



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

23 April 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
- Paul West

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes (Deputy Director)

General discussion points

- No discussion points were raised

Decisions

Lincolnshire:

Trust Changes

Project: An application for St Gilbert's Church of England Primary School (single-academy trust), URN:139178, Lincolnshire, to transfer to Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust (multi-academy trust).

Representations received:

No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

St Gilbert's Church of England Primary School is a medium-sized primary school and a single academy trust.

During an Ofsted monitoring visit in July 2021, the school maintained its good judgement.

The school feels that being part of a collaborative group of schools will help improve the school's financial position, as well as driving forward educational standards and outcomes for pupils.

Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust currently has the central team and financial capacity to support the school. Additionally, the trust's nearby schools will be able to support St Gilbert's Church of England Primary School in building on its already strong foundations. The trust has 23 schools, with 22 in the primary phase.

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

Decision: Defer.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school, trust, diocese and to Lincolnshire Local Authority.

Project: An application for Kidgate Primary Academy (single-academy trust), URN:138637, Lincolnshire, to transfer to Lincolnshire Gateway Academies Trust (multi-academy trust).

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Kidgate Primary Academy is a single-academy trust primary school in the rural town of Louth, Lincolnshire. It has 421 pupils aged 4 to 11.

The school was rated outstanding in a full Ofsted inspection on 17 May 2016 and a monitoring visit on 20 February 2020. However, in the latest inspection on 12 November 2024, it was rated as requires improvement in 'quality of education' and 'leadership and management'. 'Behaviour and attitudes', 'personal development', and 'early years provision' were judged as good.

The board determined that Lincolnshire Gateway Academies Trust is the best choice of multi-academy trust for the school. The governing board then passed a resolution on 28 November 2024 to apply to the Department for Education to join the trust.

Kidgate Primary Academy and Lincolnshire Gateway Academies Trust have developed a strong collaborative relationship and now wish to formalise it by transferring Kidgate Primary Academy to the trust.

As a small stand-alone academy, Kidgate Primary Academy would benefit from the established central teams of Lincolnshire Gateway Academies Trust. This is particularly advantageous given the school's proximity to Louth Academy, which many Kidgate pupils attend in the secondary phase.

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 for Carre's Grammar School, URN:137213, and Kesteven and Sleaford High School Selective Academy, URN:137667, to transfer from The Robert Carre Trust, Lincolnshire, to Community Inclusive Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Established in 2011, The Robert Carre Trust is a two-school multi-academy trust comprising Carre's Grammar School (a boys' selective school) and Kesteven and Sleaford High School Selective Academy (a girls' selective school). Carre's Grammar School was rated good by Ofsted in December 2023, while Kesteven and Sleaford High School Selective Academy

was judged outstanding in all categories in November 2024. Both schools are in Sleaford, Lincolnshire.

Community Inclusive Trust operates 16 academies, including 4 free schools, primarily in Lincolnshire. The trust includes 9 primary schools and 7 special schools. The trust has 2 outstanding schools, 11 good schools, and 3 academies yet to be inspected under the trust.

Community Inclusive Trust has been providing support to The Robert Carre Trust, with additional support from Nova Education Trust. This has included tailored SEND and safeguarding support focusing on improving systems and processes. The Robert Carre Trust has found the support to be beneficial and wants to continue the partnership on a more formal basis by joining Community Inclusive Trust.

Community Inclusive Trust will draw on additional secondary expertise through the LEARN arm of the trust, which provides school-to-school support, as well as from its executive team and board members. Community Inclusive Trust is also working with an academy trust with secondary schools to enhance external challenge and assurance for school improvement.

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. Ash Rahman was not in attendance for this part of the meeting, nor was he in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the schools/trusts and to Lincolnshire Local Authority.

Academy Converter Orders

Project: An application from The Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) CofE Primary, URN:120611, Lincolnshire, to convert and become an academy and join Keystone Academy Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

The Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) CofE Primary embraces a strong Christian ethos, which is a fundamental part of its identity. The school is based in the South Holland district of Lincolnshire in a rural area close to the river Welland.

