



Notes of meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board.

24 April 2024.

Attendance

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Carol Gray, Regional Director.

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Mark Thomas.
- Sian Hampton.
- Paul Heery.
- Sarah Armitage MBE.
- Paul West.
- Julian Scholefield.
- Ashfaq Rahman.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- Chris Wheatley OBE.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Region Group.

General discussion points

- No discussion points were raised.

Nottinghamshire Region

Sponsored Route

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

Project: To discuss Flying High Trust as the sponsor match for Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery School, Nottinghamshire.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery school is a local authority-maintained school which has been judged requires improvement in 2 consecutive full section 5 Ofsted inspections (October 2019 and April 2023).

Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery School is an average-sized primary and nursery school. There is 1 class for each year group, from nursery to Year 6.

The department undertook an assessment of local sponsor options in accordance with the High-Quality Trust Framework. Flying High Trust is the recommended sponsor based on:

- Its inclusive, quality education and school improvement.
- It meets the strategic needs of the local area.
- Its current capacity to take on another school and provide immediate leadership support.

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 against the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul West and Chris Wheatley. Paul and Chris were not in attendance for this discussion, nor were they in receipt of associated project papers.

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.

Converter academy orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: To discuss Muskham Primary School, Nottinghamshire, converting to join Aspire Multi-Academy Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Muskham Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Aspire Multi-Academy Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Ofsted last inspected the school in May 2019 leading to a good judgment.

Muskham Primary School is a village school with a catchment area covering the large rural area of North Muskham and the surrounding villages of South Muskham, Bathley, Little Carlton and Cromwell.

The school's decision to join Aspire Multi-Academy Trust is motivated by the desire to work alongside other schools to drive forward improvement and access additional support for school improvement. The school would prefer a primary-focussed, smaller trust and feel that Aspire Multi-Academy Trust is the right trust for them to join.

Aspire Multi-Academy Trust's attainment and progress data is above the national average.

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 against the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Sian Hampton. Sian is the CEO of Archway Learning Trust. Archway Learning Trust is part of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham, as is Aspire Multi-Academy Trust. Sian was not present for this discussion, nor was she in receipt of associated project papers.

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.

Free School Presumption – Sponsor Approval

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

Project: To discuss a sponsor match for Ravensdale presumption free school, Nottinghamshire.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Nottinghamshire County Council has proposed to establish a new school to help deliver their strategic plans for the provision of special school places and ensure there is access to good quality special education in the Mansfield area.

The local authority project specification states that creating this 144-place special school (with capacity to expand to 160 places) will help meet the demand for specialist places in the area. The new special school will provide a specialist learning environment for children with social, emotional, and mental health needs.

Nottinghamshire County Council ran the competition between October 2023 and January 2024. Six trusts applied and 3 were invited to interview. Following the interview process the panel decided that Diverse Academies Trust should be recommended to the Secretary of State as the preferred trust to develop and run the new Ravensdale Special Free School.

Diverse Academies Trust have the capacity, expertise, and experience to meet the needs of the school's learners.

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 against the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Julian Scholefield. Julian was not in attendance for this discussion, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

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

Leicestershire Region

Converter academy orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: To discuss Badgerbrook Primary School, Leicestershire, converting to join Discovery Schools Academy Trust Ltd.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Badgerbrook Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Discovery Schools Academy Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing

body. On 23 January 2024, Ofsted inspected Badgerbrook and judged it as requires improvement across all areas.

Badgerbrook Primary School has been receiving support, as brokered by the local authority, from Discovery Schools Academy Trust since June 2023. The governing body identified Discovery Schools Academy Trust as their preferred trust, having already established a working relationship with the trust.

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

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss Foxton Primary School, Leicestershire, converting to join Symphony Learning Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Foxton Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Symphony Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The school received an Ofsted Section 8 inspection in February 2023 which confirmed the school continues to be good.

Foxton Primary School's governing body believes that joining Symphony Learning Trust will allow them to connect with a broader community of schools, educators and educational experts that will help to improve the learning outcomes of their pupils.

