



Belonging

Year Eight: 2023-24¹

¹ To be reviewed, RAG rated and submitted to Trustees in January 2024, by the CEO. Key: **Green** – achieved; **Amber** – should be achieved within time period; **Red** – unlikely to be achieved.

BEST: Mission, Vision and Values

BEST Mission Statement

- to grow the BEST in everyone -

We believe in the importance of high expectations, hard work and the development of a community of academies where each of us strive to **'be the best that we can be'**.

BEST Vision Statement

BEST aims to:

1. Grow to comprise ten academies (7500 pupils)² and eight nurseries. A Primary-Secondary – 2 tier – structure will be in place
2. Ensure all schools achieve a minimum Ofsted inspection Good grade, with 30% achieving an Outstanding Grade. Outcomes in every school/nursery above the 50th percentile, with half of outcomes being above the 25th percentile
3. Secure financial sustainability, with clean annual audits each year and a minimum 5% of GAG in reserves.

BEST Values – We will:

Always put Children first

Our reference point question is 'how will this improve outcomes for children and enable them to go on and succeed in life?'

Collaborate to support and compete to challenge

Our academies work together to add value and compete to improve continually

Provide community-based education

Our academies form a coherent learning community at the heart of the Bedfordshire community

Have the courage to be compassionate

Our community treats all with trust, kindness and honesty

² "Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child", White Paper (HM Government, March 2022)

BEST Strategic Plan:

2016-2020
Phase One – Delivery Clarity
BEMAT to BEST: Mission Vision Values
2020-2025
Phase Two – Delivering Connection
Three to two tier: Uniting BEST Deepening values Defining Culture <u>Belonging 2023-24</u>
2025-2030
Phase Three – Delivering Excellence
Being the BEST: Growth beyond Bedfordshire Outstanding Inspections Exceptional Performance

BEST 2016-2025

Year	Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction	Holding executive leaders to account for educational performance	Overseeing financial performance and making sure money is well spent
Phase One - Delivering Clarity (BEMAT to BEST: mission, vision, values and operating principles)			
2016-17	BEMAT becomes BEST. Etonbury Academy Phase 1 new build is completed.	2 successful Ofsted inspections; 1 academy gained R/I inspection. 34 of 40 50 th percentile targets achieved	Support from reserves required, in response to significant funding cuts. Curriculum and staffing efficiencies. Curriculum reviews, financial planning metrics and benchmarking.
2017-18	ETA new build is completed Arlesey Nursery is opened. SCA joins BEST. Central Services Review, greater focus on SI.	3 successful Ofsted inspections; 1 RI inspection. 46 of 49 50 th percentile targets achieved. 2 successful Ofsted inspection.	Reserves used to support ETA staff expansion and first year of SCA deficit recovery plan. All academies ended the year with better balances than budgeted. Reserves increased slightly. Bedfordshire East Schools Trust/Nursery accounts brought up to the required standard. School Condition and Devolved Formula Capital allocations methodology implemented
2018-19	ETA becomes a fully extended-Secondary academy. LA joins BEST. 45% of central funds allocated for school improvement. Bedfordshire East Schools Trust fully integrated into BEST. Embed Compliance activity/QA calendar. First Governor Conference and concept of 'governance roles' developed. Gain National Governance Mark. ICT contract renewal reduced cost to all academies. Other contracts and SLAs reviewed.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all academies. Re-designation of BEST Teaching School. BEST TS gains Appropriate Body status.	Academies set balanced budgets except for SCA but their deficit recovery is underway. Central finance team covered for absent local finance staff. Finance function strengthened further by 4 new qualified/skilled finance assistants. Ongoing training for all finance staff in place. Further optimisation of systems and processes. Continue to build up reserves to improve resilience against further funding cuts.
2019-20	PBA opens. Langford Village Nursey (LVN) opens. Develop community engagement approach to Marketing and Comms. Plans in place for 2 tier move.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all academies.	Financial modelling to establish level of risk and potential mitigation in plan for 2 tier move. SCA deficit recovery plan complete. Pix Brook financial planning for the DfE. Additional work from LVA absorbed at no extra cost by finance team. Nursery systems updated to accommodate growth, improve accuracy, reduce processing time and provide more professional interface with customers. Build reserves further.
Summary Achievements 2016-20	BEST comprises: 9 academies; 2 nurseries; 1 teaching school; 1 SCITT; a charity; high quality and efficient central service provision.	All Ofsted inspections since joining BEST achieved a Good grade.	Financial sustainability, with clean annual audits each year.
	All our academies remained open throughout the national COVID pandemic lockdown (Inc.: Bank Holidays) for vulnerable children and the children of key workers.		

