with conditions.

Conditions:

- Confirmation of the approval of new directors by the Bishop.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the schools and trust.

Project: Whether to approve St Mary's Catholic Primary School, **Wiltshire** joining The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust. **

Points raised in discussion:

- Documented under Christ the King Catholic School Amesbury.

RD decision: Approve with conditions.

Conditions:

- Confirmation of the approval of new directors by the Bishop.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the schools and trust.

** This project was discussed together with Christ the King Catholic School Amesbury. Minutes are documented on the latter.

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to approve a proposed merger between Okeford Fitzpaine Church of England School and Shillingstone Church of England Primary School, Dorset (Sherborne Area Schools' Trust).

Points raised in discussion:

Representations:

- The issues raised were discussed and responses were provided:
- Consultation process and fairness – the Department has confidence that SAST ran a fair consultation process which was in line with guidance on timescales and required stakeholder engagement. The Trust also sent a public letter to relevant stakeholders that addressed issues raised during the consultation.

- Transport for pupils – SAST are currently providing a shuttle bus service to Shillingstone School and are in discussions with Dorset Local Authority to identify a solution to ensure this continues to be in place in the long term.
- Housing growth – the Department spoke to the Local Authority about the number of new housing developments in the area, completion dates, and projected impact on pupil numbers. Internal department place planning projections for the area were consulted. Reassurance was provided to the AB regarding sufficiency of places in the whole planning area.

Other:

- AB members highlighted the need to continue the close working engagement between the Department, SAST, Diocese, and Local Authority to ensure that there is an understanding of what is required in the time between approval and the merger being completed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the schools and trust.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Bridlewood Primary School, **Swindon** (The Park Academies Trust).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 December 2022

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Gillingham Primary School, **Dorset** (Pickwick Academy Trust).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 December 2022

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Amesbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, **Wiltshire** (Magna Learning Partnership).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 December 2022

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Manor Park Church of England First School, **Dorset** (Wessex Multi Academy Trust).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 December 2022

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Whether to approve a significant change for Bodmin College (SAT), **Cornwall** to increase capacity by 200 places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Project lead to inform the school and trust.

List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting

None.

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