



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

12 December 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

- Carol Gray.

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Sian Hampton.
- Paul Heery.
- Ashfaq Rahman.
- Julian Scholefield.
- Mark Thomas.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- Chris Wheatley OBE.
- Paul West.

DfE senior civil servants

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

Representations received

Two representations were received in relation to:

Project: A proposal for Forest Way School (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to transfer and join Open Thinking Partnership.

Derbyshire Region

Significant Change

Project: An application for a new satellite site for Stubbin Wood School (T.E.A.M Education Trust), Derbyshire, based on the site of Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to provide 12 primary SEND provision places.

AB discussion:

This proposal has previously been discussed at Advisory Board in March 2024, where the Regional Director deferred a decision. It has been brought back to be considered alongside an associated conversion application from Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School to join T.E.A.M Education Trust.

Stubbin Wood School is a special school located in Shirebrook, Derbyshire. It was judged good by Ofsted in May 2022 (across all sub-judgements). All pupils attending the main school have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Stubbin Wood School is currently made up of 4 sites: the main school building, a nursery, a primary satellite provision in Nottinghamshire and post-16 satellite site in Derbyshire. A fifth site, based at Brunts Academy in Nottinghamshire, was approved by the Regional Director in March 2024.

T.E.A.M Education Trust has experience setting up and running SEND provision satellite sites.

A consultation ran from 27 November 2023 to 24 December 2023. Twenty-six responses were received across all stakeholder groups. Twenty were in support of the proposal (76.9%). All communication received was followed up on the consultation webpage where responses to feedback were published.

Both the local authority and the Diocesan Board of Education support the proposal with the local authority confirming their commitment to commission 12 places over 3 years.

Advisory Board members highlighted a number of risks in relation to this project, particularly in respect of the long-term viability of both Caunton Dean Hole School

and proposed satellite site of Stubbin Wood School and advised that this would need to be closely monitored.

RD decision: Approve (following taking advice from absent members after the AB meeting).

Conflicts: Sian Hampton. Sian Hampton was conflicted for the project discussion of Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School. Due to interdependencies, both projects were discussed simultaneously. Sian was not in receipt of associated project papers and was not present during this discussion.

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

Nottinghamshire Region

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join T.E.A.M Education Trust.

AB discussion:

Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join T.E.A.M Education Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School is a small primary school in Newark with 26 pupils on roll against a capacity of 58. In February 2019, the school was judged as "*continues to be good*".

In May 2023, T.E.A.M Education Trust proposed taking the school into its portfolio, conditional upon opening a Stubbin Wood School special satellite site on the premises in order to support the long-term viability. Both the Diocese and Nottinghamshire local authority endorsed this proposal, as well as the school's governing body.

T.E.A.M Education Trust has established a strong relationship with the school, staff and parents. The local authority signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the trust to provide interim leadership and aspects of school improvement.

The Diocese OF Southwell and Nottingham's Board of Education has agreed that Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School can join T.E.A.M Education Trust as a one-off exception to their policy requiring church schools to join church multi-academy trusts. This agreement is contingent upon the school retaining its status as a church school and upon T.E.A.M Education Trust adopting faith articles.

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.

Both projects have been rigorously reviewed together to assess the future financial viability of the school. Advisory Board members highlighted a number of risks in relation to this project, particularly in respect of the long-term viability of both Caunton Dean Hole School and the proposed satellite site of Stubbin Wood School and advised that this would need to be closely monitored.

RD decision: Approve (following taking advice from absent members after the AB meeting).

Conflicts: Sian Hampton. Sian Hampton is the CEO of Archway Learning Trust. Archway Learning Trust is part of the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham. Caunton Dean Hole CofE Primary School has a Church of England religious character and is linked to Diocese of Southwell. Sian was not in receipt of associated project papers and was not present during this discussion.

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

Nottingham Region

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Hospital and Home Education PRU, Nottingham, to convert and become an academy and join Nexus Multi Academy Trust.

