



Notes of meeting: West Midlands Advisory Board

21 November 2024

Attendance

AB members who sent their apologies for the meeting but sent in their comments on agenda items, are listed under the apologies section. These members' views are reflected in the discussions below, unless the AB member(s) declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Andrew Warren

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Mike Donoghue
- Dan Parkes
- Maureen Brennan
- Sarah Finch
- Steve Taylor
- Amarjit Cheema
- Tom Leverage
- Guy Shears

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- None.

DfE senior civil servants

- Dawn Dandy, Deputy Director.
- Parminder Garcha, Deputy Director.

General discussion points

- The RD and AB members discussed the current climate in schools across the West Midlands region.
- Ofsted.
- Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence strategy.

Staffordshire

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Ilam CofE Primary School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an academy and join The Moorlands Primary Federation.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Ilam CofE Primary School, Staffordshire is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- The Moorlands Primary Federation consists of 9 academies across the West Midlands.
- This conversion aligns with the Diocese of Lichfield’s strategy to support all CofE schools to consider joining High Quality Trusts and assist those in rural locations with lower pupil numbers that serve a small community.
- All three proposed schools to join The Moorlands Primary Federation- Ilam, St Bartholomew’s and St Leonard’s are faith schools in close geographical proximity (under 10 miles.) All three schools face similar area-based challenges particularly in terms of rurality, serving a small community and being a smaller than average sized school. Moorlands has experience of similar schools to this.
- The MAT was originally comprised of three Staffordshire schools (Dilhorne Endowed, The Valley and St Werburgh’s) which have worked together since 2010, becoming a hard federation in 2013 and establishing The Moorlands Primary Federation (TMPF) trust in 2015. Since then, the MAT has grown to a total number of nine Staffordshire schools.
- The board discussed Trust School Improvement and the plans in place going forward.
- There were discussions around finance and integrated curriculum and financial planning approach.
- Performance data, pupil numbers and leadership were also discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from St Bartholomew’s CofE School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an academy and join The Moorlands Primary Federation.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- St Bartholomew's CofE School, Staffordshire is an Ofsted "Requires Improvement" school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- The Moorlands Primary Federation consists of 9 academies across the West Midlands.
- This conversion aligns with the Diocese of Lichfield's strategy to support all CofE schools to consider joining High Quality Trusts and assist those in rural locations with lower pupil numbers that serve a small community.
- All three proposed schools to join The Moorlands Primary Federation- Ilam, St Bartholomew's and St Leonard's are faith schools in close geographical proximity (under 10 miles.) All three schools face similar area-based challenges particularly in terms of rurality, serving a small community and being a smaller than average sized school. Moorlands has experience of similar schools to this.
- The MAT was originally comprised of three Staffordshire schools (Dilhorne Endowed, The Valley and St Werburgh's) which have worked together since 2010, becoming a hard federation in 2013 and establishing The Moorlands Primary Federation (TMPF) trust in 2015. Since then, the MAT has grown to a total number of nine Staffordshire schools.
- The board discussed Trust School Improvement and the plans in place going forward.
- There were discussions around finance and integrated curriculum and financial planning approach.
- Performance data, pupil numbers and leadership were also discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from St Leonard's CofE First School, Staffordshire, to convert and become an academy and join The Moorlands Primary Federation.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- St Leonard's CofE First School, Staffordshire is an Ofsted "Good" school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- The Moorlands Primary Federation consists of 9 academies across the West Midlands.

- This conversion aligns with the Diocese of Lichfield’s strategy to support all CofE schools to consider joining High Quality Trusts assist those in rural locations with lower pupil numbers that serve a small community.
- All three proposed schools to join The Moorlands Primary Federation- Ilam, St Bartholomew’s and St Leonard’s are faith schools in close geographical proximity (under 10 miles.) All three schools face similar area-based challenges particularly in terms of rurality, serving a small community and being a smaller than average sized school. Moorlands has experience of similar schools to this.
- The MAT was originally comprised of three Staffordshire schools (Dilhorne Endowed, The Valley and St Werburgh’s) which have worked together since 2010, becoming a hard federation in 2013 and establishing The Moorlands Primary Federation (TMPF) trust in 2015. Since then, the MAT has grown to a total number of nine Staffordshire schools.
- The board discussed Trust School Improvement and the plans in place going forward.
- There were discussions around finance and integrated curriculum and financial planning approach.
- Performance data, pupil numbers and leadership were also discussed.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Birmingham

