



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: East of England

29 January 2026

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
- Mark Farmer
- Clare Flintoff
- Al Kingsley
- Adrian Rogers
- Sarah Skinner

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Josephine Valentine

DfE senior civil servants

- None

General discussion points

- The Regional Director gave some national and regional updates and invited feedback from the Board.

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- The Regional Director reminded Advisory Board members of conflicts of interest.

Decisions

Hertfordshire

Trust Changes

Project: An application for Alban City Free School [138231], Hertfordshire, to transfer from Alban City Free School Ltd to Ambition Education Trust.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

- The Board were advised that a voluntary application from Alban City Free School had been received to transfer to Ambition Education Trust.
- The Board members discussed the trust, as well as its governance, and school's finances and budget projections.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: There were no conflicts of interest.

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision.

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

List of decisions taken outside of AB meetings.

Converter Academy Orders

Project: An application from St Margaret Clitherow Primary School [117474], Hertfordshire, to convert and become an academy and join the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: A proposal from The Grange [URN: 139374], Bedford Inclusive Learning and Training Trust, Bedfordshire, to extend the age range from 5-16 to 5-18

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application from St John Rigby Catholic Primary School [URN: 139515], Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust, Bedfordshire, to reduce the PAN from 60 to 30.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application from Elstow School [URN: 144039], Queen's Park Academy [URN:136660], and Bedford Free School [URN: 138228], Advantage Schools, Bedfordshire, to remove the inclusion of catchment areas from the admissions arrangements and revert to the existing policy without a catchment area.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application for Lingwood Primary Academy [URN: 142005], Unity Schools Partnership, Norfolk, to add an SRB for 10 pupils with communication and interaction needs.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application for Stanton Primary School and Nursery [URN: 152030], Eastern Education Group Trust, Suffolk, to change the age range of pupils attending their school-based nursery from 3 years to 2 years old.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: Lawrence Chapman

Further actions required: Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision.

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