



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: East of England

Date of meeting: 26 June 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 Flintoff
- Al Kingsley
- Adrian Rogers
- Sarah Skinner
- Josephine Valentine

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- None

General discussion points

- The Regional Director gave some general national and regional updates and invited feedback from the board.
- The board heard updates on the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence (RISE) team.

Decisions

Cambridgeshire

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Hinchingsbrook School [URN: 137475], Godmanchester Community Academy [URN: 138029], Cromwell Academy [URN: 141297], Godmanchester Bridge Academy [URN: 141690] and Spaldwick Primary School [URN: 148983], Cambridgeshire, to transfer from ACES Academies Trust to The Cam Academy Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that ACES Academies Trust comprises four primary academies and one secondary academy, all based in Cambridgeshire.
- The board heard that there have been limited opportunities for ACES Academies Trust to grow.
- The board heard that this is a voluntary application to close the ACES Academies Trust and transfer all its academies to The Cam Academy Trust.
- The board was informed that the transfer will expand the existing CAM Huntington hub and this aligns with The Cam Academy Trust's strategy of linking primary and secondary feeder schools.
- The board heard that The Cam Academy Trust has reviewed the skills of its trust board in preparation for the merger and has committed to pausing further growth until the ACES schools are successfully integrated.
- The board discussed the educational performance data of The Cam Academy Trust.
- The Regional Director and the board recommended that The Cam Academy Trust consult with another local trust that has undergone a merger of similar scale.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Central Bedfordshire

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Weatherfield Academy [URN: 137896], Central Bedfordshire, to transfer from Weatherfield Academy to Whipperley Academy Trust (Luton).

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Weatherfield Academy is a special school in a single academy trust (SAT) located in Dunstable, Central Bedfordshire, and would benefit from joining a multi academy trust (MAT).
- The board heard about the voluntary application to close Weatherfield Academy (SAT) and transfer Weatherfield Academy (school) to Whipperley Academy Trust, based in Luton.
- The board heard that Weatherfield Academy and Whipperley Academy Trust share common values and an ethos, particularly around inclusive practice. It was also noted that Whipperley Academy Trust has been supporting Weatherfield Academy in areas such as safeguarding, governance, finance, and the quality of education.
- The board discussed the governance and financial arrangements of Weatherfield Academy, including the current service level agreement between the two trusts.
- The board heard that both Central Bedfordshire and Luton local authorities support the proposed transfer.

Decision: Approve with conditions

- The Regional Director requires Whipperley Academy Trust to undergo a governance review in 2025/26 and Weatherfield Academy to continue working with Central Bedfordshire local authority on safeguarding.

Conflicts: None

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

Luton

Trust Changes

Project: An application for The Ferrars Academy [URN: 139612], Luton, to transfer from Ferrars Academy to Pioneer Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that Ferrars Academy, a single academy trust (SAT) in Luton, has voluntarily applied to close Ferrars Academy (SAT) and transfer The Ferrars Academy (school) to Pioneer Learning Trust, also based in Luton.
- The board heard Ferrars Academy is a feeder school to Ferrars Junior School, which is already part of Pioneer Learning Trust. Therefore, the proposed transfer would formalise the existing relationship between the two trusts.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Converter academy orders

Project: An application for Spring Meadow Primary School and School House Nursery [URN: 114834], Essex, to convert and become an academy and join Life Education 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 Elm Hall Primary School [URN: 146695], Attain Academy Partnership Trust, Essex, to change its age range from 4-11 to 3-11 and add a nursery.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Silver End Academy [URN: 144955], Inspires MAT, Essex, to change its age range from 2-11 to 4-11 and close its nursery.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Leigh Beck Infant and Nursery Academy [URN: 141326], Northwick Park Trust, Essex, to change its age range from 3-7 to 2-7.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Round Diamond Primary School [URN: 149206], Ivy Learning Trust, Hertfordshire, to make the following change:

- **removing a 16-place SEN unit**

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Burnham Market Primary School [URN: 144825], The Wensum Trust, Norfolk, to change its age range from 4-11 to 2-11 and add a nursery.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for UET Compass Academy [URN: 150354], Unity Education Trust, Norfolk, to make the following change:

- **location of one of their satellite sites**

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for St Nicholas School [URN: 144691], SEN Trust Southend, Southend, to change its age range from 11-16 to 9-16.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Kingsdown School [URN: 144692], SEN Trust Southend, Southend, to change its age range from 3-14 to 3-11.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Lancaster School [URN: 144693], SEN Trust Southend, Southend, to change its age range from 14-19 to 11-19.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: A retrospective application for Hanford Hall Primary School [URN: 144212], Orwell Multi Academy Trust, Suffolk, to change its age range from 3-11 to 4-11 and close its nursery.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for St Christopher's CEVCP School [URN: 142025], Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust, Suffolk, to change of age range from 4-11 to 3-11 and add a nursery.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Wells Hall Primary School [URN: 144218], Unity Schools Partnership, Suffolk, to make the following change:

- adding a 12-place SEN unit

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: Tim Coulson did not receive any papers and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as he is the Chief Executive Officer for Unity Schools Partnership.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Langer Primary Academy [URN: 138117], Unity Schools Partnership, Suffolk, to make the following change:

- increasing the number of pupils within an existing SEN unit or resourced provision by 7 places

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: Tim Coulson did not receive any papers and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as he is the Chief Executive Officer for Unity Schools Partnership.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