Sponsored academy orders

Project: A proposal for James Brindley School Trust to sponsor Oscott Manor School, Birmingham.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Oscott Manor School, Birmingham is an Ofsted rated “Inadequate” school who require a sponsor to develop improved school outcomes.
- James Brindley School Trust is a special school in Birmingham which caters for ages 2 to 19 and a range of SEND needs including SEMH, ASC and hospital provision. The school operates in 11 sites across the city: 3 school centres and 8 hospital/clinic locations. Due to the multiple sites, the SAT operates on a similar model to a MAT with a large central leadership team.

- This SAT is therefore applying to form a MAT to be known as Think Differently Multi-Academy Trust to take on Oscott Manor School as a sponsor project.
- James Brindley Schools Trust is a SAT that has 3 school settings within Birmingham one of which Dovedale is 1.4 miles from Oscott Manor and one of its hospital settings, Ardenleigh is just 0.9 miles from the school.
- James Brindley School Trust has a clear and detailed SI Plan detailing areas that would benefit Oscott Manor, including SI Strategies, Track record, Finance, and Leadership & Governance. The Trust has capacity to grow and add additional resource to the Special school provision in Birmingham.
- The board discussed school improvement and trust board capacity, expansion and provision, and the trusts governance and finances.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Maryvale Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, to convert and become an academy and join St. John Paul II Multi Academy Company.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Maryvale Catholic Primary School, Birmingham is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- St. John Paul II Multi Academy Company consists of 9 academies across Birmingham.
- St John Paul II Multi Academy Company (SJP II MAC) was highlighted as a potential trust, due to it having multiple statistical neighbours in the local area, and above national and local average of pupils achieving expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths. This is a voluntary conversion and SJP II MAC is the school’s preferred trust, due to shared ethos and values.
- Regarding their Catholic life, SJPII MAC see this as an opportunity to strengthen their practice through joint sacramental preparation, retreats, schemes of work etc. They also see the increased collaboration between schools as an opportunity to enhance standards in teaching and learning through shared CPD, assessment, work scrutiny, moderation, and cross phase(primary/secondary) challenge. Part of their future vision also includes developing a SJPII MAC brand of education that motivates and challenges young people.

- The vision for the MAC has resulted in them making some major changes to how schools are funded and the appointment of a school improvement lead for inclusion, both of which are giving the trust greater capacity to deliver high quality school improvement support.
- The board discussed the trusts leadership, finances and Governance. There were also discussions around the diocesan strategy.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Solihull

Trust changes

Project: A proposal for Langley School, Solihull, to change from a SAT to a MAT (Collaborative Education Trust).

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Langley School, an established secondary school SAT of 13 years, seeks to unite with three community primary schools to form a MAT, called the Solihull Formation Academy Trust.
- The MAT will consist of four schools in Solihull: Langley School, Coleshill Heath School, Haslucks Green School and Oak Cottage Primary School. All four schools have been judged Ofsted 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and have performance data in line with or above national averages.
- All four schools within this trust are successful with the SAT being well- established. With the relationships they have already built, they are eager to collaborate with each other in the form of a trust.
- The vision is to establish a network of schools united by a shared commitment in working in a diverse and inclusive system while prioritising the wellbeing of the children and young people they serve.
- The close proximity of the four schools fosters collaboration and support. Each school will contribute its expertise: Langley will share its knowledge of SEND, Coleshill Heath in supporting disadvantaged pupils, and Haslucks Green, in its experience of arts and cultural education. Oak Cottage will share its expertise in curriculum design, which challenges pupils to achieve the highest standards for their age group. Oak Cottage also demonstrates proficiency in assessment and statutory moderation, with Local Authority moderators for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 writing.

