



## Notes of meeting: East of England

Date of meeting: 20 March 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

- Jonathan Duff

### Advisory Board (AB) members

- Lawrence Chapman
- Tim Coulson
- Mark Farmer
- Clare Flintoff
- Al Kingsley
- Sarah Skinner

### Guests

- None

### Apologies

- Adrian Rogers
- Josephine Valentine

### DfE senior civil servants

- Becky Taylor (acting Deputy Director)

## General discussion points

- The Regional Director gave some general national and regional updates and invited feedback from the board.
- The Regional Director reflected to the board about the region's attendance conference.
- The board heard an update on the establishment of the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) teams.
- The board considered Ofsted judgements outcomes for the previous month.

# Decisions

## Essex

### Trust Changes

**Project: A proposal for The Cornelius Vermuyden School [URN: 140308], Essex, to transfer from Cornelius Vermuyden School to South East Essex Academy Trust.**

#### **Representations received:**

- No representations were made for this project.

#### **AB discussion:**

- Sarah Skinner declared she recently resigned as a member of South East Essex Academy Trust.
- Cornelius Vermuyden School (CVS) is a 11-16 secondary academy on Canvey Island, Essex. The school is in a single academy trust (SAT).
- The school was judged 'Inadequate' by Ofsted under the old inspection framework in October 2023.
- The board heard about the significant challenges faced by the school in leadership, curriculum, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The board heard the school has received significant support from the department and other local trusts. The board heard South East Essex Academy Trust is the only trust willing to continue to support the school subject to a departmental financial support package.
- The board heard about the school's recent monitoring visit and the expertise and capacity South East Essex Academy Trust has brought in supporting Cornelius Vermuyden School as a partner trust.
- The board discussed South East Essex Academy Trust's previous school improvement experience and considered their capacity to support the school.
- The board discussed the risks if Cornelius Vermuyden were to remain as a single academy trust, in terms of falling pupil roll, significant financial challenges and lack of investment in school improvement and leadership.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Sarah Skinner did not receive papers for this item due to conflict of interest, as she was previously a member of the South East Essex Academy Trust board.

**Further actions required:** Delivery Officer to inform the trusts of the decision.

## Peterborough

### Establishing a new academy through the free school presumption route

**Project:** A proposal for a sponsor for Great Haddon Primary School, Peterborough.

**Representations received:**

- No representations were made for this project.

**AB discussion:**

- Great Haddon Primary School is a free school presumption proposed to open in Peterborough in September 2026.
- The board heard Peterborough City Council's preferred sponsor is Hampton Academies Trust.
- The board heard the trust has a good understanding of local needs and a strong vision for Great Haddon Primary School.
- The board heard the trust has previously opened two free schools that have been judged by Ofsted as overall 'Good' under the old inspection framework.
- The board reviewed the educational outcomes for Hampton Academies Trust's schools.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Al Kingsley did not receive any papers and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as he is chair of board of trustees for Hamptons Academies Trust.

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the local authority of the decision.

## Suffolk

### Significant changes to an open academy

**Project:** An application for Chalk Hill [URN: 147594], Eastern Education Group Trust, Suffolk, to make the following changes:

- Redesignation from an alternative provision to a special school
- Transfer to another site
- Change of age range from 8-14 to 8-16
- Increasing the planned number of pupils from 30 to 48

**Representations received:**

- No representations were made for this project.

**AB discussion:**

- Chalk Hill is an alternative provision (AP) academy in Sudbury, Suffolk.

- The board heard that the school's boarding facilities created an anomaly as there is no Ofsted inspection framework for APs with boarding, leading to this request to redesignate it as a special academy with boarding provision.
- The board heard that the trust is also requesting to transfer the academy to a new site at the former Horringer Court Middle School in Bury St Edmunds, in order to better accommodate pupils' needs.
- The board heard the proposed changes will not displace current pupils or affect their travelling arrangements as Suffolk local authority continues to provide transportation.
- The board reviewed the trust's special school educational provision, considering one academy's recent Ofsted inspection rating of serious weaknesses. However, reassurances were given, highlighting the trust's strong track record with SEND pupils and prior school improvements.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Lawrence Chapman did not receive any papers and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as he is Regional Director of SEND and Outdoor Learning for Eastern Education Group.

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the trust of the decision.

## Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

### Significant changes to an open academy

**Project:** An application for Chipping Ongar Primary School [URN: 146195], Bridge Academy Trust, Essex, to make the following change: adding an 8-place SEN unit or resourced provision.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Mark Farmer did not receive any papers and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as he is CEO for Bridge Academy Trust. Sarah Skinner did not receive any papers and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as she is board member of the Bridge Academy Trust.

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and trust.

### Significant changes to an open academy

**Project:** An application for Ravens Academy [URN: 139641], Academy Transformation Trust, Essex, to change its age range from 3-11 to 4-11 and close its nursery.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and trust.

### Converter academy orders

**Project:** An application from St Joseph's Catholic Primary School [URN: 109635], Luton to convert and become an academy and join St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Academy Order to be issued and LA to be informed of the decision.

### Significant changes to an open academy

**Project:** An application for Iceni Primary Academy [URN: 151432], Academy Transformation Trust, Norfolk, to change its age range from 4-11 to 3-11 and add a nursery.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and trust.

### **Converter academy orders**

**Project:** An application from Stanton Community Primary School [URN: 124547], Suffolk, to convert and become an academy and join Eastern Education Group Trust.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** Lawrence Chapman did not receive any papers and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as he is Regional Director of SEND and Outdoor Learning for Eastern Education Group.

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Academy Order to be issued and LA to be informed of the decision.

### **Converter academy orders**

**Project:** An application from Hopton CEVA Primary School [URN: 124703], Suffolk, to convert and become an academy and join Elveden Schools Trust.

**Decision:** Defer

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and trust.

### **Converter academy orders**

**Project:** An application from Kyson Primary School [URN: 124628], Suffolk, to convert and join East Anglian Schools Trust.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and the trust of the decision. Academy Order to be issued and LA to be informed of the decision.

### **Significant changes to an open academy**

**Project:** A retrospective application for The Willows Primary School [URN: 144216], Orwell Multi Academy Trust, Suffolk, to make the following change of age range from 3-11 to 4-11 and close its nursery.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and trust.

## Significant changes to an open academy

**Project: An application for Warren School [URN: 146431], Consortium Trust, Suffolk, to make the following change: acquiring an additional (satellite) site**

**Decision:** Approve with conditions

- Regions Group will review the provision in collaboration with Consortium Trust during the Spring term of 2026.
- Consortium Trust is required to provide an update on the viability of Glebeland Primary School.
- Consortium Trust must adhere to the requirements specified by the Schools Financial Support and Oversight directorate in their letter dated 20 February 2025.

**Conflicts:** None

**Further actions required:** Delivery officer to inform the school and trust.

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