Symphony Learning Trust is a primary phase trust based in Leicestershire and is currently responsible for the education of approximately 3,284 pupils.

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

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Leicester Region

Significant Change

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

Project: To discuss an increase in capacity at Babington Academy (Learning Without Limits Academy Trust), Leicester, from 1200 to 1230 by incorporating a SEN Unit.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Babington Academy is an 11-16 secondary school located in the Beaumont Leys area of north-west Leicester. It was judged by Ofsted as good in March 2023.

The proposal is to change the existing 30 place resource provision at Babington Academy to a 30 place SEN unit for speech, language, and communication needs. The proposal also includes an increase in the total capacity of the school to incorporate the unit, which would see the current temporary capacity (approved in October 2022) increase from 1350 to 1380 for 2024/25. For the 2025/26 academic year (after the temporary capacity increase has ended), the permanent capacity of the school will increase from 1200 to 1230.

Leicester local authority requested the change in SEN provision due to high demand for additional SEN provision places in the area.

A consultation took place from 17 February to 31 March 2023 which was shared with parents, staff, students at Babington Academy, all Leicester schools, Leicester local authority, councillors, and local MPs.

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: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss an increase in capacity at Keyham Lodge School (Discovery Schools Academies Trust Ltd), Leicester, from 112 to 130 places by adding a satellite site.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Keyham Lodge is a special school for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs in Leicester. The school, which joined Discovery Schools Academies Trust in September 2021, was judged outstanding by Ofsted in March 2017.

The proposal is for Keyham Lodge School to increase capacity from 112 to 130 by providing an additional 18 place satellite site at 9 Layton Road, LE5 0PU.

Leicester local authority asked Keyham Lodge School to provide these extra places due to need for additional social, emotional and mental health provision in the local area.

A 5-week consultation period was held from 2 May 2023 to 6 June 2023 and was shared with all key stakeholders.

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: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

West Northamptonshire Region

Converter academy orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: To discuss Denton Primary School, West Northamptonshire, converting to join The Nene Valley Partnership.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Denton Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join The Nene Valley Partnership. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Ofsted judged Denton Primary School good in July 2021.

Denton Primary School is a small rural primary school. The majority of Year 6 children in Denton Primary School feed into Wollaston School which is the only secondary school in

The Nene Valley Partnership. Wollaston was inspected in May 2023 and judged to be good by Ofsted, with reference to strong leadership and governance.

The Nene Valley Partnership is a strong trust that runs other small rural schools in the area. Their first conversion - Bozeat Community Primary School - is also a small rural school and the trust have demonstrated their school improvement capacity, with the school improving from RI to Good with Outstanding for Early Years.

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

RD decision: Approve.

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 and external review of governance was recommended.

Project: To discuss Yardley Hastings Primary School, West Northamptonshire, converting to join The Nene Valley Partnership.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Yardley Hastings Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join The Nene Valley Partnership. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Ofsted judged Yardley Hastings Outstanding for the second time in 2023.

Yardley Hastings Primary School is a small rural primary school. The majority of Year 6 children in Yardley Hastings Primary School feed into Wollaston School which is the only secondary school in The Nene Valley Partnership. Wollaston was inspected in May 2023 and judged to be good by Ofsted, with reference to strong leadership and governance.

The Nene Valley Partnership is a strong trust that runs other small rural schools in the area. Their first conversion - Bozeat Community Primary School - is also a small rural school and the trust have demonstrated their school improvement capacity, with the school improving from RI to Good with Outstanding for Early Years.

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

RD decision: Approve.

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 and external review of governance was recommended.

Significant Change

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

Project: To discuss the addition of a resource base to King's Sutton Primary Academy (Prime7 MAT), West Northamptonshire.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

King's Sutton Primary Academy is a mainstream school in Banbury, Oxfordshire that falls within the borders of West Northamptonshire. It was judged good by Ofsted in March 2022.

There are significant pressures for SEND and Alternative Provision places across the West Northamptonshire region, with the local authority having already set up several small SEND units and schools admitting over capacity to meet the demand for places.

King's Sutton Academy is in a rural location and has the available space to accommodate such a provision.