- Langley’s governing board and leadership team believes their trust’s experience and expertise can be upscaled in the formation of a MAT, enhancing partner schools’ capacity, retaining staff, offering development opportunities across their workforce and ultimately improving the experiences and outcomes of pupils.
- The trust sees this as an opportunity to build on their experience of trust leadership whilst addressing a local need for more capacity in the trust system. The trust has plans to grow with the success of forming the MAT and become a home for other primary schools in the Solihull area.
- The board discussed the trusts governance and trustees and agreed on a recommendation of a school resource management adviser.
- There were also discussions around the support in place for the trust, staffing, nursery provision and growth plans.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Coleshill Heath School, Solihull, to convert and become an academy and join Collaborative Education Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Coleshill Heath School, Solihull is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Langley School, an established secondary school SAT of 13 years, seeks to unite with three community primary schools to form a MAT, called the Solihull Formation Academy Trust.
- The MAT will consist of four schools in Solihull: Langley School, Coleshill Heath School, Haslucks Green School and Oak Cottage Primary School. All four schools have been judged Ofsted ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ and have performance data in line with or above national averages.
- All four schools within this trust are successful with the SAT being well- established. With the relationships they have already built, they are eager to collaborate with each other in the form of a trust.
- The vision is to establish a network of schools united by a shared commitment in working in a diverse and inclusive system while prioritising the wellbeing of the children and young people they serve.

- The close proximity of the four schools fosters collaboration and support. Each school will contribute its expertise: Langley will share its knowledge of SEND, Coleshill Heath in supporting disadvantaged pupils, and Haslucks Green, in its experience of arts and cultural education. Oak Cottage will share its expertise in curriculum design, which challenges pupils to achieve the highest standards for their age group. Oak Cottage also demonstrates proficiency in assessment and statutory moderation, with Local Authority moderators for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 writing.
- Langley's governing board and leadership team believes their trust's experience and expertise can be upscaled in the formation of a MAT, enhancing partner schools' capacity, retaining staff, offering development opportunities across their workforce and ultimately improving the experiences and outcomes of pupils.
- The trust sees this as an opportunity to build on their experience of trust leadership whilst addressing a local need for more capacity in the trust system. The trust has plans to grow with the success of forming the MAT and become a home for other primary schools in the Solihull area.
- The board discussed the trusts governance and trustees and agreed on a recommendation of a school resource management adviser.
- There were also discussions around the support in place for the trust, staffing, nursery provision and growth plans.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Oak Cottage Primary School, Solihull, to convert and become an academy and join Collaborative Education Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Oak Cottage Primary School, Solihull is an Ofsted "Outstanding" school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Langley School, an established secondary school SAT of 13 years, seeks to unite with three community primary schools to form a MAT, called the Solihull Formation Academy Trust.
- The MAT will consist of four schools in Solihull: Langley School, Coleshill Heath School, Haslucks Green School and Oak Cottage Primary School. All four schools have been judged Ofsted 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and have performance data in line with or above national averages.

- All four schools within this trust are successful with the SAT being well- established. With the relationships they have already built, they are eager to collaborate with each other in the form of a trust.
- The vision is to establish a network of schools united by a shared commitment in working in a diverse and inclusive system while prioritising the wellbeing of the children and young people they serve.
- The close proximity of the four schools fosters collaboration and support. Each school will contribute its expertise: Langley will share its knowledge of SEND, Coleshill Heath in supporting disadvantaged pupils, and Haslucks Green, in its experience of arts and cultural education. Oak Cottage will share its expertise in curriculum design, which challenges pupils to achieve the highest standards for their age group. Oak Cottage also demonstrates proficiency in assessment and statutory moderation, with Local Authority moderators for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 writing.
- Langley's governing board and leadership team believes their trust's experience and expertise can be upscaled in the formation of a MAT, enhancing partner schools' capacity, retaining staff, offering development opportunities across their workforce and ultimately improving the experiences and outcomes of pupils.
- The trust sees this as an opportunity to build on their experience of trust leadership whilst addressing a local need for more capacity in the trust system. The trust has plans to grow with the success of forming the MAT and become a home for other primary schools in the Solihull area.
- The board discussed the trusts governance and trustees and agreed on a recommendation of a school resource management adviser.
- There were also discussions around the support in place for the trust, staffing, nursery provision and growth plans.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Haslucks Green School, Solihull, to convert and become an academy and join Collaborative Education Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Haslucks Green School, Solihull is an Ofsted "Good" school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Langley School, an established secondary school SAT of 13 years, seeks to unite with three community primary schools to form a MAT, called the Solihull Formation Academy Trust.