**Phase Two - Delivering connection
(Three to two tier: uniting BEST, defining culture and laying foundations)**

2020-21	Preparing for and successfully opening all our Academies to all our children, in the face of the national COVID pandemic.		
	Langford Village Nursey (LVN) opens. Develop community engagement approach to Marketing and Comms. Plans in place for 2 tier move. Another Academy joins BEST. Final year of 3 year Capital and Estates SCA programme – new Conditions Surveys and review of onward priorities.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all academies.	All academies working toward contributing at least 5% of their GAG income to the pooled reserves. Review and benchmark auditor services. Modelling for 2 tier and 0-18 academy to estimate the extent of the restructuring required. Set LVA 2021/22 budget for primary structure. Incorporate Campton Lower academy and LVA nursery into trust systems and procedures.
2021-22	CBC re-set: fewer primary school places needed and 2 tier programme pushed back to 2025.		
	Intensify change to 2 tier preparations. Details to be confirmed.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all academies.	Modelling for 2 tier and 0-18 school fine-tuned to clarify restructuring plan. All academies continue to increase to 5% of GAG reserves target. Review systems to ensure compatibility with the 2 tier structure. Create designated revenue and capital funds as a contingency for transition to 2 tier.
2022-23	Gain DfE approval for PAN and age range changes. Work with CBC to progress and complete feasibility studies. Align nursery strategy, with 2 tier change.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all academies.	Establish process for managing revenue/pupil flow challenge – internally and with CBC. Work with schools to prepare for budget implications of two tier transition. Ensure capital funding plans reflect two tier conversion process to avoid duplication or wasted spend. Ensure HR implications are understood by all.
2023-24	Begin capital works, including two new builds (Campton Academy and Gothic Mede Academy). Open 6 th Form provision at Etonbury Academy. Ensure nursery provision is in place.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all academies/nurseries.	Model flows of pupil numbers and monitor potential revenue and expenditure impact through budget forecast. Devise and begin implementation of HR Strategy Plan, with staff wellbeing as a primary focus. Designate revenue and capital funds as a contingency for transition to 2 tier in place. Review and update budget forecasts as more accurate information becomes available. Strategically release funds to facilitate transition.
2024-25	Ensure that all BEST academies are ready to open as primary or secondary academies. Campton Academy to open as a new build lower-primary school and Lawnside Academy to become a primary school. Ensure all nurseries are sustainable.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all academies/nurseries.	Finalise staffing across BEST to meet 2 tier demands. Update budget forecast with accurate pupil numbers. Continue to strategically release funds to facilitate transition including targeted capital funds.
Summary Targets 2020-25	BEST comprises: 10 academies (7500); 8 nurseries; a charity; high quality and efficient central service provision. A Primary-Secondary – 2 tier – structure is in place.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50th percentile targets hit, in all academies/nurseries.	Financial sustainability, maintaining a minimum of 5% of GAG in free reserves, while strategically using designated reserves to support academies through the negative effects of transition.

BEST Summary of 2023-24³

	Aim		Objective	Achieved Fully/Partially/Not
1.	High quality and inclusive education	1.1	high quality education across academies inc: SEND + operates fair access	
		1.2	effective central teams	
		1.3	strong school leadership + teaching	
		1.4	evidence-based design + implementation	
2.	School Improvement	2.1	works quickly to improve standards	
		2.2	transform previously underperforming schools	
		2.3	maintains appropriately performing schools	
3.	Strategic Governance	3.1	vision	
		3.2	effective + robust governance structure, involves schools + exemplifies ethical standards	
		3.3	utilises the expertise + skills of Board to oversee strategic direction; holds leaders to account	
		3.4	strong local identity, engaging effectively with parents + the wider community	
4.	Financial Management	4.1	strong + effective financial management	
		4.2	prioritises the use of resources, inc: estate to deliver the best educational experience for children	
5.	Efficient and effective operational structures	5.1	efficient and effective central service provision	
		5.2	trusted partner service	
		5.3	robust compliance system	
		5.4	effective capital and estates provision	
6.	Workforce inclusivity, resilience and wellbeing	6.1	trains, recruits, develops + retains great teachers + leaders throughout their careers	
		6.2	proactively engages in ITT + the ECF	
		6.3	supports staff development by using NPQs + other evidence-based professional development	
		6.4	ensure BEST Is an Inclusive employer	
		6.5	prioritises staff wellbeing	

