



## Notes of Meeting: East of England

Date of meeting – 20 July 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). Board members with conflicts 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

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

### Representations received

- 3 representations received about the Significant Change project; 'Whether Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form Free School, **Norfolk**, should expand onto a satellite site and increase its pupil admission number by 80.'

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

## General Discussion Points

- The RD provided updates on decisions made following the June Advisory Board.
- 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.
- The board were given an update on the Ortu Federation schools in Thurrock and the RD invited advice from the board.

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether to increase the capacity at Wixams Academy, Bedford, from 824 to 1750.**

### **AB discussion:**

- The board heard that the Bedford College Academies Trust has applied to increase capacity at Wixams Academy due to the demand for additional secondary places in the Wixams planning area.
- The board discussed the school's 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted judgement as of March 2022.
- The board heard that since this judgement, that the trust had made changes to its leadership and governance and had developed a school improvement plan to raise standards.
- The RD felt that the school would benefit from being part of a larger multi-academy trust.
- The RD approved the application in principle with final approval subject to the trust merging with a larger, more established multi-academy trust.

**RD decision:** Approve with conditions.

**Conflicts:** None

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether to change the age range at Biggleswade Academy, Central Bedfordshire, from 2-13 to 2-11.**

### **AB discussion:**

- The board heard that the school has applied to change the upper age range of the school from 2-13 to 2-11 and no longer offer Key Stage 3, in line with the local authority's move to a two-tier structure across Central Bedfordshire.
- The board heard feedback from the consultation and felt that it had been satisfactorily addressed.
- The board was assured that secondary schools in the local area were part of multi-academy trusts that would drive improvement.
- The board discussed the governance of the school.
- The RD supported the recommendation to offer the school a visit from a School Resource Management Adviser.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether to change the age range at Caldecote Church of England Academy, Central Bedfordshire, from 3-9 to 3-11.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard the proposal to increase the age range of the school in line with the local authority's move to a two-tier structure across Central Bedfordshire.
- The board heard that the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust (DSAMAT) has applied to change the upper age range of the school from year 4 to include year 5 and 6 and become a primary school.
- The RD considered the case and was satisfied with the proposal.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether to change the age range at Northill Church of England Academy, Central Bedfordshire, from 5-9 to 5-11.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard the proposal to increase the age range of the school in line with the local authority's move to a two-tier structure across Central Bedfordshire.
- The board heard that the Diocese of St Albans Multi Academy Trust (DSAMAT) has applied to change the upper age range of the school from year 4 to include year 5 and 6 and become a primary school.
- The RD felt that the change would be beneficial to the local area and pupils.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Sponsored Route

**Project: To discuss sponsor options for Laburnum Primary School, Central Bedfordshire.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that the school was judged 'Inadequate' in December 2022 and will therefore convert under a directive academy order into a multi-academy trust.
- A range of sponsor options were considered based on geography, track record and educational performance.
- Advantage Schools was identified as the preferred sponsor given the trust's experience of managing behaviour, strong track record of primary school improvement and phonics, KS1 and KS2 performance.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether Avanti Grange Secondary School, Hertfordshire, should expand their capacity by way of opening a 20-place Special Resource Provision (SRP) unit.**

**AB discussion:**

- 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.

## Trust Change

**Project:** To discuss whether Ralph Sadleir School (MAT) should merge with Freman College (SAT) to form a new MAT named the Halcyon Trust, Hertfordshire.

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Freman College has applied with Ralph Sadleir Academy to form a mutli academy trust named the Halcyon Trust.
- The board discussed the context of education provision in Buntingford, Hertfordshire.
- The ESFA recommended a visit from a School Resource Management Adviser.
- The RD asked that the proposal returns to the Advisory Board with the trust's planned school improvement strategy and the proposed trust's development.

**RD decision:** Defer.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform Freeman College and Ralph Sadleir Academy of the decision. Trusts to provide a more developed proposal with focus on school improvement strategy.

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project:** To discuss whether Edwinstree Church of England Middle School, Hertfordshire should convert to an academy and join the Halycon Trust, Hertfordshire.

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Edwinstree Church of England Middle School has applied to join the new MAT, Halycon Trust, if approved by the RD.
- The RD deferred the proposal to form the Halcyon Trust and therefore the proposal for Edwinstree Church of England Middle School to join the trust.

**RD decision:** Defer.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project: To discuss whether Anstey First School, Hertfordshire, should convert to an academy and join the Halycon Trust, Hertfordshire.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Anstey First School has applied to join the new MAT, Halycon Trust, if approved by the RD.
- The RD deferred the proposal to form the Halcyon Trust and therefore the proposal for Anstey First School to join the trust.

**RD decision:** Defer.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Trust Change

**Project: To discuss whether Hoddesdon School Trust, Hertfordshire, should transfer to Danes Educational Trust, Hertfordshire.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board discussed the business case from Danes Educational Trust for the Hoddesdon School Trust to transfer.
- The John Warner School in the Hoddesdon School Trust was judged 'Inadequate' in December 2022. The board also noted that a monitoring inspection report published in June had concluded that leaders had made 'insufficient progress to improve the school'.
- The board felt that the proposal from Danes Educational Trust contained a good level of detail about the type and quantity of support that would be offered to The John Warner School in particular.
- The RD considered the case and was satisfied with the proposal.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Josephine Valentine.

