

BEST Trustees' Meeting

15 March 2022, 10:00am – 12:15pm

BEST House, Conference Room



Attendees: Ilona Bond (IB), Paul Walker (PW), Alan Lee (AL), Claire Mycock (CM), David Morgan (DM), Jerry Tonge (JT), Craig Smith (CS), Alison Wilshaw (AW) and Nafia Baust (NB)

Chair: Ilona Bond

Vice Chair: Paul Walker

Apologies: Tony Sanderson

Governance Professional: Yvonne Humphryes

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

Approval of previous minutes:

- Trustees' meeting minutes 25 January 2022 – Minutes approved for electronic signing subject to a minor tweak
- Trustees' extraordinary minutes 1 March 2022 – Minutes approved and electronically signed

Finance and Audit Committee Update

Pre-read: Finance and Audit Committee minutes distributed prior to the meeting – view minutes for more detail.

- September 2020 – August 2021 Accounts are complete and have been submitted
- Juniper re-appointed for this years' internal audit. 2022 Internal audit = Payroll, Cyber Security and Wellbeing
- Budget assumptions for the coming year have commenced – energy increases reviewed closely
- Awaiting guidance from the DfE regarding pensions
- Benchmarking review undertaken. Comparatively BEST are expensive in some areas and less expensive in others – this may be owing to classification, guidance is being sought
- Charging and Remission Policy approved.

Performance Committee Update

Pre-read: Performance Committee minutes distributed prior to the meeting – view minutes for more detail.

- Insightful and useful meeting
- Numerous documents shared to support review i.e. SEFs, SOAPs, Statements of provision and DoE Report
- Decision made to share the BEST Data Overview document with Principals and Chairs of LGBs – well received
- DoE (Director of Education) report will in future include the DoE's view in regards to the schools' accuracy of data and performance

AW responded to a trustee question to confirm schools' present data is collected from FFT, which measures against national data.

Chairs' Forum

Pre-read: Chairs' Forum minutes distributed prior to the meeting – view minutes for more detail.

- Chairs appreciated sight of the BEST Data overview document; document to be shared each term
- In-depth group discussion on current LGB practice for monitoring school performance. The discussion provided assurance on the level of scrutiny taking place at some schools; the importance of triangulating data discussed. Schools less confident with data offered AW or data specialist support
- 2Tier (non-school specific) update provided. Trust representatives will attend SWA LGB to answer their questions

BEST Governance Handbook and Scheme of Delegation (BGHB)

Pre-read: BGHB timeline document circulated prior to the meeting – view document for detail.

The BGHB 2022/23 Consultation is now in progress and will run until 1 April 2022. Any suggestions or amendments should be rooted in the official documents: BEST Articles of Association, Governance Handbook (Oct 2020), Academy Trust Handbook (Sept 2021) and the Ofsted Inspection section 5, section 8 and Early Years handbooks.

The current edition (6th) is well established and each year receives less suggestions – this said, there are numerous updates within the official documents that will need incorporating; there is a greater emphasis on community engagement.

Monthly Cash Flow and Management Accounts

The cash flow and management accounts for BEST are received on a monthly basis by the Finance and Audit Committee members i.e. DM, AL, IB, PW and JT 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.

Risk Register

Pre-Read: 2 x versions of the BEST Risk Register distributed prior to the meeting – view documents for more details. As per the actions of the previous trustees' meeting, AL incorporated the recommendations of the trustees in regards to Ofsted/2Tier into the risk register and offered two options.

Option A: Includes an additional risk – 1.1.6 – detailing the risks 2Tier may have on BEST School's Ofsted inspections.

Option B: 1.1.0 more detailed to include Ofsted rating risk and does not include 1.1.6

Trustees discussed both options in detail and concluded that Ofsted Inspections are a risk to all BEST schools during the transition period from 3-to-2Tier but particularly for the BEST schools currently Ofsted rated 'Outstanding'. AL believes no BEST school should drop below an Ofsted rated 'Good'.

Decision: Trustees agreed to go with Option A.

Action: 1.1.0 to be generalised – the risk is to all schools, particularly schools currently Ofsted rated 'outstanding'. Risk to remain at 3x3=9.

Action: 1.1.6 to include RBA.

Trustees unanimously agreed to maintain the current review schedule for the risk register. Review undertaken, no further amendments required.

Matters Arising

Pre-read: BEST GDPR Annual Report 2022 distributed prior to the meeting – view document for more detail.

CS discussed the report in which trends are identified. The process for monitoring and preventing GDPR breaches or near misses at BEST are tight – this is largely attributed to the well supported and attended termly GDPR meetings organised by the BEST Compliance Officer and attended by trust-wide GDPR leads.

GDPR: No reportable incidents since the last trustees update

Safeguarding: No reportable incidents since the last trustees update

Health & Safety: 1 x Riddor incident currently being investigated.

Wellbeing Update

Pre-read: Mindful and Compassionate PPT. distributed prior to the meeting – view PPT. for more details.

AL provided trustees with an overview of the Mindfulness work and the delegate feedback received to date. 28% response rate to a recent delegate survey in which there was an overwhelming response for a commitment to mindfulness practice and desire for continued Mindfulness learning through BEST.

Policies for Approval

Pre-read: Proposed Equality Policy and BEST Supervision Policy distributed prior to the meeting.

The following policies were unanimously approved by trustees for trust-wide distribution:

- Equality Policy
- Supervision Policy

In response to a trustee query, it was confirmed the data is held internally within BEST and is in line with GDPR legislation.

Notification: On 1st March 2022 IB and AL approved a minor amendment to the Peer on Peer Abuse Policy.

2Tier Update

Trustees' proposed plans for BEST Schools within the Shefford/Stotfold cluster were submitted to CBC by their 4 March 2022 deadline; CBC will release the cluster-wide plans for cluster approval by the end of March. Following which the plans will go to CBC Executive for capital approval with expected timescales by the end of May 2022. September 2023 is no longer a viable option – some new feasibility studies are required to help determine the work required/new transition date. BEST would like the cluster to move together – the current GMA and CMA sites do not have the capacity to accommodate the transition to primary.

The Biggleswade cluster plans have been released, delivering a disappointing blow for LSA who will no longer relocate.

CBC have offered to extend LVA to enable an increase in PAN to 45 with effect from September 2024 and have asked whether BEST would be willing to accept up to 45 applications in September 2022 and 2023.

Decision: Trustees present agreed they'd like any extension works futureproofed to accommodate a PAN of 60 at a later date.

Decision: Trustees present agreed to accept up to 45 applications in September 2022 and September 2023 but would like to ask CBC to guarantee funding for 45 pupils during these years; the funding would help to cover the additional staffing costs required to support the bulge years.

Confidential



Next meeting: Tuesday 10 May 2022 at BEST House.

J. Bowd Approved and electronically signed 10 May 2022