³ Adapted from “**Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child**” (March 2022)

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators

2023-24 – Lead: [Alison Wilshaw](#)

1. High quality and inclusive education			
Ref	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
1	High quality education across academies inc: SEND + operates fair access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All 50th percentile targets achieved in all academies/nurseries - From Early Years onwards, all children will be taught a broad, ambitious, knowledge rich curriculum and have access to high-quality extra-curricular provision - Collaborative sharing of best practice and working with Lead Teachers across the Trust to develop curriculum areas - SEND Lead teacher to work collaboratively to improve practice – SENCo group to continue with monthly meeting - Start to train to deliver SEND NPQ - English, Maths and Science Directors to work with leads in each school to ensure curriculums are in line with National Curriculums and support pupils to make good progress - Use of 'Enthuse Partnership' money to deliver personalised CPD for staff within science and computing 	
2	Effective central teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A minimum 'Good' Ofsted Inspection grade achieved in all academies/nurseries - Regular monitoring and evaluation of schools - Training to be taken to upskill leaders and add capacity to SI Team delivery partners – widen team capacity - Reports to be written and presented to Trustees 	
3	Strong school leadership + teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High quality CPD and training to be delivered based on the needs of the schools and nurseries and requests of SLT / middle-leaders - Regular monitoring for T&L in schools and the provision within Nurseries - Training, coaching and support programmes in place where T&L requires development 	
4	Evidence-based design + implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CPD and training delivered to match school / department needs and be based on analysis of data, T&L and curriculums - External SIA work to continue in schools and Nurseries - Monitoring Reviews completed by SI Team 	

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators

2023-24 – Lead: [Alison Wilshaw](#)

1. School Improvement			
Ref	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
1	Works quickly to improve standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of vulnerabilities starting to emerge - Provision Statements to identify areas of development / support / capacity - Leadership support for all levels via NPQs and Leadership Ladder - Delivery of NPQLL to develop and strengthen Literacy across schools - Delivery of NPQEYF to support Nurseries in their quality of Leadership - Nursery Hub Manager to collate reports on standards of Education across the Nurseries 	
2	Transform previously underperforming schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coaching and CPD in place to support areas for development - Shadowing opportunities across all phases and job roles within the schools and nurseries - Providing extra leadership capacity - Moderation across key stages to enforce National Standards in schools and Nursery education <p>Use external schools to the Trust if extra expertise is needed</p>	
3	Maintains appropriately performing schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Robust monitoring in place to ensure high quality in all areas of the school - Quality training in place for next steps in leadership and the curriculum - Robust phonics screening in place, and checked regularly where outcomes are concerned - Multiplication Tables check to be performed 	

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators

2023-24 – Lead: [Craig Smith](#)

2. Strategic Governance			
Ref	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
1	Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure Lawnside is fully prepared for primary in September 2024 - work with CBC to deliver Shefford and Stofold cluster in 2025 - align related activity e.g. post 16 and nursery activity with two tier landscape - develop BEST presence wider than CBC geographical area 	
2	Effective + robust governance structure, involves schools + exemplifies ethical standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - review suite of monitoring and support activity for LGBs (currently Annual Conversation, attendance at LGB meetings, close links with Chairs, training, review of minutes) - provide support for any LGBs in process of change - refine and develop training offer (linked to Skills Audits) - review and strengthening of BEST Governance Handbook 	
3	Utilises the expertise + skills of Board to oversee strategic direction; holds leaders to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure delivery of two tier transformation as focus shifts from capital plans to operational activity 	
4	Strong local identity, engaging effectively with parents + the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realign focus of communications to ensure positive positioning of structural change / two tier - Promote BEST successes better – Ofsted reports, performance and outcomes, investment and improvements - Focus internal communications on ensuring positive advantages of BEST are better understood 	

