



Notes of Meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

11 October 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

- Kate Copley.

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Inderjit Sandhu.
- Julian Scholefield.
- Sarah Armitage.
- Mark Thomas.
- Paul Heery.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- Paul West.
- Sian Hampton.
- Chris Wheatley.

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.

General Discussion Points

No discussion points were raised.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: To discuss Lake View Primary and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire, converting to join East Midlands Education Trust.

AB discussion:

Lake View Primary and Nursery School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join East Midlands Education Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The school was inspected by Ofsted in March 2019 and received a good judgement.

Lake View Primary and Nursery School is in a close partnership with 2 other local primary schools (Blidworth Oaks Primary School and Heathlands Primary School), which joined East Midlands Education Trust in August 2022 and January 2023 respectively. Additionally, East Midlands Education Trust has provided support to Lake View Primary and Nursery School when faced with leadership and governance issues recently.

Lake View Primary and Nursery School sees joining East Midlands Education Trust as a continuation to the collaborative arrangements in place, seen as extremely beneficial to all 3 schools.

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

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Monksmoor Park Church of England Primary School, West Northamptonshire, converting to join The Rutland Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

Monksmoor Park Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Aided Primary School situated in Daventry, Northamptonshire. It was inspected by Ofsted in March 2023 and received a good judgement.

Monksmoor Park Church of England Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join The Rutland Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body, and the Diocese of Peterborough has given its approval.

Monksmoor Park Church of England Primary School has been working with The Rutland Learning Trust for the last year and seeks to formalise that arrangement. The Rutland Learning Trust has a strong track record of providing school improvement support. This arrangement also brings additional faith trust capacity into the region.

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

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust, and West Northamptonshire Council of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management adviser was recommended.

Sponsored Route:

Points discussed in relation to a school's sponsor status.

Project: To discuss a sponsor match for Newhall Community Junior School, Derbyshire.

AB discussion:

Newhall Community Junior School is a local authority-maintained school in Swadlincote, South Derbyshire, near the border with Leicestershire. In February 2018, the school was judged as requires improvement overall. In December 2021, it received a second successive requires improvement judgement from Ofsted.

An academy order was issued to Newhall Community Junior School on 8 March 2023.

Newhall Community Junior School is part of the Schools Rebuilding Programme. An information gathering exercise was conducted by the department to seek a sponsor for Newhall Community Junior School. The department shortlisted 2 trusts and these options were presented to Advisory Board members.

The chosen trust sponsor was Lionheart Educational Trust, which has a strong track-record of school improvement.

Geographically, Lionheart Educational Trust is also well positioned to sponsor the school with 3 schools in Coalville, north Leicestershire (1 primary, 2 secondaries) that are approximately 12 miles away.

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

RD decision: Approve - Lionheart Educational Trust.

Conflicts: Julian Scholefield. Julian was not present for this discussion, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust and Derbyshire County Council of the decision taken.

Project: To discuss a sponsor match for Buswells Lodge Primary School, Leicester.

AB discussion:

Buswells Lodge Primary School is a local authority-maintained school in Leicester and has been judged as requires improvement in the last 2 consecutive Ofsted inspections (September 2018 and May 2022). The school is therefore in scope for intervention by the department under The Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022.

Following analysis of all the available evidence and the school's representations, an academy order was issued to the school on 16 June 2023.

The department identified 3 trusts as strong sponsor options. On balance, it was recommended that Attenborough Learning Trust would be the best match for Buswells Lodge Primary School.

Attenborough Learning Trust consists of 6 Leicester primaries and has been working with the school via the department's Trust and School Improvement offer. The trust has a track-record in delivering strong outcomes for primary pupils and has the capacity to support the school.

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

RD decision: Approve – Attenborough Learning Trust.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust, and Leicester City Council of the decision.

Project: To discuss a sponsor match for St Mary's Fields Primary School, Leicester.

AB discussion:

St Mary's Fields Primary School is a local authority-maintained school in Leicester and has been judged as requires improvement in the last 2 consecutive Ofsted inspections (March 2019 and January 2023). The school is therefore in scope for intervention by the department under The Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022.

Following analysis of all the available evidence and the school's representations, an academy order was issued to the school on 16 June 2023.

The department identified 2 trusts as strong sponsor options. On balance, it was recommended that L.E.A.D. Academy Trust would be the best match for St Mary's Fields Primary School.

L.E.A.D. Academy Trust consists of 25 academies and has a track-record in primary school improvement. It has the capacity to support the school and geographically the trust is well situated as has an existing local hub that St Mary's Fields would join.

The financial health of the school, the strength of financial management and governance in place at L.E.A.D. Academy Trust and the trust's future financial health were also considered.

RD decision: Approve – L.E.A.D. Academy Trust.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust, and Leicester City Council of the decision. The supportive deployment of a school resource management adviser was recommended.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Langar CofE Primary School.

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 November 2023.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Significant Change

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

Project: To discuss the physical expansion of Yeoman Park Academy, a special school in Nottinghamshire, to increase capacity from 110 to 138 pupil places.

AB discussion:

Yeoman Park Academy, a special school in the district of Mansfield, converted to academy status and joined Diverse Academies Trust in October 2017. The school provides education for pupils aged 3 to 18 who have a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Yeoman Park Academy is one of the 50 schools in the first round of schools and academies identified for refurbishment or rebuild (rebuild in the case of Yeoman Park Academy) by the department under the Schools Rebuilding Programme.

The proposed new capacity is for 138 pupils, an increase of additional 28 places. The development is being undertaken in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council.

The profile and age-range of the academy will remain the same, however, each department will have an additional class. These will be formed by splitting the current classes.

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

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy, trust, and Nottinghamshire County Council of the decision.

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: To discuss a sponsor match for Mercia Academy, Derbyshire.

AB discussion:

Mercia Academy is an academy within Falcon Education Academies Trust, which is due to close as an entity. The school is in Swadlincote, South Derbyshire, near the border with Leicestershire. The school was judged inadequate in 2014 by Ofsted and was inspected as requires improvement on 3 occasions in 2016, 2018 and 2022.

Mercia Academy is part of the Schools Rebuilding Programme.

The department conducted an information gathering exercise to seek a sponsor for Mercia Academy. The department shortlisted 2 trusts and these options were presented to Advisory Board members.

The chosen trust sponsor was Lionheart Educational Trust, which has a strong track-record of school improvement. Geographically, Lionheart Educational Trust is also well positioned

to sponsor the school with 3 schools in Coalville, north Leicestershire (1 primary, 2 secondary) that are circa 12 miles away.

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

RD decision: Approve - Lionheart Educational Trust.

Conflicts: Julian Scholefield. Julian was not present for this discussion, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the academy, trusts and Derbyshire County Council of the decision taken.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: To discuss an age-range change at Chapel St Leonard's Primary School, Lincolnshire, to increase from 4-11 to 2-11.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the academy, trust, and Lincolnshire County Council of the decision.