



Notes of Meeting: South West

13 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 discussion at the meeting (where appropriate). This excludes items where that member declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Hannah Woodhouse

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Mark Ducker
- Jennifer Blunden
- Margaret Simmons-Bird
- Steve Savory
- Jackie Fieldwick
- Adele Haysom
- Rachel Howie
- Stuart Ingram

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

NoneDfE senior civil servants

- Lucy Livings
- Matthew Stevenson

Representations received

- None

General Discussion Points

Regional Director Update

- AB members shared local intelligence and provided insight on the challenges being faced by the sector.
- Ofsted inspection outcomes from the start of this academic year were shared.

Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: To discuss the following two schools converting to academy status and joining Ventrus Limited:

- Georgeham CofE (VC) Primary School, **Devon**
- Shirwell Community Primary School, **Devon**

Points raised in Discussion: ** This project was discussed together with Willowbrook School, **Devon** joining Ventrus Limited.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss Frome Community College, **Somerset** converting to academy status and joining Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership.

Points raised in Discussion: ** This project was discussed together with Oakfield Academy (SAT), **Somerset** transferring to Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss EOTAS Swindon, **Swindon** converting to academy status and joining The White Horse Federation.

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) is a Local Authority maintained Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) comprised of 5 provisions across 3 different sites (Fernbrook, Riverside and Oakfield).
- EOTAS works with mainstream schools in Swindon to offer a variety of education packages for children who are permanently excluded, at risk of exclusion and/or have school anxiety, SEND or additional medical needs.
- EOTAS has had a challenging few years and would benefit from the stability and support that a Multi-Academy Trust can provide.
- The White Horse Federation (TWHF) has been working with EOTAS formally since Spring 2023 and is aware of the difficulties the PRU is facing and the key focuses for school improvement.
- TWHF has two special schools in Swindon both of which have been inspected recently and are rated Ofsted Good.
- The LA are supportive of TWHF taking on the PRU.

Governance:

- The diversity of the trust board was discussed and the need for further specialist experience in Alternative Provision and Special Education Needs.

School Improvement (SI):

- TWHF has a Director of Primary Education and a Director of Secondary Education who lead and monitor the trust-wide school improvement work. The MAT is also working with an external SEND school improvement consultant to strengthen their SEND practice across the MAT.
- The new Head of SEND appointment (starting in Jan 24) will bring strength to the MAT.

Finance:

- TWHF are aware of the financial situation at the PRU and plan to review the business model.

RD decision: Approve with conditions

- TWHF to secure additional SEND expertise on the trust board.
- The trust sets out a plan for how they will work in partnership with their own schools, other Swindon schools and the LA on inclusive practice across Swindon.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss Churchfields, the Village School, **Wiltshire** converting to academy status and joining Palladian Academy Trust.

Points raised in Discussion: ** This project was discussed together with Westbury Leigh CofE Primary School, **Wiltshire** joining Palladian Academy Trust.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

Project: To discuss the following three academies from The Duchy Academy Trust, **Cornwall** transferring to An Daras Multi Academy Trust:

- Boyton Community Primary School, **Cornwall**
- Callington Primary School, **Cornwall**
- Lewannick Community Primary School, **Cornwall**

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- The Duchy Academy Trust is a primary phase trust consisting of three academies.
- All three schools were inspected between October and December 2022. Callington Primary was rated Good November 2022, Lewannick Community was rated Requires Improvement October 2022 and Boynton Community was rated Requires Improvement December 2022.
- The Duchy Trust has recognised the need to either grow or seek to merge with a larger trust.
- An Daras MAT is considered a good fit in relation to their size, the trust's primary focus and geographical location.
- The Duchy has an established working relationship with An Daras.

Governance:

- An external review of governance is recommended. This should include a skills audit to identify and address gaps in educational experience.
- Trust Board would be strengthened by the addition of a trustee with MAT leadership experience to support growth.

School Improvement (SI):

- An Daras has a good track record for improving schools. The schools within An Daras are Ofsted rated Good or Outstanding, and the trust feel their current schools are in a stable position to allow deployment of additional SI capacity and support to schools within The Duchy. The Duchy schools will form a new hub.
- The SI model was discussed with the recommendation of an external review of school improvement. The Regions Group team will review the impact of this with the trust.

