



Notes of Meeting: South West

18 March 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

- Lucy Livings – Regional Director

Advisory Board (AB) members

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

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Rachel Howie

DfE senior civil servants

- Matthew Stevenson
- Jessica Trahar (Interim Deputy Director)

Representations received

- Five representations were received for Lovington Church of England Primary School.

These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

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 St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, **Devon** converting to academy status and joining Learning Academy Partnership (South West).

Points raised in Discussion: The board members considered the case and did not have any further comments in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss following two schools converting to academy status and joining Cathedral Schools Trust:

- Ashton Gate Primary School, **Bristol**
- Henleaze Infant School, **Bristol**

Points raised in Discussion: The board members considered the case and did not have any further comments in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Calton Primary School, **Gloucestershire** converting to academy status and joining SAND Academies Trust.

Points raised in Discussion: The board members considered the case and did not have any further comments in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Project: To discuss Evercreech Church of England Primary School, **Somerset** converting to academy status and joining Preston Primary Academy Trust.

Points raised in Discussion: ** This project was discussed together with Lovington Church of England Primary School, **Somerset** joining Preston Primary 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 Aspire Academy, **Bath and North East Somerset** (Futura Learning Partnership) transferring to North Star Academy Trust (NSAT).

Project: To discuss a significant change for Aspire Academy, **Bath and North East Somerset** (Futura Learning Partnership) to change the age range from 4 – 19 to 4 – 16 to remove the sixth form provision.

Points raised in Discussion: **all projects for Futura Learning Partnership (trust change and significant change) were discussed together

Strategy:

- Aspire Academy is an all-through special school in Bath and is currently part of Futura Learning Partnership (FLP).
- Aspire supports a range of pupil needs including SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) and ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition).
- It is the only special school within FLP and although currently rated Ofsted good (March 2017) it is recognised that intervention and improvement support is needed from a specialist SEMH provider.
- North Star Academy Trust (NSAT) is a special school only trust specialising in SEMH needs. NSAT has been supporting Aspire Academy from June 2023.
- It is a small and successful MAT with the capacity to provide continued improvement for Aspire Academy.

- The current headteacher at Aspire Academy will remain, providing continuity and consistency for pupils and staff.
- Futura Learning Partnership (FLP) is proposing an age range change at Aspire Academy, from 4-19 to 4-16 as part of the conditions of transfer.
- The sixth form provision at Aspire is not providing a suitable educational experience for the post-16 students. Most pupils do not choose to stay on for the post-16 provision, with many choosing Bath College.
- NSAT have committed to continue to support all the alternative routes and have established strong links with the SENCO at Bath College.

Governance:

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

School Improvement (SI):

- NSAT have a clear understanding of the issues being faced at Aspire and have a solid plan for future improvement. The school has already seen a positive impact and the transfer will secure this for the future.
- The trust CEO is involved with the school improvement at Aspire and the SI team are onsite to ensure support is delivered efficiently.

Finance:

- There are no financial concerns for NSAT.
- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) are working with FLP in regards to the financial position remaining.

Other:

- AB members positively commented on the recognition by Futura Learning Partnership to transfer Aspire in the best interest of the pupils and acknowledged how positively this has been managed.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: Margaret Simmons-Bird is the Executive Lead for Governance at Futura Learning Partnership and 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 the following two academies from Elmlea Schools' Trust (EST) transferring to Russell Education Trust (RET):

- Elmlea Junior School, **Bristol**
- Elmlea Infant School, **Bristol**

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- Elmlea Schools' Trust (EST) has voluntarily applied to join Russell Education Trust (RET).
- EST is comprised of two schools, Elmlea Infant School and Elmlea Junior School. Elmlea Infant School received an Ofsted judgement of outstanding (March 2023) and Elmlea Junior School, outstanding (March 2015).
- RET was established in November 2010 and has five schools across five Local Authorities, primarily around the Greater London area with a presence in the South West of Bristol Free School. All schools within RET are at secondary phase.
- Elmlea Junior School is a feeder school for the Bristol Free School and both trusts by joining together consider this is in the best interests of the students.

Governance:

- The structure of the trust board and the primary phase experience was discussed.
- RET was founded by an educational company and has 4 members and 8 trustees, the Chair of Trustees is a member.
- Further information on the board and the overlap of roles is required.

School Improvement (SI):

- The Service Improvement model of the trust was discussed and how comprehensive and cohesive it is.
- RET does not have a published SI strategy or plan, the trust employ specialist Lead Advisors in core subjects who work closely with schools and report to the leadership.
- RET has a track record at secondary phase, their capability at primary phase is not yet tested.
- Further evidence of the school improvement model is needed.

Finance:

- Both RET and EST are in a good financial position.

Other:

- The trust's growth plan has a focus on expansion into the primary phase and to partner with primary schools local to existing trust schools.
- Further information about the trust's plans to grow in the Bristol area was requested.

RD decision: Defer - to be brought back to Regional Director at later date once more information is provided about issues discussed

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to feedback to the trust / schools.

