



## Notes of meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board.

26 February 2025.

### 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.
- Ash Rahman.
- Julian Scholefield.
- Mark Thomas.
- Chris Wheatley.

### Guests

- None.

### Apologies

- Paul West.

### DfE senior civil servants

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

### General discussion points

- No discussion points were raised

## Representations received

Representations from 3 individuals were received and considered in relation to:

- Project: An application from Alvaston Junior Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 12-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.
- Project: An application from Ash Croft Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 16-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.
- Project: An application from Cottons Farm Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 12-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.
- Project: An application from Lakeside Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 12-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.
- Project: An application from Village Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 26-place SEN unit to a mainstream academy.

When received in time, representations are shared in advance with the Regional Director and the AB members, who considered them when providing advice to Regional Directors.

## Leicestershire

### Converter academy orders

**Project: An application from The Hall School, Leicestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Symphony Learning Trust.**

#### **AB Discussion:**

The Hall School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Symphony Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. The Hall School is located in the Glenfield area, Leicestershire, catering to pupils aged 3 to 11. It was inspected by Ofsted and judged as good in February 2023.

The Hall School wants to join the Symphony Learning Trust to access the support and collaborative opportunities it offers. The school believe that by joining the trust, staff and students will be able to work closely with other like-minded schools, fostering a collaborative environment.

Of the 12 academies in the Symphony trust, 7 have been inspected by Ofsted (pre-September 2024) since joining and were all rated as 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.

**Decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further actions required:** Feedback decision to the schools/trust and Leicestershire Local Authority.

**Project: An application from Hugglescote Community Primary School, Leicestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Symphony Learning Trust.**

**AB Discussion:**

Hugglescote Community Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Symphony Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Hugglescote Community Primary School is located in the Hugglescote area of Coalville, Leicestershire, catering to pupils aged 4 to 11. It was inspected by Ofsted and judged good in October 2022.

Hugglescote Community Primary School wants to join the Symphony Learning Trust as it presents an opportunity for the school to thrive in a collaborative and supportive environment. The school has begun to experience a growing sense of isolation and limited support. Symphony Learning Trust offers a solution to these challenges by providing opportunities for the staff to collaborate with colleagues from its primary schools, sharing best practice and driving forward innovative thinking.

The trust's track record of school improvement, aligned values, and comprehensive support systems are key advantages. Hugglescote Community Primary School believes that as a large school, with its experienced staff, it can contribute to the trust, sharing knowledge and expertise.

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:** None.

**Further actions required:** Feedback decision to the schools/trust and Leicestershire Local Authority.

**Project: An application from Thythorn Field Community Primary School, Leicestershire, to convert and become an academy and join Symphony Learning Trust.**

**AB Discussion:**

Thythorn Field Community Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Symphony Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. Thythorn Field Community Primary School is located in Wigston, Leicestershire, catering to pupils aged 4 to 11. It was inspected by Ofsted in October 2024 and was judged good in all sub-categories.

Thythorn Field Community Primary School believes that joining Symphony Learning Trust will help address the challenges highlighted in their Ofsted report and further develop their teachers and subject leaders. By joining Symphony Learning Trust, it anticipates benefiting from the network opportunities provided by the trust.

The trust's track record of school improvement, aligned values, and comprehensive support systems are key advantages.

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:** None.

**Further actions required:** Feedback decision to the schools/trust and Leicestershire Local Authority.

## Rutland

### Trust Change

**Project: A proposal to transfer Uppingham Community College (single-academy trust), into Discovery Schools Academies Trust (multi-academy trust).**

#### **AB Discussion:**

Uppingham Community College is a single-academy trust seeking to voluntarily transfer to Discovery Schools Academies Trust. If approved, Uppingham Community College will become the first mainstream secondary to join the trust and will be the trust's second school in Rutland Local Authority.

Uppingham Community College is a secondary school located in Uppingham, Rutland, catering for pupils aged 11 to 16. The school received an Ofsted inspection (section 8) in March 2023, which stated the school continues to be a good school.

At the end of 2022, the Uppingham Community College's board identified a range of risks associated with the school being isolated as a single-academy trust and decided to explore the opportunities and benefits of joining a multi-academy trust. Uppingham Community College considered several trusts and concluded in December 2023 that Discovery Schools Academies Trust was the best fit for the school. This decision was primarily due to Uppingham Community College's existing relationship with the trust, their strong track record in primary and specialist all-through education, and Discovery Schools Academies Trust's established presence in Rutland.

