

BEST Directors' Meeting

15th March 2017, 16:00-18:00

SWA, Block 20, Room 914

Attendees

Lorraine MacDonald (LM), Alan Lee (AL), David Shelvey (DS), Paul Walker (PW), Ilona Bond (IB), (NB) Julie Hollings (JH), Cathy Piotrowski (CP)

Apologies

Peter Little (PL),

Minute taker: Yvonne Humphryes (YH)

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

Approval of Minutes: Previous minutes approved and signed.

Agenda items:

1. Student Presentation
2. Outcomes for Pupils:
Performance Committee Minutes
Admission numbers 2017-18
3. Quality of teaching, learning and assessment:
Curriculum review report
Teaching school peer review report
4. Personal development, behavior and welfare:
HR Committee Minutes
SWA Warden Project
5. Effectiveness of Leadership and Management:
Leadership Partners Report – LVA and GHA
Members, Directors and LGB update
Strategic Direction – BEMAT/BEST

Action: YH to provide Directors with the details to enable them to log into the guest WIFI.

Student Presentation

James Cantwell from Samuel Whitbread Academy's Sixth form spoke about Youth Parliament and their drive to get the voice of the youth heard amongst local councilors within Central Bedfordshire, in relation to issues such as 'Safeguarding'. Directors were supportive of the work James and his peers are doing with 'Youth Central'.

James left the meeting.

Etonbury Admission Numbers

Etonbury's Principal, Alex Prior, spoke to the Directors regarding recent developments with Etonbury's 2017 Admission numbers. Etonbury are committed in serving the community whilst driving standards to enable students to achieve their outcomes. Earlier this year we were advised that admission numbers had soared to 83 over PAN, with 95% of the community selecting Etonbury as their first choice; in January the BEST Directors approved increase in numbers of Roll from 150 to 180; this still leaves 53 first choice applicants with a place.

It was agreed that the rapid growth in admissions could be to the detriment of student progress and as a consequence, requests from the local authority to accommodate the additional spaces would require funding to support additional build/classrooms etc.

With the agreement of the local governing body and the BEST Directors, Alex put together a package proposal for the local authority to enable BEST/Etonbury to serve the community. BEST received a letter from Sue Harrison at Central Bedfordshire earlier this week, to advise that they will not pursue their plans to admit any further pupils to Etonbury above the recently agreed 180 NOR.

AL commended Alex on the work that has been done within the community and that it is a success that so many pupils would like to attend Etonbury. It should also be remembered that we have agreed to go 20% above PAN to accommodate an extra 30 pupils.

Alex advised that the LGB are uneasy about the fallout within the community. Directors advised improving outcomes for all children within the school should be the focus.

AL thanked Alex for his time – Alex left the meeting.

Samuel Whitbread Admission Numbers

At the start of the academic year discussions were had around improving pupil outcomes; this could be achieved much more effectively with a reduced PAN, however, the local authority opposed this request. Directors reviewed the Samuel Whitbread admissions data for the past four years; the data showed a PAN of 434 of which, approx.100 applicants per year are out of catchment. The Directors would like the PAN at Samuel Whitbread Academy reviewed.

Action: AL to contact Sue Harrison at the start of the summer term to discuss a possible reduction in the Samuel Whitbread PAN.

Langford Admission Numbers

Admission numbers at Langford for several years has come in at approximately 30 against a PAN of 45.

Action: AL to explore one form of entry with Lyn Rouse and the Local Governing Body.

Performance committee minutes

A skills audit, self-evaluation and third party evaluations currently take place within the schools. On the back of the skills audit, Sharon Jeffs put together a Governor training schedule.

Action: AL will attend some LGB meetings during the summer term, reflect and create an evaluation framework for LGBs based on the work of its all-party parliamentary committee.

AL advised that the current scheme of delegation starts with BEST's values and visions and what we stand for i.e. striving to achieve 20th percentile; to enable this to happen the core operating principles were then developed May 2016 and the Value and Vision day. AL made an annual agreement to revise the scheme of delegation.