Finance:

- No concerns. Good financial controls are in place.

Other:

- The growth strategy of the trust was discussed with a period of consolidation recommended to embed The Duchy Schools and raise attainment across the trust. The Regions Group team will discuss growth plans with the trust.
- For the trust to consider being a part of more MAT networks such as CEO learning sets.

RD decision: Approve with conditions

- The trust undergoes an External Review of Governance with a follow up review within 6 months of completion.
- The trust to undergo an external review of School Improvement, this should focus on the SI model within the trust as well as integration of the Duchy schools.

Conflicts: Jennifer Blunden is the CEO of Truro & Penwith Academy Trust (considered as a trust to join) hence did not receive the papers and was not present for the discussion.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss Forest View Primary School (SAT), Gloucestershire transferring to Forest of Dean Trust.

Points raised in Discussion: The board members considered the case and did not raise any concerns with the proposal.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss Oakfield Academy (SAT), Somerset transferring to Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP).

Project: To discuss Frome Community College, Somerset converting to academy status and joining Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (MNSP)

Points raised in Discussion: **all projects for Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership (trust change and converter academy orders) were discussed together.

Strategy:

- Frome College is a maintained secondary (upper) school serving the town of Frome and is the sole provider of KS4 and post-16 education for the town. This is a voluntary conversion and Frome College will benefit from joining a large family of schools with an established good practice at secondary level. The college has strengths that it can bring to other schools in the MAT.
- The availability of SEND services in Frome has reduced over recent years. Joining a MAT with developing specialist SEND provision was considered in the decision to join MNSP.
- Oakfield Academy converted to Academy status in 2011. At their Ofsted inspection, September 2021 the academy was rated as Requires Improvement.
- Oakfield will benefit from MNSP's expertise in quickly improving schools that require support.

Governance:

- The diversity of the trust board and educational expertise was discussed. The Regions Group team will review this with the trust.

School Improvement (SI):

- MNSP has a strong track record of improving underperforming schools. The focus on high standards and the level of support that they can offer these two schools will be beneficial, alongside the depth of secondary experience.

Finance:

- No concerns. Good financial controls are in place.

Other:

- The strength of the trust's profile was positively recognised and the significant role MNSP can play in connecting with networks in the region, supporting other/new trusts and mentoring new CEOs.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss Dorset Studio School (SAT), **Dorset** transferring to Wessex Multi Academy Trust (WMAT).

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- Dorset Studio School (DSS) has considered joining Wessex MAT (WMAT) for some time and the support that a Multi-Academy Trust can provide.
- DSS has a well established working relationship with Wessex and Kingston Maurward College.
- DSS will add capacity to the trust's existing secondary provision with their experience of delivering effective Special Education Needs provision in a mainstream setting.

Governance:

- The educational expertise of the trust board was discussed.

School Improvement (SI):

- The trust's SI model and capacity was discussed as well as their KS2 performance.

Finance:

- No concerns raised.

RD decision: Approve with conditions

- In the continued development of the trust, commission an external review of the school improvement model.
- Continue to strengthen the educational expertise on the Trust Board, particularly through experience at MAT level.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Sponsored Route

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

Project: To discuss Willowbrook School, **Devon** joining Ventrus Limited.

Project: To discuss the following two schools converting to academy status and joining Ventrus Limited:

- Georgeham CofE (VC) Primary School, **Devon**
- Shirwell Community Primary School, **Devon**

Points raised in Discussion: **all projects for Ventrus Limited (sponsored route and converter academy orders) were discussed together

Strategy:

- Willowbrook School has had two successive Requires Improvement Ofsted inspection ratings, July 2018 and June 2022.
- Georgeham CofE Primary School and Shirwell Community Primary School have applied voluntarily to convert and join Ventrus Trust Limited.
- Georgeham CofE Primary School is a 2-11 voluntary controlled Church of England Primary School and at the last Ofsted inspection November 2019 was rated Good.
- Shirwell Community Primary School is a 4-11 community primary school and at the last Ofsted Inspection July 2018 was rated Good.
- Shirwell have an experienced leadership team who have expertise in small schools.
- All schools are in a management partnership with Ventrus and are benefitting from this collaboration.

Governance:

- The diversity of the trust board, educational expertise and board level overview was discussed. The Regions Group team will review this with the trust.

