



Notes of Meeting: East of England

Date of meeting – 25/04/2024

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

- Emily Williams (DD)

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Al Kingsley (AB)
- Mark Farmer (AB)
- Clare Flintoff (AB)
- Lawrence Chapman (AB)
- Sarah Skinner (AB)
- Adrian Rogers (AB)
- Josephine Valentine (AB)

Guests

- ESFA Representative

Apologies

- Jonathan Duff (RD)
- Tim Coulson (AB)

DfE senior civil servants

- None

Representations received

- One received about the project; 'To discuss Ferrars Junior School, Luton, converting and becoming an academy and joining Pioneer Learning Trust.'
- One received about the project; 'To discuss City Academy Norwich (Sapienta Education Trust), Norfolk, adding a sixth form provision for up to 120 pupils.'
- These representations were shared in advance of the meeting with all attendees and considered alongside their corresponding item.

General Discussion Points

- The DD gave some general national and regional updates and invited feedback from the board.
- The DD updated the board on changes to the converter process.
- The board considered Ofsted judgement outcomes for the previous month.
- Emily Williams, Deputy Director for the East of England chaired the meeting in the absence of Jonathan Duff, Regional Director for the East of England. It was agreed that with advice from Emily Williams and the AB members, Jonathan Duff would make decisions on projects on his return.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Ferrars Junior School, Luton, converting and becoming an academy and joining Pioneer Learning Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this is a voluntary conversion with the trust based in Luton which has a school with similar characteristics to Ferrars Junior School. The trust has three good schools with experience of improving schools.
- The board discussed the LA concerns.
- The board considered the finances of the trust and their financial forecasts.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trusts of the decision. Delivery Officer to deploy an SRMA for the trust.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Aspley Guise Village School, Central Bedfordshire, converting and becoming an academy and joining Chiltern Learning Trust, Luton.

Project: To discuss Wootton Lower School, Bedford, converting and becoming an academy and joining Chiltern Learning Trust, Luton.

AB discussion:

- The board heard the proposal for two Ofsted 'Good' schools to join the Chiltern Learning Trust.
- The board heard the trust and the LA agree for the schools to transition to primary post conversion. The trust is already supporting Central Bedfordshire in their programme to move from a three tier to a two tier education system.
- The board heard about the benefits both schools could bring to Chiltern Learning Trust and the benefits the schools considered would come from joining the multi-academy trust.
- No concerns were raised.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Adrian Rogers, Chiltern Learning Trust, was not present for this item and did not receive the papers.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss Fulbrook Academy (single academy trust), Central Bedfordshire, transferring to Kingsbridge Educational Trust (multi-academy trust consisting of five academies), Milton Keynes.

AB discussion:

- The board heard this is a voluntary transfer for Fulbrook Academy to join Kingsbridge Education Trust. Fulbrook currently provides for pupils aged 9-16 and has an Ofsted 'Requires Improvement' rating.
- The board discussed the benefits to Fulbrook including high quality school improvement and financial support.

RD decision: approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Sponsored route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Leedon Lower School, Central Bedfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the school is a 2RI local authority maintained school for pupils aged 2-9.
- The board discussed capacity, location, and relationships of the considered trusts.
- The board discussed the needs of the children, the leadership and school improvement capacity of the proposed trusts.

RD decision: None, once preferred sponsor has been identified, it will be presented at the board for a decision.

Conflicts: Adrian Rogers, Chiltern Learning Trust, was not present for this item and did not receive the papers

Further actions required: Project to come back to AB once preferred sponsor agreed.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss sponsor options for Gilbert Inglefield Academy (Gilbert Inglefield Academy Trust), Central Bedfordshire.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Gilbert Inglefield recently received an 'Inadequate' Ofsted report highlighting issues with behaviour and curriculum.

- The board considered the options including discussions around capacity and the trusts track record of school improvement activities.

RD decision: none, once preferred sponsor has been identified, it will be presented at the board for a decision.

Conflicts: Adrian Rogers, Chiltern Learning Trust, was not present for this item and did not receive the papers.

Further actions required: Project to come back to AB once preferred sponsor agreed.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Langenhoe Community Primary School, Essex, converting and becoming an academy and joining LIFE Education Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Langenhoe is a strong performing school and is supporting other schools in the trust already.
- The board heard that the school and trust have been working together already and are pleased with how that has worked. The head teacher at Langenhoe is already working as executive head teacher at another LIFE Education Trust school.
- The board heard about the benefits the school could bring to LIFE Education Trust and the benefits the school considered would come from joining the multi-academy trust
- The board discussed the financial position of the trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the schools and trust of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Potter Street Academy (The Passmores Co-Operative Learning Community), Essex, opening a specialist resource base (an autism hub).

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is to open a specialist resource base following the closure of the resource base at a nearby school.
- The board discussed the performance of the school and the overall strategic oversight and governance.
- The local authority support the proposal and have completed their due diligence.
- The board discussed the trust's philosophy, their strong SEND support and the LAs

supportive stance.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Delivery Officer to discuss the governance arrangements with the trust.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Harston and Newton Community Primary School, Cambridgeshire, converting and becoming an academy and joining The Cam Academy Trust, Cambridgeshire.

