



Notes of Meeting: North East Advisory Board

Thursday 14 December 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 note of the meeting (where appropriate). This excludes items where that member declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Katherine Cowell (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Jo Heaton (AB)
- Colin Lofthouse (AB)
- Jason Brine (AB)
- Anita Bath (AB)
- Dame Nicola Stephenson (AB)

Apologies

- Dame Maura Regan (AB)
- Robert Tarn (AB)
- Elizabeth Horne (AB)

DfE senior civil servants

Matt Beer (Deputy Director, North East Regions Group)

Representations received

- No representations were made for any items discussed at this meeting.

General Discussion Points

The RD welcomed board members to the meeting and invited them to share their views on current challenges and their school's plans for Christmas.

Middlesbrough

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the transfer of Kader Academy Trust, Middlesbrough to join Prince Regent Street Trust (PRST).

AB discussion:

- Kader Academy Trust is an oversubscribed Single Academy Trust (SAT) with a capacity of 420 and currently 480 pupils on roll.
- Kader has operated as a SAT since 2014 and was rated Ofsted 'Good' in April 2022.
- The board was advised that Kader Academy has considered joining several trusts; there is already a strong working relationship between trust and school with Kader, having been an associate member of PRST for over 12 months.
- The board was informed that this proposal is in line with the Department for Education's published Trust Development Statement for Middlesbrough.
- PRST is a small trust of 4 primaries, based in Stockton on Tees, with all schools good or outstanding.
- The board discussed the current trust governance structure and future growth of the trust. They recommended that the trust reviews the skills profile and balance of trustees currently on the board.
- The board recommended mentorship for the CFO.

RD decision: Approve with condition that PRST provides a full financial plan and monthly management accounts.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school and send conditions to the trust.

Darlington

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the transfer of Shared Vision Learning Trust (West Park Academy), Darlington to join Lingfield Education Trust (LET).

AB discussion:

- West Park Academy is the only academy in Shared Vision Learning Trust and was rated Ofsted 'Good' in March 2019.
- It is a large, over-subscribed primary school based in Darlington with a capacity of 420 and currently 460 pupils on roll.
- The board was informed that this proposal is in line with the Department for Education's published Trust Development Statement for Darlington.
- Lingfield Education Trust (LET) is a primary trust consisting of 16 academies located across the Tees Valley and North Yorkshire area.
- LET has a history of improving schools with 3 sponsored academies having been inspected since joining the trust and receiving 'good' Ofsted judgements.
- The board was advised that growth at LET has been planned and managed carefully with the introduction of Regional Hubs, ongoing support from another experienced CEO and the acceptance of an SRMA planned for early February 2024.
- The board was satisfied that the department is working closely with the trust and will ensure the proposed growth is managed carefully.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Gateshead

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Oakfield Infant School and Oakfield Junior School (Oakfield Schools Federation), Gateshead to convert and join SMART Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- Oakfield Schools Federation is a two school federation based in Gateshead, comprising of Oakfield Infant and Oakfield Junior Schools.
- Oakfield Infant School was rated by Ofsted as 'Requires Improvement' in November 2022 and Oakfield Junior School was rated 'Good' in March 2023.
- The infant school has 167 pupils on roll with a capacity of 180, and the junior school is full with 240 pupils currently on roll.

- The board was advised of building issues at Oakfield which need to be addressed as a priority.
- Oakfield Schools Federation has an already established working relationship with SMART having worked with the trust informally before they entered into a formal partnership agreement.
- SMART was established in 2016 and consists of 8 Ofsted rated 'Good' primary schools.
- SMART has significant educational expertise within its governance structure and has a history of improving schools. The trust has further expanded its workforce to prepare for any future growth.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: Colin Lofthouse was not present and did not receive papers for this item.

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

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss St Aidan's Church of England Primary School, Gateshead to convert and join Durham and Newcastle Diocesan Learning Trust (DNDLT).

AB discussion:

- St Aidan's Church of England Primary School was inspected in May 2022 and judged to be Ofsted 'Good'.
- DNDLT is one of the approved CofE trusts for schools in the North East and if approved, this proposal is in line with the diocesan strategy around conversion.
- DNDLT is currently a 17 primary school MAT, spanning over the North East of England, with schools in 7 local authority areas.
- The board was advised that the trust has already undergone an SRMA deployment with the report due later this month. The trust is taking necessary action to further improve its future financial position.
- The board discussed the governance and trust board structure and asked for further clarification regarding leadership roles across the trust and the Diocese.
- The board discussed the School Improvement Strategy and requested a review of this in line with the trust model.
- It was recommended that an acceptable financial plan be provided once the SRMA report has been received and reviewed by the trust. The Department will also discuss with the trust its future direction and School Improvement model.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: Sponsor match discussion for Carville Primary School, North Tyneside

AB discussion:

- This is a further discussion around the sponsor match options for Carville Primary School, a foundation school situated in Wallsend, originally brought to November advisory board.
- Carville Primary School was inspected by Ofsted in July 2023 and was judged to be 'Inadequate'.
- Performance results are significantly below national average.
- Consideration was given to several trusts as potential sponsors, taking into account their school improvement track record, capacity to support other schools and their potential to grow further given the low presence of high quality trusts in North Tyneside.
- Further consideration of trusts included performance, geography and pupil demographics.
- The board was advised of the school's preference for an established trust.
- The board discussed the shortlist of proposed sponsor options and the reasons behind North East Learning Trust (NELT) as the proposed trust.
- The board was informed that NELT has experience in improving teaching and learning, a proven track record of school improvement and the capacity to grow further in the area.
- The RD approved the preferred sponsor option of NELT and agreed that they can now commence due diligence.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: Dame Nicola Stephenson was not present and did not receive papers for this item.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school and trust of preferred sponsor.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Battle Hill Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Denbigh Community Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Hadrian Park Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Knop Law Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Milecastle Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Newburn Manor Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Peases West Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Simonside Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Throckley Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Waverley Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: West Denton Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Westerhope Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Whitehouse Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed opening date 01/01/2024

Further actions required: No further action required.

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

List of projects that were on the published draft agenda but not discussed at the AB meeting.

Project: Dunn Street Primary School, Marine Park Primary School and Whitburn Village Primary School (Blue Skies Federation), South Tyneside to convert and join Barnwell Academy Trust.

Type of decision: Academy order

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Rescheduled for a future AB meeting.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: NCEA James Knott CofE Primary School, Northumberland.

Decision type: Significant Change – change in age range.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: St. Helen's Primary School, Hartlepool.

Decision type: Significant Change - addition of an Additional Resource Provision.

RSC decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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