



Notes of meeting: East Midlands Advisory Board

17 December 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.
- Paul West.

Guests

- None.

Apologies

- Chris Wheatley.

DfE senior civil servants

- Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Regions Group.

General discussion points

- No discussion points were raised.

Decisions

Leicestershire

Trust Changes

Project: 2A - An application for Outwoods Edge Primary School (URN:139038) (single-academy trust), Leicestershire, to transfer to Bradgate Education Partnership.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Outwoods Edge Primary School, a single-academy trust located in Loughborough, Leicestershire, seeks to voluntarily transfer to Bradgate Education Partnership, a multi-academy trust also based in Leicestershire.

Outwoods Edge Primary School is a larger-than-average primary academy for pupils aged 4–11. The school converted to academy status in 2012. Ofsted last inspected the school in October 2021, confirming it “continues to be a good school.”

The trust board at Outwoods Edge Primary School considered several trusts and concluded that Bradgate Education Partnership was the best fit.

Bradgate Education Partnership is a mixed-phase trust formed in 2016, comprising 18 academies - 16 primary schools and 2 secondary schools.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to Bradgate Education Partnership as outlined in the High-Quality Trust Framework, was considered against the strategic needs of the schools.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust and Leicestershire County Council.

West Northamptonshire

Trust Changes

Project: 3A - An application for Magdalen College School, (URN:139158) (single-academy trust), West Northamptonshire, to transfer to EPA Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Magdalen College School, Brackley is a single-academy trust located in West Northamptonshire and is seeking to transfer to EPA Trust, a high-performing multi-academy trust based in Oxfordshire. If approved, the transfer is expected to take effect on 1 April 2026 and is intended to secure rapid and sustainable improvement following an Ofsted judgement of special measures in April 2025.

Magdalen College School is a large secondary academy for pupils aged 11 to 18, with 1,358 pupils on roll against a capacity of 1,500. The school converted to academy status in 2012. Ofsted last inspected the school in April 2025 and judged it to require special measures. A subsequent monitoring visit confirmed that while the school remains in special measures, improvements have begun under the support of EPA Trust, particularly in behaviour and leadership capacity.

EPA Trust is an established trust formed in 2012, currently comprising 11 schools across Oxfordshire, including 1 secondary school, 1 all-through school, and 9 primary schools. All schools have been judged by Ofsted to be good or better, with the exception of one primary awaiting inspection after joining as requires improvement.

The trust board at Magdalen College School requested to join EPA Trust after acknowledging that it did not have the capacity to deliver the rapid improvements required. EPA has been working with the school since May 2025.

The proposed transfer reflects a clear alignment between the school's needs and EPA Trust's capacity and expertise. EPA's experience of improving schools in challenging circumstances, combined with its leadership and governance structures, will support Magdalen College School to secure rapid and sustained improvement.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to EPA Trust, as outlined in the High-Quality Trust Framework, was considered against the strategic needs of the school.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust and West Northamptonshire Council.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Project: Norwell CofE Primary School (URN: 122766).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required

Project: St Matthew's CofE Primary School (URN: 122764).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required

Project: Pollyplatt Primary School (URN: 120472).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required

Project: Kneesall CofE Primary School (URN: 122762).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required

Project: Taylor Road Primary School (URN: 120065).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required

Project: Farnsfield Primary School and Nursery (URN: 133272).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 January 2026

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 for Woodford Halse Church of England Primary Academy (141073), Innovate Multi Academy Trust, West Northamptonshire, to make the following change: change the age range to 2-11, expanding the nursery to include 2-year-olds.

Representations received: None

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further action required: Feedback decision to the schools, trust and West Northamptonshire Council.

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

Sponsored Academy Orders

Project: A proposal for Transform Trust to sponsor Wren Park Primary School (URN:112758), Derby.

Reason for removal: Further information required prior to the Regional Director making a decision.

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