Project: To discuss the following two academies from Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) transferring to The Park Academies Trust (TPAT):

- The Deanery CE Academy, **Swindon**
- Kingfisher CE Academy, **Swindon**

Points raised in Discussion:

Strategy:

- The Deanery CE Academy is an 11-18 secondary Free School that opened in September 2019. It is part of the Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) and the only secondary school within the trust.
- The school was inspected in September 2023 and received an Ofsted judgement of requires special measures, subsequently the trust was subject to a Termination Warning Notice.
- Kingfisher CE Academy is a 2 – 11 primary Free School that opened in September 2021. It is also part of DBAT and located on the same campus as The Deanery. It was inspected in February 2024 and judged to be Requires Improvement (the report was not yet published at the time the meeting took place).
- DBAT has confirmed that transferring both schools to a high quality MAT would deliver improvement and be in the best interests of the pupils.
- The Park Academies Trust (TPAT) is one of the strongest local performing MATs for secondary in Swindon. Recent Ofsted outcomes demonstrate that TPAT has experience in improving Ofsted Inadequate schools, for both primary and secondary phases.
- TPAT's Board of Trustees has approved to take on Church of England Articles of Association, giving assurances that the Christian identity and values of the schools and their pupils will be promoted and supported.

Governance:

- TPAT is in the process of recruiting a permanent CEO and the challenges associated to securing a long-term appointment were discussed by AB members.
- The diversity of the trust board and the educational expertise across both primary and secondary as well as SEND (Special Educational Needs) was discussed and the appropriate level of support and challenge for the incoming CEO.

School Improvement (SI):

- TPAT has been building capacity to allow for growth, and to provide resources and staff to The Deanery and Kingfisher without impacting their existing schools.

Finance:

- There are no concerns with the financial position of TPAT.

Other:

- It was recommended for the trust to engage with peers that have undergone similar transfers and the challenges that can be faced.

RD decision: Approve with conditions

- TPAT to ensure that the trust board is balanced with educational expertise across both primary and secondary as well as SEND.

Conflicts: None

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

Project: To discuss Henleaze Junior School (SAT), Bristol transferring to Cathedral Schools Trust.

Points raised in Discussion: The board members considered the case and did not have any further comments in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approve

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 Lovington Church of England Primary School, **Somerset** joining Preston Primary Academy Trust (PPAT).

Project: To discuss Evercreech Church of England Primary School, **Somerset** converting to academy status and joining Preston Primary Academy Trust (PPAT).

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

Representation:

The representations received were discussed and assurances were given that Regions Group will continue to work closely Preston Primary Academy Trust.

Strategy:

- Lovington CoE Primary School is a 4-11 school, and received an Ofsted judgement of inadequate (October 2023).
- Evercreech CoE Primary School is a 4 -11 school, with a pre-school managed by the school. This is a voluntary conversion and at the last Ofsted Inspection was judged as good (December 2021).
- The two schools are federated and form the Fosse Federation. With the close relationship between the two schools, it makes strategic sense for both to join a trust at the same time.
- Lovington is receiving Trust and School Improvement support from PPAT, and this has helped in already establishing a working relationship.
- Preston Primary Academy Trust (PPAT) has 9 primary schools that are all Ofsted rated as good or outstanding.
- The application is supported by Somerset Local Authority and the Diocese of Bath and Wells.

Governance:

- There are no concerns about PPATs governance and expertise.

School Improvement (SI):

- PPAT has a good track record of school improvement.
- There are two schools due to join the trust in June 2024. The trust has provided assurances on their capacity, this will be reviewed with Regions Group and the trust.
- It was recommended that as the trust grows they consider a review of the SI model and how to develop the model in line with trust growth.

Finance:

- There are no concerns with the financial position of PPAT.

Other:

- The Acorns pre-school was discussed, this is managed by Evercreech school under community powers. Regions Group will discuss the way forward with the school and the trust.
- It was recommended for the CEO to have a mentor to provide positive and constructive support as the trust grows.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Robert Blake School, **Somerset** joining United Learning Trust.

Points raised in Discussion: The board members considered the case and did not have any further comments in relation to the proposal.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: Stuart Ingram is a secondary Regional Director for United Learning Trust and 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).

Significant Change

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

Project: To discuss a significant change for Aspire Academy, BANES (Futura Learning Partnership) to change the age range from 4 – 19 to 4 – 16 to remove the sixth form provision.

Points raised in Discussion: ** This project was discussed together with Aspire Academy, **Bath and North East Somerset** (Futura Learning Partnership) transferring to North Star Academy Trust.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

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: Box Church of England Primary School, **Wiltshire** (Mosaic Partnership Trust Ltd).

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

Opening date 1 April 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Cherry Garden Primary School, **South Gloucestershire** (Castle School Education Trust).

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

Opening date 1 April 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Georgeham Church of England (VC) Primary School **Devon** (Ventrus Limited).

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

Opening date 1 April 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Littleham Church of England Primary School, **Devon** (Link Academy Trust).

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

Opening date 1 April 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Neston Primary School, **Wiltshire** (Mosaic Partnership Trust Ltd).

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

Opening date 1 April 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Shirwell Community Primary School, **Devon** (Ventrus Limited).

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

Opening date 1 April 2024.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: No action required.

Project: Willowbrook School, **Devon** (Ventrus Limited).

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

Opening date 1 April 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 Priory Community School, **North Somerset** (The Priory Learning Trust) to add a 10 place resource base for children with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

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 Clyst Vale Community College, **Devon** (Clyst Vale Academy Trust) to close the Hearing Impairment Support Centre.

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 St Dennis Primary Academy, **Cornwall** (Truro & Penwith Academy Trust) to change the age range from 3 -11 to 2 -11.

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 Lavington School, **Wiltshire** (Equa Multi Academy Trust) to change its age range from 11-16 to 11-18 to add sixth form provision.

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.

None

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