School Improvement (SI):

- Ventrus has a well-established school improvement model that has a good and sustained track record.
- The trust has sponsored two inadequate academies, both judged Good within three years of sponsorship.

Finance:

- No concerns. Good financial controls are in place.

RD decision: Approve with conditions

- The trust to recruit an additional trustee with a focus on SI expertise.
- The trust to establish an Education and Standards Committee and feed back plans to Regions Group.
- The trust to consider the appointment of a deputy CEO.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss Oak Hill Church of England Primary School, **Gloucestershire** joining Primary Quest Multi-Academy Trust.

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- Oak Hill Church of England Primary School has had two successive Requires Improvement Ofsted inspection ratings, March 2018 and January 2022.
- Governors at the school have been considering joining a MAT for a time and Primary Quest are already supporting the school, focusing on behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- The Diocese of Gloucester is in agreement for Primary Quest as the sponsor. The trust is a small and growing trust with majority articles.

School Improvement (SI):

- The trust uses external consultants to determine and support the SI plan for their schools.
- Primary Quest is looking to grow over the next year and recognises that their SI model will need to reflect this growth with the option to consider bringing the SI support in house. This will be reviewed with the trust and the Regions Group team.

Finance:

- No concerns. Good financial controls are in place.

Other:

- The school is split over two sites. In consultation with the local authority, the site at Dumbleton which is currently not in use will remain with the LA on conversion.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: To discuss Westbury Leigh CofE Primary School, **Wiltshire** joining Palladian Academy Trust (PAT).

Project: To discuss Churchfields, the Village School, **Wiltshire** converting to academy status and joining Palladian Academy Trust (PAT).

Points raised in Discussion: **all projects for Palladian Academy Trust (sponsored route and converter academy orders) were discussed together.

Strategy:

- Churchfields is a 4-11 age range primary maintained school. This is a voluntary conversion, the school was judged Good by Ofsted in September 2012 and September 2022.
- Westbury Leigh is a 4-11 age range primary maintained school. The school has had two successive Requires Improvement Ofsted inspection ratings, February 2019 and October 2022.
- Both schools have already established working relationships with PAT and will benefit from increased access to school improvement, centralised teams and school-to-school support, as well as benefiting from economies of scale.
- The Diocese of Salisbury and Wiltshire Council are in support of both schools joining Palladian Academy Trust.

Governance:

- The trustee and board structure was discussed, this will be reviewed with the trust and the Regions Group team to consider an external review of governance.

School Improvement (SI):

- The SI model was discussed with the recommendation of an external review of school improvement.
- PAT has received two Ofsted judgements since 2019, the low number of recent judgements provides a limited view of PAT's school improvement and impact.
- The Regions Group team will hold termly catch-ups with the trust, taking account of capacity and whether there are areas where support is required.

Finance:

- The engagement of an SRMA (school resource management adviser) is in train with the trust to review the budgets, finances and efficiency options.

Other:

- The growth strategy of the trust was discussed, this will be reviewed with the trust and the Regions Group team.

RD decision: Approve with conditions

- The trust undergoes an external review of governance.
- The trust conducts an external review of their school improvement model.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Significant Change

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

Project: To discuss a significant change for Helston Community College, **Cornwall** (Truro & Penwith Academy Trust) to change the age range to include 0 – 4 to incorporate nursery provision.

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- This is a retrospective significant change. It is considered that the nursery has been operating on the site of Helston Community College and run by the secondary school for at least ten years, pre-dating its transfer to Southerly Point Co-operative MAT. Helston Community College transferred voluntarily, to Truro & Penwith Academy Trust (TPAT) on 1st January 2023.
- Helston Day Nursery holds provision for 30 children. At their Ofsted inspection, March 2023 the nursery was rated Good, previously Outstanding July 2017.
- The nursery is run by an experienced team of staff.
- Helston Community College is a secondary school that also offers post 16 provisions on site and is part of TPAT. The school was inspected in November 2022 and rated as Good.