After previously receiving a good judgement in 2015, the school was inspected by Ofsted in January 2019 and judged as requires improvement. In September 2022, the school was reinspected, and was again judged as requires improvement.

The school has since made significant progress in self-improvement, benefiting from a partnership with Keystone Academy Trust, the Diocese, and the local authority.

The school wishes to join a local majority faith multi-academy trust which can provide the school with increased resources, expertise, and collaboration opportunities, while preserving its core Christian identity. The school has a well-established relationship with Keystone Academy Trust, whose efforts have delivered rapid improvements, as noted in the school's recent positive Ofsted report, where the school was judged to be good in all areas.

Since 2024, Keystone Academy Trust has been the trust of choice for the school's governors due to its robust support and academic and geographical compatibility. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body and the Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education.

Keystone Academy Trust has a track record of 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, diocese and to Lincolnshire Local Authority.

Derbyshire/Nottingham:

Trust Changes

Project: A proposal for QEGSMAT (multi-academy trust), Derbyshire, to merge with Djanogly Learning Trust (multi-academy trust), Nottingham, and form a new trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

This proposal is for QEGSMAT and Djanogly Learning Trust to merge to form one multi-academy trust under the proposed name of Tapestry Learning Partnership.

QEGSMAT was established at the start of 2017 when they sponsored City of Derby Academy. QEGSMAT and Djanogly Learning Trust have been working towards this proposal since 2023. The CEO of Djanogly Learning Trust is currently the acting CEO of QEGSMAT under a service level agreement.

Both trusts view this as the joint creation of a new trust and have worked together to draw out and learn from each other's strengths for a mutually beneficial future.

QEGSMAT currently has 7 schools across Derby, Derbyshire and Staffordshire – 4 primaries (of which 2 are Church of England (CofE)) and 3 secondaries.

The West Midland's Regional Director approved the transfer of the 2 Church of England primary schools to The Moorlands Primary Federation on 7 April 2025.

The 5 remaining non-faith schools (2 primaries and 3 secondaries) are based in Derby and Derbyshire and are proposed to join with the Djanogly Learning Trust schools in forming Tapestry Learning Partnership.

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, Chris Wheatley and Paul Heery. Sian Hampton and Chris Wheatley serve as a Board Director with Mark Mallender (CEO of Djanogly Learning Trust) on Inspiring Leaders. Paul Heery is the CEO at The White Hills Park Trust. A trustee at The White Hills Park Trust is also a senior member at QEGSMAT. Sian Hampton, Chris Wheatley and Paul Heery were not in attendance for this part of the meeting, nor were they in receipt of associated project papers.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the trusts and to Derbyshire and Nottingham local authorities.

Leicestershire:

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Brookvale Groby Learning Campus, URN:138323, Leicestershire, to transfer from Brookvale Groby Learning Trust (multi-academy trust) to The Mead Educational Trust (multi-academy trust).

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Brookvale Groby Learning Campus is a secondary school with a Post-16 Centre, catering to pupils aged 11 to 19 located in Groby, Leicestershire. The school was inspected by Ofsted in October 2024 and judged good in all sub-categories.

Brookvale Groby Learning Campus explored several trusts to find the best fit for their school. They have been working with The Mead Educational Trust for many years and believe that their culture, values and ways of working closely align with their own.

The Mead Educational Trust is made up of 8 primary schools, 5 secondary schools and 1 special school. Thirteen of these schools have been inspected by Ofsted since joining (pre-1 September 2024) and were rated as good or outstanding.

The Mead Educational Trust has been conducting thorough due diligence, engaging with successful Post 16 providers in the area and collaborating with various networks in order to develop further expertise at this phase.

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/trusts and to Leicestershire Local Authority.

Leicester:

Academy Converter Orders

Project: An application from Taylor Road Primary School, URN:120065, Leicester, to convert and become an academy and join Aspire Learning Partnership.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Taylor Road Primary School seeks to voluntarily convert to academy status and join Aspire Learning Partnership. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

Taylor Road Primary School is a larger-than-average-sized primary school located in Leicester and was judged by Ofsted as good in all categories following an Ofsted inspection on 28 January 2025.

The governing body considered several trusts and concluded that Aspire Learning Partnership was the best fit.