Discovery Schools Academies Trust and Uppingham Community College have a long-standing and well-established working relationship, dating back to 2012 through their collaborative work as part of the Affinity Teaching School Alliance. This collaboration includes joint efforts in developing and delivering a wide range of school improvement activities, such as school placements, school-to-school support, and Initial Teacher Training.

Uppingham Community College believe it will benefit greatly from formally joining Discovery Schools Academies Trust, allowing both parties to continue building upon their collaborative work and realising the benefits of being part of a larger group of schools.

**Decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** Sian Hampton and Chris Wheatley. Both Sian Hampton and Chris Wheatley serve as Board Directors with Paul Stone (CEO of Discovery Trust) on Inspiring Leaders. Sian Hampton and Chris Wheatley were not in receipt of associated project papers, nor were they in attendance for this discussion.

**Further actions required:** Feedback decision to the schools/trust and Rutland Local Authority.

## Lincolnshire

### Converter academy orders

**Project: An application from Coleby Church of England Primary School, Lincolnshire, to convert and become an academy and join Infinity Academies Trust.**

#### **AB discussion:**

Coleby Church of England Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Infinity Academies Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and supported by the Diocese of Lincoln.

Coleby Church of England Primary School is a small, rural primary school. In April 2024, the school received an Ofsted inspection, which resulted in a requires improvement judgement. The school had been previously judged to be a good school in 2012 (full inspection), 2017 and 2023 (short inspections).

In joining Infinity Academies Trust and forming a geographical partnership with Leadenham Church of England Academy, the school will be able to get the support that it needs to continue strengthening and growing. Coleby Church of England Primary School will benefit from operating a shared curriculum and leadership model to increase its sustainability into the future.

The governors at Coleby Church of England Primary School are confident that Infinity Academies Trust has the capacity and expertise to further support this journey.

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:** None.

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

**Project: An application from St Helena's Church of England Primary School, Lincolnshire, to convert and become an academy and join Infinity Academies Trust.**

#### **AB discussion:**

St Helena's Church of England Primary School, seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Infinity Academies Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and supported by the Diocese of Lincoln.

St Helena's Church of England Primary School is based in east Lincolnshire in a rural area on the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds. The school was inspected by Ofsted in September 2018 and judged as requires improvement. In June 2022, the school was reinspected, and was again judged as requires improvement.

By joining a local trust this small, rural primary school hopes to access more resources, expertise, and collaboration opportunities whilst keeping its unique identity.

Infinity Academies Trust is currently providing support to St Helena's Church of England Primary School through the Trust and School Improvement offer, continuing to work on the issues identified by the Ofsted reports. The trust is a strong match for the school based on its strong recent Ofsted inspections, particularly regarding curriculum development and implementation.

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:** None.

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

### **Project: An application from The Lincoln St Peter-in-Eastgate Church of England Infants School, Lincolnshire, to convert and become an academy and join Infinity Academies Trust.**

#### **AB discussion:**

The Lincoln St Peter-in-Eastgate Church of England Infants School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Infinity Academies Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and supported by the Diocese of Lincoln.

St Peter-in-Eastgate Church of England Infants School was judged by Ofsted as requires improvement (December 2022), having previously been judged to be an outstanding school in 2009 (full inspection).

Over the past 2 years, the school has formed a strong connection with Infinity Academies Trust, which has provided support after it received a requires improvement Ofsted inspection in December 2022. Joining Infinity Academies Trust will offer the school the opportunity to access extensive resources, providing stability for the school going forward.

The school acknowledges the valuable support provided by Infinity Academies Trust to both the head teacher and the institution since the 2022 inspection. It is believed that Infinity Academies Trust aligns well with the school's future direction. The Lincoln St Peter-in-Eastgate Church of England Infants School considers that Infinity Academies Trust was the best match for them going forward.

Infinity Academies Trust is a strong match for St Peter-in-Eastgate based on its existing relationship with the school and the school improvement strategies that the trust has already put in place.

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:** None.

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

## Nottinghamshire

### Converter academy orders

**Project: An application from Bramcote Church of England Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join Archway Learning Trust.**

#### **AB discussion:**

Bramcote Church of England Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Archway Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and received the Diocese of Nottingham and Southwell's support.

The school was inspected by Ofsted and judged to be good in March 2012. A further inspection in January 2022 judged the school as continuing as good.

Over the past 2 to 3 years, the school's governing body has carefully considered whether joining one of the five church multi-academy trusts is the right decision. Governors attended presentations from the Diocesan Director of Education, which has helped them to understand both the benefits of academisation and the process of joining a multi-academy trust. Governors also identified the qualities they would like from a multi-academy trust, as well as the strengths that the school would contribute to a trust.

