



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: South East Advisory Board

Date of Meeting – 13 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

- Dame Kate Dethridge

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Sarah Bennett
- Sarah Brown
- Sir Andrew Carter
- Stuart Gardner
- Paul James
- Claire Lowe
- Sue Samson MBE

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Dame Kate Dethridge

DfE senior civil servants

- Paul Schofield, Deputy Director South East Regions Group

General discussion points

- No discussion points were raised.

Decisions

West sub-region

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: Bridge Academy, Stephenson MK Trust, Milton Keynes, Amalgamating 2 or more academies

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Acknowledged the support of the LA for this proposal.
- The board discussed the proposed leadership structure and how this would work across the three sites.
- The Board reflected on whether the trust had given full consideration to its financial plan and the impact of the amalgamation on its finances.
- The Board noted that a Schools Resource Management Adviser (SRMA) had been deployed to the trust and the report is currently being prepared.
- To seek assurance from the trust that they can manage any potential financial challenges.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust and local authority.

Converter academy orders

Project: The following schools to convert and become academies and form a new trust called Cottesloe Hundred Trust.

- The Cottesloe School, Buckinghamshire
- Wingrave Church of England Combined School, Buckinghamshire
- Eaton Bray Academy, Central Bedfordshire

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the experience of the proposers in undertaking this MAT formation.
- The need for additional MAT capacity in the area was discussed.
- The board discussed the financial plan for this proposed MAT.
- The board acknowledged the need for a partnership for some of the schools but questioned the capacity of the proposed trust and its opportunities to grow.

- The board noted that an SRMA deployment was currently being undertaken.

Decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust/diocese and local authority.

Project: The following schools to convert and become academies and form a new trust called Summit Education Trust.

- The Downs School, West Berkshire
- The Willink School, West Berkshire
- Compton CE Primary School, West Berkshire
- Beedon CE (Controlled) Primary School, West Berkshire
- Basildon CE Primary School, West Berkshire

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The low level of responses from the consultation was discussed.
- The board felt that the plans for the MAT's central team required further development – HR/Finance/IT has low numbers proposed and the top slice is insufficient to fund an effective central team.
- The board discussed the particular financial challenges being faced by Beedon Primary and the current uncertainty over its future operating model.
- The board thought further detail was needed on how the proposed cost savings would be achieved.
- The board noted that this is a group of strong schools and there is potential for the proposed MAT to grow.
- The board asked if there will be external support/mentor available for the trust.

Decision: Approve with conditions.

- Producing a revised plan for central services (including a more realistic top slice)
- Beedon would not transfer at this time
- Confirmation of the primary expertise on the trust board

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust/diocese and local authority.

Kent, Medway and Surrey sub-region

Converter academy orders

Project: Simon Langton, The Canterbury Academy Trust, Kent.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board discussed the recent Ofsted report for Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys.
- The board discussed previous representations about this project.
- The board discussed whether Simon Langton's governing board was properly constituted when voting on academisation and discussed the benefits of having an external review of governance if the trust was formed. The board questioned the proposed leadership structure.
- The board questioned the repayment of Simon Langton's loan to Kent County Council.

Decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust and local authority.

Project: The following schools to convert and become academies and form a new trust called The Inclusive Alliance Trust.

- Five Acre Wood School, URN: 119055, Kent
- Grange Park School, URN: 119051, Kent
- St Nicholas School, URN: 119059, Kent
- The Beacon, Folkestone, URN: 119044, Kent
- The Orchard School, URN: 119058, Kent

Representations received:

- 3 representations were received for this project.
- When received in time, representations are shared in advance with the RD and the AB members, who consider them when providing advice to RDs.

AB discussion:

- The board questioned the trust's financial plans.
- The board questioned the governance structure of the MAT and discussed the degree of autonomy to be given to local governing boards.
- The local landscape was discussed by the board and the need for a new special school MAT.

Decision: Decline.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust and local authority.