- The MAT will consist of four schools in Solihull: Langley School, Coleshill Heath School, Haslucks Green School and Oak Cottage Primary School. All four schools have been judged Ofsted 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and have performance data in line with or above national averages.
- All four schools within this trust are successful with the SAT being well- established. With the relationships they have already built, they are eager to collaborate with each other in the form of a trust.
- The vision is to establish a network of schools united by a shared commitment in working in a diverse and inclusive system while prioritising the wellbeing of the children and young people they serve.
- The close proximity of the four schools fosters collaboration and support. Each school will contribute its expertise: Langley will share its knowledge of SEND, Coleshill Heath in supporting disadvantaged pupils, and Haslucks Green, in its experience of arts and cultural education. Oak Cottage will share its expertise in curriculum design, which challenges pupils to achieve the highest standards for their age group. Oak Cottage also demonstrates proficiency in assessment and statutory moderation, with Local Authority moderators for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 writing.
- Langley's governing board and leadership team believes their trust's experience and expertise can be upscaled in the formation of a MAT, enhancing partner schools' capacity, retaining staff, offering development opportunities across their workforce and ultimately improving the experiences and outcomes of pupils.
- The trust sees this as an opportunity to build on their experience of trust leadership whilst addressing a local need for more capacity in the trust system. The trust has plans to grow with the success of forming the MAT and become a home for other primary schools in the Solihull area.
- The board discussed the trusts governance and trustees and agreed on a recommendation of a school resource management adviser.
- There were also discussions around the support in place for the trust, staffing, nursery provision and growth plans.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Telford and Wrekin

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Old Park Primary School, Telford and Wrekin, to convert and become an academy and join Learning Community Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Old Park Primary School, Telford and Wrekin is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Learning Community Trust consists of 13 academies across Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire.
- LCT was confirmed as the most suitable trust for Old Park Primary due to primary schools within the trust having similar characteristics, the strength of its school improvement offer and the geographical closeness of the trust schools and central team. Old Park Primary School is 2 miles from the central offices of the Learning Community Trust and under 5 miles from the three closest primary schools in the trust.
- The school is seeking to strengthen its school improvement capacity through joining Learning Community Trust (“LCT”).
- The board discussed school improvement, trust capacity and leadership and staffing. It was agreed that Old Park Primary School is a capacity giver.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Worcestershire

Establishing a new academy through the free school presumption route

Project: A proposal for a sponsor for Foxlydiate First School, Worcestershire.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- The Foxlydiate area straddles the boundary between Bromsgrove and Redditch District Councils in the north of Worcestershire, within a locality that has attracted several housing developments in recent years.
- A major housing development on land to the west of Foxlydiate Lane and Pumphouse Lane is expected to deliver c. 2,560 new houses by 2037. This development is forecast to generate around 28 pupils in each year group of first school age (nursery and Reception through to Year 4) by 2027 and 73 pupils by 2031.

- There are also other developments in the locality which are forecast to generate a further 26 Reception age pupils by 2027 and 39 pupils by 2031. Existing local schools cannot be expanded to accommodate these numbers, so a new first school is required. The developer of Foxlydiate is providing a site within the development, which will enable these 113 pupils to access a first school within their local community, and they are contributing the majority of the construction cost.
- Worcestershire County Council has identified the need to establish a new First School in Foxlydiate to open in 2027.
- The school will open initially with a nursery and Reception Year cohort only, which will gradually feed through the school until reaching all year groups, allowing the number on roll to grow organically to reach capacity in 2031. The school site is of sufficient size to accommodate a three forms of entry school.
- The board supported this proposal.

RD decision: Approve in-principle.

