



Notes of Meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

26 April 2023.

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

- Carol Gray.
- Kate Copley.

Advisory Board (AB) members

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

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- None.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Regions 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 Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery, Nottinghamshire, to convert and join Transform Trust.

AB discussion:

Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery is a larger-than-average primary school. It was inspected by Ofsted in June 2019 and received a requires improvement judgement.

Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery applied to convert to academy status and join a multi-academy trust to benefit from the expertise and support offered through working as part of a family of schools.

Abbey Hill Primary and Nursery have worked with Transform Trust for a term previously. The school is firmly of the opinion that Transform Trust is the right fit for the school, citing alignment of values, maintaining the school identity and focus on supporting and raising aspirations for disadvantaged children.

A consultation period took place and on 13 December 2022 - Transform Trust delivered a presentation to parents/carers, followed by a meeting with staff members.

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 board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

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

AB discussion:

Bagthorpe Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school. It received a good judgement from Ofsted following an inspection in November 2015.

The governing body of Bagthorpe Primary School has been considering applying to convert to academy status for a number of years and the school has spoken to a range of multi-academy trusts.

The school's governing body has identified that the values of Transform Trust align most closely with the school. Bagthorpe Primary School want to engage with the support and challenge available from Transform Trust to continue to improve the quality of education and to contribute to the trust's wider purpose and ambition for its children.

A consultation period took place during September and October 2022. A vote at the full governors' meeting in November 2022 resulted in a unanimous agreement to apply to convert to academy status and join Transform 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 board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Holy Family Catholic Primary School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 01 May 2023.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No further actions.

Project: Woodland View Primary School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 01 May 2023.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No further actions.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: To discuss and agree a sponsor match for Bracebridge Heath St John's Primary Academy (single-academy trust), Lincolnshire.

AB discussion:

Bracebridge Heath St John's Primary Academy is a 4 to 11 primary school located in Lincoln. It opened in January 2012 and is a single-academy trust. The academy was inspected by Ofsted in July 2022 and judged to be inadequate (previously good).

Following the inadequate judgement, an information gathering exercise was completed to identify a suitable sponsor, resulting in 4 sponsors registering their interest in sponsoring the academy. The advisory board reviewed the sponsor options and recommended that The Priory Federation of Academies was the most suitable sponsor for the academy.

The Priory Federation of Academies is predominately based in Lincolnshire and is comprised of 12 academies and has a strong presence in the area surrounding Bracebridge Heath St John's Primary Academy. The Priory Federation of Academies base is 1.1 miles away from the academy and 5 of their 6 primary academies are within 6 miles. This ensures the academy has access to a local support network and opportunities for collaboration.

The Priory Federation of Academies Trust has a strong track record of school improvement and of securing and maintaining positive Ofsted judgements.

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

RD decision: Approved - The Priory Federation of Academies Trust.

Conflicts: Paul West. Paul was not present for this part of the meeting, nor was he in receipt of project papers.

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

Project: To discuss and agree a sponsor match for Lincoln Castle Academy, Lincolnshire.

AB discussion:

Lincoln Castle Academy in Lincoln, part of Harbour Learning Trust, was inspected by Ofsted in July 2022 and judged to be inadequate (previously good). On 6 January 2023, the trust agreed to transfer Lincoln Castle Academy to another multi-academy trust.

An information gathering exercise was conducted, resulting in 3 sponsors registering their interest in sponsoring the academy. After assessing the options, the advisory board acknowledged that 2 of the trusts would be strong sponsors for the school. Following discussion, board members agreed that The Spencer Academies Trust should sponsor the academy.

The Spencer Academies Trust has a demonstrable record of successfully improving academies with a similar demographic and context to Lincoln Castle Academy. The choice of The Spencer Academies Trust would also contribute towards the need for additional multi-academy trusts in some parts of Lincolnshire, as set out in the [Lincolnshire Trust Development Statement](#).

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

RD decision: Approved – The Spencer Academies Trust.

Conflicts: Paul West. Paul was not present for this part of the meeting, nor was he in receipt of project papers.

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

Addendum - Subsequent to this discussion, having reviewed their position, Spencer Academies Trust determined that the match would not be the right fit at this point in time. A new sponsor match was agreed by the Regional Director following discussion at the advisory board meeting on 17 May.

Project: Whether to approve Long Bennington Church of England Academy (single-academy trust), Lincolnshire, to join Infinity Academies Trust (multi-academy trust).

AB discussion:

Long Bennington Church of England Academy has voluntarily applied to join Infinity Academies Trust.

Long Bennington Church of England Academy is a primary single-academy trust, located between Newark-on-Trent and Grantham. The academy was rated good by Ofsted in February 2019.

Long Bennington Church of England Academy has been working with Infinity Academies Trust since the start of this academic year after recognising the benefits of being part of a multi-academy trust. Long Bennington Church of England Academy passed a resolution to join Infinity Academies Trust in November 2022 and Diocesan approval for the transfer was given in February 2023.

Infinity Academies Trust opened in 2013 and is currently comprised of 9 academies (5 of which are Church of England faith schools). The trust operates in the south of Lincolnshire, with established hubs in Boston and Spalding, and a developing hub in Grantham.

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

The board was in agreement with this proposal.

RD decision: Approved - Infinity Academies Trust.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss and agree a sponsor match for Carlton le Willows Academy, Nottinghamshire.

AB discussion:

Carlton le Willows Academy is a larger-than-average secondary school in the district of Gedling. The school is part of the Greater Nottingham Education Trust, a 2 school multi-academy trust (one primary and one secondary).

Carlton Le Willows Academy was inspected by Ofsted in November 2022 and judged as inadequate (serious weaknesses). The report was published on 16 January 2023.

A Termination Warning Notice (TWN) to the trust board was issued on 27 January 2023. The trust board agreed to transfer the academy to a new trust.

An information gathering exercise was conducted, resulting in 7 sponsors providing further information to support their interest in sponsoring the academy. After assessing the options, the advisory board was in agreement that Delta Academies Trust was the most suitable sponsor for the academy.

Delta Academies Trust has a small hub of schools in Nottinghamshire and a growth strategy which includes consolidating existing hubs to drive school improvement in that geographical area. Delta Academies Trust has a strong record of improving schools from inadequate to good.

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

RD decision: Approved – Delta Academies Trust.

Conflicts: Chris Wheatley, Sian Hampton, and Paul West. Chris, Sian and Paul were not present for this part of the meeting, nor were they in receipt of associated project papers.

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

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Whether to approve an increase in capacity at John Ferneley College, Leicestershire, from 1100 to 1200 places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: Whether to approve an increase in capacity at Samuel Barlow Primary Academy, Nottinghamshire, from 231 (plus 26 nursery places) to 315 places (plus 39 nursery places).

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: Whether to approve an increase in capacity at Tuxford Primary Academy, Nottinghamshire, from 210 (plus 52 nursery places) to 285 places (plus 52 nursery places).

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

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