



Notes of Meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

13 March 2024.

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

- Carol Gray (Regional Director, East Midlands Regions Group).
- Kate Copley (Regional Director, East Midlands Regions Group).

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Inderjit Sandhu.
- Chris Wheatley.
- Paul West.
- Sian Hampton.
- Paul Heery.
- Sarah Armitage.
- Julian Scholefield.

Guests

- Ashfaq Rahman (CEO, Nova Education Trust).

Apologies

- Mark Thomas.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes (Deputy Director, East Midlands Regions Group).

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 Sutton Bonington Primary School, Nottinghamshire, converting to join Equals Trust.

AB discussion:

Sutton Bonington Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Equals Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Ofsted last inspected the school in July 2011 leading to a good judgment. Ofsted undertook a short inspection in May 2019 which showed the school continues to be good.

Sutton Bonington Primary School's governing body identified Equals Trust as the trust that best matched their ambitions to expedite the improvement process, and a significant impact.

All 13 schools within Equals Trust are rated good by Ofsted.

This proposal is aligned with the department's published Trust Development Statement for the area, which is to: "raise education standards by both growing high quality trusts already operating in the area and across the East Midlands region, and creating 2 or 3 new, high-quality primary trusts". The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the High Quality Trust Framework was considered alongside the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Shenton Primary School, Leicester, converting to join Attenborough Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

Shenton Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Attenborough Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Ofsted last inspected the school in March 2011 leading to a good judgment. Ofsted undertook a short inspection in January 2020 which showed the school continues to be good.

Shenton Primary School's governing body identified Attenborough Learning Trust as their preferred trust, having already established a working relationship with the trust.

Attenborough Learning Trust is a primary phase trust based in Leicester. It formed in April 2019 and is currently responsible for the education of approximately 2,250 pupils. The trust currently comprises of 6 schools (3 of which are infant).

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the High Quality Trust Framework was considered alongside the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Bridge Junior School, Leicester, converting to join Attenborough Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

Bridge Junior School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Attenborough Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Ofsted last inspected the school in November 2022 leading to a requires improvement judgement.

Bridge Junior School's governing body identified Attenborough Learning Trust as their preferred trust having already established a working relationship with the trust through the Trust and School Improvement offer. The trust continues to support the school, adding leadership capacity and support with governance.

Attenborough Learning Trust is a primary phase trust based in the city of Leicester. It formed in April 2019 and is currently responsible for the education of approximately 2,250 pupils. The trust currently comprises of 6 schools (3 of which are infant).

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the High Quality Trust Framework was considered alongside the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored Route:

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

Project: To discuss The Forge Trust as the sponsor match for Maun Infant and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire.

AB discussion:

Maun Infant and Nursery School is a 2-form entry, larger-than-average infant and nursery school. The school has been judged as requires improvement in 2 consecutive full section 5 Ofsted inspections (June 2018 and June 2022).

In October 2022, the department issued a letter notifying the school's governing body that it meets the legal definition of a school that is coasting (not making necessary improvements) as set out in The Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022. In March 2023, the school was issued with an Academy Order.

The process to identify The Forge Trust as the proposed sponsor option was undertaken in line with the High Quality Trust Framework. The Forge Trust is the recommended sponsor on the basis of strong outcomes across the High Quality Trust Framework pillars, in particular, high quality and inclusive education and school improvement and geographical fit. Maun Infant and Nursery School shares a school site with Forest View Junior School which is already part of The Forge Trust.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the Commissioning High Quality Trust Framework was considered alongside the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

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 advisor was recommended.

Project: To discuss Equals Trust as the sponsor match for Normanton-on-Soar Primary School, Nottinghamshire.

AB discussion:

Normanton-on-Soar Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The school has been judged requires improvement in 2 consecutive full Ofsted inspections (May 2019 and December 2022).

On 8 March 2023, the department issued a letter notifying the governing body that the school meets the legal definition of a school that is coasting (not making necessary improvements) as set out in The Coasting Schools (England) Regulations 2022. An Academy Order was issued on 21 June 2023. The department then conducted an assessment of local sponsor options in line with the High Quality Trust Framework.

