



Notes of Meeting: East of England

Date of meeting – 22 June 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. Board members who have been noted to have a conflict of interest with an item were not present during the discussion, nor received papers for the item.

Deputy Director (DD) chair

- Emily Williams (DD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Al Kingsley (AB)
- Brian Conway (AB)
- Tim Coulson (AB)
- Mark Farmer (AB)
- Clare Flintoff (AB)
- Lawrence Chapman (AB)
- Sarah Skinner (AB)
- Josephine Valentine (AB)

DfE senior civil servants

- Vickie Wood (ESFA Operational Delivery – Head of East of England Region)

Representations received

- 11 representations received about the Trust Change project; ‘Whether to transfer Howard Junior School, Norfolk, from Apollo Academies Trust to Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, Norfolk’.

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

General Discussion Points.

- The DfE's SEND Implementation Team were invited to the meeting to discuss the SEND and AP improvement plan.
- Emily Williams, Deputy Director for the East of England chaired the meeting in the absence of Jonathan Duff, Regional Director for the East of England, and gave some general national and regional updates and invited feedback from the board.
- The board considered Ofsted judgement outcomes for the previous month.
- It was agreed that Claire Burton, Regional Director for London, would make decisions on projects with advice from Emily Williams and the AB members, except where specified that a decision was deferred until Jonathan Duff's return.

Decisions taken by another RD:

Converter Academy Orders

Project: To discuss whether Hockliffe Lower School, Bedford, should join Kingsbridge Educational Trust, Milton Keynes.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school has applied to join Kingsbridge Educational Trust to become more financially resilient, increase school capacity, and raise standards for pupils.
- The board heard that the school and the trust have been working on school improvement strategies through the trust's outreach programme.
- The board discussed the trust's capacity and governance.
- The board heard that the trust has improved another school it has recently taken in and was reassured of its capacity.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Orders

Project: To discuss whether The Highfield School, Hertfordshire, should join Scholars' Education Trust, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board considered the application from the Highfield School, Hertfordshire, to convert into Scholars' Education Trust.
- The board asked that the Regional Director review the academy growth plan from Scholars' Education Trust before a decision is taken on whether to approve the application.

RD decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust growth plan to be brought to the East of England Regional Director, on return.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss whether Longdean School, Hertfordshire, should join Scholars' Education Trust, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board considered the application from Longdean Academy and Scholars' Education Trust for Longdean Academy to transfer into Scholar's Education Trust.
- The board asked that the Regional Director review the academy growth plan from Scholars' Education Trust before a decision is taken on whether to approve the application.

RD decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Trust growth plan to be brought to the East of England Regional Director, on return.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss whether to transfer Howard Junior School, Norfolk, from Apollo Academies Trust to Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, Norfolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school was judged Inadequate by Ofsted and there are concerns about governance and leadership at the school.
- The board heard that a range of multi-academy trusts (MAT) options were considered. Eastern Multi-Academy Trust (EMAT) has been identified as the preferred MAT because it was already supporting the school, is aligned with their vision and values, and has a local outstanding primary school that can provide ongoing capacity.
- The board discussed the long-term view of the school, as this decision would maintain its separation from the infant school with which it shares a site. However, it was also noted that Howard Junior school feeds King's Lynn Academy, which is nearby and also operated by EMAT.
- The board considered 11 representations received and felt that they had been satisfactorily addressed.

RD decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: Brian Conway.

Further actions required: Project to be brought to the East of England Regional Director for a decision, on return.

Sponsored Route:

Project: To discuss whether Heycroft Primary School, Southend, should join South East Essex Academy Trust, Essex, as a sponsored project.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school was judged Inadequate and will therefore convert under a directive academy order.
- The board heard that a range of sponsor options were considered for the school and South East Essex Academy Trust was identified as the preferred sponsor due to its geographical location, financial records, capacity, and academic performance.
- The board heard that the trust has been providing school improvement support to Heycroft Primary School.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Sarah Skinner.

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

Trust Change

Project: To discuss whether Pear Tree Mead, Essex, should join Passmores Co-operative Learning Community, Essex.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school has applied to join Passmores Co-operative Learning Community as it has primary and secondary experience and offers shared use of facilities, has good financial records, geographical location, and capacity.
- The ESFA discussed the financial position of the trust and recommended a visit from a school resource management adviser.
- The board discussed the trust's academic performance, governance, track record, and finances.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Orders

Project: To discuss whether Fowlmere Primary School, Cambridgeshire, should convert to join the Cam Academy Trust, Cambridgeshire.

Project considered.

- The board considered the case and provided no advice in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Significant Change

Project: To discuss whether to lower the age range at William Law CofE Primary School, Peterborough, from 5-11 to 3-11 to include a nursery provision.

AB discussion:

- The board considered the case and provided no advice in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Decisions taken between AB meetings.

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

Project: To discuss whether Fulbrook, Central Bedfordshire, should keep its lower year groups for longer than the previously agreed timescale of 2024.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust about the decision to extend its temporary transition arrangements by two years up to 2026.