



Notes of Meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board.

18 January 2023.

Attendance data is published annually on the GOV.UK website.

Advisory Board 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

- Carol Gray.
- Kate Copley.

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Inderjit Sandhu.
- Paul West.
- Sarah Armitage.
- Julian Scholefield.
- Sian Hampton.
- Paul Heery.
- Mark Thomas.
- Chris Wheatley.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- None.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Region Group.
- ESFA representative.

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 King Edward Primary School & Nursery, Nottinghamshire, to convert and join Transform Trust.

AB discussion:

King Edward Primary School & Nursery made a voluntary application to convert to academy status and join Transform Trust. We have received signed governing body resolutions from the school.

King Edward Primary School & Nursery received a requires improvement judgement from Ofsted in October 2019.

King Edward Primary School & Nursery consider they will be more secure in a trust, where they can draw from a wider pool of expertise and support. The school has worked closely with Transform Trust through the department's focused Trust and School Improvement offer. The school is keen to benefit from the partnership working already in place with other Transform Trust schools in the local area.

Transform Trust is made up of 19 primary schools based in Derby, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including 4 faith schools. 95% of the schools are rated good or outstanding. The trust has a good track record of improving schools, with 2 sponsored schools improving from inadequate to good after joining the trust.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Transform Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

The Advisory Board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor to Transform Trust was recommended, as was an external review of governance.

Project: Whether to approve Holgate Primary and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and join Transform Trust.

AB discussion:

Holgate Primary and Nursery School made a voluntary application to convert to academy status and join Transform Trust. We have received signed governing body resolutions from the school.

Holgate Primary and Nursery School received a requires improvement judgement from Ofsted in October 2019.

This school is part of The P.R.I.D.E. Federation with Sutton Road Primary School. The federation has a common governing body across both schools, a common executive head (separate heads of school) and several other shared roles.

Holgate Primary and Nursery School consider they will be more secure in a trust, where they can draw from a wider pool of expertise and support.

The school has been supported by Transform Trust through the department's focused Trust and School Improvement offer. The school is geographically well placed (27 minutes away from the trust's head office by car), with a substantial, modern site and plentiful outdoor green space. Transform Trust sees the benefit of the school site as outdoor learning space for children from their inner-city schools.

Transform Trust is made up of 19 primary schools based in Derby, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including 4 faith schools. 95% of the schools are rated good or outstanding. The trust has a good track record of improving schools, with 2 sponsored schools improving from Ofsted inadequate to good after joining the trust.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Transform Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

The Advisory Board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor for Transform Trust was recommended, as was an external review of governance.

Project: Whether to approve Sutton Road Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and join Transform Trust.

AB discussion:

Sutton Road Primary School made a voluntary application to convert to academy status and join Transform Trust. We have received signed governing body resolutions from the school.

Sutton Road Primary School received a good judgment from Ofsted in May 2012. A short Ofsted inspection in March 2019 confirmed that the school continues to be good.

This school is part of The P.R.I.D.E. Federation with Holgate Primary and Nursery School. The federation has a common governing body across both schools, a common Executive Head (separate Heads of School) and a number of shared roles.

Sutton Road Primary School believe Transform Trust's enrichment programme will benefit the school. Transform Trust provided support to Sutton Road Primary (a federated partner of Holgate Primary and Nursery School) during 2021 through the department's enhanced Trust and School Improvement offer. The school is keen to benefit from the partnership working already in place with other Transform Trust schools in the local area.

Transform Trust is made up of 19 primary schools based in Derby, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, including 4 faith schools. 95% of the schools are rated good or outstanding. The trust has a good track record of improving schools, with 2 sponsored schools improving from Ofsted inadequate to good after joining the trust in the last few years.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at Transform Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

The Advisory Board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor for Transform Trust was recommended, as was an external review of governance.

Project: Whether to approve Bracken Hill School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and join Esteem Multi-Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Bracken Hill School was judged to be good by Ofsted in September 2016. A Section 8 (monitoring) inspection in 2021 confirmed the school continues to be good.

Bracken Hill School applied to convert to academy status and join the Esteem Multi-Academy Trust. We have received signed governing body resolutions from the school.

