



Notes of meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

22 January 2025

Attendance

Advisory Board 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 Advisory Board member(s) declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director chair

- Carol Gray.

Advisory Board members

- Sian Hampton
- Paul Heery
- Chris Wheatley
- Mark Thomas
- Ash Rahman
- Paul West
- Julian Scholefield

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- None.

DfE senior civil servants

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

Representations received

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

Derbyshire

Converter academy orders

Caveat: The following 19 projects were discussed as one proposal and are categorised into 'approved' and 'declined' sections. The Advisory Board discussion summary follows at the end of these 2 sections.

Conflicts: Paul Heery. Paul Heery is the CEO of The White Hills Park Trust. The CEO of Embark Multi Academy Trust sits as a Member of The White Hills Park Trust.

Decline:

Project: An application from Ambergate Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Ashbrook Infant School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Ashover Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Belper School and Sixth Form Centre, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Brockley Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy trust.

Project: An application from Grassmoor Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Lea Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Long Row Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Middleton Community Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Milford Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Pottery Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Wessington Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Wirksworth Junior School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Further actions required: Feedback decline decision to Embark Multi Academy Trust, Derbyshire Local Authority and the 13 individual schools and offer discussions on next steps.

Approve:

Project: An application from Burbage Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Buxton Infant School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Buxton Junior School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Fairfield Infant and Nursery School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Harpur Hill Primary School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Project: An application from Ripley Junior School, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.

Further actions required: Feedback approve decision to the 6 schools, Embark Multi Academy Trust and Derbyshire Local Authority.

AB summary of discussion regarding the 19 projects above:

Nineteen applications were received between June 2022 and September 2024 from schools seeking to join Embark Multi Academy Trust. All schools are situated within the Derbyshire Local Authority area. The trust has developed a membership model, which is currently only available to schools with applications to join the trust.

To manage the large pipeline of schools wishing to join Embark Multi Academy Trust, schools were prioritised on the basis of a range of factors including the capacity of the trust and its current hub structure, the position and needs of the schools, and the strategic needs of the area.

The 6 schools prioritised for the next phase of growth are rated good or outstanding in all areas in their latest Ofsted inspections and should add improvement capacity to the trust. They are located in the High Peak and Amber Valley.

There are currently only a small number of academies in Buxton and High Peak. This includes Buxton Community School, which is a secondary school, already part of Embark Multi Academy Trust. Five of the 6 schools in this next group of prioritised schools are part of an existing partnership and ultimately feed into Buxton Community School.

The sixth school approved, Ripley Junior School, has an existing relationship with the trust having worked with Embark Multi Academy Trust since 2022. The school would join the Amber Valley hub, which is the most established hub in the trust (growing to 9 schools).

To ensure a manageable rate of growth of the trust, 13 applications are declined at this time. Future applications to join Embark Multi Academy Trust will be considered by the department after a period of consolidation of at least 12 months using the High-Quality Trust Framework.

Regions Group East Midlands will offer each of the schools with a declined application the opportunity for a conversation about next steps for the school.

The supportive deployment of a school resource management adviser was also recommended.

Derby

Converter academy orders

Caveat: The following 3 projects were discussed as one proposal. The Advisory Board discussion summary follows at the end.

Project: An application from Bridge Street School, Derby, to convert and become an academy and set up a new trust called RESPECT Collaboration Trust.

Project: An application from Castle School, Derby, to convert and become an academy and set up a new trust called RESPECT Collaboration Trust.

Project: An application from Kingsmead School, Derby, to convert and become an academy and set up a new trust called RESPECT Collaboration Trust.

AB discussion:

Bridge Street School, Castle School, and Kingsmead School are seeking to voluntarily convert to academy status and establish RESPECT Collaboration Trust. The trust will consist of one special school and two pupil referral units, all dedicated to supporting pupils with social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs.

- Bridge Street School (ages 5 to 16, 150 places) is a pupil referral unit. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2024 and was rated *Good* across all sub-judgements.
- Castle School (ages 5 to 18, 100 places) is a pupil referral unit. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2023 and was judged to *continue to be good*.
- Kingsmead School (ages 10 to 18, 180 places) supports students where SEMH is the primary area of need. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in September 2023 and was judged to *continue to be good*.

RESPECT Collaboration of Schools is a well-established organisation with a strong track record of supporting students with SEMH needs across Derby Local Authority. The trust aims to create an inclusive education network where all students receive equitable, high-quality support. Academy status will provide RESPECT with greater flexibility in decision-making, allowing it to respond quickly to the evolving needs of students in Derby and beyond.

This proposal aligns with the department's strategic priorities for the area, which highlight the need to grow trusts that support pupil inclusion, increase attendance, reduce preventable exclusions, and improve outcomes for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The applications were assessed using the High-Quality Trust Framework, considering both quantitative and qualitative evidence in relation to the strategic needs of the schools.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the schools/trust and Derby Local Authority. The supportive deployment of a school resource management advisor was recommended.

Nottinghamshire

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Newark Orchard School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join Community Inclusive Trust.

AB discussion:

Newark Orchard School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Community Inclusive Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The school was last inspected (short inspection) by Ofsted in November 2024 and judged as continues to be good.

Newark Orchard School is an all-through special school for pupils aged 3 to 18 with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties, multi-sensory impairment and challenging behaviour associated with learning difficulties. All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan.

Nottinghamshire local authority commissioned Community Inclusive Trust to support the school in 2023/24, due to the school requesting additional support from a trust that had the capacity to share resources.

Since receiving support from Community Inclusive Trust, Newark Orchard School has made significant improvements, culminating to a good continues to be good Ofsted short inspection in November 2024.

Community Inclusive Trust and Newark Orchard School feel their visions align very closely..

Newark Orchard School joining the trust would be mutually beneficial as the school will continue to benefit from the trust's educational expertise and economies of scale. The trust also reports that the school would add capacity to the trust as a good special school.

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.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: Ash Rahman. Ash is the CEO of Nova Education Trust. A Trustee at Nova Education Trust is also an employee at Community Inclusive Trust

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust and to Nottinghamshire Local Authority.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Project: Wilby Church of England Primary School

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Round Hill Primary School

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Osbournby Primary School

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Significant Change

Project: An application from Ash Croft Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust Ltd), Derby, to make the following changes: change of age range from 3-11, to 2-11, without changing school type.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Esteem North Academy (Esteem multi-academy trust), Derbyshire, to make the following changes: increase capacity to 250 by expanding on to a new site.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Unity Academy (Raleigh Education Trust), Nottingham, to make the following changes to change the age range from 14-16 years to 7-16 and increase the pupil capacity from 103 to 210.

RD decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

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