



## Notes of Meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 22 February 2024

### 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

- Andrew Warren

### Advisory Board (AB) members

- Dame Mo Brennan
- Mike Donoghue
- Sarah Finch
- Dan Parkes
- Guy Shears
- Amarjit Cheema
- Tom Leverage

### Guests

- None.

### Apologies

- None.

### DfE senior civil servants

- Dawn Dandy

## **Representations received**

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

## **General Discussion Points**

- The RD and AB members discussed the current climate in schools across the West Midlands region.

### Local Update

- None.

## Converter Academy Orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

**Project:** To discuss issuing an Academy Order to Millfield Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an academy and join Community Academies Trust, Telford & Wrekin, Warwickshire and Staffordshire.

### AB discussion:

- Millfield Primary School, Staffordshire is an Ofsted “Good” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to increase the school improvement and professional development opportunities.
- Community Academies Trust consists of 18 academies across Telford&Wrekin, Warwickshire and Staffordshire.
- The school believes its ethos and values align with those of Community Academies Trust and will secure its future. The MAT is local to Tamworth and the Staffordshire area with a strong group of surrounding schools in the vicinity.
- Millfield primary school will join the existing hub of 5 good or outstanding trust primary schools in the Tamworth area, strengthening the existing group of academies. This aligns with the trust’s growth plan of adding additional primary schools.
- The board discussed Ofsted inspections, pupil outcomes and secondary outcomes, and the recommendation of an External Review of Governance.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and DCS to be informed of the decision.

**Project:** To discuss issuing an Academy Order to St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Wolverhampton, to convert and become an academy and join Ignite Learning Partnership, Wolverhampton.

### AB discussion:

- St Andrew’s CofE Primary School, Wolverhampton is an Ofsted “Good” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to benefit from centralised quality assurance, utilising opportunities to attend subject co-ordinator meetings to share best practice and monitor subject development.
- Ignite Learning Partnership consists of 3 academies across Wolverhampton.
- Each of the three schools currently within the trust entered with a ‘Good’ Ofsted grading. Whilst one is awaiting its first inspection since converting, the remaining two have maintained their ‘Good’ gradings following short inspections in Autumn 2021.

- The school also hopes that, in joining a trust, it will develop additional capacity for internal school improvement, drawing upon trust-wide staff expertise and strong community links.
- There were discussions around finances and leadership and governance at the trust.
- The board agreed that this is a positive move for the school and the trust.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and Director of Children’s Services to be informed of the decision.

**Project:** To discuss issuing an Academy Order to St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, to convert and become an academy and join Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company, Birmingham.

**AB discussion:**

- St Peter’s Catholic Primary School, Birmingham is an Ofsted “Outstanding” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company consists of 8 academies across Birmingham.
- The school adds further capacity by bringing an outstanding school to the MAC. The MAC has already developed strong working relationships with the school and its staff. They use the Lumen Christi Catholic MAC curriculum and are already involved in network meetings across the curriculum e.g. Music and SEND.
- Six schools at the trust have received a Good Ofsted Judgement, one received Outstanding, and one joined as Inadequate.
- The board discussed the leadership and governance at the trust along with school performance.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and Director of Children’s Services to be informed of the decision.

**Project:** To discuss issuing an Academy Order to Story Wood School, Birmingham, to convert and become an academy and join Robin Hood Multi Academy Trust, Birmingham

and Solihull.

**AB discussion:**

- Story Wood School, Birmingham is an Ofsted “Outstanding” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to develop and strengthen the abilities of the school.
- Robin Hood Multi Academy Trust consists of 5 academies across Birmingham and Solihull. It has demonstrated its capability of school improvement across a number of schools and is solely a primary school trust.
- Robin Hood MAT has supported a number of small trusts across Birmingham as a result of designation through initially the NLE format and latterly the Trust and School Improvement Offer.
- Robin Hood MAT has planned carefully to have the capacity to strategically grow the trust to a 10 school MAT in the short to medium term. As a result of this strategic planning, the trust is now in a position to move towards this target.
- There were discussions around geography and governance.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and Director of Children’s Services to be informed of the decision.

**Project:** To discuss issuing an Academy Order to Valley Primary, Solihull, to convert and become an academy and join The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust, West Midlands, London and East of England.

**AB discussion:**

- Valley Primary, Solihull is an Ofsted “Good” school who have requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust to allow the school to continue good practice and collaborate with high performing schools in a strong national trust for further growth. Joining the trust will also allow a path for ongoing development and improvement with regards to governance and performance.
- The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust consists of 33 academies across the West Midlands, London and East of England. It has demonstrated its capability of school improvement across a number of schools and is solely a primary school trust.
- Valley primary have stated that they have taken into consideration ethos, values and strategic vision. All of which match and can be used for a mutually beneficial relationship between the school and trust. The MAT has strong experience in primary school management and has a proven track record for high educational performance.
- The board sought assurances around performance, finances and staffing.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Converter Academy Order to be issued to Chair of Governors. Trust and Director of Children's Services to be informed of the decision.