Coastal sub-region

Sponsored academy orders

Project: Rowhill School, Hampshire, to be sponsored by Inclusive Education Trust

Representations received:

- 1 representation was received for this project.
- When received in time, representations are shared in advance with the RD and the AB members, who consider them when providing advice to RDs.

AB discussion:

- Finance – how the trust would address the in-year deficit was discussed.
- The board discussed the school improvement strategy and the support provided by the local authority.
- The current capacity of the pupil referral unit was discussed.
- The board suggested that an SRMA – with AP experience - be appointed to review Rowhill's finances.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required:

- Feedback decision to the school/trust and local authority.

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Converter Academy Orders

Project: Farncombe CofE Infant School, Surrey. To convert and join Learning Partners Church Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Jude's Church of England Junior School, Surrey. To convert and join Enlighten Learning Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Jude's CofE Infant School, Surrey. To convert and join Enlighten Learning Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Lawrence CofE Aided Primary School, Surrey. To convert and join Learning Partners Church Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Mary's CofE Controlled Primary School, Surrey. To convert and join Learning Partners Church Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Matthew's CofE Aided Infant School, Surrey. To convert and join Enlighten Learning Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Nicolas CofE Aided Infant School, Surrey. To convert and join Enlighten Learning Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Surrey. To convert and join Xavier Catholic Education Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School, Medway. To convert and join The Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St William of Perth Roman Catholic Primary School, Medway. To convert and join The Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: Ashurst Wood Primary School, West Sussex. To convert and join Hurst Education Trust Limited.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: Droxford Junior School, Hampshire. To convert and join University of Winchester Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: Marnel Community Infant School, Hampshire. To convert and join University of Winchester Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: Orchard Infant School, Hampshire. To convert and join University of Winchester Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hastings, East Sussex. To convert and join Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Mark's Church of England Aided Primary School, Hampshire. To convert and join The Prospect Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, West Sussex. To convert and join Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Isle of Wight. To convert and join Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Mary's CofE Primary School East Grinstead, West Sussex. To convert and join Hurst Education Trust Limited.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Waterloo, Hampshire. To convert and join Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Arundel, West Sussex. To convert and join Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Richard's Catholic College, East Sussex. To convert and join Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Richard's Catholic Primary School, West Sussex. To convert and join Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Saviour's Catholic Primary School, Isle of Wight. To convert and join Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, Isle of Wight. To convert and join Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: Turners Hill CofE Primary School, West Sussex. To convert and join Hurst Education Trust Limited.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: West Hoathly CofE Primary School, West Sussex. To convert and join Hurst Education Trust Limited.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Henley-On-Thames, Oxfordshire. To convert and join The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company.

Decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Aloysius' Catholic Primary School, Oxfordshire. To convert and join The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company.

Decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Project: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Oxfordshire. To convert and join The Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Company.

Decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust/diocese and local authority of the decision.

Significant Change

Project: Leigh Academy Rainham, Leigh Academies Trust, Medway. To add a SEN unit or resourced provision.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: Greenlands Primary School, Cygnus Academies Trust, North Kent. To change age range (including adding or removing a nursery or sixth form provision).

Decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: Halstead Community Primary School, The Pioneer Academy, South Kent. To add a SEN unit or resourced provision.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: Forest Bridge School, Forest Bridge School Ltd, Windsor & Maidenhead. To expand (increasing physical capacity).

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Trust Changes

Project: The Gryphon Trust, Hampshire. To merge with Bourne Education trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Project: The Beaconsfield School, Buckinghamshire. To transfer to Danes Educational Trust.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school /trust and local authority of the decision.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Project: Brookfields Special School, Ascendancy Partnership Trust, Berkshire.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

Project: Epsom Downs Community School & Early Years Centres, Greensand Multi Academy Trust, Surrey.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

Project: Ringmer Primary and Nursery School, Durrington Multi Academy Trust, East Sussex.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

Project: Rusper Primary School, Bohunt Education Trust, West Sussex.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

Project: Robertsbridge Community College, Aquinas Church of England Education Trust Limited, East Sussex.

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

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

Points raised in discussion: None.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: None.

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