

BEST Directors' Meeting

26th April 2017, 16:00-18:00

SWA, Block 20, Room 914

Attendees

Peter Little (PL), Lorraine MacDonald (LM), Alan Lee (AL), David Shelvey (DS), Paul Walker (PW), Ilona Bond (IB), (NB) Julie Hollings (JH)

Apologies

Cathy Piotrowski (CP)

Minute taker: Lisa Little (LL)

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

Agenda items:

1. Etonbury Academy – Alex Prior (4:00-4:30pm)
Coasting School Status
Challenge Partners Report
2. Projects – Ian Kite (4:30-5:00pm)
Best Nursery Etonbury
Best Nursery Gothic Mede
Warden
Pix Brook
3. Central Services - AL
4. Governance Handbook
5. Gothic Mede's Chair of LGB
6. Safeguarding Statement
7. GHA/LVA Principal Recruitment update
8. Governor meal

Etonbury Academy

AL welcomed Alex Prior (AP) to the meeting.

Etonbury Academy's coasting schools letter was discussed by Directors. AP explained that the coasting schools criteria takes into account 3 years of data including progress. AP advised that during this period they reviewed their areas for improvement, implemented rapid intervention and as a result the subsequent summer results leapt significantly. The following year, despite the SATs regime changing, Etonbury achieved stable outcomes.

AP discussed the challenges faced at key stage 2 and the strategies that have been implemented to improve outcomes further. Etonbury are engaging with lower schools in terms of the assessment of pupils and has aligned their data tracking systems.

AP explained that Etonbury have adopted a new process for transition into year 5 where pupils are kept in the same group allowing a more comprehensive handover.

Etonbury build programme starts this week. This will create a new primary delivery unit on site called Etonbury Juniors.

AP circulated Etonbury's Whole School Action Plan 2017 to the meeting. Etonbury are aiming for 63% combined and AP feels this is achievable. They have formed a partnership with Tennyson Road, Luton. Both schools have adopted the same preparation programme, Rising Stars.

AP explained Etonbury's strategies for SATs preparation particularly in relation to pupil premium children.

AL thanked AP for his time and praised all the positive progress made by Etonbury.

Action: AL to circulate coasting schools criteria to all Directors.

Projects

Pix Brook

Letter has been received from the Director of the Free Schools Group. Application has entered into the next stage of the process – the “pre-opening phase”. The offer is conditional on none of the BEST schools entering special measures. Due diligence is planned to be carried out on a site in Stotfold. Ian Kite (IFK) has visited the proposed site and raised concern regarding the size. Two other sites have also been considered. All agreed that the proximity to Etonbury Academy should be considered carefully.

Discussion followed concerning the expectation that the land be provided at no cost and the feasibility of this. Further information concerning the startup grant should be received shortly and an open date of September 2019 was proposed. It was felt that a meeting should be arranged with Central Beds Council once the letter has been received.

Recruitment of Principal should be factored into the budget for next year.

AL thanked IFK and the rest of the team involved for getting the application to this point.

Decision: all agreed that DS should be the named Director for this project.

Etonbury 2

Sport England objection to placement of car park has been resolved – the car park will remain where it is. There are a number of conditions which need to be discharged prior to commencement. Works due to commence in approximately 10 days' time with an estimated completion date of May next year. Overspend discussed and meeting held concerning reallocation of budget. Meeting due to be held on Friday in which this will be discussed further.

Year 5 block due to be completed by September 2017.

Etonbury Nursery

IFK would like to take the project to planning to identify planning risks then make decision concerning taking project forward. It was felt that the project could potentially exceed the cost of the grant. Terms and conditions state that BEST should provide 25% of cost (£600k estimated total spend). It was felt that IFK and DS should continue discussions with Central Beds Council.

SWA Warden Project

Action plan and timeline has been provided by Freeths. The consultation is due to run from 2nd May to 20th June 2017. Consultation meeting planned for 24th May, 6.00pm to 8.00pm in Samuel Whitbread reception.

Discussion followed concerning the restriction on the title.

Freeths to instruct District Valuer. IFK hopes to have everything complete by 7th July although estimated that the DfE could take 3 months to come back.

Robert Bloomfield Academy

Refurbishment due to take place over the summer. Contractor has been appointed.

Gothic Mede Academy

Business case has been put together and feasibility is being completed. Two new classrooms and change of use for one classroom. The nursery can then expand to 0-4. It was felt that the works could cost in excess of the sale of the bungalow.

Discussion followed concerning projected reserves. Last year it was noted in the accounts that the reserves were not sufficient. It was felt that it would be beneficial to create a 3-5 year plan and it had previously been agreed

that going forward no deficits will be accepted. Curriculum reviews have taken place to produce ideas for change and potential for savings.

Timescales for the works at Gothic Mede were discussed and it was felt that the classrooms and space for children should be prioritised. It is possible to phase the project if needed.

IFK briefed the Directors on potential loans available.

Central Services

AL forwarded paper on central services to all Directors.

There has been a significant focus to date on school improvement including the appointment of Sharon Jeffs to Teaching School, sharpening the SLE job description, Challenge Partners and curriculum reviews.

AL explained that there is a financial driver in the suggestions made in the paper and a refocus on deliverables.

Decision: Directors unanimously agreed with the principle of the paper and advised AL to progress with exploring the plans for central services.

Action: AL and LM to arrange a meeting to discuss the detail behind the proposals further.

Discussion followed re union agreement of HR policies. Consideration to be given to adopting full set of union approved policies.

Governance Handbook

The Governance Handbook has been updated. The Chairs Forum has been removed as it did not take place. AL has attended LGB meetings for all BEST schools and will try to attend again before the end of term.

Decision: all agreed with the removal of this forum and felt that it could be reviewed again next year.

Further detail has been added to the handbook concerning policy and website compliance.

AL advised the Directors that BEST will be working towards achieving the National Governor Mark.

Action: all Directors to email any comments concerning the revised Governor Handbook to Lisa Little (LL) by e/o Monday 1st May 2017.

Gothic Mede's Chair of LGB

Decision: Directors agreed the proposal for Steve Stanbury to take over as Chair of Gothic Mede LGB and Jo Graves as Vice Chair.

Safeguarding Statement

Decision: Directors agreed the Safeguarding Statement for BEST.

GHA/LVA Principal Recruitment Update

LGB interviews took place today and formal panel interview due to take place tomorrow.

Governor Meal

Proposed date of 28th June 2017 put forward.

Decision: Directors agreed that the governor meal should take place again this year.

Action: AL/LL to organise.

Approval of Minutes: Previous minutes approved and signed after the meeting had ended.

Next meeting: 28th June 2017



