



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: Yorkshire and the Humber

09 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

- Alison Wilson OBE

Advisory Board (AB) members

- Steve Hodsman
- Carol Dewhurst OBE
- Tom Banham
- Rowena Hackwood

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Jonny Uttley

DfE senior civil servants

- None

General discussion points

- Digital standards and sustainability plans
- New Ofsted framework and inspection process.
- Risk management with Related Party Transactions

Published January 2026

Decisions

North Yorkshire and North Humberside

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from The Market Weighton School, URN 118076, East Riding of Yorkshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called The Wyke Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The Market Weighton School is an 852 capacity school located in East Riding of Yorkshire with 626 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in September 2022 and was rated as Good.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside The Market Weighton School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to the desire to strengthen the existing partnerships, rooted in community and inclusivity, and the benefits a strong Multi Academy Trust could bring to the area.
- The Regional Director decided to defer the project in September 2025 to give proposers time to address concerns raised with the project. Although positive steps have been taken and additional work to address previous concerns has been started, concerns remain primarily around capacity of the proposed trust to drive school improvement support for the primary and infant school.

Decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust detailing the further information required or rationale for deciding.

Project: An application from Market Weighton Infant School, URN 117912, East Riding of Yorkshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called The Wyke Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Market Weighton Infant School is a 228 capacity school located in East Riding of Yorkshire with 291 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in March 2024 and was rated as Good.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Market Weighton Infant School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to the desire to strengthen the existing partnerships, rooted in community and inclusivity, and the benefits a strong Multi Academy Trust could bring to the area.
- The Regional Director decided to defer the project in September 2025 to give proposers time to address concerns raised with the project. Although positive steps have been taken and additional work to address previous concerns has been started, concerns remain primarily around capacity of the proposed trust to drive school improvement support for the primary and infant school.

Decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust detailing the further information required or rationale for deciding.

Project: An application from Wyke Sixth Form College, URN 130581, Kingston Upon Hull, City of, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called The Wyke Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Wyke Sixth Form College is a 2500 capacity college located in Kingston Upon Hull with 2447 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in October 2023 and was rated as Outstanding.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Wyke Sixth Form College's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to the desire to strengthen the existing partnerships, rooted in community and inclusivity, and the benefits a strong Multi Academy Trust could bring to the area.
- The Regional Director decided to defer the project in September 2025 to give proposers time to address concerns raised with the project. Although positive steps have been taken and additional work to address previous concerns has been started, concerns remain primarily around capacity of the proposed trust to drive school improvement support for the primary and infant school.

Decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust detailing the further information required or rationale for deciding.

South Yorkshire and South Humberside

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Castledyke Primary School, URN 117967, North Lincolnshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called The Wyke Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Castledyke Primary School is a 340 capacity school located in North Lincolnshire with 213 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in July 2024 and was rated as Requires Improvement.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Castledyke Primary School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to the desire to strengthen the existing partnerships, rooted in community and inclusivity, and the benefits a strong Multi Academy Trust could bring to the area.
- The Regional Director decided to defer the project in September 2025 to give proposers time to address concerns raised with the project. Although positive steps have been taken and additional work to address previous concerns has been started, concerns remain primarily around capacity of the proposed trust to drive school improvement support for the primary and infant school.

Decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust detailing the further information required or rationale for deciding.

Project: An application from Baysgarth School, URN 118109, North Lincolnshire, to convert and become an academy and form a new trust called The Wyke Learning Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Baysgarth School is a 1200 capacity school located in North Lincolnshire with 1024 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in January 2023 and continued to be a Good school.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Baysgarth School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to the desire to strengthen the existing partnerships, rooted in community and inclusivity, and the benefits a strong Multi Academy Trust could bring to the area.
- The Regional Director decided to defer the project in September 2025 to give proposers time to address concerns raised with the project. Although positive steps have been taken and additional work to address previous concerns has been started, concerns remain primarily around capacity of the proposed trust to drive school improvement support for the primary and infant school.

Decision: Defer

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust detailing the further information required or rationale for deciding.