AB discussion:

- The board were reminded that this proposal came to a previous AB last year but was deferred pending further information on succession arrangements and performance.
- Since the previous meeting, DfE has conducted monthly monitoring meetings.
- The board confirmed new leadership is in place which supports the proposal.
- The board raised concerns on the number of members and trustees but were assured this is being addressed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the schools, trust, and local authority of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Impington Village College (Eastern Learning Alliance), Cambridgeshire, reorganising its SEND provision by closing the 16-18 enhanced resource base and merging the two existing 11-16 enhanced resource bases into one.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this reorganisation of provision will create more 11-16 places, better meeting the needs of children and young people in Cambridgeshire.
- The trust has confirmed that there will be no displacement of pupils by this change or any negative impact on the support given to those with physical needs.
- There has been an increase in pupils with an education, care and health plan, with many coming from outside the catchment area. The local authority supports this application.
- No further concerns were raised.

RD decision: Approved with conditions – The consultation with parents needs to be completed in full.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and trust of the decision and conditions of approval.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss The HEART Education Trust (multi-academy trust consisting of four academies), Norfolk, joining Unity Schools Partnership (multi-academy trust consisting of thirty-five academies), Suffolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is to transfer the HEART Education Trust to Unity Schools Partnership (USP). HEART will be dissolved after the transfer. The board heard that Heart believes its schools would benefit from being in a trust that has greater capacity to support them.
- The board discussed USP's capacity and heard that USP is already supporting HEART schools which are using the USP curriculum already. This will help USP to provide support straight away if this proposal is agreed.
- No further concerns were raised

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Tim Coulson, Chief Executive of Unity Schools Partnership, was not present for this item and did not receive the papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Sponsored Route

Project: To discuss Sacred Heart Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Norfolk, joining St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust, Norfolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School received an Ofsted 'Inadequate' rating in February.
- The board heard that St John the Baptist has supported Sacred Heart over the last year and have a comprehensive school improvement plan for the school.
- The board recognised the diocese's position regarding which trust the school should join.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school, trust and LA and Diocese of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss City Academy Norwich (Sapienta Education Trust), Norfolk, adding a sixth form provision for up to 120 pupils.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is to open a small sixth form at the school.
- CAN joined Sapientia in 2022 following an Inadequate Ofsted judgement.
- The board heard that Sapientia is a strong performer in Norfolk.
- The board discussed the rationale behind the proposal, which aims to increase the number of students who remain in education after key stage 4.
- The board were sighted on and discussed the concerns raised by the local authority & City College Norwich and discussed the current offer in Norfolk.
- The board raised concerns around the lack of demand for places.

RD decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Converter Academy Order

Project: To discuss Hollesley Primary School, Suffolk, converting and becoming an academy and joining ASSET Education, Suffolk.

Project: To discuss Waldringfield Primary School, Suffolk, converting and becoming an academy and joining ASSET Education, Suffolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is for two 'RI' schools to convert and join Asset Education.
- Hollesley & Waldringfield are a federation of schools and have been working with Asset since late 2022 as part of their outreach work.
- The board heard that the schools have experienced a period of turbulence including declining pupil numbers, a growing percentage of pupils requiring SEND support, low staff morale, and low attainment scores consistently under local authority averages.
- The trust and local authority are already working collaboratively to resolve the issues at the schools.
- No concerns were raised and the board supported this proposal.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Clare Flintoff, Chief Executive of Asset Education Trust, was not present for this item and did not receive the papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the schools, the trust and the local authority of the decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss Holbrook Academy (single academy trust), Suffolk, transferring to East Anglian Schools Trust Ltd (multi-academy trust consisting of nine academies), Suffolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is for Holbrook Academy to transfer to East Anglian Schools Trust.
- The board discussed viability of the transfer, the financial position and the school improvement strategy.
- No concerns were raised.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Trust Change

Project: To discuss John Milton Academy Trust (multi-academy trust consisting of four academies), Suffolk, transferring to Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust (multi-academy trust consisting of three academies), Suffolk.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that this proposal is to transfer John Milton Academy Trust to Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust.
- Both trusts are already working together closely and are sited within easy reach of each other.
- The board discussed progress being made by existing schools in the trusts that have received 2+ 'Requires Improvement' Ofsted ratings and how the transfer will affect the school improvement strategy.
- The board considered evidence of recent progress and potential alternatives to this transfer.

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Glebeland Community Primary School (Consortium Trust), Norfolk, lowering its age range from 4-11 to 2-11.

AB discussion:

- No concerns were raised

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Weeting Church of England Primary School (The Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust), Norfolk, lowering its age range from 5-11 to 2-11.

AB discussion:

- No concerns were raised

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss The Alderton Infant School (Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust), Essex, forming a nursery by lowering its age range from 4-7 to 3-7.

AB discussion:

- No concerns were raised

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: To discuss Langer Primary Academy (Unity Schools Partnership), Suffolk, opening an offsite specialist resource base for pupils with complex needs.

AB discussion:

- No concerns were raised

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Tim Coulson, Chief Executive of Unity Schools Partnership, was not present for this item and did not receive the papers.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision.

Decisions taken between meetings

Significant Change

Project: Whether White Bridge Primary School, Essex, should change its age-range from 4-11 to 3-11, to include a nursery provision.

AB discussion:

- This proposal was initially discussed at Advisory Board in January 2023, and the decision was made to defer it and reconsider at a later point so that the nursery can open from 2024.
- The Delivery officer was asked to inform the school of the outcome, monitor academic performance of the school, and revisit the school improvement plan to enable the case to be reconsidered for a 2024 opening. ESFA to offer SRMA expertise to assess the financial plan for the early years age group.
- Progression has been made in all areas and the recommendation is to now approve this project.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the school of the decision.