Bracken Hill School caters for pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils at the school have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

Esteem Multi-Academy Trust has specialist expertise in SEND and AP and has the capacity to grow.

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

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Julian Scholefield. Julian wasn't present for this part of the meeting, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision. An external review of governance was recommended for Esteem Multi-Academy Trust.

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: To discuss Aspire Multi-Academy Trust as a sponsor option for Langar CofE Primary School, Nottinghamshire.

AB discussion:

Langar CofE Primary School was inspected by Ofsted in July 2022 and judged to have serious weaknesses with safeguarding concerns. The school was issued with an Academy Order on 6 October 2022.

The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham brokered interim support for the school from Aspire Multi-Academy Trust. The trust has been providing support to the school on curriculum design and safeguarding Continuing Professional Development.

Aspire Multi-Academy Trust has 1 outstanding academy, 5 good academies and 1 academy which joined the trust with an inadequate judgement and is yet to be inspected within the trust.

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

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved – Aspire Multi-Academy Trust.

Conflicts: Sian Hampton. Sian wasn't present for this part of the meeting, nor was she in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and trust of the decision. An external review of governance was recommended for Aspire Multi-Academy Trust.

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

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

Project: To discuss a sponsor match for a primary free school in Thoresby Vale, Edwinstowe, Nottinghamshire.

AB discussion:

The Edwinstowe Primary Planning Area has experienced significant population growth in recent years. Nottinghamshire County Council anticipates that additional demand for primary school places will come from the housing development at Thoresby Vale.

Nottinghamshire County Council has identified a need for a new one form entry primary school in Thoresby Vale from September 2024. A private early years setting is also expected to be part of this development.

Nottinghamshire County Council published its specification for the proposed new primary free school on 14 February 2022. Five applications were received by the local authority. Following an initial sift, Nottingham County Council informed the Department for Education on 24 May 2022 that they intended to interview 3 applicants. Following interviews on 26 September 2022, the local Authority decided to recommend Diverse Academies Trust as their preferred sponsor.

The board was satisfied that Diverse Academies Trust has sufficient capacity to continue to improve their existing schools, alongside developing a new free school.

The strength of financial management and governance in place at Diverse Academies Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approved – Diverse Academies Trust.

Conflicts: Sian Hampton, Paul West, and Chris Wheatley. These members were not present for this part of the meeting. They were not in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform Nottinghamshire County Council and the trust of the decision.

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to approve Saint Benedict Academy (St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust), Derby, to temporarily expand physical capacity to admit 90 extra pupils in 2023/24 and another 90 pupils 2024/25.

AB discussion:

St Ralph Sherwin Multi Academy Trust are seeking a temporary expansion of physical capacity at Saint Benedict Catholic Voluntary Academy at the request of Derby City Council. The expansion is to enable an increase of 90 pupils in 2023/24 and 90 pupils in 2024/25 academic years to accommodate a 'bulge' in students in the city. This would result in an increase from a 245 PAN to 335 PAN for two years. Capacity in the age range 11-19 would increase from 1411 to 1591 (with no change to sixth form) up until September 2029.

Derby City Council is providing capital and revenue funding to support the change. Internal reconfiguration of existing space and additional building work will be required on site. Whilst funding is to be provided by the local authority, consideration was given to value for money and the nature of investments into the site (which includes the School Rebuilding Programme). Capacity will revert back to 1411 in September 2029.

The leadership team are finalising plans to increase staffing capacity across the school in line with the increased in pupil numbers.

A 4-week consultation has been undertaken in respect of the proposals. The consultation ran from the 23 November 2022 to the 23 December 2022. 27% of consultation responses were not in favour of this significant change. For those not in support, the academy has provided explanatory responses to their concerns.

The board was in agreement with this proposal - subject to 3 conditions: all necessary planning permission being obtained; capital and revenue funding approved by Derby City Council and a commitment from the trust to revert to existing capacity once the 'bulge' has passed through the school to prevent surplus places in the city.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

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: Whether to approve Stonebroom Primary and Nursery School, Derbyshire, to convert and join The David Nieper Education Trust.

Type of decision: Converter Academy Orders

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: This project was removed from the agenda as further information was required. The project will be discussed at the February Advisory Board.