King's Sutton Academy has been supporting children within the school who have significant social communication and interaction needs and has worked closely with the local authority to ensure quality provision and best practice has been implemented.

A public consultation was run from 15 January 2024 to 26 February 2024. In total 45 responses to the consultation were received - 40 out of the 45 responses were positive (88.8%). All questions have been responded to.

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

RD decision: Approve.

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 and external review of governance were recommended.

Derbyshire Region

Trust Change

Points discussed in relation to a trust change.

Project: To discuss the transfer of 4 schools (Barrow Hill Primary Academy, Dunston Primary and Nursery Academy, Netherthorpe School, Whittington Moor Nursery and Infant Academy) from Cavendish Learning Trust, Derbyshire to Minerva Learning Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Cavendish Learning Trust was formed in March 2012 and is based in Staveley, on the outskirts of Chesterfield, Derbyshire. The trust currently has four schools in Derbyshire – 3 primaries and 1 secondary. Of the 4 schools currently in Cavendish, 3 of them (Barrow Hill Primary, Dunston Primary and Nursery Academy and Netherthorpe School) are currently judged by Ofsted to be requires improvement, with Whittington Moor Nursery & Infant Academy judged good.

This proposal seeks the approval for Cavendish Learning Trust to transfer all 4 of its schools to Minerva Learning Trust and for Cavendish Learning Trust to subsequently close. Cavendish Learning Trust has expressed a preference for their schools to transfer to Minerva Learning Trust. The proposed date for the transfers is 1 September 2024.

Minerva Learning Trust has been supporting Cavendish Learning Trust through the Trust and School Improvement offer.

Minerva Learning Trust is a mixed-phase trust, based in Sheffield, which formed in October 2014. Minerva currently has 6 schools - 5 secondaries and 1 primary. Minerva Learning Trust has a strong track-record of school improvement. All schools in the trust were good or outstanding when the trust decided to grow the primary arm of their trust with Woodthorpe Primary in 2021. Now that Woodthorpe is more embedded into the trust, the trust has increased its school improvement capacity, ready to grow the primary arm of the trust.

This proposal is aligned with the department's published Trust Development Statement for the area, which is: "to raise education standards in Derbyshire, we welcome growth proposals from trusts already operating in the area and those operating near the northern and western borders of Derbyshire". The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the High-Quality Trust Framework was considered against the school's strategic needs.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Paul West. Paul was not in attendance for this discussion, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

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

Lincolnshire Region

Converter academy orders

Points discussed in relation to school conversion.

Project: To discuss Helpringham School, Lincolnshire, converting to join Voyage Education Partnership.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Helpringham School is a small local authority-maintained school, located south-east of Sleaford. The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2018 and rated as good. The proposal seeks approval for the school to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Voyage Education Partnership.

The school's governing body conducted due diligence on a number of local multi-academy trusts and concluded that the vision of Voyage Education Partnership, to raise aspiration and achievements for all, aligned to the school's primary objective. They believe Voyage Education Partnership has experience of addressing the needs of rural communities in areas of high deprivation and understand the importance of closely working with local communities to provide a good educational offer.

Voyage Education Partnership have been working with Helpringham School for over a year. They have developed a close relationship which has included Voyage Education Partnership providing education and leadership support, reviews and shared services expertise.

Voyage Education Partnership has a good track-record of primary school improvement, including capacity for further growth and track record of working with small, rural schools.

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

RD decision: Approve.

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.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Project: To discuss an increase in capacity at Spalding Academy (South Lincolnshire Academies Trust), Lincolnshire, 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: To discuss an increase in capacity at Bourne Academy (South Lincolnshire Academies Trust), Lincolnshire, 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: To discuss a change in the age range at South Wilford Endowed CofE Primary School (Transform Trust), Nottingham, from 4-11 to 3-11 by adding 26 full-time equivalent nursery places.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the addition of a nursery provision at Oundle Church of England Primary School (Peterborough Diocese Education Trust), North Northamptonshire.

Decision type: Significant Change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform the school, trust, and North Northamptonshire Council of the decision.

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