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators

2023-24 – Lead: [Kim Rowe](#)

3. Financial Management			
Ref	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
1	Strong + effective financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Model the pupil flow required to transition to 2 tier and approach CBC to provide revenue funding to ensure the affected schools remain sustainable- Review banking procedures to evaluate the security of process and whether there is room for further improvement- Ensure schools with deficit recovery plans operate within the agreed parameters to be back in surplus as soon as possible	
2	Prioritises the use of resources, inc: estate to deliver the best educational experience for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continually review budgets in response to the changing inflation rates and the impact of underfunded pay awards- Support the finances of ETA sixth form while their numbers are growing ensuring the pupils have the resources they need	

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators
2023-24 – Lead: [Craig Smith](#)

4. Efficient and effective operational structures⁴			
Ref	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
1	Efficient and effective central service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect and act upon stakeholder views / schools feedback on central services - Support core staff with career development 	
2	Trusted partner service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversee and manage a full ICT tendering process - Undertake a review of annual safeguarding audits provision - Review Horizons HR service (as part of wider HR changes) - Ensure effective performance management of other providers 	
3	Robust compliance system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote and embed Compliance Review document and process - Provide greater challenge to ensure full responses to compliance activity requests - Further use of SMARTlog for recording and analysing trends 	
4	Effective capital and estates provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of Capital and Estates Scheme of Capital Delegation (including DfC) - Update strategic approach to capital expenditure (as priorities shift) - Ensure compliance with DfE Good Estates Management - Review work with Barkers 	

⁴ BEST Executive Team decision to incorporate, June 2022.

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators

2023-24 – Lead: [Alison Wilshaw](#)

5. Workforce inclusivity, resilience and wellbeing			
Ref	Objectives	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
1	Recruits, trains, develops + retains great teachers + leaders throughout their careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involvement with SCITT and Beds Uni to secure best trainees come to the Trust - A wide range of CPD courses offered to BEST and beyond - Delivering personalised CPD within science and computing using 'Enthuse Partnership' money - Shadowing opportunity in place for all BEST Staff - Apply for funding again for DfE STEM Internships 	
2	Proactively engages in ITT + the ECF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust Lead for ECF Programme in place - ECT/ECM training provided to the Trust and beyond - ECT mentoring and Induction Tutor support provided by SI Team where required - SCITT opportunities to staff via subject mentoring and course delivery for SCITT at Primary and Secondary Level 	
3	Supports staff development by using NPQs + other evidence-based professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with Best Practice Network and University of London to deliver the full range of NPQs - Work with Eastern Partnership to establish the new SEND NPQ 	
4	Ensure BEST Is an Inclusive employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leave given for faith days - Financial support for qualifications whenever possible 	
5	Prioritises staff wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wellbeing charter is updated - Continue contribution to DfE Workload Reduction Toolkit - Wellbeing Leads group meets at least 3 times a year - Wellbeing Survey Collated by SI Team 	

Appendix 1: Schools for the Future – BEST School Plans

School/Nursery	Structure	PLAN	TIMESCALE	Max. NOR
Samuel Whitbread Academy	Secondary + Sixth Form	7FE (PAN: 210) Secondary School plus 650 place Sixth Form	2025	1700
Etonbury Academy	Secondary + Sixth Form	6FE (PAN: 180) Secondary School plus 200 place Sixth Fform	2025	1100
Pix Brook Academy	Secondary	6FE (PAN: 180) Secondary School	2025	900
Robert Bloomfield Academy	Secondary	5FE (PAN: 150) Secondary School	2025	750
St Christophers Academy	Primary	2FE (PAN: 60) Primary School	Current	420
Langford Village Academy	Primary	1FE (PAN:30) Primary School – becoming 1.5FE (PAN: 45) 2024	Current	315
Lawnside Academy	Primary	2FE (PAN: 60) Primary School	2024	420
Gothic Mede Academy	Primary	2FE (PAN: 60) Primary School*	2025	420
Campton Academy	Primary	2FE (PAN: 60) Primary School – Relocated new build	2025	420
Gravenhurst Academy	Primary	0.5FE (PAN: 15) Primary School	2025	105
Shefford Nursery	Nursery	55	Current	n/a
Arlesey Nursery	Nursery	95 + 50 WAC	Current	n/a
Langford Nursery	Nursery	40 + 70 WAC	Current	n/a