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

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project:** To discuss whether St Anne Line Catholic Infant School, Essex, should convert to an academy and join Christus Catholic Trust, Essex.

**AB discussion:**

- 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. Academy Order to be issued and LA to be informed of the decision.

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project:** To discuss whether Lincewood Primary School, Essex, should convert to an academy and join CRESCO Multi-Academy Trust, Essex.

**AB discussion:**

- 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 LA to be informed of the decision.



## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether to increase the primary capacity of The Beaulieu Park School, Essex, by opening a satellite site with a 420-place capacity for 4–11-year-olds.**

### **AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Chelmsford Learning Partnership has applied to increase primary capacity of The Beaulieu Park School to meet the rising demand for primary places in the north Chelmsford development of Greater Beaulieu Park.
- The local authority supports the proposal.
- The board discussed finances and future sustainability of the school.
- The board noted that this was an unusual proposal, but given the need for places, local support and the recent 'Outstanding' inspection at the school, the RD was content to approve.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether to change the age range at Purford Green Primary School, Essex, from 3-11 to 2-11.**

### **AB discussion:**

- 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.

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether to de-amalgamate the Short Stay School for Norfolk into two provisions, one specialising in SEMH, and one for excluded pupils or those missing mainstream education.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Unity Education Trust has applied to de-amalgamate the school to separate and clarify the approaches to SEMH provision and provision for pupils who have been excluded or missing mainstream education.
- The local authority supports the proposal.
- The board discussed monitoring the schools and how this would be continued after the de-amalgamation.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether Lionwood Infant and Nursery School, Norfolk, should establish a Specialist Resource Base.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Inclusive Schools Trust has applied to establish a Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Lionwood Infant and Nursery School.
- The board discussed the Norfolk Local Authority's strategy for SEND provision and agreed that this proposal was in line with it.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether Lionwood Junior School, Norfolk, should establish a Specialist Resource Base.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Inclusive Schools Trust has applied to establish a Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Lionwood Junior School.
- The board discussed the Norfolk Local Authority's strategy for SEND provision and agreed that this proposal was in line with it.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Significant Change

**Project: To discuss whether Reffley Academy, Norfolk, should establish a Specialist Resource Base.**

**AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Ad Meliora Academy Trust has applied to establish a Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Reffley Academy.
- The board discussed the Norfolk Local Authority's strategy for SEND provision and agreed that this proposal was in line with it.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project:** To discuss whether Hickling CofE VC Infant School, Norfolk, should convert to an academy and join The Diocese of Norwich St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust, Norfolk.

**AB discussion:**

- The board considered the case and provided no advice in relation to 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 LA to be informed of the decision.

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project:** To discuss whether Sutton CofE VC Infant School, Norfolk, should convert to an academy and join The Diocese of Norwich St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust, Norfolk.

**AB discussion:**

- The board considered the case and provided no advice in relation to 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 LA to be informed of the decision.

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project:** To discuss whether Catfield CofE VC Primary School, Norfolk, should convert to an academy and join The Diocese of Norwich St Benet's Multi-Academy Trust, Norfolk.

**AB discussion:**

- The board considered the case and provided no advice in relation to 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 LA to be informed of the decision.

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project: To discuss whether Orford CoE VA Primary School, Suffolk, should convert to an academy and join The Tilian Partnership, Suffolk.**

**AB discussion:**

- 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 LA to be informed of the decision.

## Converter Academy Orders

**Project: To discuss whether Wilby CoE Primary School, Suffolk, should convert to an academy and join The Tilian Partnership, Suffolk.**

**AB discussion:**

- 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 LA to be informed of the decision.

## Decisions escalated

List of decisions that have been escalated to the Minister.

### **Project: Significant Change - Whether Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form Free School, Norfolk, should expand onto a satellite site and increase its pupil admission number by 80.**

#### **AB discussion:**

- The board heard that Inspiration Trust has applied to expand physical capacity to increase pupil admission numbers.
- The board discussed the potential benefits of the proposal for the community and the potential risks to the stability of other providers.
- The board considered three representations received.
- The RD and the AB members were in support of the proposal, which would create more Outstanding post-16 places in a Priority Education Investment Area and meet parental demand.
- However, because of the potential impact on other local providers, the RD determined this should be escalated to the Minister.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** RD to receive ministerial steer on decision.

## Decisions taken between AB meetings.

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

### **Project: Whether Ormiston Bushfield Academy, Peterborough, should increase its physical capacity to create an additional 300 places.**

**Decision type:** Retrospective Significant Change.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

**Project: Whether Ely College, Cambridgeshire, should increase its sixth form published admission number and increase its capacity to 400 places.**

**Decision type:** Significant Change.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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