West Yorkshire and Doncaster

Trust Changes

Project: A proposal for The Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School, URN 139504, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School is a 315 capacity school located in Wakefield with 320 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in January 2023 and was rated as Good.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside The Rookeries Carleton Junior and Infant School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for The King's School, URN 139500, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The King's School is a 1050 capacity school located in Wakefield with 1038 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in October 2022 and was rated as Good.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside The King's School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Orchard Head Junior and Infant and Nursery School, URN 139503, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Orchard Head Junior and Infant and Nursery School is a 315 capacity school located in Wakefield with 358 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in November 2019 and was rated as Good.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Orchard Head Junior and Infant and Nursery School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Northfield Primary School, URN 150309, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Northfield Primary School is a 315 capacity school located in Wakefield with 358 pupils on roll. The school is awaiting an Ofsted inspection.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Northfield Primary School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Larks Hill Junior and Infant School, URN 139499, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Larks Hill Junior and Infant School is a 210 capacity school located in Wakefield with 202 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in March 2025 and achieved Outstanding in all areas.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Larks Hill Junior and Infant School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Halfpenny Lane Junior Infant and Nursery School, URN 139502, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Halfpenny Lane Junior School is a 420 capacity school located in Wakefield with 437 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in May 2025 and achieved Outstanding in all areas.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Halfpenny Lane Junior School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for De Lacy Primary School, URN 140023, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- De Lacy Primary School is a 315 capacity school located in Wakefield with 336 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in March 2024 and was rated as Outstanding.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside De Lacy Primary School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Carleton Park Junior and Infant School, URN 140337, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Carleton Park Junior and Infant School is a 210 capacity school located in Wakefield with 203 pupils on roll. The school was last inspected in October 2024 and achieved Outstanding in all areas.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Carleton Park Junior and Infant School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Project: A proposal for Carleton High School, URN 139501, Wakefield, to transfer from Pontefract Academies Trust to ARK Schools

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- Carleton High School is a 1050 capacity school located in Wakefield with 1021 pupils on roll. The school was last fully inspected in July 2019 and was rated as Good.
- Officials' assessment of the trust using the Commissioning High Quality Trusts Framework was considered alongside Carleton High School's strategic needs. In making the recommendation, consideration was given to ARK Schools having experience of working in a range of communities, covering inner city and coastal areas and with a wide spectrum of pupils in terms of ethnic backgrounds and affluence. ARK is also the 5th largest Multi Academy Trust in the sector, educating 30,222 pupils, they have a commitment to working in areas of high deprivation and they have a strong track record of improving failing schools.
- Schools Funding and Strategic Oversight (SFSO) colleagues advised that Pontefract Academies Trust comes with a healthy reserves level and that although ARK School's reserves level is lower, it will improve. Assurances were also given that the approach of ARK align with what Pontefract Academies Trust feel is important to them. It was also confirmed that at the point of transfer, the Pontefract Academies Trust board would be wound up.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Project: Ecclesall Primary School, Peak Edge, Sheffield.

Points raised: Proposed Opening Date – 01/01/2026

Conflicts: None

Further action required: No action required

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Sponsored academy orders

Project: Cobden Primary School, Leeds, to be sponsored by Owlcoates Multi-Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve with conditions

Conflicts: None

Further actions required:

- 1) Prior to conversion the trust is to provide a recovery plan for the school.
- 2) Feedback decision to the school/trust.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: Ormiston South Parade Academy, Ormiston Academies Trust, North East Lincolnshire, to change the age range at the academy from 3 to 11 to 2 to 11.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust

Project: Co-op Academy Smithies Moor, The Co-operative Academies Trust, Kirklees, to reduce their capacity by 30 places to match the capacity of the new building for the academy.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to the school/trust

Cases referred to ministers for a decision

No cases were referred to ministers for a decision this month.

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

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from Cornholme Junior, Infant and Nursery School, URN 107521, Calderdale, to convert and become an academy and join Share Multi Academy Trust.

Reason for removal: This project will now be decided outside of the Advisory Board

Sponsored academy orders

Project: A proposal for Owlcotes Multi Academy Trust to sponsor Cobden Primary School, URN 107963, Leeds.

Reason for removal: This project was decided outside of the Advisory Board

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