

BEST Trustees' Meeting

16 May 2023, 10:00am – 12:00pm

BEST House Conference Room

Attendees: Ilona Bond (IB), Paul Walker (PW), Alan Lee (AL), Tony Sanderson (TS), Claire Mycock (CM), David Morgan (DM), Jerry Tonge (JT), Craig Smith (CS), Alison Wilshaw (AW) and Kim Rowe (KR)

Meeting Chair: Ilona Bond

Guests: Nick Martin (NM) – SWA Principal; Thomas Clarke (TC) – GMA Principal; Cheryl Johnson (CJ)- LSA Principal.

Governance Professional: Yvonne Humphryes

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

NM joined the meeting

SWA Ofsted Inspection

Pre-read: SWA Ofsted Inspection Report distributed prior to the meeting – see report for more detail.

NM provided trustees with an overview of the SWA Inspection experience:

The Inspectors were professional, had open dialogue, held regular KIT meetings and queried any concerns immediately – the process was transparent.

Both the school and LGB were very well prepared and encountered no surprises; the Inspection followed the Ofsted framework.

Staff and Governors were consistent and impressive with their delivery.

The parent survey raised concerns over the student toilets – the Inspectors checked each and every toilet and were satisfied the toilets were in good order and carefully monitored.

This was an ungraded Inspection – SWA were offered the opportunity to request a graded inspection to see if they could secure an 'Outstanding' grading; SWA decided to focus energies on ensuring a smooth transition to secondary.

SWA are very pleased with the outcome of their Ofsted Inspection.

Trustees acknowledged and celebrated NM's leadership in making huge systemic and cultural improvements since the last inspection in 2017 in which SWA scraped a Good. NM concluded it was a team effort.

NM left the meeting

Approval of previous minutes:

- ° Trustees' meeting minutes 14 March 2023 – approved and signed electronically

Personnel Updates

BEST's new CFO, Kim Rowe, welcomed to the meeting.

ETA and RBA Executive Principal, Ian Evason, will leave BEST at the end of this academic year – new principals have been appointed; ETA Principal will be Joanne Young and RBA's will be John Linehan. John starts on 19 June 2023.

Michael Craddock will replace Joanne Young as Vice Principal at ETA.

Matters Arising

Pre-read: COO Termly Health & Safety Report – see report for more detail

Pre-read: Equality Annual Report distributed prior to the meeting – see report for more detail.

GDPR: No ICO reportable incidents since the last trustees meeting.

Safeguarding: No trustee reportable safeguarding incidents since the last trustees' meeting. External audits are almost complete and appear to be going well – reports will be shared at the next Trustees' meeting.

Health & Safety: 1 x Riddor reportable incident at SWA, case discussed. Trustees discussed the H&S report, noting an absence of reporting from three of the schools and a disparity in reporting – this is a result of how fastidious individual schools are with their reporting. Whilst compliant, the glass banisters at PBA are a concern; Wilmot Dixon have offered a solution for which we await a CBC response. **Action:** CS will speak to PBA Principal to resolve ASAP.

Equality: Trustees discussed the report. The effectiveness of the E&D committee began to wane following the departure of a couple of members who were not replaced. All schools received an E&D audit, advice and support.

Action: Consideration to be given on how we reach a wider demographic for BEST vacancies.

Subsidiaries Executive Committee Meeting Update

Pre-read: Subsidiaries' Executive Committee meeting 'draft' minutes (2 May 2023) distributed prior to the meeting. An Ofsted monitoring visit took place at Langford Nursery shortly after the Nursery Hub Manager (NHM) joined BEST - sufficient improvement had been seen to move the Nursery from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires Improvement'. The next Inspection should secure a 'Good' Ofsted rating, as the NHM will have been in position long enough to make a significant impact.

Trustees discussed the finances. **Action:** YH to correct financial labelling within the committee minutes.

The nursery finances currently show a deficit but this should resolve itself and break even by the year end. KR will attend the next nursery networking meeting and will be working closely with the nursery managers to get a better understanding of their position.

CBC are holding a meeting with nurseries to look at fees and what can be done locally to ensure nursery sustainability. Carer/Child ratios and the Government funding structure are changing – this needs to be carefully managed and monitored.

BEST House is forecasting a £9,500 surplus.

Capital and Estates Committee Meeting Update

Pre-read: Capital and Estates Committee meeting minutes (2 May 2023) distributed prior to the meeting. The ETA Sixth form refurbishment is progressing well, this said, costs have increased overall by £32,000, owing to costs such as solar panels at £15,000 – however, the panels will create savings and neutralise costs in the long term.

With the exception of CMA and GMA owing to their pending new builds, all BEST schools now have a wellbeing garden. Committee members acknowledge the lack of space at CMA and the need for finalised site plans at GMA but would like to see something done in the interim for each of the schools under the wellbeing banner to boost morale.

