



Department
for Education

Note of decisions: South West Advisory Board

Date of planned meeting: 15 December 2025

Advice

No meeting was held. AB advice was sought by correspondence. The views of members that sent in advice are reflected in the AB discussion sections below, unless the AB member(s) declared a conflict of interest.

Regional Director (RD)

- Lucy Livings - Regional Director (RD), South West Region

Advisory Board (AB) members that provided advice

- Steve Savory
- Adele Haysom
- Margaret Simmons-Bird
- Mark Ducker
- Rachel Howie

Decisions

Gloucestershire

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Stone with Woodford Church of England Primary School (139987), Gloucestershire to transfer from Stone with Woodford C of E Primary School (SAT) to Severn Federation Academy Trust.

Representations received: ** all projects for Severn Federation Academy Trust (academy conversion and trust change) were discussed together.

- No representations were made for this project.

AB advice

- All schools have voluntarily agreed to join the Severn Federation Academy Trust (SFAT).
- Old Sodbury CoE Primary is a school located within South Gloucestershire. The school was rated good at their last Ofsted inspection November 2023.
- St Helen's and St Mary's CoE Primary schools are both located in South Gloucestershire and work as a federation. St Helen's was rated outstanding overall at their last Ofsted inspection December 2019 and St Mary's was rated good overall at their last Ofsted inspection October 2023.
- Stone with Woodford is a single academy trust which has been working with SFAT since May 2025. The school was rated good across all measures at their last Ofsted inspection April 2025.
- The schools applying to join SFAT have expressed that the Trust's pupil-focused and church-based values strongly align with their own. As church schools, they also believe SFAT can provide effective support with financial decisions, admissions, and processes, ensuring long-term stability and security.
- The Trust's school improvement model was considered, emphasizing the need for its continued development as the Trust expands. The discussion highlighted how support should be tailored to meet the needs and challenges of individual schools, ensuring rapid improvement and sustained above-average outcomes in reading, writing, and maths. It was recommended that the Trust undertake a review of the current model and align its development with growth plans, setting clear ambitions for pupil outcomes and defining key milestones. As part of this process, Regions Group recommends partnering with a larger trust or one that has recently grown to share lessons learned, Regions Group will assist in facilitating these discussions.
- As the Trust grows, strengthening the Board with experience in all areas would be beneficial. It is recommended commissioning an external review of governance.
- The financial position of all four schools joining the trust was considered, the Schools Financial Support and Oversight (SFSO) directorate and Regions Group will work with the trust as the schools join.

Decision: Approve with conditions

- The decision is subject to the completion of a financial assessment on one of the joining schools by the Funding and Financial Oversight team.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

South Gloucestershire

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Old Sodbury Church of England Primary School (109175), South Gloucestershire to convert and become an academy and join Severn Federation Academy Trust

Project: An application from St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Yate (109264), South Gloucestershire to convert and become an academy and join Severn Federation Academy Trust.

Project: An application from St Helen's Church of England Primary School (109158), South Gloucestershire to convert and become an academy and join Severn Federation Academy Trust.

Representations received: ** all projects for Severn Federation Academy Trust (academy conversion and trust change) were discussed together.

- No representations were made for this project.

Decision: Approve with conditions

- The decision is subject to the completion of a financial assessment on one of the joining schools by the Funding and Financial Oversight team.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

This is a list of schools expected to open on the first of the month following the date of this planned meeting. They must have been given agreement in principle to open.

Project: Crossways Infant School, South Gloucestershire (The Leaf Trust)

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Crossways Junior School, South Gloucestershire (The Leaf Trust)

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Martock Church of England VA Primary School, Somerset (The Bath And Wells Diocesan Academies Trust)

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

Opening date 1 January 2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Sea Mills Primary School, Bristol City of (The Leaf Trust)

Points raised in discussion: No questions or concerns were raised.

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.

Academy Converters

Project: An application from Gillingham School (113882), Dorset to convert and become an academy and join United Learning Trust.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Trust changes

Project: An application for Blockley Church of England Primary School (139524), Gloucestershire to transfer from Blockley Educational Academy (SAT) to The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust.

Decision: Approve

- It was advised that the Trust consider how they will ensure consistent outcomes at KS2 across all schools, by addressing areas of variable performance and monitoring and sustaining High-Quality outcomes. Regions Group team will discuss this with the Trust.

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: Liden Academy, Swindon (Excalibur Academies Trust) to make the following change:

- retrospective change in age range from 2 – 11 to 9 months – 11 to extend nursery provision

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: Gordano School, North Somerset (Lighthouse Schools Partnership) to make the following change:

- to add a 25-place resource base for pupils with autism spectrum disorder

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

Project: The Manor CoE VC Primary School, Wiltshire (The White Horse Federation) to make the following change:

- to change the age range from 4-11 to 3-11 to add nursery provision

RD decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery officer to inform the schools, trust and Diocese (where relevant).

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

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: Combe Pafford School (139540), Torbay (Combe Pafford School SAT) to make a change in type of SEN provision from Moderate Learning Difficulties to Autistic Spectrum Condition

Reason for removal: Decision postponed to January 2026