

BEST Trustees' Meeting

14 March 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), Craig Smith (CS), Alison Wilshaw (AW) and Nafia Baust (NB)

Apologies: Jerry Tonge (JT)

Meeting Chair: Ilona Bond

Governance Professional: Yvonne Humphries

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

Approval of previous minutes:

- Trustees' meeting minutes 24 January 2023 – approved and signed electronically
- Trustees' Extraordinary Trustee meeting minutes 28 February 2023 – approved and signed electronically

Matters Arising

Pre-read: GDPR Annual Report distributed prior to the meeting – see document for more detail

GDPR: No ICO reportable incidents since the last trustees meeting. Trustees are pleased with the report findings. 'Near misses' trends, interventions and DPO training discussed. Discussion included process regarding suppliers.

Safeguarding: No trustee reportable safeguarding incidents since the last trustees' meeting. Audits have started.

Health & Safety: No Riddor reports since the last trustees' meeting.

Equality: Significant changes came out of the last Equality and Diversity meeting. As such, the Annual Equality Report will be shared with Trustees' at their May meeting to allow time for the implementation of changes.

Performance Committee Meeting Update

Pre-read: Performance Committee meeting 'draft' minutes (28 February 2023) distributed prior to the meeting. LVA Principal attended the meeting to provide a progress update. AW is organising an external review/mock Ofsted Inspection for LVA and will continue to monitor progress. The BEST SI Team are supporting the school well; committee members expressed concern around the level of support required. An update on LVA's data, SEND, absence and behaviour provided.

Committee members reviewed/discussed the Director of Education's report – key highlights include:

- Concerns over reporting systems at GHA, as highlighted within the SIA Report
- CMA are doing very well
- SI Team commended for their work across BEST Schools

SWA Ofsted Inspection

A Section 8 ungraded Ofsted Inspection took place on 2-3rd March 2023 – The report has not yet been received. Central Executive Team members and Trustees involved in the Inspection commended the organisation and readiness of the school and LGB. AW provided an overview of the inspection and the key headlines e.g. Strength of leadership across Trustees, LGB and SWA Leadership. Trustees are very pleased with the outcome and look forward to receiving the report.

Finance and Audit Committee Meeting Update

Pre-read: Finance & Audit Committee (FAC) meeting minutes (28 February 2023) distributed prior to the meeting. Feedback provided to Bishops Fleming (BF) in regards to the Board's disappointment around the timeliness of accounts; apology received - staff illness and insufficient staff allocation of resource offered as the reason. However, three months on and a meeting between BEST and BF was cancelled with 30 minutes notice and a benchmarking report expected three weeks ago has still not been received; further feedback to be provided. The 2022/23 Audit will fulfil the three year agreement with BF, following which, a new tendering process will commence.

Most schools across BEST are tracking their budgets well despite the energy and staffing challenges experienced nationally. GMA are experiencing some challenges with their budgets owing to a change in pupil intake; NB is working with the school to address this.

Kim will join BEST on 2nd May 2023 as CFO – NB leaves this trust on 1st May but has kindly offered to support Kim in the early days. Trustees thanked Nafia for her work over the years and wished her well in her next journey.

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 present confirmed they are happy with the accounts and are satisfied the Trust is financially sound and confirmed the accounts are in line with forecasting.

Risk Register

Pre-read: (Spring term) Risk Register distributed prior to the meeting for review – see document for more detail
Trustees reviewed and discussed the risk register; trustees unanimously approved the following:

- 1.1.1 relating to the completion/handover of PBA to be removed from the register. PBA railings will be picked up within the Health and Safety section of the register i.e. 3.1.5
- 1.1.3 relating to Coronavirus will be downgraded from 3x3=9 (red) → 2x3=6 (amber). Wording to be amended to be generalised as pandemics as opposed to Coronavirus specific
- 1.1.6 relating to Ofsted to remain 'as is' with a view to revisiting this at the next review

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 '*Appraisal Policy – Teaching Staff*' Policy for BEST-wide distribution; union consultation is complete
- Trustees unanimously approved the '*Appraisal Policy – Support staff*' Policy for BEST-wide distribution; union consultation is complete
- Trustees unanimously approved the '*DSL Supervision Policy*' for trust-wide distribution; no changes were made - review cycle amended to three-yearly
- Trustees unanimously approved extending the review period for the '*Flexible Working Policy*' in its current form by 12 months whilst awaiting new legislation
- Trustees unanimously approved the '*Leave of Absence Policy*' for BEST-wide distribution. Trustees also reviewed the revised support staff pay scales (no decision required) – document amended to reflect the previously approved NJC amendments i.e. SPC1 removal and one extra day holiday for all support staff.