## **Sponsored Route:**

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

**Project:** To discuss Doxey Primary and Nursery School, Staffordshire, to be sponsored by The Creative Learning Partnership Trust.

**AB discussion:**

- Doxey Primary and Nursery School, Staffordshire is an Ofsted rated “Requires Improvement” school who require a sponsor to develop improved school outcomes.
- The Creative Learning Partnership Trust consists of 8 schools across Staffordshire.
- The Creative Learning Partnership Trust is a suitable fit as the School and the Trust already have a solid relationship that has been developed through professional links in the locality, via training support offered to Doxey as well as the commission to provide system leader support
- The Trust has a proven track record of school improvement.
- The board sought assurances around trust capacity and had a discussion around finances and pupil numbers.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the School, Sponsor and DCS.

**Project:** To discuss The Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, to be sponsored by St. John Paul II Multi Academy Company.

**AB discussion:**

- The Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School, Birmingham is an Ofsted rated “Inadequate” school who require a sponsor to develop improved school outcomes.
- St. John Paul II Multi Academy Company consists of 9 schools across Birmingham.
- 7 out of 9 of the MAC's schools are primary schools with several of the trust's academies having similar cohorts to that of the Oratory.
- The Archdiocese's plans for the conversion of Catholic Primary schools in this area is that they join the John Paul II MAC which has also been supporting the school with an executive head since November 2023.
- The board talked about the trust and it's experience and capacity in sponsoring the school. They also discussed school performance and improvement, pupil numbers and leadership at the trust.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the School, Sponsor and DCS.

## Significant Change

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

**Project:** To discuss creating an Autistic Specialist Resource Base at Birchfield Primary School, Birmingham.

**AB discussion:**

- Birchfield Primary received a full section 5 Ofsted inspection in September 2022 and was judged Good in all areas. The school wish to create an Autistic Specialist Resource Base to cater for 12 children in EYFS/KS1 and KS2 groups.
- Birchfield Primary School has been supporting 'Nurture Classes' in its school to meet the significant needs of the children in mainstream. The level of resources provided by the current statutory funding does not meet the needs of the children.
- An expression of interest was submitted to the LA to change the designation of the school from informal 'Nurture Classes' to a recognised Resource Base.
- Birmingham City Council SEND & inclusion strategy includes a commitment to establish more resource provision in mainstream settings providing a bridge between mainstream and specialist provision.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school.

## Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to academies moving to another trust.

**Project:** To discuss the application for the transfer of Woodrush High School, Worcestershire, to The Black Pear Trust.

**AB discussion:**



- Woodrush High School wants to join The Black Pear Trust, as the trusts have collaborated for several years on projects with a common focus on investing in the development of the workforce for the benefit of all pupils.
- The Black Pear Trust consists of 6 schools across Worcestershire.
- The project work completed has allowed both stakeholders to realise shared goals and the benefits of working together for school and wider communities. Both organisations share a strong commitment to ongoing investment in professional development and learning.
- The board discussed the geography involved in the new school joining the trust.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the Trusts.

**Project:** To discuss the application for the transfer of Brockhampton Primary School, Herefordshire, to The Black Pear Trust.

**AB discussion:**

- A successful partnership between The Black Pear Trust and Brockhampton developed through 2022-2023 academic year. Over the past academic year, leaders from both trusts have identified opportunities for collaboration around support for Early Career Teachers (ECTs), subject leadership and curriculum development, professional development and school improvement. They have identified a strong alignment between vision, values and ethos.
- Initial collaboration between the trusts has proved effective and Brockhampton believe working together in a formal arrangement and utilising Black Pear's existing trust knowledge and structures will add value and offer greater benefit for pupils' education, physical resource and estate development.
- The Black Pear Trust The trust consists of 6 schools across Worcestershire. Brockhampton will add additional leadership and expertise capacity to the trust.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the Trusts.

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

**Project:** Paulet High School and 6th Form College, Staffordshire

**Decision type:** Significant Change - A change in physical capacity – building a new dining area, creating 29 additional car parking spaces, expanding the school yard, and extending the library which will change the capacity from 750 – 825 pre 16 and remain as 215 post 16.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school of the decision.

**Project:** Oldfields Hall Middle School, Staffordshire

**Decision type:** Significant Change - Expansion of physical capacity by adding 5 classrooms and a new sports hall, in order to meet the planned rise and gradual increase of 1FE due to extensive residential development in the area.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school of the decision.

**Project:** Havergal Church of England Primary Academy, Staffordshire

**Decision type:** Significant Change - Approve Havergal CofE Primary Academy significant change application to lower the age limit and provide a nursery. Proposal to lower the age limit to 3-year-olds and provide a nursery (currently 4 to 11)

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** To inform the school 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:** None.

© Crown copyright 2024.