This proposal is aligned with our published Trust Development Statement for the area, which is to: “raise education standards by both growing high quality trusts already operating in the area and across the East Midlands region, and creating 2 or 3 new, high-quality primary trusts”. There is a particular need in Nottinghamshire for trusts with capacity to take on smaller schools; Equals Trust is one of those trusts.

Equals Trust is the recommended sponsor based on strong outcomes across the High Quality Trust Framework pillars, particularly high quality and inclusive education and school improvement, geographical fit and the trust approach to running smaller schools.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the Commissioning High Quality Trust Framework was considered alongside the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

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

Project: To discuss a sponsor match for Coalville Forest presumption free school, Leicestershire.

AB discussion:

Coalville Forest Primary School is a presumption free school in the Coalville area of Leicestershire. The construction of the school has commenced and is due to be completed during the summer of 2024. The school is intended to serve pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 and will have a capacity of 420.

Leicestershire County Council opened the application window in October 2023 and closed it in November 2023. The local authority identified Lionheart Educational Trust as their preferred sponsor.

Lionheart Educational Trust has 14 schools, including a hub of 3 schools in Coalville. The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the Commissioning High-Quality Trusts Framework were considered alongside the area and the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved – Lionheart Educational Trust.

Conflicts: None.

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

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open.

Project: Ashbourne Hilltop Primary Academy & Nursery

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 April 2024.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: St Mary's Fields Academy

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 April 2024.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Abbey Hill Primary & Nursery

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 April 2024.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Bracken Hill School

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 April 2024.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Woodhouse Eaves St Paul's Church of England Primary School

AB discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 April 2024.

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 a new satellite site for Stubbin Wood School (T.E.A.M Education Trust), Derbyshire, based on the site of Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to provide primary SEND provision.

AB discussion:

Stubbin Wood School is a special school located in Shirebrook, Derbyshire. It was judged good by Ofsted in May 2022. All pupils attending the main school have an education, health, and care plan. The school offers provision and support to pupils with complex needs.

This proposal is to establish a SEND satellite site for 12 primary-aged students (Key Stage 1 and 2) from September 2024 to be established on the site of Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School.

Nottinghamshire County Council supports this proposal. as part of their SEND place planning strategy which identifies the need for an additional 285-490 places in specialist provision by September 2026.

The Regional Director has requested additional information about this proposal before a decision can be taken.

RD decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss a new satellite site for Stubbin Wood School (T.E.A.M Education Trust), Derbyshire, based on the site of The Brunts Academy (Greenwood Academies Trust), Nottinghamshire, to provide secondary SEND provision.

AB discussion:

Stubbin Wood School is a special school located in Shirebrook, Derbyshire. It was judged good by Ofsted in May 2022 (across all sub-judgements). All pupils attending the main school have an education, health, and care plan. The school offers provision and support to pupils with complex needs.

This proposal is to establish a SEND satellite site for 12 secondary-aged students (Key Stage 3 and 4) from September 2024, to be co-located on the site of The Brunts Academy which is part of Greenwood Academies Trust.

Nottinghamshire County Council supports the proposal as part of their SEND place planning strategy which identifies the need for an additional 285-490 places in specialist provision by September 2026.

The Regional Director has requested additional information about this proposal before a decision can be taken.

RD decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss a new satellite site for Stubbin Wood School (T.E.A.M Education Trust), Derbyshire, based on the site of Chesterfield Football Club, Derbyshire, to provide post-16 SEND provision.

AB discussion:

Stubbin Wood School is a special school located in Shirebrook, Derbyshire. It was judged good by Ofsted in May 2022 (across all sub-judgements). All pupils attending the main school have an education, health, and care plan. The school offers provision and support to pupils with complex needs.

This proposal is to establish a SEND satellite site for up to 36 post-16 students (Key Stage 5), initially opening with 24 pupils in September 2024 and rising to 36 the following year.

Derbyshire County Council have confirmed in writing their full support of the proposal, highlighting a need in the area "for high-quality post-16 SEND provision" which supports the 6th priority in their published SEND strategy, Preparation for Adulthood.

The Regional Director has requested additional information about this proposal before a decision can be taken.