Mindfulness Update

Pre-read: The following documents were distributed prior to the meeting – see documents for more details:

1. BEST Mindfulness Overview 2. Mindfulness at BEST: Impact 3. BEST Mindfulness Pathways

Wellbeing Index 2022 states 82% of Educational Senior Leaders are experiencing stress, of which, 67% have considered leaving the profession. AL provided trustees with an overview of Mindfulness at BEST:

- 108 BEST staff have completed Mindfulness training – several of whom have attended more than one course. This is a big personal undertaking as the 6/8 x 90 minutes sessions are completed by staff members in their own time
- 7 x cohorts of the .b programme completed (facilitated by Will George) .b = 'Stop and Breath'
- 6 x cohorts of Cultivating/Developing Leadership Practice completed (facilitated by Maggie Farrar)
- 7 x Staff members supported to complete their Mindfulness in Schools training to deliver to pupils
- A BEST Mindfulness platform 'Yammer' established with members actively exchanging ideas /practices
- An overarching BEST Pathways document has been produced outlining the trust's mindfulness objectives, actions, evidence and resources. Principals/Mindfulness Leads have produced their own Pathway documents in line with the appetite and context of their schools
- Impact documents reviewed. PW said he was recently inspired by CMA's Chair of Governors feedback regarding the mindfulness work undertaken with their reception class. AL agreed and discussed the work being undertaken by CMA; evidence suggests the potential is huge - four year olds saying 'I close my eyes and breath, it helps to clear my head' is a powerful life skill
- Some staff members requested and are accessing Mindfulness Support/Coaching with Maggie
- AL (and Maggie) will attend the Inspiring Leadership Conference in June 2023, as guest speakers to an audience of 8,000 people.

2Tier Update

Pre-read: 2Tier Progress Tracker document distributed prior to the meeting – see document for more detail
The programme has made significant progress with plans for all BEST Schools virtually agreed. CBC hope for sign-off by Easter 2023, although CS suspects May half-term more likely; subject to sign-off by all schools within the Shefford/Stotfold cluster. Once all schools have approved their school's plans, Capital sign-off by CBC Executive is required, following which the tendering processes will begin.

Revenue/Pupil flow funding discussions have made minimal progress. DfE have advised a local decision was made by CBC to move to 2Tier and as such, CBC are responsible for funding. Trustees believe revenue funding is essential to the survival of the secondary schools within the Shefford/Stotfold cluster.

LSA design complete – plans have been submitted to the Regional Director Advisory Board for approval in March'23. Works are scheduled to begin January 2024, complete September 2024. Construction staff with De-camp and complete the MUGA by December 2024.

CMA plans have been delayed owing to land legalities. CMA Principal is pushing for a 2025 completion, as a partial completion in 2024 will compromise the design plans.

ETA sixth form is progressing well, building works should be completed in readiness for September 2023. An additional two classroom block has been built to accommodate the revised 2Tier programme (years 5 and 6 will remain at ETA until 2025). **Action:** YH to add ETA sixth form as an agenda item for the next Capital and Estates Committee meeting, to review whether additional funding is required to ensure the success of ETA sixth form.

GMA new build is no longer viable until 2030; reasonable plans are now in place for the current site.

GHA plans have moved on to include a new hall and replacement classrooms for the temporary block.

LVA PAN and trustee views have been shared with CBC. CBC have conceded that perhaps the temporary build should be replaced with something more permanent – this is being considered by CBC.

RBA plans are pleasing, the design of which have been excellently led by Ian Evason and Colin Marshall. The plans will be shared with RBA staff during the post Easter Inset Day. Exciting times for RBA having just appointed a new Principal.

ETA/PBA/SWA will have no building works completed but will require revenue funding to be sustainable. CBC have asked for a schedule of accommodation for ETA and PBA to ensure capacity for future cluster growth.

AOB

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved rescheduling the final trustee meeting of the academic year from 27 June 2023 to 11 July 2023. **Action:** YH to amend the Trustees June meeting date to 11 July 2023.

Improvements seen at Langford Nursery during a recent Ofsted Inspection – Report not yet received.

IE is leaving at the end of this academic year; the recruitment process for a new principal at ETA has begun.

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved YH and LL as the registered administrators for BEST with the Charity Commission.

Confidential item: CS, AW and NB Left the meeting

CONFIDENTIAL Item

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Next Meeting: 10:00am on Tuesday 16 May 2023 at BEST House

J. Bowd

Minutes approved and electronically signed 16/05/2023