



Department
for Education

Note of decisions: East Midlands Advisory Board

25 February 2026.

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)

- No Regional Director present. Decision-maker: Kelly Hughes, Deputy Director, East Midlands Regions Group.

Advisory Board (AB) members that provided advice

- Sian Hampton.
- Paul Heery.
- Julian Scholefield.
- Mark Thomas.

Decisions

West Northamptonshire

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application for Elizabeth Woodville School, URN:143421, Tove Learning Trust, West Northamptonshire, to make the following change: De-amalgamation of the 2 sites at Elizabeth Woodville School into 2 separate schools.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Elizabeth Woodville School (Tove Learning Trust) operates across two sites in West Northamptonshire and was judged *Good* across all categories except sixth form at its March 2025 Ofsted inspection, with the sixth form judged Requires Improvement.

The trust is proposing to de-amalgamate the current dual-site school into 2 separate secondary schools to improve leadership focus, educational outcomes, and operational efficiency. Both sites already function largely independently, with separate leadership teams and distinct pupil intakes.

A full consultation showed broad support from stakeholders, including the local authority, trustees and Local Governing Boards. Concerns raised about uniform costs were addressed through assurances that any changes would be phased and optional. PAN will remain unchanged at 120 for each school.

Financial assessment confirms the trust has sufficient reserves, and no capital works are needed as a result of this proposal. The de-amalgamation does not result in changes to the availability of sixth form provision.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to Tove Learning 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.

Nottinghamshire

Establishing a new academy through the free school presumption route

Project: To discuss a sponsor match approval for a proposed presumption primary free school in Fairham Pastures, Nottinghamshire.

Representations received:

- No representations were made for this project.

AB discussion:

Fairham Pastures Primary Academy is a new mainstream primary school, including nursery provision, planned to open in September 2027 as part of the large Fairham Pastures housing development in Nottinghamshire. The local authority has identified a clear need for additional primary and nursery places due to the 3,000-home development, with pupil numbers expected to rise steadily over the next decade.

The school will open as a two-form entry primary (420 places plus a 26-place nursery), with capacity to expand to three-form entry as further housing is occupied. Nottinghamshire County Council is responsible for delivering the school.

Through a free school presumption competition, the local authority shortlisted 4 trusts and recommended Flying High Trust as the preferred sponsor, citing their strong track record in primary education, high-quality teaching and CPD, effective SEND practice, and previous success opening presumption free schools.

Flying High Trust operates 38 primary schools, the majority judged good or outstanding and has demonstrably strong outcomes and sustained school improvement.

Approval is recommended for Flying High Trust to sponsor the new Fairham Pastures Primary Academy.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to Flying High 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 Nottinghamshire County Council.

Academy opening approved in principle

List of academies approved to open the following month.

Project: Heage Primary School (URN:112773).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 March 2026.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Project: Sudbury Primary School (URN: 112631).

Key Points: Proposed school opening date – 1 March 2026.

Conflicts: None.

Further action required: No action required.

Decisions taken outside of AB meeting

Academy Converter Orders

Project: An application from Simmondley Primary School, URN:112706, Derbyshire, to convert and become an academy and join The True Learning Partnership.

Representations received: None.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Project: An application from Holly Primary School, URN:122727, Nottinghamshire, to convert and become an academy and join Nova Education Trust.

Representations received: None.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Significant changes to an open academy

Project: An application for Cottons Farm Primary Academy, URN:145982, The Harmony Trust Ltd, Derby, to make the following change: add a 12 place Enhanced Resource Provision.

Representations received: None.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Project: An application for Oakway Academy, URN: 140853, Hatton Academy Trust, North Northamptonshire, to make the following change: add a nursery provision and expand the age range from 4-11 to 2-11.

Representations received: N/A.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

Trust changes

Project: An application for Barwell Church of England Academy (single-academy trust), URN:138965, Leicestershire, to transfer to Discovery Schools Academies Trust Ltd.

Representations received: None.

Decision: Approve.

Conflicts: None.

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