



Notes of Meeting: South East Advisory Board

Date of meeting – 17 October 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

- Representations were received for the following agenda items:
 - Proposal for Burfield and Phoenix academies, STEP Academy Trust, East Sussex, to make the following change/s - Amalgamating 2 or more academies.
 - Proposal for Olive Academies to sponsor Two Bridges, North Kent.
 - Application from Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys, Kent, to convert and become an academy and join The Canterbury Academy Trust.
 - Proposal for Aquinas Church of England Trust to sponsor Robertsbridge Community College, East Sussex.

General discussion points

- A temperature check was completed for the region.

Trust change

Project: To discuss a proposal for John Madejski Academy, Reading, to transfer from The White Horse Federation to Greenshaw Learning Trust

AB discussion:

- The financial position of The White Horse Federation was discussed.
- The capacity and strength of Greenshaw Learning Trust was discussed.
- The board discussed whether there was interest from other trusts.
- The Local Authorities view was discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Significant change

Project: To discuss the proposal for Burfield and Phoenix academies, STEP Academy Trust, East Sussex, to make the following change/s:

- Amalgamating 2 or more academies.

AB discussion:

- The board were notified of the representations which were received for the project.
- The board discussed the application and proposal from Burfield and Phoenix academies.
- The board probed the building, planning arrangements and impact on drop-off for pupils.
- The board recommended that STEP Academy Trust engaged with the Local Authority on planning.

RD decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored route

Project: To discuss an application for the revocation of the academy order for Homewood College, Brighton & Hove.

AB discussion:

- The board had no comments on the proposal.

RD decision: Recommend approval to minister.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: To be submitted for ministerial decision.

Sponsored route

Project: To discuss a proposal for Aquinas Church of England Trust to sponsor Robertsbridge Community College, East Sussex.

AB discussion:

- The board was informed of the representations received for this item.
- The board discussed the strengths of Aquinas CofE Trust.
- The board considered the size of the trust and its financial position.
- The School Improvement Strategy was discussed, and the board agreed that further information would be beneficial.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Sponsored route

Project: To discuss a proposal for Olive Academies to sponsor Two Bridges, North Kent.

AB discussion:

- The board were informed of the representations received for this item.
- The board discussed the strengths of Olive Academies, including the trust's appetite for growth.
- The performance of schools in the trust was discussed.
- The risk associated with the trust was considered alongside alternative options.

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 an application from Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys, Kent, to convert and become an academy and join The Canterbury Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board were informed of the representations received for this item.
- The board discussed the performance of Simon Langton Grammar School.
- The board discussed the consultation that had taken place.
- The proposed governance structure was discussed.
- The financial position of the school was discussed.
- The board recommended the governance structure of the trust board was reviewed regarding a) the level of separation between board member roles b) primary expertise c) the expertise required to take the trust forward in the future.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

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

Converter academy order

Project: To discuss an application from Horsell Church of England Primary School, Surrey, to convert and become an academy and join Learning Partners Church Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the governance arrangements of Learning Partners and Learning Partners Church Academy Trust.
- The board recommended that the trust restructure the governance arrangements at LPCAT to ensure there are independent trustees from LPAT.
- The board discussed the potential benefits of a new MAT in the area.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust change

Project: To discuss a request/proposal for Gravesend Grammar School, Whitehill Primary School, North Kent, to transfer from The Decus Educational Trust to Aletheia Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed Aletheia's School Improvement Strategy and its strategic ambitions.
- The board discussed school performance in Aletheia.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Trust change

Project: To discuss a request/proposal for The Rowans, Medway, to transfer from The Inspiring Change Multi Academy Trust to The Howard Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the performance of The Rowans.
- The board discussed the board numbers at The Howard Academy Trust.
- The breadth of expertise on the Howard trust board was discussed.

RD decision: Approve with conditions:

- To recruit new trustees to develop the breadth of expertise on the trust board.
- A School Improvement Strategy to be provided for review.