While pleased with the school's progress in recent years, the governing body remains committed to securing the ongoing support needed for its continued success in delivering high-quality education. The governors believe that joining Archway Learning Trust would best serve the school's needs, as the trust offers strong central team support in key areas such as safeguarding, school improvement, HR, finance, and IT. Additionally, the school looks forward to contributing to the trust's development and utilising its position as a high-achieving, outward-facing institution to support other schools.

Primary growth is a key strand of Archway Learning Trust's growth strategy.

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:** Sian Hampton. Sian Hampton is the CEO of Archway Learning Trust. Sian Hampton was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was she in attendance for this discussion.

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

**Project: An application from St John's Church of England Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join Archway Learning Trust.**

**AB discussion:**

St John's Church of England Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Archway Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and received the Diocese of Nottingham and Southwell's support.

The school was inspected by Ofsted and judged to be good in April 2011. A further inspection was conducted in April 2024 leading to another good judgment.

St John's Church of England Primary School is a small primary school with a Christian ethos. It has an above LA and national average educational performance in percentage of pupils meeting expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Over the past 2 to 3 years, the school's governing body has carefully considered whether joining one of the five church multi-academy trusts is the right decision. Governors attended presentations from the Diocesan Director of Education, which has helped them to understand both the benefits of academisation and the process of joining a multi-academy trust. Governors also identified the qualities they would like from a multi-academy trust, as well as the strengths of the school that they could contribute to a trust.

While they are pleased with the school's progress the governing body believe that Archway Learning Trust is developing its primary arm which presents an exciting opportunity for St John's to flourish and to share their own good practices across the trust. The school will also benefit from Archway Learning Trust's strong central team support.

Primary growth is a key strand of Archway Learning Trust's growth strategy.

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** Sian Hampton. Sian is the CEO of Archway Learning Trust. Sian Hampton was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was she in attendance for this discussion.

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

**Project: An application from Trowell Church of England Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join Archway Learning Trust.**

**AB discussion:**

Trowell Church of England Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Archway Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and received the Diocese of Nottingham and Southwell's support.

The school was inspected by Ofsted and judged good in February 2020. A further inspection on the 5 November 2024 lead to a judgement that the school had maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection.



The school has a values-based culture centred on its "Big 4" values: "love others, aim high, believe we can do it, and do the right thing". The school offers a broad and ambitious curriculum, with particular strengths in writing and early years education.

Over the past 2 to 3 years, the school's governing body has carefully considered whether joining one of the five church multi-academy trusts is the right decision. Governors attended presentations from the Diocesan Director of Education, which has helped them to understand both the benefits of academisation and the process of joining a multi-academy trust. Governors also identified the qualities they would like from a multi-academy trust, as well as the strengths of the school that they would want to contribute to a trust.

While pleased with the school's progress they believe that Archway Learning Trust will be able to support them going forwards and they will benefit from centralised support for HR and finance and access to better CPD for staff. Additionally, the school looks forward to contribution to the trust's development of the primary arm particularly with their focus on well-being and safeguarding and governance insights to support other schools.

Primary growth is a key strand of Archway Learning Trust's growth strategy.

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:** Sian Hampton. Sian is the CEO of Archway Learning Trust. Sian Hampton was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was she in attendance for this discussion.

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

**Project: An application from Wood's Foundation Church of England Primary School, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join Archway Learning Trust.**

#### **AB discussion:**

Wood's Foundation Church of England Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Archway Learning Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and received the Diocese of Nottingham and Southwell's support.

The school was inspected by Ofsted and judged good in April 2024.

The school's vision and values are rooted in its Christian ethos, which underpins all aspects of school life, supporting both pupils and staff.

Over the past 2 to 3 years, the school's governing body has carefully considered whether joining one of the five church multi-academy trusts is the right decision. Governors attended presentations from the Diocesan Director of Education, which has helped them to understand both the benefits of academisation and the process of joining a multi-academy trust. Governors also identified the qualities they would like from a multi-academy trust, as well as the strengths of the school that would contribute positively to a multi-academy trust.

While pleased with the school's recent progress, the governing body wanted to join a trust with contrasting schools to themselves and felt the other trusts they had considered were

too similar to themselves and would not provide the diversity they required moving forwards. The GB believe that joining Archway Learning Trust would meet the needs of the school and provide opportunities for staff to contribute to the future of the trust. Additionally the school will receive the strong central team support.

Primary growth is a key strand of Archway Learning Trust's growth strategy.

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:** Sian Hampton. Sian is the CEO of Archway Learning Trust. Sian Hampton was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was she in attendance for this discussion.