RD decision: Deferred.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the removal of residential designation at St Bernard's School (Inspire Connected Communities Trust), Lincolnshire.

AB discussion:

St Bernard's School is an all-through, all-needs special academy in the district of Louth, Lincolnshire. The Maples is a residential provision based on the site of St Bernard's School. It has provided an educational, 24-hour curriculum for pupils where this need is identified on a student's education, health, and care plan. It also provides for young people, who are on

roll at the school, during the holidays, weekends, and for short breaks, following identification of an assessed need by the local authority's social care team.

Inspire Connected Community Trust (formerly Lincolnshire Wolds Community Trust) has submitted an application to remove the residential designation (with capacity of up to 5 pupils) at St Bernard's school.

Removal of the residential designation at the school does not remove or close the residential provision, it simply enables the provision to be accessed by a wider number of children and young people who are not on roll at the school. There are currently no pupils boarding at the Maples for educational provision as part of their EHCP.

As the residential provision is designated as part of the school, the only people currently able to access it are pupils on roll at St Bernard's. This means other young people and their families are having to travel long distances out of county to access short breaks provision.

A consultation took place from November 2023 to December 2023 which included a dedicated page on the school's website and letters to staff, parents and carers and local community. There were no comments, questions or objections raised during this consultation.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the Commissioning High Quality Trust Framework was considered against the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss an increase in planned places at St Lawrence School (Inspire Connected Communities Trust), a special school in Lincolnshire, from 150 to 180 places.

AB discussion:

St Lawrence School is an all-through, all-needs special school in Horncastle, Lincolnshire. It is part of Inspire Connected Community Trust (formerly Lincolnshire Wolds Community Trust). The trust is working in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and has proposed to increase the number of planned places at the school from 150 to 180.

Lincolnshire County Council has undertaken a programme of SEND service transformation since 2018, including a significant capital programme to expand the special school estate by 527 places over a 5-year period. This is due to considerable increase in demand for special school places, and a strategy to provide specialist teaching space to enable students to access a broader curriculum and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND within their local community, rather than traveling long distances to access provision.

Following a further increase in demand for places, Lincolnshire County Council commissioned a further increase of 178 places in Autumn 2022.

A consultation took place from 20 November 2023 to 17 December 2023 which included a dedicated page on the school's website and letters to staff, parents and carers and local community including local authority. There were 8 responses which all supported to the proposed increase planned places to 180.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the Commissioning High Quality Trust Framework was considered alongside the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss a new 20-place post-16 satellite site at Purple Oaks Academy (Greenwood Academies Trust), West Northamptonshire.

AB discussion:

Purple Oaks Academy is a special free school for pupils with autism and/or severe learning difficulties and was opened by Greenwood Academies Trust in September 2017.

The proposed significant change for Purple Oaks Academy (age range 3-18) is to increase capacity from 100 to 120 by moving the pre-existing post 16 provision onto a satellite site at neighbouring Green Oaks Academy (age range 3-11, mainstream). This proposal does not seek to alter the provision at Purple Oaks Academy or alter staffing numbers at either the school or satellite site.

West Northamptonshire Council are supportive of the proposal and have confirmed the demand for additional SEND places in the region.

A 4-week consultation period was held, running from 21 November 2023 to 21 December 2023. Letters were sent to all parents and staff of Purple Oaks Academy and all parents and staff of Green Oaks Primary Academy. Three responses raised issues around traffic. There are currently 118 pupils on roll at Purple Oaks so the proposal to increase capacity to 120 is considered unlikely to result in any increase in traffic overall across the two sites.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the Commissioning High Quality Trust Framework was considered alongside the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approved.

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 advisor was recommended.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Increase in capacity at Bourne Academy, Lincolnshire, to increase capacity from 1475 to 1525 places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: Increase in capacity at Spalding Academy, Lincolnshire, to increase capacity from 1710 to 1820 places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: A change in age range at Derby St Chad's CofE Nursery and Infant School, Derby, from 3-7 to 2-7 years.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: Increase in capacity at the Designated Special Provision at Willowbrook Mead Primary Academy, Leicester, from 10 places to 12 places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

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