



Department
for Education

Notes of meeting: North West Advisory Board

20 February 2025

Attendance

Regional Director (RD) chair

- Vicky Beer

Advisory Board (AB) members

- George Beveridge
- Nic Brindle
- Karen Burns
- Shane Ireston
- Tania Lewyckyj
- Helen O'Neill

Guests

- None

Apologies

- Annette Williams

DfE senior civil servants

- Mark Taylor, Deputy Director, North West Region

General discussion points

- A temperature check was completed for the region.

Greater Manchester sub-region

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join Emmaus Catholic Academy Trust:

- St John Bosco RC Primary School, Manchester
- St Malachy's RC Primary School, Manchester
- Corpus Christi RC Primary School, Oldham
- St Anne's RC Primary School, Oldham
- St Joseph's RC Junior Infant and Nursery School, Oldham
- St Monica's RC Primary School, Trafford
- St Teresa's RC Primary School, Trafford

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, acknowledging that the trust is taking action to mitigate risks on capacity and recruitment. The project lead should ask for the trust's short to medium term plans, particularly with Estates and HR functions.
- The board reflected on the trust's positive engagement with the SRMA (School Resource Management Advisor) and that there is a need to review their actions plan and consolidated budget for all schools.
- The board suggested a period of consolidation to enable the trust to develop their operations and governance structures.

Decision: Approve with 3 conditions:

- Trust to provide the consolidated budget for all schools.
- Trust to provide a progress update on the SRMA deployment action plan.
- Trust to clarify their capacity and plan for schools onboarding activity.

Conflicts: None

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

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join Corpus Christi Catholic Academy Trust:

- St James Catholic Primary School, Tameside
- St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Stockport
- St Christopher's Catholic Primary School, Stockport

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board acknowledged that the trust has plans in place to address any gaps in capacity.

- The board reflected on the need for the trust and department to work closely with the local authorities, to enable the planned delivery of this conversion.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Liverpool City Region, Warrington, Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester and Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool and Lancashire and Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness sub-region

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join Chester Diocesan Academies Trust:

- **Mottram CofE Primary School, Tameside**
- **Gee Cross Holy Trinity CofE Primary School, Tameside**
- **St Berteline's CofE Primary School, Halton**
- **Broadbottom Church of England Primary, Tameside**
- **Kingsley St John's CofE (VA) Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester**
- **Tarporley CofE Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester**

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board were advised that The Priory Parish CofE Primary School in Wirral will pause their application for voluntary conversion at this time. This is in the section below as a project listed on the published draft agenda but was removed before the meeting.
- The board supported the project recommendation for the remaining six schools to convert and join Chester Diocesan Academies Trust and supported the trust's plan to take a period of consolidation to develop their central teams.
- The board acknowledged the trust's engagement with the SRMA deployment and that there is a need for them to provide a detailed operational and governance model action plans.
- The board reflected on the need for the trust and department to work closely with the local authorities, to enable the planned delivery of this conversion.

Decision: Approve with 1 condition:

- Trust to provide a detailed plan of how their operating model and infrastructure is evolving, particularly for HR and Estates.

Conflicts: None

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

Project: An application from Orrets Meadow School, Wirral Local Authority to convert and become an academy and join Oak Trees Multi Academy Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- Members discussed the need for the trust to balance their board's business and educational expertise, particularly independent SEND expertise.
- The board asked the project lead to clarify funding continuity with the local authority.

Decision: Approve with 1 condition:

- Trust to conduct a full review of their board's skill gaps, particularly for educational expertise.

Conflicts: None

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

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join Romero Catholic Academy Trust:

- **St Michael and St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Lancashire**
- **St Charles' RC School, Lancashire**
- **Ss John Fisher and Thomas More Roman Catholic High School, Lancashire**

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board acknowledged the trust's engagement and progress on their finance strategy.
- The board reflected on the trust's school improvement strategy, particularly their secondary provision and for the trust's plans to articulate the action and support that is being monitored.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: An application from the following schools to convert and become academies and form a new trust called Emmanuel Diocese Of Liverpool Academies Trust (Edlat):

- **Sankey Valley St James Church of England Primary School, Warrington**
- **Bewsey Lodge Primary School, Warrington**
- **St Elphin's (Fairfield) CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Warrington**

- **Winwick CofE Primary School, Warrington**
- **St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Warrington**
- **Cinnamon Brow CofE Primary School, Warrington**
- **Warrington St Ann's CofE Primary School, Warrington**
- **Warrington St Barnabas CofE Primary School, Warrington**
- **St Margaret's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Warrington**

Representations received: 1 representation received.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, whilst considering the representation made.
- The board discussed the need to see the trust's consolidated budget and to schedule a finance meeting with appropriate board members before the end of the summer term.
- The board agreed that the trust should review the balance of primary and secondary expertise on the trust board.

Decision: Approve with 3 conditions:

- Trust to receive a supportive School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) deployment, focusing on LA budget forecasts and the consolidated budget for all schools.
- Trust to conduct a review of their board membership.
- Trust to clarify the CEO's capacity and confirm plans for mentoring support.