AB discussion:

Hospital and Home Education PRU seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Nexus Multi Academy Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's management committee. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2021 and judged to be good.

The school has identified key challenges stemming from the unique nature of its multi-site setting. After 12 months of extensive research into how support could be provided by different multi-academy trusts with and without experience in hospital education, the school have concluded that joining a multi-academy trust is the most effective solution to address these challenges.

The management committee then identified Nexus Multi Academy Trust as the preferred trust to support the school's strategic objectives.

Nexus Multi Academy Trust has many years of experience working with local authorities, health services, and other key partners, particularly in Pupil Referral Unit and SEND contexts. The trust is one of few with hospital provision.

Hospital and Home Education PRU has a proven model that successfully supports children and young people who are unable to access mainstream education. By joining Nexus Multi Academy Trust, they can share their experience in helping pupils reintegrate into education and achieve positive outcomes, ensuring pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education or lives.

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: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Derby Region

Trust Change

Project: A proposal for Allestree Woodlands School (single-academy trust), Derby, to transfer and join The Two Counties Trust.

AB discussion:

Allestree Woodlands School is a large secondary school situated in the north of Derby close to the Derbyshire border. A resolution has been passed by the outgoing trust to transfer to The Two Counties Trust. The school's Ofsted in April 2024 assessed the school to be good, which was an improvement on previous inspections where the school was judged to be requiring improvement (March 2022 and June 2018).

The school's main priorities in selecting a trust were its trajectory of improvement, alignment of values, demographic similarities, and opportunities for collaboration and professional development.

Allestree Woodlands School was also looking for a trust that prioritises inclusivity. As a school with specialist provision for deaf pupils and those with hearing impairments, they were seeking a trust with a strong commitment to integrating SEND provision within mainstream education.

The Two Counties Trust is made up of 9 secondary schools (All of which are judged by Ofsted to be good. The trust has a good track record of improving schools from requires improvement to good.

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: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

West Northamptonshire Region

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Hunsbury Park Primary School, West Northamptonshire, to convert and become an academy and join Orbis Education Trust.

AB discussion:

Hunsbury Park Primary School has applied to convert to academy status and join Orbis Education Trust. The proposal would be the first step in establishing a new primary arm to the Trust.

Hunsbury Park Primary School is a 4-11 maintained school located in West Northamptonshire. The most recent Ofsted inspection in September 2022 judged Hunsbury Park Primary School as good.

Hunsbury Park School has a substantial 80-place SEN unit which is designated specialist provision for children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) split across two sites (EYFS and key stage 1 at Hunsbury Park Primary School and key stage 2 at Chiltern Primary School). The SEND unit and will add significant capacity and expertise to the trust in this field.

The board requested additional information on this proposal before a decision can be taken by the Regional Director.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

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

North Northamptonshire Region

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Earls Barton Primary School, North Northamptonshire, to convert and become an academy and join Hatton Academies Trust.

AB discussion:

This proposal is for Earls Barton Primary School to convert to academy status and join Hatton Academies Trust. The proposal will help facilitate the smooth transition of pupils into Sir Christopher Hatton Academy (the secondary school of choice for the majority of pupils at Earls Barton Primary School) and enable the school to benefit from the economies of scale and collaborative working that can be achieved as being part of a local trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

Earls Barton Primary School is a large local authority maintained 4-11 school in Northampton, North Northamptonshire. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in March 2018 following a full inspection and maintained this rating following an inspection in September 2023.

Hatton Academies Trust has schools local to Earls Barton Primary School, with good Ofsted judgments and is keen to grow further in the local area. The trust's 3 primary schools are all judged to be good, and Sir Christopher Hatton Academy is also judged to be good and has above LA and national KS4 outcomes.

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: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Leicestershire Region

Trust Change

Project: A proposal for Redmoor Academy (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to transfer and join The Futures Trust.