Total (Current) Capacity = 5785

Total (Post 2 tier) Capacity = 6540 (plus PANs at ETA and PBA expected to rise to 210/240 = additional 600 = 7140)

*new build / increase to 3FE for Gothic Mede is still expected but later than 2025

Appendix 2: Bedfordshire Schools Trust: Ofsted Inspections

Academy Name	Opening date as an academy	Date joined BEMAT/BEST	Date of Previous Inspection	Previous Inspection Judgement	Most Recent Inspection Date	Most Recent Inspection Grade	Next Inspection Due (approximate)
Campton Academy	1 st Nov 2020	1 st Nov 2020	31 st Oct 2006	Satisfactory	12 th Jan 2010	Outstanding	By Nov 2023 ⁵
Etonbury Academy	1 st Nov 2011	1 st Nov 2011	16 th Nov 2017	Requires Improvement	11-12 th Feb 2020	Good	By Feb 2024
Gothic Mede Academy	1 st Nov 2013	1 st Nov 2013	27-28 th June 2017	Good	21-22 nd March '23 (ungraded)	Good	By March 2027
Gravenhurst Academy	1 st Sept 2013	1 st Sept 2013	9 th Oct 2007	Good	7-8 th Mar 2011	Outstanding	Inspection due anytime*
Langford Village Academy	1 st June 2014	1 st June 2014	3-4 th May 2017	Good	22 nd & 23 rd Nov '22 (ungraded)	Good	By Nov '23 – Nov '24 ⁶
Lawnside Academy	1 st Jan 2019	1 st Jan 2019	28 th -29 th June 2017	Requires Improvement	28 th & 29 th March '23 (graded)	Good	By March 2027
Pix Brook Academy	1 st Sept 2019	1 st Sept 2019	New Free School	n/a	n/a	n/a	Sept '22 – Sept '24 ⁷
Robert Bloomfield Academy	1 st May 2011	1 st May 2011	15 th May 2008	Outstanding	25-26 th June 2014	Outstanding	Inspection due anytime*
Samuel Whitbread Academy	1 st March 2012	1 st March 2012	31 st Oct – 1 st Nov 2017	Good	2 nd -3 rd March 2023 (ungraded)	Good	By March 2027
St Christophers Academy	1 st April 2012	1 st Sept 2017	9 th Feb 2016	Good	26-27 th Sept 2019 (Section 8 Inspection)	Good	By Sept '23
BEST Nursery – Shefford	n/a	n/a	16 th Feb 2022	Requires Improvement	12 th December 2022	Good	By Dec '28 ⁸
BEST Nursery – Arlesey	n/a	n/a	10 th Dec 2012	Good	27 th June 2018	Good	By June '24
BEST Nursery – Langford	Opened April 2021	n/a	30 th Nov '22	Inadequate	8 th March '23	Requires Improvement	By March '24 ⁹

*Owing to the COVID Pandemic, some inspections have been delayed – Ofsted committed to inspecting all schools between May 2021 to July 2025 (School Inspection Handbook, July '22)

⁵ Ofsted Inspection within 3 years of becoming an academy

⁶ Ofsted will return within 1-2 years following an ungraded inspection where there is evidence that the school may have improved or declined – the next inspection will be a graded inspection (Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, updated 11th July '22, guidance came into force September '22)

⁷ New schools that opened prior to Sept '20 and that have not had their first inspection can expect to be inspected in their 4th or 5th year of operation (Ofsted Inspecting Schools guidance – updated 11th July '22, guidance came into force September '22)

⁸ Ofsted must inspect each provider within 6 years from the date of its last inspection (Early Years Inspection Handbook for Ofsted-registered Provision, updated April '23)

⁹ Ofsted will return within 12 months from date of inspection of RI judgement (Early Years Inspection Handbook for Ofsted-registered Provision, Updated April '23)