Governance:

- The requirement to regularise the nursery arrangement was discussed and TPAT is an established trust with capacity to support across all ages.
- The responsibility of the headteacher and local governing body for the nursery and Ofsted was raised and Regions Group will continue to review this arrangement with the college and trust.
- There was a recommendation that Early Years experience is added to the Local Governing Body.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: Jennifer Blunden is the CEO of Truro & Penwith Academy Trust hence did not receive the papers and was not present for the discussion.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Decisions escalated

List of decisions that have been escalated to the Minister.

Project: To discuss the local authority's recommended trust for a new presumption Alternative Provision (AP) free school in Misterton, **Somerset**.

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- Somerset Council has identified the need to establish a new provision for therapeutic education for young people with complex needs where there is a significant risk of home placement breaking down and accessing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision.
- Somerset propose to open this provision within a strategic partnership between the Council, Shaw Trust and the NHS.
- Shaw Trust is a large charity: its vision is to ensure 'good, meaningful, rewarding, purposeful and dignified employment is accessible to all in society irrespective of life circumstances'.
- This application is to establish a SAT that would run the presumption AP free school providing the therapeutic education strand.
- The provision will combine:
 - A bespoke curriculum designed to support learners back into local mainstream and special school provision.
 - Therapeutic support from CAMHS staff and therapists.
 - Coordination with children's home support staff and foster carers to support the learning of young people both within the provision and at home, and ensure engagement in education for a cohort of children who are likely to have been disengaged previously.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Escalated to ministers for a decision

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

All of the projects have gone through previous Advisory Board meetings for consideration and discussion. These projects are checked for any legal inconsistencies to ensure they are in line with departmental requirements and that all conditions are met.

Project: Abbas and Templecombe Church School, **Somerset** (The Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust)

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Lulworth and Winfrith CofE Primary School, **Dorset** (Coastal Learning Partnership).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Aldhelm's Church School, **Somerset** (The Bath and Wells Diocesan Academies Trust).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Catharine's Catholic Primary School, **Gloucestershire** (The Little Way Partnership MAT).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St George's Church of England Primary School, Langton Matravers, **Dorset** (Coastal Learning Partnership).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, **Gloucestershire** (The Little Way Partnership MAT).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Louis Catholic Primary School, Frome, **Somerset** (The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Martin's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, **Wiltshire** (Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Peter's Catholic Primary School, **Gloucestershire** (The Little Way Partnership MAT).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Thomas More Catholic Primary School, **Gloucestershire** (The Little Way Partnership MAT).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Stoborough Church of England Primary School, **Dorset** (Coastal Learning Partnership)

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Swanage Primary School, **Dorset** (Coastal Learning Partnership)

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: The Catholic School of Saint Gregory the Great, **Gloucestershire** (The Little Way Partnership MAT).

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: To discuss a significant change for Westfield Primary School, **BANES** (Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership) to add a 12 place resource base for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and trust.

Project: To discuss a retrospective significant change for Broadstone First School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** (Castleman Academy Trust) to increase capacity of its resource base from 8 – 14 places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and trust.

Project: To discuss a significant change for Broadstone First School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** (Castleman Academy Trust) to increase capacity of its resource base from 14 – 20 places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and trust.

Project: To discuss a significant change for Brixington Primary School, **Devon** (The First Federation Trust) to add a 10 place resource base for children with Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs (SEMH).

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and trust.

Project: To discuss a significant change for Holsworthy Community College, **Devon** (Dartmoor Multi Academy Trust) to add a 10 place resource base for children with Communication and Interaction Needs (C&I).

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and trust.

Project: To discuss a significant change for Hannah More Infant School, **North Somerset** (Lighthouse Schools Partnership) to add a 10 place resource base for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and trust.

Project: To discuss a significant change for Grove Junior School, **North Somerset** (Lighthouse Schools Partnership) to add a 10 place resource base for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools and trust.

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 Aspire Academy, **BANES** (Futura Learning Partnership) transferring to

North Star Academy Trust.

Type of decision: Trust change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Necessary papers were not ready.

Project: To discuss Poole High School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** converting to academy status and joining Twynham Learning.

Type of decision: Converter academy order

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Necessary papers were not ready.

Project: To discuss Canford Heath Junior School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** (Teach Poole) to add a 20 place resource base for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

Type of decision: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Necessary papers were not ready.

Project: To discuss Canford Heath Infant School, **Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole** (Teach Poole) to add a 15 place resource base for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

Type of decision: Significant change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Necessary papers were not ready.

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