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

## Derbyshire

### Converter academy orders

**Project: An application from Swanwick School and Sports College, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join Embark Multi Academy Trust.**

#### **AB discussion:**

Swanwick School and Sports College seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Embark Multi-Academy Trust. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body. A total of 20 applications, including Swanwick School and Sports College, were received between June 2022 and September 2024 from schools seeking to join Embark Multi Academy Trust. 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. 19 applications to join Embark Multi Academy Trust were considered at the January 2024 Advisory Board meeting, following which, 6 were approved by the Regional Director.

Swanwick School and Sports College is a community special school located in the Amber Valley in the Derbyshire Local Authority area. The school serves pupils in the age range of 5 to 16. It received an outstanding Ofsted judgement in March 2015 and in 2 subsequent short inspections in March 2019 and most recently in November 2024.

Embark Multi Academy Trust has 21 schools all located in Derbyshire. Since formation in January 2019, the trust has grown significantly from an initial group of 7 primary schools to 10 primary and 4 secondary schools. The trust currently has 8 further primary schools with approval to join. .

To ensure a measured and sustainable rate of trust growth, this application has been 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 and quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the trust as outlined in the High-Quality Trust Framework will be considered.

**Decision:** Decline.

**Conflicts:** Paul Heery. Paul Heery is the CEO of The White Hills Park Trust. Embark Multi Academy Trust's CEO is a member of The White Hills Park Trust. Paul Heery was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was he in attendance for this discussion.

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

## Derby

### Significant Change

**Caveat:** The following 5 projects were discussed as one proposal. The Advisory Board discussion summary follows at the end of the 5 projects listed.

**Project: An application from Alvaston Junior Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 12-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.**

**Project: An application from Ash Croft Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 16-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.**

**Project: An application from Cottons Farm Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 12-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.**

**Project: An application from Lakeside Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 12-place resourced provision to a mainstream academy.**

**Project: An application from Village Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust), Derby, to make the following changes: add a 26-place SEN unit to a mainstream academy.**

#### **AB summary of discussion regarding the 5 projects above:**

The Harmony Trust has submitted applications for approval to add 4 Enhanced Resource Bases (ERBs) and one SEND unit across 5 academies at the request of Derby Local Authority. The applications align with the local authority's inclusion strategy. An 'Inclusion Hub' model is well established across Harmony Trust and applications relate to the formalisation of this model. The model has already been successfully formalised in 2 other schools through similar collaboration within Oldham Local Authority. Greater clarity is required on the proposed implementation date of the formal designation of the SEND unit and ERBs.

This proposal includes the addition of an ERB at 3 academies which are all judged requires improvement by Ofsted in at least 3 subcategories (including leadership and management and quality of education) at latest inspection. The trust and local authority view is that Inclusion Hubs bring capacity to academies, in particular those with Ofsted requires improvement sub judgements. In line with published significant change guidance, the department must be assured that Derby Local Authority applied a rigorous process for exploring what other viable options were available in schools with strong performance records.

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

**Decision:** Defer.

**Conflicts:** Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Region Group - Professional connection. Kelly Hughes was not in receipt of associated project papers, nor was she in attendance for this discussion.

**Further actions required:** Feedback decision to the schools/trust and to Derby Local Authority.

## Academy opening approved in principle

### List of academies approved to open the following month.

**Project:** Bispham Spencer Academy.

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

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further action required:** No action required.

**Project:** Coddington CofE Primary and Nursery School.

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

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further action required:** No action required.

**Project:** Cantrell Primary and Nursery School.

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

**Conflicts:** None.

**Further action required:** No action required.

## Decisions taken between AB meetings

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

### Trust Change

**Project:** To discuss the proposal for Lady Jane Grey Primary School, Leicester, to move from Lady Jane Grey Primary School SAT to The Raleigh Education Trust (MAT).

**RD decision:** Approve (previously discussed and deferred at East Midlands December AB).

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## **Converter Academy Orders**

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

**RD decision:** Approve previous discussed, and deferred at East Midlands December AB)

**Conflicts:** None.

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

## **Significant Change**

**Project:** To discuss the application from The Carlton Infant Academy (Redhill Academy Trust), Nottinghamshire to make the following change/s: change the age range from 3-7 years to 2-7.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

**Project:** To discuss the proposal for New Lubbesthorpe Primary School (Oadby, Wigston and Leicestershire Schools Academy Trust), Leicestershire, to make the following change/s: expand capacity from 420 to 630 places from September 2026.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

**Project:** To discuss the application from The Milford Academy (single-academy trust), Nottingham, to make the following change/s: adding a SEN unit.

**RD decision:** Approve.

**Conflicts:** None.

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

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