



Department
for Education

Note of decisions: South East Advisory Board

16 October 2025

Advice

AB advice was sought by correspondence. The views of members are reflected in the AB discussion sections below, unless the AB member(s) declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD)

- Kate Dethridge

Advisory Board (AB) members that provided advice

- Sue Samson
- Claire Lowe
- Paul James
- Stuart Gardner
- Sarah Bennett
- Sarah Brown

Coastal

Trust Changes

Project: The following academies to transfer from University of Brighton Academies Trust to Mulberry Schools Trust:

- The Hastings Academy, URN:136401, East Sussex
- The St Leonards Academy, URN:136400, East Sussex
- West St Leonards Primary Academy, URN:140179, East Sussex
- The Baird Primary Academy, URN:140493, East Sussex
- Silverdale Primary Academy, URN: 141713, East Sussex

Representations received:

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

AB advice:

- AB members recognised the need for an academy trust with strong school improvement expertise, given the significant improvements needed in some schools.
- The proposed trust's existing work in East Sussex and knowledge of the area was raised as an important consideration, given the unique challenges in Hastings.
- Some of the trust's existing programmes were highlighted, such as the Changemakers programme and the benefit that this could have in Hastings.

Decision: Approve with conditions:

- Subject to completion of the trusts' financial due diligence and an assessment on the financial impact of the transfers.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Inform the schools, trusts and local authority.

Project: The following academies to transfer from University of Brighton Academies Trust to REAch2 Academy Trust:

- Desmond Anderson Primary Academy, URN:143973, West Sussex
- Pound Hill Infant Academy, URN:142290, West Sussex
- Holmbush Primary Academy, URN:141906, West Sussex

Representations received:

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

AB advice:

- AB members commented on the geographic distribution of the schools and how this aligns with some of the existing Reach2 schools in West Sussex.
- The trust's school improvement expertise and experience of working with a number of different clusters was noted.

Decision: Approve with conditions:

- Subject to completion of the trusts' financial due diligence and an assessment on the financial impact of the transfers.

Conflicts: None.**Further actions required:** Inform the schools, trusts and local authority.**Project: The following academies to transfer from University of Brighton Academies Trust to The Pioneer Academy:**

- Robsack Wood Primary Academy, URN:141263, East Sussex
- Churchwood Primary Academy, URN:141261, East Sussex

Representations received:

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

AB advice:

- AB members highlighted the trust's existing presence in the area and their experience supporting Hollington Primary School, a school that also previously transferred to them from UBAT.
- The trust's school improvement expertise and strong track record was also highlighted.

Decision: Approve with conditions:

- Subject to completion of the trusts' financial due diligence and an assessment on the financial impact of the transfers.

Conflicts: None.**Further actions required:** Inform the schools, trusts and local authority.**Project: The following academies to transfer from University of Brighton Academies Trust to Hurst Education Trust:**

- Blackthorns Community Primary Academy, URN:141892, West Sussex
- Lindfield Primary Academy, URN:142291, West Sussex

Representations received:

- 6 representations were received for this project.

- When received in time, representations are shared in advance with the RD and the AB members, who considered them when providing advice to RDs.

AB advice:

- AB members considered other recent additions to the trust and their wider growth strategy.
- The challenges associated with rapid growth were considered.
- It was noted that there has been a lack of Ofsted inspections under the trust's current structure given the trust's relatively recent establishment, but that pupils have continued to perform well in the trust.

Decision: Approve with conditions:

- Subject to completion of the trusts' financial due diligence and an assessment on the financial impact of the transfers.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the schools, trusts and local authority.

Project: The following academies to transfer from University of Brighton Academies Trust to Sussex Learning Trust:

- The Burgess Hill Academy, URN: 142089, West Sussex
- The Bedelands Academy (URN: N/A - pipeline free school), West Sussex

Representations received:

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

AB advice:

- The benefit of the trust's existing links to the area were noted, as was their school improvement expertise.
- Other local connections were considered, including the benefits of Sussex Learning Trust sponsoring a nearby pipeline free school as well.

Decision: Approve with conditions:

- Subject to completion of the trusts' financial due diligence and an assessment on the financial impact of the transfers.

Conflicts: Sue Samson. Sue did not receive any papers for the Sussex Learning Trust item only and did not provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest.

Further actions required: Inform the schools, trusts and local authority.

Project: The following academy to transfer from University of Brighton Academies Trust to Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust:

- Dudley Infant Academy, URN: 140311, East Sussex

Representations received:

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

AB advice:

- The trust's existing links to the area were noted, including the fact that the nearby junior school is already part of the trust.

Decision: Approve with conditions:

- Subject to completion of the trusts' financial due diligence and an assessment on the financial impact of the transfers.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school, trusts and local authority.

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Converter Academy Order

Project: Woodingdean Primary School, Brighton and Hove, to convert and join Eko Trust.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Inform the school/trust, and local authority.

Significant Change

Project: Meadhurst Primary School, The Howard Partnership Trust, Surrey, to make the following changes:

- Increasing the number of pupils within an existing SEN unit or resourced provision

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school/trust and local authority.

Project: Hailsham Academy, Mark Education Trust, East Sussex, to make the following changes:

- Change of age range (including adding or removing a nursery or sixth form provision)

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school/trust and local authority.

Project: The Wren School, Excalibur Academies Trust, Reading, to make the following changes:

- Adding a SEN unit or resourced provision

Decision: Defer

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Inform the school/trust and local authority.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Droxford Junior School, University of Winchester Academy Trust, Hampshire.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, and local authority.

Lambs Lane Primary School, Orchard Learning Alliance, Wokingham.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, and local authority.

Orchard Infant School, University of Winchester Academy Trust, Hampshire.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, and local authority.

Radstock Primary School, Orchard Learning Alliance, Wokingham.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, and local authority.

Southfield Park Primary School, Lumen Learning Trust, Surrey.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, and local authority.

St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Xavier Catholic Education Trust, Surrey.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, diocese and local authority.

Turners Hill CofE Primary School, Hurst Education Trust Limited, West Sussex.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, diocese and local authority

West Hoathly CofE Primary School, Hurst Education Trust Limited, West Sussex.

Points raised: N/A.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: Inform the school/trust, diocese and local authority