Conflicts: Guy Shears did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a professional conflict of interest. Mike Donoghue did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, which is support through the Trust and School Improvement Offer.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Chadsgrove School, Worcestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Chadsgrove School, Worcestershire is an Ofsted “Outstanding” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust opened in April 2017 as an empty MAT. This project would form a 5 school MAT from the existing trust.
- All four schools have identified Alvechurch CofE MAT as the preferred choice – Chadsgrove School, Meadows First School, Stoke Prior First School and Fairfield First School. The schools will join what is currently an empty MAT. This will form a five school MAT of three first schools, a middle deemed secondary school and a special school.
- The trust and founding school are in Alvechurch. The other schools are all within 8 miles.

- The expanded Trust will have expertise across a broad age range including the mainstream and specialist sector, putting inclusion and equal opportunity at the heart.
- Alvechurch CofE MAT will become a blended trust. The range of schools will bring shared expertise benefiting all, with a strong ethos of school-to-school support. The trust schools will be local ensuring easy and effective collaboration.
- A sustainable growth strategy has been agreed, starting small and growing brilliance in a gradual and timely way.
- The board discussed governance and leadership and School Improvement plans.
- The board agreed to a recommendation of School Resource Management Advisers and CEO mentoring.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Guy Shears did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a professional conflict of interest.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Meadows First School, Worcestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Meadows First School, Worcestershire is an Ofsted “Outstanding” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust opened in April 2017 as an empty MAT. This project would form a 5 school MAT from the existing trust.
- All four schools have identified Alvechurch CofE MAT as the preferred choice – Chadsgrove School, Meadows First School, Stoke Prior First School and Fairfield First School. The schools will join what is currently an empty MAT. This will form a five school MAT of three first schools, a middle deemed secondary school and a special school.
- The trust and founding school are in Alvechurch. The other schools are all within 8 miles.
- The expanded Trust will have expertise across a broad age range including the mainstream and specialist sector, putting inclusion and equal opportunity at the heart.
- Alvechurch CofE MAT will become a blended trust. The range of schools will bring shared expertise benefiting all, with a strong ethos of school-to-school support. The trust schools will be local ensuring easy and effective collaboration.

- A sustainable growth strategy has been agreed, starting small and growing brilliance in a gradual and timely way.
- The board discussed governance and leadership and School Improvement plans.
- The board agreed to a recommendation of School Resource Management Advisers and CEO mentoring.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Guy Shears did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a professional conflict of interest.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Stoke Prior First School, Worcestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Stoke Prior First School, Worcestershire is an Ofsted “Outstanding” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust opened in April 2017 as an empty MAT. This project would form a 5 school MAT from the existing trust.
- All four schools have identified Alvechurch CofE MAT as the preferred choice – Chadsgrove School, Meadows First School, Stoke Prior First School and Fairfield First School. The schools will join what is currently an empty MAT. This will form a five school MAT of three first schools, a middle deemed secondary school and a special school.
- The trust and founding school are in Alvechurch. The other schools are all within 8 miles.
- The expanded Trust will have expertise across a broad age range including the mainstream and specialist sector, putting inclusion and equal opportunity at the heart.
- Alvechurch CofE MAT will become a blended trust. The range of schools will bring shared expertise benefiting all, with a strong ethos of school-to-school support. The trust schools will be local ensuring easy and effective collaboration.
- A sustainable growth strategy has been agreed, starting small and growing brilliance in a gradual and timely way.
- The board discussed governance and leadership and School Improvement plans.
- The board agreed to a recommendation of School Resource Management Advisers and CEO mentoring.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Guy Shears did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a professional conflict of interest.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Fairfield First School, Worcestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Fairfield First School, Worcestershire is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Alvechurch CofE Multi Academy Trust opened in April 2017 as an empty MAT. This project would form a 5 school MAT from the existing trust.
- All four schools have identified Alvechurch CofE MAT as the preferred choice – Chadsgrove School, Meadows First School, Stoke Prior First School and Fairfield First School. The schools will join what is currently an empty MAT. This will form a five school MAT of three first schools, a middle deemed secondary school and a special school.
- The trust and founding school are in Alvechurch. The other schools are all within 8 miles.
- The expanded Trust will have expertise across a broad age range including the mainstream and specialist sector, putting inclusion and equal opportunity at the heart.
- Alvechurch CofE MAT will become a blended trust. The range of schools will bring shared expertise benefiting all, with a strong ethos of school-to-school support. The trust schools will be local ensuring easy and effective collaboration.
- A sustainable growth strategy has been agreed, starting small and growing brilliance in a gradual and timely way.
- The board discussed governance and leadership and School Improvement plans.
- The board agreed to a recommendation of School Resource Management Advisers and CEO mentoring.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Guy Shears did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a professional conflict of interest.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Church Lench CofE First School, Worcestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Bengeworth Multi-Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Church Lench CofE First School, Worcestershire is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- Bengeworth Multi-Academy Trust consists of 2 academies across Evesham and Worcestershire.
- Church Lench CofE First School has stated that Bengeworth Multi-Academy Trust is the preferred trust for the voluntary conversion, being no more than a 15-minute drive from either school in the trust and having collaborated informally for over twenty years. The school sees this conversion as a chance to formally collaborate to provide better outcome for pupils, to draw on support of trust leaders and to share expertise of staff, helping them to address their subject leadership areas for improvement, which Ofsted brought light to in their 2023 inspection.
- There were discussions around governance and leadership, the trusts growth plans, and the diocesan strategy, along with curriculum, pupil numbers and finances.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Steve Taylor did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, having previously worked with the CEO.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application for Pershore High School, Avonreach Academy Trust, Worcestershire, to make the following changes:

- **Expansion (increasing the physical capacity) of a mainstream academy by more than 30 places**
- **Change of age range, including adding/removing a nursery or sixth form provision**

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Pershore High School is Ofsted rated 'Requires Improvement', following inspection in March 2024.
- This is one of a group of significant changes required to progress a transition from three-tier to two-tier education in the Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA), Worcestershire.
- The Department for Education does not have a policy position on the number of tiers in the education system.
- This proposal has been assessed under the High-Quality Trust framework (HQT). Avonreach MAT is deemed to be a high-quality trust and Pershore High School deemed to be a well performing school, both with sufficient resource and expertise to make the proposed change.
- The West Midlands team presented a Pershore Pyramid changes presentation to the board.
- There were discussions on the School Improvement plan, performance data, curriculum, pupil numbers and governance.
- The board discussed finances and agreed to a recommendation of a School Resource Management Advisers.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application for St Barnabas CofE First and Middle School, The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust, Worcestershire, to make the following changes:

- **Change of age range, including adding/removing a nursery or sixth form provision.**

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- St Barnabas CofE First and Middle School is Ofsted rated 'Good', following inspection in November 2023.
- This is one of a group of significant changes required to progress a transition from three-tier to two-tier education in the Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA), Worcestershire.
- The Department for Education does not have a policy position on the number of tiers in the education system.
- This proposal has been assessed under the High-Quality Trust framework (HQT). The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT) is deemed to be a high-quality trust and St Barnabas CofE First and Middle School deemed to be a well

performing school, both with sufficient resource and expertise to make the proposed change.

- The West Midlands team presented a Pershore Pyramid changes presentation to the board.
- There were discussions on the School Improvement plan, performance data, curriculum, pupil numbers and governance.
- The board also discussed finances and agreed to a recommendation of School Resource Management Advisers.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application for Crowle CofE First School, The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust, Worcestershire, to make the following changes:

- **Change of age range, including adding/removing a nursery or sixth form provision.**
- **Expansion (increasing the physical capacity) of a mainstream academy by more than 30 places.**

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Crowle CofE First School is Ofsted rated 'Good'.
- This is one of a group of significant changes required to progress a transition from three-tier to two-tier education in the Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA), Worcestershire.
- The Department for Education does not have a policy position on the number of tiers in the education system.
- This proposal has been assessed under the High-Quality Trust framework (HQT). The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT) is deemed to be a high-quality trust and Crowle CofE First School deemed to be a well performing school, both with sufficient resource and expertise to make the proposed change.
- The West Midlands team presented a Pershore Pyramid changes presentation to the board.
- There were discussions on the School Improvement plan, performance data, curriculum, pupil numbers and governance.
- The board also discussed finances and agreed to a recommendation of School Resource Management Advisers.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application for Pinvin CofE Academy, The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust, Worcestershire, to make the following changes:

