



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: East of England

Date of meeting: 17 July 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
- Adrian Rogers
- Sarah Skinner
- Josephine Valentine

Guests

- None

Apologies

- None

DfE senior civil servants

- Susan Lovelock (incoming Interim Regional Director of West Midlands)

Published: August 2025

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.
- The board considered Ofsted judgement outcomes for the previous month.

Decisions

Bedfordshire

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Wilstead Primary School [URN: 109492], Bedfordshire, to convert and become an academy and join Heart Academies Trust.

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Goldington Green Academy [URN: 139523], Bedfordshire, to transfer from Goldington Green Academy to Heart Academies Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board heard Wilstead Primary School is a mixed, local authority-maintained primary school, while Goldington Green Academy operates as a single academy trust (SAT). Both schools are located in Bedford and are geographically close to Heart Academies Trust.
- Both schools currently have Ofsted good ratings.
- Wilstead Primary School and Goldington Green Academy are aligned with the values and ethos of Heart Academies Trust.
- Heart Academies Trust has been working closely with Goldington Green Academy to strengthen its financial position and governance structures.
- The board reviewed performance data for the schools and Heart Academies Trust and discussed the trust's school improvement strategy.
- Wilstead Primary School will act as a capacity giver to Heart Academies Trust, owing to its strong educational outcomes.
- The voluntary conversion of Wilstead Primary School and the transfer of Goldington Green Academy to Heart Academies Trust should bring strategic alignment and long-term sustainability.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Central Bedfordshire

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Redborne Upper School and Community College [URN: 136559], Bedfordshire, to transfer from Redborne Upper School and Community College to The Pyramid Schools Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Redborne Upper School and Community College is a single academy trust (SAT) located in Ampthill, Bedfordshire.
- The board noted that Redborne Upper School and Community College has an established relationship with The Pyramid Schools Trust, with both sharing a common educational ethos.
- The Pyramid School Trust's central team has been expanded to support growth.
- The Pyramid Schools Trust appears to have strong financial management, which would support the effective operational management of Redborne Upper School and Community College.
- The board was informed that the voluntary transfer would be beneficial in broadening the post-16 curriculum offer.
- The Pyramid Schools Trusts is working with the local authority on its transition from a three-tier to a two-tier education system.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Peterborough

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Woodston Primary School [URN: 146843], Orton Wistow Primary School [URN: 146845] and Nene Valley Primary School [URN: 146854], Peterborough, to transfer from OWN Trust to Meridian Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The board heard that the OWN Trust consists of three primary schools, all based in Peterborough.
- The board was informed that this is a voluntary application to close the OWN Trust and transfer the three primary academies to the Meridian Trust.
- The board heard that the CEO of OWN Trust has resigned, and the trust is currently being led by an off-payroll CEO.
- The board noted that the OWN Trust would benefit from transferring its academies to a trust like Meridian Trust, which operates in the same local area and can provide strong and stable leadership.
- The board reviewed the educational outcomes of the Meridian Trust.
- The board heard that there are existing links between the two trusts, and the transfer would enable Meridian Trust to build a regional primary hub in the area.
- The board was reminded of the recent growth approved at a previous Advisory Board meeting and informed that the trust has experience in handling a transfer of this scale.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Converter Academy Orders

Project: An application from Loddon Infant and Nursery School [URN: 121203], Norfolk, to convert and become an academy and join The Active Learning Trust Limited.

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.

Project: An application from Loddon Junior School [URN: 121192], Norfolk, to convert and become an academy and join The Active Learning Trust Limited.

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 Olive AP Academy - Cambridge [URN: 142378], Olive Academies, Cambridgeshire, to make the following change:

- increasing the planned number of pupils in an AP academy by 13 places

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Olive AP Academy - Nene Valley [URN: 142793], Olive Academies, Cambridgeshire, to make the following change:

- increasing the planned number of pupils in an AP academy by 21 places

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Cranfield Church of England Academy [URN: 148454], Cranfield Church of England Academy, Central Bedfordshire, to change its age range from 2 to 9 to 2 to 11.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Harwich and Dovercourt High School [URN: 145061], The Sigma Trust, Essex, to change its age range from 11-18 to 11-16 and close its sixth form.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Witham Oaks Academy [URN: 139871], Inspires MAT, Essex, to make the following change:

- adding a 12-place SEN unit or resourced provision

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for The Gilberd School [URN: 137926], Alpha Trust, Essex, to make the following change:

- expansion (increasing physical capacity) by 100 places

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Sculthorpe Church of England Primary Academy [URN: 141918], The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, Norfolk, 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 Queensway Infant Academy and Nursery [URN: 149896], Inspiration Trust, Norfolk, to change its age range from 3-7 to 4-7 and close its nursery.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for North Walsham High School [URN: 147505], Enrich Learning Trust, Norfolk, to make the following change:

- adding a 20-place SEN unit or resourced provision

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Warren School [URN: 146431], Consortium Trust, Suffolk, to make the following changes:

- increasing the planned number of pupils in a special or AP academy by 55 places
- acquiring an additional (satellite) site

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Ipswich Academy [URN: 136453], Paradigm Trust, Suffolk, to make the following change:

- adding a 24-place SEN unit or resourced provision

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Burton End Primary Academy [URN: 141546], Unity Schools Partnership, Suffolk, to make the following change:

- increasing the number of pupils within an existing SEN unit or resourced provision by 12 places

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for Clements Primary Academy [URN: 144276], Unity Schools Partnership, Suffolk, to make the following change:

- increasing the number of pupils within an existing SEN unit or resourced provision by 8 places

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for West Row Academy [URN: 150276], Unity Schools Partnership, Suffolk, to make the following change:

- increasing the number of pupils within an existing SEN unit or resourced provision by 12 places

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

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:

- closing an off-site satellite site (Bramford Lane - 15 places)

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

Project: An application for The Bridge School [URN: 147162], Unity Schools Partnership, Suffolk, to make the following change:

- acquiring an off-site satellite site (Bramford Lane - 20 places)

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school / trust.

List of projects listed on the published draft agenda, but were removed before the meeting

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Cold Norton Primary School [URN: 114904], Essex, to convert and become an academy and join The Eveleigh LINK Academy Trust.

Reason for removal: This project has been rescheduled for an AB meeting later this year.

Trust changes

Project: An application for The Appleton School [URN: 136579], The Billericay School [URN: 136861], The Bromfords School [URN: 139181] and Woodlands School [URN: 141214], Essex, to transfer from Compass Education Trust Ltd to South East Essex Academy Trust.

Reason for removal: The project has been withdrawn by Compass Education Trust Ltd.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application for Acle Academy [URN: 138758], The Wensum Trust, Norfolk, to make the following change:

- adding a 10-place SEN unit or resourced provision

Reason for removal: This project has been rescheduled for an AB meeting later this year.

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