Aspire Learning Partnership is a multi-academy trust based in Leicester, formed in June 2023. It comprises two secondary schools: Soar Valley College and The City of Leicester College. Soar Valley College was rated outstanding by Ofsted in 2014. A report of the recent Ofsted inspection on 11 and 12 March 2025 is pending publication. The City of Leicester College was rated as requiring improvement in November 2019.

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 Leicester Local Authority.

North Northamptonshire:

Trust Changes

Project: A proposal for Rothwell Junior School, URN:140073 and Rothwell Victoria Infant School, URN:140061, North Northamptonshire, to transfer from Pathfinder Schools to INMAT.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Pathfinder Schools Trust primarily operates in North Northamptonshire, with 9 primary schools and 1 secondary school.

Rothwell Junior School was judged inadequate across 2 categories and requires improvement in 2 more by Ofsted in September 2024 and a termination warning notice was issued by the Regional Director in December 2024. The Ofsted report for Rothwell Victoria Infant School from 13 July 2021 reported the school continues to be a good.

In November 2024, the trust board informed Department for Education of their intention to transfer all schools to other trusts ahead of the trust's closure. At the same time, the board decided that Rothwell Victoria Infant School, which shares the same site and head teacher as Rothwell Junior School, would be transferred along with Rothwell Junior School.

In selecting a trust to transfer the schools to, it was important to find a trust that could both address the issues identified by Ofsted at Rothwell Juniors and continue to support Rothwell Infants to develop.

INMAT comprises 11 primary schools situated in clusters across North and West Northamptonshire, including Kettering, Wellingborough, Northampton, and Daventry. INMAT was chosen as the sponsor for Rothwell Juniors due to its track record of school improvement, evidence of curriculum alignment, collaboration and engagement with local communities.

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, trusts and to North Northamptonshire Local Authority.

Nottinghamshire:

Academy Converter Orders

Project: An application from Orston Primary School, URN:122668, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join Equals Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Orston Primary School seeks to convert to academy status and join Equals Trust. The school is a small rural primary and seeking to benefit from being in a multi-academy trust to help secure its long-term future and financial viability. A resolution has been passed by the school's governing body.

At its most recent Ofsted inspection in January 2023, the school was rated good overall, with an outstanding judgement for behaviour and attitudes.

Finding a trust that was geographically close was important to the school, as a motivating factor for joining a trust is the desire to collaborate with staff and children at other local schools. A primary-focussed trust was also a priority.

Orston Primary School is confident Equals Trust would offer the support the school requires, by enabling the school to both broaden and deepen their curriculum and increase the range of learning and enrichment activities. The latter was identified as an area for improvement in Orston Primary School's most recent Ofsted report.

Equals Trust is a 16 primary school multi-academy trust established in 2016 and has schools located in Nottinghamshire.

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 Nottinghamshire Local Authority.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Project: The Brigg Infant School.

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Lake View Primary and Nursery School.

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Arno Vale Junior School.

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: The Lanes Primary School.

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: The Herewoode Academy.

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Mickley Village Primary & Nursery School.

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

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Significant Changes

Project: An application from Brocks Hill Primary School (Lionheart Educational Trust), URN:139739, Leicestershire, to make the following change: expand capacity from 420 to 630 places from September 2025.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Lincoln Castle Academy (Delta Academies Trust), URN: 150482, Lincolnshire, to make the following change: remove the sixth form provision.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Grantham Additional Needs Fellowship (Community Inclusive Trust), URN:141254, Lincolnshire, to make the following change: increase pupil places from 260 to 356.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Village Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust Ltd), URN:145760, Derby, to make the following change: add a 26-place SEND unit.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Borrow Wood Primary School (Odyssey Collaborative Trust), URN:146847, Derby, to make the following change: add a 16-place Enhanced Resource Base.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Ash Croft Primary Academy (The Harmony Trust Ltd), URN:145806, Derby, to make the following change: add a 16-place Enhanced Resource Base.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

Project: An application from Greenfields Primary School and Nursery (The David Ross Education Trust), URN:140191, North Northamptonshire, to make the following change: add a 32-place SEND unit.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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

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