



Notes of Meeting: East of England

Date of meeting – 19/12/2023

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.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Jonathan Duff (RD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Al Kingsley (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), East of England

Representations received

- Two received about the project; 'To discuss two single academy trusts, Elveden CofE Academy and St Mary's CofE Academy, Suffolk, joining and forming Elveden Schools Trust and to discuss St. Edmundsbury CofE Primary, Suffolk, being sponsored by Elveden Schools Trust.'
- These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

General Discussion Points

- The RD gave some general national and regional updates and invited feedback from the board.
- The board discussed attendance in schools and shared ideas of how to encourage it.
- The board discussed SEND referrals and special schools and the need for more spaces in the region.
- The board discussed Ofsted inspections and the RD invited feedback from the board about their experiences of Ofsted inspections.
- The board considered Ofsted judgment outcomes for the previous month.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Deneholm Primary School (South West Essex Community Education Trust Limited), Thurrock, opening a specialist resource base.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the specialist resource base would have an inclusive and tailored curriculum which would be delivered by experienced staff.
- The board discussed recent Ofsted inspections for schools in the trust.
- The board discussed the finances of the trust and heard that an SRMA was being deployed.
- The RD noted that there was a demand for AP in this area and that this specialist resource base would help fulfil this need.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust Change and Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss the transfer of Chaulden Junior School, Hertfordshire, from Spiral Partnership Trust to Scholars' Education Trust.

Project: To discuss Chaulden Infants' and Nursery, Hertfordshire, being sponsored by Scholars' Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Chaulden Junior School and Chaulden Infants' and Nursery are on the same site and share some facilities.
- The board heard that Scholars' Education Trust has already been working with Chaulden Infants' and Nursery, which has now moved from an 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgment to 'Requires Improvement'.
- The board heard that Scholars' Education Trust has the capacity and ability to help Chaulden Junior School improve its pupil outcomes.
- The board heard that the trust's action plan for both schools is tailored to the needs of the schools.
- The RD asked about the finances of the trust.

RD decision:

Approve the project, 'To discuss the transfer of Chaulden Junior School, Hertfordshire, from Spiral Partnership Trust to Scholars' Education Trust.'

Approve the project, 'To discuss Chaulden Infants' and Nursery, Hertfordshire, being sponsored by Scholars' Education Trust.'

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss Creswick Primary and Nursery School, Hertfordshire, being sponsored by Agora Learning Partnership.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the trust has the knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide good quality education at this school.
- The board heard about the proximity of this school to other schools within the trust.
- The board heard that the schools within the trust performed well in 2023 performance data.
- The board considered how the addition of this school to the trust would affect the capacity of the trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

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

Trust Change and Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss two single academy trusts, Elveden CofE Academy and St Mary's CofE Academy, Suffolk, joining and forming Elveden Schools Trust.

Project: To discuss St. Edmundsbury CofE Primary School, Suffolk, being sponsored by Elveden Schools Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that St Mary's CofE Academy and Elveden CofE Academy have a strong working relationship and that they collaborate widely, for example subject leaders work together at both schools.
- The board heard that St Edmundsbury CofE Primary School has been through a period of instability, especially regarding its leadership and governance, and has recently received an 'Inadequate' Ofsted judgement.
- The board heard that St Edmundsbury CofE Primary School has made progress in addressing the concerns raised by the recent Ofsted inspection.
- The board heard about the finances of all three schools.
- The board considered the two representations received for this project.
- The board discussed the benefits of two SATS joining together to form a MAT.

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- The RD raised concerns about the capacity of the proposed newly formed MAT, Elveden Schools Trust, to provide sufficient support to St Edmundsbury CofE Primary School while also continuing improvement work at St Mary's CofE Academy.
- The RD referred to the school improvement experience of other local faith trusts in Suffolk.

RD decision:

Approve the project, 'To discuss two single academy trusts, Elveden CofE Academy and St Mary's CofE Academy, Suffolk, joining and forming Elveden Schools Trust'.

Defer the project, 'to discuss St. Edmundsbury CofE Primary, Suffolk, being sponsored by Elveden Schools Trust'.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and the trusts of the decision. Delivery Officer to have further discussions about the sponsorship options for St Edmundsbury CofE Primary School, particularly consideration of alternative MATs as well as strengthening Elveden Schools Trust's capacity.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Sexton's Manor Community Primary School, Suffolk, converting and becoming an academy and joining All Saints Schools Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this is a voluntary conversion and that the trust and the school are already working closely together.
- The board heard that All Saints Schools Trust already has two schools in the area and that this school would join the trust's western hub.
- The board heard that the trust is a primary specialist with a strong track record of school improvement and that the trust would support the school to improve its performance at KS1 and KS2.
- The board heard that the trust is planning to expand over the next few years.
- The board considered the finances of the school and the trust.
- The board noted that this is a strong proposal, and the RD raised no concerns.

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.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Wintringham Primary Academy (The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust), Cambridgeshire, opening an enhanced resource provision for up to 10 pupils.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the opening of this enhanced resource provision would help address the lack of SEND provision in this area.
- The board heard that the school received a 'Good' Ofsted judgement in February 2023.
- The board heard that this is a strong trust with a good record of school improvement and robust governance.
- The board noted that this would be the trust's first SEND provision and asked about the experience of the school in delivering SEND provision. The trust has experience of working with children with SEND. The board heard that the project is also fully supported by the LA, who will enable the school to access a network of SEND professionals.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Significant Change

Project: To discuss The Round House Primary Academy (The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust), Cambridgeshire, lowering the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to include a nursery provision.

AB discussion:

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

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter Academy Orders

Project: To discuss Colman Junior School, Norfolk, converting and becoming an academy and joining Unity Schools Partnership.

Project: To discuss Colman Infant School, Norfolk, converting and becoming an academy and joining Unity Schools Partnership.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that significant improvements and support are required for both Colman Junior School and Colman Infant School.
- The board heard that the trust could offer both schools assistance with governance, curriculum and pupil behaviour.
- The board heard that the trust has experience with special provision, and that both schools have a Deaf Resource Base.
- The board heard that by joining this trust, Unity Schools Partnership's hub in Norfolk will expand to 4 schools, which will bring benefits of collaborative working.

RD decision:

Approve the project, 'To discuss Colman Junior School, Norfolk, converting and becoming an academy and joining Unity Schools Partnership.'

Approve the project, 'To discuss Colman Infant School, Norfolk, converting and becoming an academy and joining Unity Schools Partnership.'

Conflicts: Tim Coulson.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and the trust of the decision. Academy Orders to be issued and LA to be informed of the decision.

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: To discuss closing Bury St Edmunds County High sixth form, Suffolk, from September 2024 and changing the age range from 13-18 to 13-16.

Type of decision: Significant Change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Further information requested to make an informed decision.

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