It was agreed that more detail is required with regards to LGB responsibilities and the remit of their autonomy e.g. Over all financial accountability lies with the Trust but spending overview lies with the LGBs. AL is currently conducting his annual review of the scheme of delegation and will look to provide more detail.

Action: AL to revise the scheme of delegation ready for September 2017.

NB: LGBs and Directors have been emailed for any recommended amends.

Recommended: In the revised scheme of delegation, publish a recommended maximum number of Governors per LGB.

Curriculum Review Report

AL advised that if we're unable to change the structure of the three tier system, then BEST need to be looking to get Samuel Whitbread (SWA) and Robert Bloomfield (RBA) more aligned with their curriculums in order to maximise outcomes.

As part of a school improvement exercise, a curriculum expert, Chris Jones, has recently spent time with SWA and RBA going through their curriculum data and has produced a thorough report.

SWA are offering a huge range of options with their curriculum; reducing the number of courses on offer will still enable great results to be achieved and will have significant cost savings, as we are faced with budget cuts.

AL, Nick Martin and Julian Axford are working together to create a more seamless curriculum, ready for an Autumn2018 launch.

Decision: The Directors would like Etonbury to have their curriculum reviewed and have asked that Alex Prior works with Chris Jones.

Teaching School Peer Review

St Thomas More conducted a peer review at the BEST Teaching School, the Directors reviewed the document. BEST are conducting a peer review on St Thomas More tomorrow; both parties are looking to offer a model to other teaching schools nationally.

Redborne Upper School should be notified whether they have achieved Teaching school status soon; at which point CBTSP may look to change its name to 'BEST' Teaching School.

AL advised that Sharon Jeffs would like to work with the CBC as their school improvement partner.

HR committee minutes

AL confirmed that IB has completed the action to forward on a 'non-negotiables' document onto him; AL has shared this document with Nick Martin.

LM and AL will be conducting the Principal's mid-year reviews on Monday 20th March; Alex Prior is unavailable on this date.

Action: YH to get LM's availability and schedule AP's mid-year review.

The BEST CEO's mid-year review is to be scheduled.

Action: LM to schedule CEO's appraisal together with another BEST Director.

BEST Nurseries Managing Director needs a new Line Manager and her Job Description re-evaluating.

Action: AL to review the Job Description.

Action: AL's job description is to be reviewed as part of his mid-year review.

LM advised that we're not yet in a position to give an answer re: facilities time.

Action: PW & LM to circulate the 'draft' union recognition agreement to Directors for feedback.

Warden Project

DS advised that the project is now moving on the basis agreed at the last Directors meeting – working with Freeths on tweaking the conditional contract, this needs to be right as EFA approval is required before we can sign. The complexities are owing to the fact that we're looking to give the land in exchange for Warden's doing the work; this is a very different proposition to selling the land and appointing a contractor to do the work.

Concerns we raised regarding the timelines, as staff at Samuel Whitbread Academy are hoping to have the 4G facility next year. Ian Kite is the project lead.

Finance committee minutes

DS advised that this year the schools were allowed to set deficit budgets within the reserves that they had. All except two schools, Etonbury (ETA) and Langford, will come in within budget. The Etonbury build has a £261,000 overspend needs to be allocated. DS proposed that the 'overspend' gets allocated to phase two; this will mean savings will need to be made on this phase of the build. If a standalone school, they would've needed to approach EFA for a Loan.

Decision: Directors agreed that the ETA phase 1 overspend, will be allocated to phase 2 of the build.

Robert Bloomfield has undertaken work over the past two years that has now used up their surplus funds.

DS expressed concerns that this is not the first project to run into costs in excess of the target and feels tighter management of the projects is required.

Leadership Partner report reviewed and discussed. No actions.

Members, Directors and LGB update

Peter Little will be standing down as the Chair of Directors but will remain a Trust Member.

AL has some informal meetings scheduled with two candidates who are interested in becoming a Director; the candidates have come via Academy Ambassadors.

Action: AL to feedback to the Directors after the meetings with Caroline and Claire have taken place on 22nd and 27th March.

Cathy Piotrowski co-opted to the board for one year – Cathy will be standing down at the end of the academic year.

Next meeting: 26th April 2017

 26.04.17