- **Change of age range, including adding/removing a nursery or sixth form provision.**

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Pinvin CofE Academy is Ofsted rated 'Good', following inspection in February 2024.
- This is one of a group of significant changes required to progress a transition from three-tier to two-tier education in the Pershore Education Planning Area (EPA), Worcestershire.
- The Department for Education does not have a policy position on the number of tiers in the education system.
- This proposal has been assessed under the High-Quality Trust framework (HQT). The Diocese of Worcester Multi Academy Trust (DoWMAT) is deemed to be a high-quality trust and Pinvin CofE Academy deemed to be a well performing school, both with sufficient resource and expertise to make the proposed change.
- The West Midlands team presented a Pershore Pyramid changes presentation to the board.
- There were discussions on the School Improvement plan, performance data, curriculum, pupil numbers and governance.
- The board also discussed finances and agreed to a recommendation of School Resource Management Advisers.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Warwickshire

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Evergreen School, Warwickshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called Warwick Schools Foundation Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Evergreen School, Warwickshire is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- This proposal aligns with the strategic need of Warwickshire to develop and grow more high-quality educational provision. The LA has recently completed a SEND and AP review and is in the process of developing its strategic plans.
- Warwick Schools Foundation MAT is proposing to open in April 2025 and will be comprised of four founding schools, two primary and two specials, providing an education for approx. 1,000 children across the trust.
- Three of the schools (Evergreen, Clapham, and Westgate) are in south Warwickshire and are within 3.7 miles (15-minute car drive) of one another. Exhall Grange is in north Warwickshire, 15.3 miles (a 38-minute drive) away from the furthest school in the proposed MAT, Clapham Terrace Primary.
- The MAT will be supported by Warwick Schools Foundation (WSF), an education charity which currently consists of five independent schools. WSF MAT will become a subsidiary of the WSF charity, operating as an independent entity with a clear link between WSF and WSF MAT through the governance and executive structures.
- Evergreen School is a special school operating across two sites in Warwick. Evergreen School is seen as a capacity giver to the trust, particularly regarding leadership. The school was also praised for its work on developing pupils’ communication strategies and preparing pupils for adulthood.
- Collaboration and inclusion are key values of the Warwick Schools Foundation Multi Academy Trust (WSFMAT) and by joining the trust, Evergreen are hoping to benefit from the sharing of best practice and strengthening their existing relationship with the Warwick Schools Foundation, particularly around curriculum enrichment. In addition, Evergreen provides an outreach service for mainstream schools which they plan to continue, providing further support to local schools and generating additional income.
- The board discussed viability, School Improvement, governance and leadership.
- It was agreed that points of process clarification needed to be sought outside the meeting.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Exhall Grange Specialist School, Warwickshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called Warwick Schools Foundation Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Evergreen School, Warwickshire is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- This proposal aligns with the strategic need of Warwickshire to develop and grow more high-quality educational provision. The LA has recently completed a SEND and AP review and is in the process of developing its strategic plans.
- Warwick Schools Foundation MAT is proposing to open in April 2025 and will be comprised of four founding schools, two primary and two specials, providing an education for approx. 1,000 children across the trust.
- Three of the schools (Evergreen, Clapham, and Westgate) are in south Warwickshire and are within 3.7 miles (15-minute car drive) of one another. Exhall Grange is in north Warwickshire, 15.3 miles (a 38-minute drive) away from the furthest school in the proposed MAT, Clapham Terrace Primary.
- The MAT will be supported by Warwick Schools Foundation (WSF), an education charity which currently consists of five independent schools. WSF MAT will become a subsidiary of the WSF charity, operating as an independent entity with a clear link between WSF and WSF MAT through the governance and executive structures.
- Exhall Grange Specialist School is Ofsted rated Good, which was maintained in a S8 monitoring visit in 2018. A notable strength is that the strong relationships staff have with children to foster their development. It was acknowledged that pupils join the school with a growing range of needs and from differing points in their education, however once they attend the school they make good progress.
- Like Evergreen, Exhall Grange is seen as a capacity giver in the specialist provision sector but will also benefit from support to further refine their provision.
- The board discussed viability, School Improvement, governance and leadership.
- It was agreed that points of process clarification needed to be sought outside the meeting.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Clapham Terrace Community Primary School and Nursery, Warwickshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called Warwick Schools Foundation Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Evergreen School, Warwickshire is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- This proposal aligns with the strategic need of Warwickshire to develop and grow more high-quality educational provision. The LA has recently completed a SEND and AP review and is in the process of developing its strategic plans.
- Warwick Schools Foundation MAT is proposing to open in April 2025 and will be comprised of four founding schools, two primary and two specials, providing an education for approx. 1,000 children across the trust.
- Three of the schools (Evergreen, Clapham, and Westgate) are in south Warwickshire and are within 3.7 miles (15-minute car drive) of one another. Exhall Grange is in north Warwickshire, 15.3 miles (a 38-minute drive) away from the furthest school in the proposed MAT, Clapham Terrace Primary.
- The MAT will be supported by Warwick Schools Foundation (WSF), an education charity which currently consists of five independent schools. WSF MAT will become a subsidiary of the WSF charity, operating as an independent entity with a clear link between WSF and WSF MAT through the governance and executive structures.
- The Local Authority has submitted a letter of support for this MAT formation proposal as it aligns with the strategic need of Warwickshire, to develop and grow more high-quality educational provision. The schools already have an established working relationship with Warwick Schools Foundation.
- Clapham Terrace and Westgate Primary are both well-performing schools with a desire to contribute to and benefit from shared best practice to ensure an inclusive educational experience for all young people. In joining the trust, both schools will formalise existing partnerships with the Warwick Schools Foundation.
- The board discussed viability, School Improvement, governance and leadership.
- It was agreed that points of process clarification needed to be sought outside the meeting.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: An application from Westgate Primary School, Warwickshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called Warwick Schools Foundation Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received:

