



Notes of Meeting: East of England

Date of meeting – 25 May 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.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Jonathan Duff (RD)

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

- ESFA representative
- Emily Williams, Deputy Director (DD)

Representations received

- One representation received about Hertfordshire local authority's recommendation of the sponsor for the new special free school at Potters Bar, **Hertfordshire**, Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval.

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

General Discussion Points

- The DfE's Teaching Workforce team were invited to the meeting to discuss teacher supply and recruitment plans.
- The RD gave some general national and regional updates and invited feedback from the board.
- The board considered Ofsted judgment outcomes for the previous month.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss whether Alderman Jacobs School, Cambridgeshire, should transfer to SOKE Education Trust, Peterborough.

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.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Bedford Road Primary School, Bedford.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school was judged Requires Improvement in 2019 and 2022.
- A range of sponsor options were considered based on geography, track record, education performance, leadership and financial position. Knowledge Schools Trust was identified as the preferred sponsor.
- The board discussed the capacity and governance of Knowledge Schools Trust.

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 Stratton Upper School, Central Bedfordshire, should lower its age range to become a secondary school.

AB discussion:

- The board heard the proposal to lower the age range of the school in line with the local authority's move to a 2-tier structure across the region.
- The RD felt that lowering the age range of the school would help meet demands for pupil places in the local area.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Chaulden Infants' and Nursery, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school was judged Inadequate in January 2022 and will therefore convert under a directive academy order into a MAT.
- The board considered several sponsor options. Scholars' Education Trust was identified as the preferred MAT.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Josephine Valentine.

Further actions required: The delivery officer to notify the local authority, the approved trust and other academy trusts who expressed an interest, of the RD's decision.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss options for the transfer of the academy, Chaulden Junior School, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board considered MAT options into which the academy could transfer from Spiral Partnership Trust.
- The board discussed the fact that the academy shares a site and facilities with Chaulden Infants and Nursery.
- Scholars' Education Trust was identified as the preferred sponsor, which mean that the same trust oversees the junior school and the Infant school / nursery.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Josephine Valentine.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform Spiral Partnership Trust and Scholars' Education Trust of the decision.

Free School Presumption- Sponsor Approval

Project: To discuss whether to approve the local authority's recommendation of the sponsor for the new special free school at Potters Bar, Hertfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the local authority's preferred sponsor of the new special free school is Agora Learning Partnership.
- The local authority based its recommendation on its assessment of the academy trust's capacity, education attainment across all schools, the trust's record supporting SEND pupils and strategic vision.
- The board discussed the trust's track record and education performance.
- The board noted the representation received and asked the delivery officer to notify the local authority of discussions.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter

Project: To discuss whether Wimbish Primary School, Essex, should join Anglian Learning, Cambridge.

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. Converter Academy Order to be issued and DCS to be informed of the decision.

Converter

Project: To discuss whether Holy Trinity CofE Primary School, Eight Ash Green and Aldham, Essex, should join LIFE Education Trust, Romford.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that LIFE Education Trust has a similar ethos as the school, has experience in supporting other small, village church schools, and has been providing support to the school.
- The board discussed the geography and capacity of the Trust.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Converter Academy Order to be issued and DCS to be informed of the decision.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss whether Chappel Church of England Controlled Primary School, Essex, should join LIFE Education Trust, Romford.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school was judged Inadequate in November 2022.
- A range of trust options were considered, and the board heard the recommendation to approve LIFE Education Trust as the preferred sponsor due its geography, capacity, performance, and governance.
- The board discussed the geography and capacity of the Trust.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss whether Fordham All Saints Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Essex, should join LIFE Education Trust, Romford.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school was judged Inadequate in November 2022.
- A range of trust options were considered, and the board heard the recommendation to approve LIFE Education Trust as the preferred sponsor due its geography, capacity, performance, and governance.
- The board discussed the geography and capacity of the Trust.