Conflicts: Stuart Gardner, CEO, The Thinking Schools Academy Trust. Stuart's trust had an initial conversation with Rowens but there was no formal process. Papers were not provided for this item, and Stuart was not present for the discussion.

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

Trust change

Project: To discuss a request/proposal for Chattenden Primary School, Medway, to transfer from Peninsula Gateway Academy Trust to Inspire Partnership Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the strengths of the application.

- The board discussed the governance structure of Inspire Partnership Academies Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Decisions taken between AB meetings

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

Project: Eggar's School, Hampshire

Decision type: Proposal for the SAT to MAT merger of Eggar's School to join Weydon MAT.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: St Andrew's Catholic School, Surrey

Decision type: Proposal for the conversion of St Andrew's Catholic School to join Xavier Catholic Education Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: St Clement's Catholic Primary School, Surrey

Decision type: Proposal for the conversion of St Clements Catholic Primary School to join Xavier Catholic Education Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership, Kent

Decision type: Significant change application to lower the age range to provide nursery provision.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School, Medway

Decision type: Proposal for St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School to become an academy and join Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School, Kent

Decision type: Proposal for St Bartholomew's Catholic Primary School to become an academy and join Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: North Downs Primary School, Surrey

Decision type: Proposal for North Downs Primary School to join Everychild Partnership Trust, Surrey.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School, Bishop Otter Academy, West Sussex.

Decision type: Proposal for the transfer of St Nicolas and St Mary Church of England Primary School to join Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese and LA of the RDs decision.

Project: Cold Harbour Church of England School, Milton Keynes

Decision type: Proposal for the conversion of Cold Harbour Church of England School to join Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese and LA of the RD's decision.

Project: Cedars Primary School, Milton Keynes

Decision type: Proposal for the conversion of Cedars Primary School to join The Grand Union Partnership.

RD decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, and LA of the RD's decision.

Project: Green Park School, Milton Keynes

Decision type: Proposal for the conversion of Green Park Community Primary School to join The Grand Union Partnership.

RD decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, and LA of the RD's decision.

Project: Grafham Grange School, Orchard Hill College Academy Trust, Surrey

Decision type: A request/proposal for Grafham Grange School, Surrey, to transfer from Orchard Hill College Academy Trust to London South East Academy Trust.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: Robert Piggot Infant and Junior School, Wokingham

Decision type: Proposal for the conversion of Robert Piggot Infant and Junior School to join Agape MAT.

RD decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese and LA of the RD's decision.

Project: Shinfield St Mary's CofE Junior School, Wokingham

Decision type: Proposal for the conversion of Shinfield St Mary's CofE Junior School to join Agape MAT.

RD decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, diocese and LA of the RD's decision.

Project: Chiltern Hills Academy, Buckinghamshire

Decision type: Proposal for the voluntary transfer of Chiltern Hills Academy to join Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust.

RD decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Inform the school, trust, and LA of the RD's decision and take the project to the November Advisory Board.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open on 1 November 2024:

- **Project:** Beacon Hill Community Primary School, **Surrey**, joining Weydon Multi Academy Trust.
- **Project:** Clifton Hill School, **Surrey**, joining Weydon Multi Academy Trust.
- **Project:** Crawley Down Village CofE School, **West Sussex**, joining Hurst Education Trust Limited.
- **Project:** Ewell Grove Primary and Nursery School, **Surrey**, Lumen Learning Trust.
- **Project:** Meadow Vale Primary School, **Berkshire**, joining King's Group Academies.
- **Project** St Margaret's CofE Primary School, **West Sussex**, joining Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust.
- **Project** St Paul's CofE (Aided) Primary School, **Surrey**, joining The Good Shepherd Trust.
- **Project:** Stephen Freeman Community Primary School, **Oxfordshire**, joining Ridgeway Education Trust.
- **Project:** Epsom Downs Community School & Early Years Centres, **Surrey**, joining Greensand Multi Academy Trust.
- **Project:** Summerlea Community Primary School, **West Sussex**, joining Schoolworks Academy Trust.