Conflicts: Nic Brindle received the papers but did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, which is a professional connection at an event with the trust.

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

Project: An application from the following schools to convert and become academies and form a new trust called **The Belong Trust**:

- **St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Liverpool**
- **Kirkdale St Lawrence CE VA Primary School, Liverpool**
- **Childwall Church of England Primary School, Liverpool**
- **Archbishop Blanch CofE High School, Liverpool**

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, acknowledging the strong leadership experience that this new trust will bring together.
- The board discussed the need to see the trust's consolidated budget and to offer the support of a SRMA deployment.
- The board reflected on the new trust's school improvement capacity and asked that the trust provides their plans, particularly for their primary provision.

Decision: Approve with 2 conditions:

- Trust to provide their consolidated budget for all schools.
- Trust to provide their primary focused School Improvement strategy.

Conflicts: Shane Ierston did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, which is a professional working connection with the Belong Trust CEO.

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

Project: An application from Educational Diversity Blackpool Local Authority to convert and become an academy and join Synergy Education Trust Limited.

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation.
- The board discussed the need for the trust to recruit independent alternative provision (AP) expertise to the trust board.
- There was discussion about the need for the trust to work with Blackpool local authority to ensure that the local community has appropriate access to alternative provision places.
- The board reflected on the trust's plan to enter a period of consolidation and asked that they share their 3-5 year funding model.

Decision: Approve with 3 conditions:

- Strengthen board membership, particularly focusing on recruitment of appropriate AP expertise given the trust taking its first AP school.
- Trust to work with the LA to understand Blackpool's need for places in the PRU going forward to ensure that need will be met.
- Trust to provide a 3-5 year funding model for the school given the complexity of the intake.

Conflicts: None

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

Project: An application from Lansbury Bridge School, St Helens Local Authority to convert and become an academy and join The Shaw Education Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made.

AB discussion:

- The board supported the project recommendation, acknowledging the SEND expertise and knowledge that this conversion brings to the trust.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Decisions taken between AB meetings

Converter academy orders

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust:

- **St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale**
- **St John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale**
- **St Thomas More Roman Catholic Primary School, Middleton, Rochdale**

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust:

- **St John's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire**
- **St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire**
- **Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Lancashire**

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: Helen O'Neill did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, which is being the CEO of The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust (Diocese of Lancaster).

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join Mater Ecclesiae Catholic Multi Academy Trust:

- **St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire**
- **St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Lancashire**
- **Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Lancashire**
- **St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Lea Town, Lancashire**

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: Helen O'Neill did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, which is being the CEO of The Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust (Diocese of Lancaster).

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Establishing a new academy through the free school presumption route

Project: To approve the local authority's recommendation of the Sandstone Trust to be the preferred trust of the new primary school in Cheshire West and Chester.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: Annette Williams did not receive any papers and did not participate in discussions or provide advice on this project due to a conflict of interest, as the CEO of Weaver Trust.

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Trust changes

Project: Marlfields Primary School, Cheshire East Local Authority to transfer from Congleton Primary Academy Trust Limited and join Children First Learning Partnership Trust.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Smithills School, Bolton Local Authority to join The Bolton Impact Trust.

Decision: Approve with 1 condition:

- The Bolton Impact Trust to agree to a SRMA deployment.

Conflicts: None

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

Project: An application from the following schools, to convert and become an academy and join M20 Learning Trust:

- Northenden Community School, Manchester
- Cavendish Primary School, Manchester

With the addition of the following schools to transfer from Link Learning Trust and join M20 Learning Trust:

- Barlow Hall Primary School, Manchester
- Brookburn Community School, Manchester

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Significant changes

Project: Highfurlong School, Blackpool, to increase the planned pupil places from 105 to 130.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Gorse Covert Primary School, Warrington, addition of 16 place ASD unit and extending a further 8 places in September 2025.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Manor Primary School, Wirral, to add a SEN unit or resourced provision.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Bury, increasing physical capacity more than 30 places, including expansion of sixth form.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Heswall Primary School, Wirral, application for 8 place SEN provision.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Stanton Road Primary School, Wirral, application for 12 place SEN provision.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Egremont Primary School, Wirral, application for 16 place SEN provision.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Everton Free School, Liverpool, increase PAN for 6th form and addition of 3 satellites.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School, Cheshire East, to change their age range from 2-11 to 3-11.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: The Rudheath Senior Academy, Cheshire West & Chester, to add a SEN/RP unit for 15 pupils.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

Project: The Crompton House Church of England Academy, Oldham, increase capacity to provide the required space for published PAN/need.

Decision: Approve

Conflicts: None

Further actions required: Feedback decision to school/trust.

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

Project: An application from The Priory Parish CofE Primary school, Wirral, to convert and become an academy and join Chester Diocesan Academies Trust.

Representations received: No representations were made.

Type of project: Converter academy order

Reason for why it was taken off agenda: The school is reconsidering their position and requested to pause the application to convert.

