

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Hornbeam Academy Trust is delighted to submit this Free School application to establish **The Cambridge Oak School** – a planned, new, 110 place Special School at Alconbury Weald - which is due to open in September 2020.

We are a well-established and high-performing Multi-Academy Trust, formed in 2012, which is led by Gary Pocock, a dedicated and highly-experienced School Leader and SEN specialist, who was formerly Head of Service for Special Educational Needs and Children with Additional Needs at Essex County Council. The Trust operates three open academies – Dycorts School and Ravensbourne School in the London Borough of Havering, and Hornbeam Academy in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, which is OfSTED-rated 'Good'.

Capacity and Capability

We confirm that we have the capacity and capability to deliver the school in pre-opening. Through both our strong, supportive, and committed Trust Board, chaired by Irene Halls, and specialist, experienced Central team, we will create a flagship Special School which will be at the heart of the new community at Alconbury Weald. In the pre-opening phase, where required, we will draw on our trusted external expertise to ensure the milestones required to open the school on time are met. Post-opening, we aim to achieve an **OfSTED 'Outstanding' rating** at our first inspection by delivering a proven curriculum tailored to suit each child's needs with excellent outcomes, a highly-experienced, dedicated school leadership team, strong local governance and a firm commitment to working collaboratively with families and carers through their child's school journey and into further education, employment, or training.

COMMENDATION

Sue Baldwin, the RSC for the East of England and North East London has given her written approval to the Trust to submit this application, confirming our capacity and capability to open the new school.

The success of the new school will be underpinned by well-established and sound governance. Our established model of a Trust Board and local Strategic Advisory Boards will give capacity and strength to The Cambridge Oak School. The skills and experience of our Trust Board, which includes broad education, specialist SEN experience, finance, and commerce will ensure the school's success from the outset, with the appropriate balance of support and challenge for our CEO and school leadership team.

We will quickly establish a strong local presence in the area, with Trust Leadership keen to strengthen their existing relationships in the locality, and forge new partnerships which will benefit all stakeholders. We are excited about the significant benefits which will be gained for pupils, staff, and the wider community in Alconbury Weald through co-location with the proposed secondary school. We look forward to working closely with the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust (DEMAT) to develop outstanding education provision across all phases and promote community cohesion in the local area. The opportunity to be co-located with a mainstream secondary school will allow us our experienced team of SEN specialists and their mainstream education specialists to collaborate in developing innovative curricular and extra-curricular provision, creating opportunity and excellent outcomes for all pupils within the learning campus.

Rationale and Local Context

Hornbeam Academy Trust is excited about the opportunity to open a new Special Free School within the new development at Alconbury Weald. We enjoy a strong and established presence in the East of England and North East London (EENEL) RSC Region and look forward to The Cambridge Oak School becoming our first school in a new Cambridgeshire regional hub.

We acknowledge that this is an area of high deprivation, with a history of poverty, low aspirations and below the national average educational outcomes. Our experience of working with SEN pupils and their families in some of the country's most deprived boroughs and the strategies we have developed to tackle the associated challenges and create good outcomes, for example employing dedicated family workers will enable us to quickly make a positive impact. We would seek to become an active stakeholder in the emerging Alconbury Weald Education Trust, and promote wider community cohesion within the new development through the formation of successful partnerships with the developer - Urban Civic, and the businesses within the Alconbury Weald Enterprise Zone. We are committed to becoming part of the wider family of schools and Further Education establishments in the county.

Curriculum and Measuring Pupil Performance

The curriculum at The Cambridge Oak School will mirror that of our open academies; this is a proven model which offers a unique, personalised learning experience for all our pupils with excellent outcomes. The curriculum has three strands - Explorer, Challenger and Horizon – each of which is aimed at learners with differing needs and disabilities. We will begin the transition to further education and employment from Year 9, and post-16 all of our learners will follow a curriculum that focuses on preparing for adulthood and independence. We will work with local businesses and FE institutions to develop work placements and other work-based learning activities to prepare our students for further education, training and employment.

We will introduce our well-established methods and associated interventions at The Cambridge Oak School to promote a positive approach to behaviour for learning.

Our Trust has established and appropriate methods of target setting and measuring SEN pupil performance which will be used at The Cambridge Oak School. We will ensure consistency across the Trust through data sharing, cross-Trust Learning Walks and Lesson Observations.

Conclusion

We would be proud to be chosen as the new sponsor for The Cambridge Oak School and to become one of the education providers within the Alconbury Weald development. We share the ambitions of Cambridgeshire County Council and the developer in creating a vibrant and prosperous new community, and believe we can, through the education of some of the county's most vulnerable young people and their families, make a significant impact on outcomes. We are committed to working with local organisations partnering and working together to support SEN families and are eager to embed our school within these local partnerships in order to embrace every opportunity for pupils. We will develop opportunities through local businesses within the Enterprise Zone to create future employment opportunities for our pupils. The Cambridge Oak School will be a member of the Hornbeam Academy Trust, but a beacon school in its own right offering a bespoke, innovative curriculum designed, measured and monitored using the Trust's established systems and processes. We want to ensure each of our pupils is afforded pathways to independence and opportunity, drawing on our existing outstanding Governance, our track record to hire and retain excellent staff and our commitment to continuous development in all areas of our operation, to ensure our capability is always matched to local needs.