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 The Beaulieu Park School, Essex, should change its age-range from 4-16 to 4-19, to include sixth form provision from September 2024.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that The Chelmsford Learning Partnership has applied to include a sixth form at the school in September 2024 to provide their prospective year 11 leavers place to continue their post-16 studies.
- The board discussed the capacity, governance, and financial record of the school.
- The RD approved the application in principle with final approval subject to:
 - The trust provides the ESFA with further assurances about the long-term financial status of the trust.
 - Planning permission for the sixth form building to be approved.

RD decision: Approved with conditions.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Heycroft Primary School, Southend.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the local authority-maintained school was judged Inadequate in February 2023 and needs a strong sponsor.
- A range of sponsors were considered and South East Essex Academy Trust (SEEAT) was identified as the preferred sponsor due to its good track record of school improvement, financial health, educational performances, geography and governance structure.
- The board discussed the school's improvement plan.
- The board heard that the local authority supports the proposal of the school to join SEEAT.
- The RD discussed the governance of the trust and suggested bringing in another member onto the trust board.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Sarah Skinner.

Further actions required: Project to be brought to the next Advisory Board to discuss whether the school should convert to SEEAT.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss whether Hinguar Community Primary School, Southend, should change its age range from 3-11 to 2-11, to expand the nursery age range from September 2023.

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 of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss whether Nightingale Infant and Nursery School, Norfolk, should lower its age range from 3-11 to 2-11.

AB discussion:

- The board was notified of the proposal to lower the age range from 3-7 to 2-7 at Nightingale Infant and Nursery School.
- The board heard that the school has applied to lower its admission age to be able to take in more pupils starting from age two and meet the needs of the local area by providing childcare and a solid foundation for Early Years.
- The board discussed the capacity of the school.
- The ESFA discussed the financial records of the school and stated that it is waiting to receive the review of the school resource management adviser's visit held in April 2023.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter

Project: To discuss whether Robert Kett Primary School, Norfolk, should join Unity Schools Partnership, Suffolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school was judged Requires Improvement in May 2018 and in March 2022.
- A range of sponsors were considered at the previous Advisory Board meeting.
- Unity Schools Partnership was identified as the preferred sponsor due to its high primary results, ongoing curriculum collaboration and capacity for primary provision.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: Tim Coulson.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Converter Academy Order to be issued and DCS to be informed of the decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss whether Diss High School Single-Academy Trust, Norfolk, should become part of Enrich Learning Trust, Norfolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school has applied to join a multi-academy trust to add capacity and financial stability and gain access to greater resources and knowledge.
- The board heard that the school prefers to join Enrich Learning Trust due to its alignment in values, ethos, and ambitions for children.
- The board felt that transfer would enable the school to work more collaboratively with other schools and raise standards.
- The board discussed the governance of the trust.
- The RD felt that the transfer would benefit the school and the trust.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter

Project: To discuss whether Happisburgh Primary and Early Years School, Norfolk, should join The Diocese of Norwich St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust, Norfolk.

AB discussion:

- The board was reassured that the trust was chosen due to its school improvement strategy, geography, and capacity.
- The board agreed with the RD's decision to approve the proposal.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Brian Conway

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Converter Academy Order to be issued and DCS to be informed of the decision.

Converter

Project: To discuss whether St Mary's (Endowed) CofE VA Primary School, Norfolk, should join The Diocese of Norwich St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust, Norfolk.

AB discussion:

- The board was reassured that the trust was chosen due to its school improvement strategy, geography, and capacity.
- The board agreed with the RD's decision to approve the proposal.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Brian Conway

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Converter Academy Order to be issued and DCS to be informed of the decision.

Converter

Project: To discuss whether to approve the application for Cockfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Suffolk, to join All Saints School Trust, Suffolk.

Project considered.

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

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Converter Academy Order to be issued and DCS to be informed of the decision.

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

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

Type of decision: Significant Change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Further information requested about the wider plans for school reorganisation in Central Bedfordshire, in order to come to an informed decision.

Decisions taken between AB meetings.

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

Project: To discuss whether to lower the age range from 3-4 years to 2-4 years at Richmond Avenue Primary and Nursery School, Southend East Community Academy Trust, Southend-on-Sea.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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