Trustees were made aware of the PBA energy situation in May 2022. Since this time the root cause for the astronomical bills has been identified and resolved. Following which, a meeting was held with CBC last December to discuss responsibility. BEST/PBA are still awaiting a CBC response with chaser emails sent in March and April 2023.

SLL have lost several local contracts and will now undergo a staffing restructure; it is believed that this will not affect the management of the Pendleton Centre. However, CBC have confirmed they will support BEST if the SLL arrangement fails. The new arrangement removes BEST from underwriting any losses. Profits will be placed into a sinking fund as BEST are accountable for maintenance and repairs owing to a 125 years lease arrangement with CBC.

Committee members unanimously agreed to CS supporting LSA in discussions with CBC for a new reception area within the new build block. CBC have estimated costs of £130,000 for the reception area.

All schools are safe, warm and dry and the BEST priorities will now be widened to drive the wellbeing and green agenda.

CJ joined the meeting

LSA Ofsted Inspection

Pre-read: LSA Ofsted Inspection Report distributed prior to the meeting – see report for more detail.

CJ provided trustees with an overview of the LSA Inspection experience:

LSA had a full section 5 Inspection. The Inspectors were thorough and scrutinised hard but the process and outcome was fair. CJ thanked the SI Team for their support throughout the process.

There are long standing staff members who have been on the journey from the beginning and have real passion for the school and pupil success.

Pre-academisation, the school had always been 'Requires Improvement' – all staff are delighted to have secured a 'Good' rating. Trustees commented that this achievement is testament to CJ's great leadership.

CJ shared the news with the parent/carer community at their recent Coronation celebrations, at which parents/carers and pupils cheered and applauded.

Trustees commended CJ on her eagerness to work with the SI Team and build positive relations since joining BEST.

The report has helped steer improvement at the school – it is easier to manage conversations and address the importance of attendance (and possible fixed notices) now they have an Ofsted Report stipulating it.

Trustees are delighted with a report that opens with ‘Pupils at Lawnside Academy enjoy coming to school. They talk positively about their learning. They are proud of their school.’ Trustees thanked CJ for all their handwork.

CJ left the meeting

Monthly Cash Flow and Management Accounts

Finance and Audit Committee members i.e. DM, AL, IB, PW and JT receive the cashflow reports on behalf of the board of trustees, all of whom confirmed they are happy with the accounts and are satisfied the Trust is financially sound and confirmed the accounts are in line with forecasting.

Policies for Approval

Pre-read: The proposed policies as listed below were distributed prior to the meeting – see policies for more details.

- Trustees unanimously approved the ‘*ECT Policy*’ for BEST-wide distribution following union consultation.
- Trustees unanimously approved extending the review period for the ‘*Redundancy Policy*’ in its current form by 12 months whilst awaiting new guidance.
- Trustees unanimously approved the ‘*Pay Policy*’ for union consultation, subject to the inclusion of the following:
 1. The Executive Remuneration Committee have delegated authority from the Board of Trustees
 2. The Executive Remuneration Committee will take any concerns to the Board of Trustees
 3. The Board of Trustees are informed of the committee’s decisions, not approvers of the decision

Decision: The Staff Code of Conduct Policy is not ready for review. However, Trustees’ confirmed they are happy to receive, review and approve the ‘Staff Code of Conduct Policy’ for union consultation by email prior to the next trustees’ meeting.

TC joined the meeting

GMA Ofsted Inspection

Pre-read: GMA Ofsted Inspection Report distributed prior to the meeting – see report for more detail.

TC provided trustees with an overview of the GMA Inspection experience:

This was an ungraded inspection. The school has maintained a Good rating with no causes for concern.

The school established a good relationship with the inspector.

Surveys/discussions with Staff, Parents and Pupils raised a line of enquiry into behaviour. There were in-depth discussions around needs and challenges; the inspector understood how schools work and the challenges they face.

Priorities include: Implementing a new writing curriculum and updating their behavioural policy – they policy is dated and does not reflect their current therapeutic/restorative practice.

Since the inspection GMA have been working with behavioural hubs.

TC is overwhelmed and incredibly proud of his exceptional leadership team. He is very happy with the report and the parental support shown.

TC thanked BEST for all their support, this is thanks echoed by the whole GMA leadership Team.

TC left the meeting

2Tier Update

Pre-read: 2Tier Progress Tracker document distributed prior to the meeting – see document for more detail
Shefford/Stotfold cluster plans should be taken to CBC Executive this term, until then we’re on hold.

Unfortunately, the CMA new build looks to be delayed owing to legal rights regarding accessing the land – we await an update. BEST is keen to get answers/solution asap as the possible delays are unsettling for the school/staff.

The Biggleswade cluster looks to be on track with a 2Tier transition date of September 2024. LSA plans have been approved and the tendering process has begun – there are four bidders.

Next Meeting: 10:00am on Tuesday 11 July 2023 at BEST House

J. Bond

Approved and electronically signed 11/07/23