



Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 18 April 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

- Dame Kate Dethridge

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Sarah Bennett
- Sarah Brown
- Sir Andrew Carter
- Stuart Gardner
- Paul James
- Claire Lowe
- Sue Samson MBE

DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield, Deputy Director South East Regions Group

Representations received

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

General Discussion Points

- A temperature check was completed for the region.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application from Cams Hill School (SAT) to join Gateway Multi Academy Trust, Hampshire.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the CEO role and capacity to support the school.
- The performance of Gateway's schools was discussed by the board, including progress measures for disadvantaged pupils.
- The overlap between board members and the local governing body was discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss application from Rusthall St Paul's Church of England VA Primary School to join Inspire Academy Movement Trust, North Kent.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the financial support that the trust has received.
- The trust's financial capacity and financial expertise on the board was discussed.
- A need for the school to receive support was discussed, alongside potential risks associated with the conversion.

RD decision: Approve with condition:

- A School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) is to be appointed.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss application from All Hallows Catholic School to join Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust, Surrey.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the performance of existing schools in the trust.
- Trust finances were discussed by the board.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese, and local authority of the RD decision.

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

Project: To discuss Kent County Council's preferred trust option for the Thanington Primary School project, South Kent.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the interview and shortlisting process for a free school presumption project.
- Board members discussed the importance of relationships between a trust and the local authority.
- The board discussed the trust's governance and processes for overseeing performance.
- Trust board expertise and areas to strengthen was discussed.
- Progress 8 performance scores in the local area was discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the approved trust and local authority of the RD decision. Local authority to inform unsuccessful applicants and provide feedback.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application for Knole Academy Trust (SAT) to transfer to Aletheia Academies Trust, North Kent.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the growth of the trust.
- The board agreed on the positive strength of the application.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss the applications from Chatham Grammar, Holcombe Grammar and Fort Pitt to change their admissions arrangements from single-sex cohorts to mixed cohorts, Medway.

AB discussion:

- A question was raised on whether any alternative proposals were considered to this approach.
- The board discussed local feeling towards the changes and the requirement for well managed stakeholder communication.
- The board discussed the consultation that has been undertaken.
- School performance was discussed by the board.

RD decision: Escalated to ministers.

Conflicts: Stuart Gardner. CEO, The Thinking Schools Trust. Papers were not provided to Stuart and he was not present during this item discussion.

Further actions required: Ministerial submission to be sent.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss The Propeller Academy Trust as the sponsor option for Woodeaton Manor School, Oxfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the school improvement plan.
- The board discussed the proposed Interim Education Board.
- The board highlighted the risk associated with the condition of the school buildings.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- Oxfordshire County Council updates Woodeaton Manor School website to ensure full transparency.
- Oxfordshire County Council agree a capital support package for Propeller prior to the school joining the trust.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss the application for Walton High (Milton Keynes Education Trust) to transfer and join 5 Dimensions Trust, Milton Keynes.

Project: To discuss the application for Heronsgate School (Milton Keynes Education Trust) to transfer and join Inspiring Futures through Learning, Milton Keynes.

Project: To discuss the application for Kents Hill (Milton Keynes Education Trust) to transfer and join Inspiring Futures through Learning, Milton Keynes.

Project: To discuss the application for New Chapter Primary (Milton Keynes Education Trust) to transfer and join Inspiring Futures through Learning, Milton Keynes.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the applications for the primary schools to transfer to Inspiring Futures Through Learning and the secondary to 5 Dimensions Trust
- Sustainability of the primary schools, in relation to finances was discussed.
- The board discussed the pros and cons of the transfers for all the schools.
- Trust growth plans were discussed by the board.
- The school improvement strategy from Inspiring Futures Through Learning was discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sarah Bennett. CEO, Inspiring Futures Through Learning. Papers were not provided, and Sarah was not present during the discussion.

Further actions required: Inform the schools, trusts, and local authority of the RD decision.

Project: To discuss merger of Faringdon Learning Trust (MAT) with Vale Academy Trust (MAT) to form Cambrian Learning Trust, Oxfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the importance of having transparency for the CEO position.
- The consultation feedback was discussed.
- Trust oversight on pay was discussed.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- A governance review is to be conducted of the Cambrian Trust.
- A School Resource Management Advisor is to be appointed for the Vale Academy Trust.
- New external board members are to be appointed.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, and local authority of the RD decision.

List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting

Project: To discuss application from Temple Grove Academy Trust to merge with Skinners' Academies Trust

Type of decision: Trust Change

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: The paper was not available by the deadline.

Project: To discuss the change of sponsor for the free school Nore Academy.

Type of decision: Trust Change.

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: Linked to additional item which was not submitted for agenda publishing on time.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Freeland Church of England Primary School, Oxfordshire, Eynsham Partnership Academy Trust.

Decision type: Significant Change. Fast track significant change: Lower the age range to 2-11 to open nursery provision.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: None

Project: Perins School, Hampshire, The Perins MAT.

Decision type: Significant Change. To add a resourced provision

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: Cuddington Croft Primary School, Surrey, GLF Schools.

Decision type: Significant Change. Fast track significant change: Lower the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 to allow the nursery to offer places to 2-year-olds.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: Hillcroft Primary School, Surrey, GLF Schools.

Decision type: Significant Change. Fast track significant change: Lower the age range from 3-11 to 2-11 to allow the nursery to offer places to 2-year-olds.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Academy Opening Approved in Principle

List of academies approved to open on 1 April 2024

- **Project:** Badgemore Primary School, **Oxfordshire**, joining The Circle Trust
- **Project:** Burstow Primary School, **Surrey**, joining Everychild Partnership Trust.
- **Project:** Puttenham Church of England Infant School, **Surrey**, joining The Good Shepherd Trust.
- **Project:** St Peter's Church of England Primary School, **West Sussex**, joining Hurst Education Trust Limited.
- **Project:** St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School, **Horsham**, joining Bosco Catholic Education Trust.
- **Project:** The Priory CofE Voluntary Aided School, **Surrey**, joining Enlighten Learning Trust.

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