



Department  
for Education

## Notes of meeting: East of England

26 February 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 (partially attended)
- Clare Flintoff
- Al Kingsley
- Adrian Rogers
- Sarah Skinner
- Josephine Valentine

### Guests

- None

### Apologies

- None

### DfE senior civil servants

- None

### General discussion points

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

- The Regional Director briefly discussed the Schools White Paper and invited feedback from the board.

## Decisions

### Bedfordshire

#### Significant changes to an open academy

**Project: An application for Castle Newnham primary school [151125], Bedfordshire Schools Trust Limited, Bedfordshire, to amalgamate with Castle Newnham secondary school [151042], Bedfordshire Schools Trust Limited, Bedfordshire to form an all-through school.**

#### Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

#### AB discussion:

- The Board heard an application from Castle Newnham primary school to amalgamate with Castle Newnham secondary school.
- The Board members discussed governance, school standards and financial implications around the amalgamation.

#### Decision: Approve with conditions

- Delivery Officer to check how the changes to Unique Reference Numbers (URNs) will be managed.

**Conflicts:** There were no conflicts of interest.

**Further actions required:** Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision setting out the conditions.

### Essex

#### Trust changes

**Project: An application for Lift Columbus [138122], Essex and Lift Pioneer [138219], Essex to transfer from Lift Schools to The Bridge MAT Ltd.**

#### Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

#### AB discussion:

- The Board heard a voluntary application from Lift Columbus and Lift Pioneer to transfer to The Bridge MAT.
- The Board members discussed the schools' finances and The Bridge MAT's leadership and governance.

**Decision:** Approve with conditions

- Delivery Officer to provide Regional Director with assurance that the terms of the transfer are financially sustainable.

**Conflicts:** There were no conflicts of interest.

**Further actions required:** Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision setting out the conditions.

## Trust changes

**Project:** An application for Jotmans Hall Primary School [137247], Essex to transfer from Jotmans Hall Primary School to Robus Multi Academy Trust.

**Representations received:**

- No representations were made for this project.

**AB discussion:**

- The Board heard a voluntary application from Jotmans Hall Primary School to transfer to Robus Multi Academy Trust.
- The Board members outlined that this was a straightforward transfer and underlined that it was good to see the trust's growth plan and school improvement strategy.
- The Board members discussed the trust's governance and its board.

**Decision:** Approve with conditions

- Delivery Officer to seek clarification from trust on its governance and feed back to Regional Director.

**Conflicts:** There were no conflicts of interest.

**Further actions required:** Delivery Officer to inform school / trust of the decision setting out the conditions.

## Norfolk

### Significant changes to an open academy

**Project:** An application for Middleton Church of England Primary Academy [141662], The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, Norfolk, to amalgamate with Gayton Church of England Primary Academy [146060], The Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, Norfolk.

**Representations received:**

- No representations were made for this project.

**AB discussion:**

- The Board heard an application from Middleton Church of England Primary Academy to amalgamate with Gayton Church of England Primary Academy.
- The Board discussed the close proximity of the two schools and the views of the diocese and the local authority regarding the schools' catchment areas.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** There were no conflicts of interest.

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

## Suffolk

### Trust changes

**Project:** A proposal for Westbourne Academy [139288], Suffolk to transfer into a new trust.

**Representations received:**

- No representations were made for this project.

**AB discussion:**

- The Board members heard options for Westbourne Academy to transfer into a new trust, following Ofsted's inspection rating of Inadequate last year and the subsequent Termination Warning Notice.
- The Board members considered three potential trusts and discussed each trust's local knowledge, leadership and governance, school improvement plans and track record, how it would affect the local community and how young people will benefit from the new trust.
- The Regional Director took Board members' advice and selected a trust.

**Decision:** Approve the transfer of Westbourne Academy to Inspiration Trust.

**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.

### Significant changes to an open academy

**Project:** An application for Putnoe Primary School [139519], Putnoe Primary School trust (SAT), Bedfordshire, to change its standalone admissions variation from 90 to 60.

**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 Milwards Primary School and Nursery [144631], Harlow Inspirational Learning Trust, Essex, to remove a specialist resource base as part of a retrospective significant change.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

## **Converter Academy Orders**

**Project:** An application from Ludham Primary School and Nursery [120830], Norfolk, to convert and become an academy and join Hartismere Family of Schools.

**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 Stalham Infant School & Nursery [147321], Broad Horizons Education Trust, Norfolk, to add a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice, which is similar to a School Resource Base, for 20 pupils (10 from the infant school and 10 from Stalham Academy) with neurodiverse 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 Woodbridge Road Academy [149072], Paradigm Trust, Suffolk, to increase their planned pupil numbers.

**Decision:** Approve

**Conflicts:** None

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

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