AB discussion:

Redmoor Academy, located in Hinckley, Leicestershire, is a mixed secondary school for students aged 11 to 16. It opened as a standalone academy in April 2012, when operating as a middle deemed secondary school, for students aged 11 to 14. However, in September 2015, the school expanded its age range and became a full secondary school accommodating students aged 11 to 16. Redmoor Academy was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2021 and judged as good across all areas.

Redmoor Academy has been exploring the possibility of joining a multi-academy trust and has considered a number of trusts. Following due diligence, the school's board concluded that The Futures Trust aligns best with their vision. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

Redmoor Academy already has a long-standing relationship with The Futures Trust through collaborative work with The Futures Teaching Alliance (ITT) and The Futures Education Institute (CPD). Additionally, Redmoor Academy has built a strong relationship with The Hinckley School, which is part of The Futures Trust and is approximately 2 miles away.

The Futures Trust is a mixed-phase multi-academy trust based in Coventry, West Midlands. It currently comprises of 9 open academies: 6 in Coventry, 2 in Warwickshire, and 1 in Leicestershire. The trust currently has one school in the South Leicestershire area (The Hinckley School) and is looking to build a 'local hub' to facilitate student opportunity, educational collaboration and financial efficiencies. The trust believes that Redmoor Academy is a strong fit with the trust vision and values and leaders are fully aligned with the trust's strategy plans.

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: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Forest Way School (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to transfer and join Open Thinking Partnership.

AB discussion:

Forest Way School is special school located in Coalville, Leicestershire, catering to pupils aged 3 to 19. It was judged as outstanding by Ofsted.

Forest Way School seeks to realise the benefits of joining a larger multi-academy trust, including their plans for future growth and support of mainstream schools in their area. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

Forest Way School and Open Thinking Partnership have already established collaborative relationships to enhance practices within their respective trusts and improve SEN provision in Leicestershire. They have initiated joint efforts in school development. Open Thinking Partnership and Forest Way School have also collaborated together within the broader Leicestershire context, having partnered on projects in the region.

Forest Way School believes that the structure of Open Thinking Partnership, with its central hub and satellite sites, would be advantageous for both Forest Way and the mainstream schools in their vicinity. Forest Way School believes that replicating the Open Thinking Partnership structure would enable further development of their educational offerings within mainstream schools in Northwest Leicestershire.

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: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Lady Jane Grey Primary School (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to transfer and join Raleigh Education Trust.

AB discussion:

Lady Jane Grey Primary School is a small primary school located in the village of Groby, Leicestershire. The school received an outstanding Ofsted judgement in February 2015.

The board explored several trusts before selecting Raleigh Education Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

Lady Jane Grey Primary School engaged in discussions with Raleigh Education Trust about the future of their school, seeking collaboration on aspects of the curriculum and financial management.

The board requested additional information on this proposal before a decision can be taken by the Regional Director.

RD decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

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

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Project: Forest Town Primary School

Points raised in discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2025.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Lovers' Lane Primary and Nursery School

Points raised in discussion: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2025.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Project: To discuss the proposal for Hardingstone Academy, West Northamptonshire (EMAT), to make the following change: change of lower age limit to include pre-school pupils aged 2+.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the proposal for Rendell Primary School (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to make the following change: change of age range from 4-11 to 3-11

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the proposal for Buckton Fields Primary School, Preston Hedges Trust, West Northamptonshire, to make

the following change: lower the age range from 4-11 to 2-11 to introduce nursery provision.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the (retrospective) proposal for Iveshed School, Leicestershire, Mowbray Education Trust, to make the following change: increase the capacity by 450 places from 950 to 1400.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the proposal for Millgate School, Discovery Schools Academies Trust (DSAT) to close the 8-place short-stay boarding provision at Millgate School.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the proposal for West Park Academy (SAT), Derby, to increase their capacity by 150 places. This is a retrospective significant change.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: To discuss the proposal for Southfield School for Girls to add a 16-place SEND provision to the school from January 2025.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

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