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

AB discussion:

- Evergreen School, Warwickshire is an Ofsted “Good” school which has requested to convert and join a Multi Academy Trust.
- This proposal aligns with the strategic need of Warwickshire to develop and grow more high-quality educational provision. The LA has recently completed a SEND and AP review and is in the process of developing its strategic plans.
- Warwick Schools Foundation MAT is proposing to open in April 2025 and will be comprised of four founding schools, two primary and two specials, providing an education for approx. 1,000 children across the trust.
- Three of the schools (Evergreen, Clapham, and Westgate) are in south Warwickshire and are within 3.7 miles (15-minute car drive) of one another. Exhall Grange is in north Warwickshire, 15.3 miles (a 38-minute drive) away from the furthest school in the proposed MAT, Clapham Terrace Primary.
- The MAT will be supported by Warwick Schools Foundation (WSF), an education charity which currently consists of five independent schools. WSF MAT will become a subsidiary of the WSF charity, operating as an independent entity with a clear link between WSF and WSF MAT through the governance and executive structures.
- The Local Authority has submitted a letter of support for this MAT formation proposal as it aligns with the strategic need of Warwickshire, to develop and grow more high-quality educational provision. The schools already have an established working relationship with Warwick Schools Foundation.
- Clapham Terrace and Westgate Primary are both well-performing schools with a desire to contribute to and benefit from shared best practice to ensure an inclusive educational experience for all young people. In joining the trust, both schools will formalise existing partnerships with the Warwick Schools Foundation.
- The board discussed viability, School Improvement, governance and leadership.
- It was agreed that points of process clarification needed to be sought outside the meeting.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: Hearsall Community Academy, Coventry

- The addition of a resourced provision at Hearsall Community Academy (Inspire Education Trust), a primary school catering for pupils aged between 3 and 11.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Project: St Giles CE Primary Academy, Staffordshire

- To lower the age range at Haughton St Giles CE Primary Academy (St Bartholomew's CE MAT).

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: None.

Cases referred to ministers for a decision

List of decisions that have been made by the Director General of Regions Group and/or ministers.

Project: None.

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

Project: None.