



Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 20 April 2023

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
- Sarah Finch
- Amarjit Cheema
- Dan Parkes
- Tom Leverage

Guests

- Andrew Cooke (Ofsted Regional Director).

Apologies

- Lizana Oberholzer

DfE senior civil servants

- Dawn Dandy (Deputy Director)

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

Ofsted

- Andrew Cooke presented the Ofsted priorities across the West Midlands and overall strategy.
- Andrew and the board discussed the current grading system, reporting styles and the public response to the media.

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 Departmental strategy plans and noted it would be helpful to delve into this further across each Local Authority of the WM.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: Whether to issue the Academy Order to King's Norton Boy's School, Birmingham, to convert and join King Edward VI Academy Trust, Birmingham.

AB discussion:

- King's Norton Boy's School, Birmingham is an Ofsted "Good" school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to share opportunities of improvement and access an effective programme of support.
- King Edward VI Academy Trust comprises of 11 schools with 1 pipeline across Birmingham. The trust values the strengths which the school can offer and has identified areas for school improvement.
- The central services provided by the trust will help to address the school's identified need for greater clarity around its finances, as well as supporting the school's future planning and decision-making more broadly.
- The board discussed the financial position of the Boy's School and sought clarity on Balaam Wood Academy's financial position whilst reviewing school improvement. All assurances were provided.
- 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 the Academy Order to Cardinal Griffin Catholic College, Staffordshire to convert and join Painsley MAC, Staffordshire.

AB discussion:

- Cardinal Griffin Catholic College, Staffordshire is an Ofsted "Good" school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to meet the vision of the Archdiocese of Birmingham and to create sustainable school improvement structures.
- Painsley MAC comprises of 15 schools with 1 pipeline across Staffordshire. Painsley have been working with Cardinal Griffin for some time now and both the trust and school are keen to formalise their existing relationship.
- The Archdiocese strategy has expressed the preference for Cardinal Griffin to join the Painsley Catholic Academy due to geographical proximity of Cardinal Griffin to Paisley's Head Office and the track record of improvement at Painsley Catholic Academy.
- The board discussed the benefits of the school joining the MAC, including the Trust's track record with a similar school.
- The board supported the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Tom Leverage.

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 the Academy Order to Barford St Peter's CofE Primary School, Warwickshire, to convert and join Arden Forest C of E Multi Academy Trust, Warwickshire.

AB discussion:

- Barford St Peter's CofE Primary Schools, Warwickshire is an Ofsted "Good" school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to share opportunities of improvement and access an effective programme of support.
- Arden Forest C of E Multi Academy Trust is built up of 9 schools with 1 pipeline across the South Warwickshire area. The trust has a pre-existing relationship with the Diocese of Coventry, leading on 4 of the Diocese's schools.
- As part of the Diocese's strategic plan, schools will be encouraged to make decisions about academisation and joining a strong MAT.
- The board reviewed the proposal and spoke on the Trust's growth strategy, noting risks on a land transfer.
- The board supported the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Tom Leverage.

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

Significant Change

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

Project: Whether to approve a physical expansion and increase in pupil numbers at Tudor Grange Academy Redditch, Worcestershire.

AB discussion:

- Tudor Grange Academy Redditch, Worcestershire, is an Ofsted rated 'Good' school who have proposed a significant change application to expand the current specialist provision 'Treetops' for an increased number of students.
- The provision currently operates as a base provider with 20 places, working with the LA to allocate places to those students who mainstream settings are not suitable.
- The Trust has identified the need to expand places after working collaboratively with the Worcestershire LA, meeting the increased demand in the area.
- A 4-week consultation has been completed with all responses received being in support of the proposal.
- The board discussed how the expansion would affect the local area and the Trust's finances within the provision.
- The board supported the recommendation.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To inform the school.

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 Holy Trinity School, Worcestershire, to transfer to Severn Academies Education Trust, Worcestershire.

Type of decision: Trust Change.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Insufficient information to present at AB.

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