

BEST Trustees' Meeting

24 January 2023, 10:00am – 12:30pm

BEST House Conference Room

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

Meeting Chair: Ilona Bond

Guest: Langford Village Academy Principal, Debbie Randall (DR)

Governance Professional: Yvonne Humphryes

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

Approval of previous minutes:

- Trustees' meeting minutes 6 December 2022 – minutes approved and signed electronically
- BEST AGM minutes 6 December 2022 – minutes approved and signed electronically

Langford Village Academy (LVA) Ofsted Inspection

Pre-read x 3: The following were distributed prior to the meeting – please see documents for more details:

1. LVA Ofsted Report
2. LVA Leadership Support Plan
3. LVA Ofsted Action Plan

Trustees discussed the Ofsted report findings and then invited DR to join the meeting – *DR joined the meeting.*

DR advised she was pleased to maintain a 'Good' rating but disappointed with some aspects of the report that will now be worked through.

LVA have recently changed their phonic scheme, the implementation of which has not been as DR had intended i.e.

- Phonics should be completed daily alongside spellings, DR was surprised that this has not been the case
- New books were on the side for use after the next 'inset day' as opposed to being implemented immediately

Question: Was it a surprise to you that Phonics was identified as a weakness?

Answer: Yes, as the training has taken place and I had believed phonics was continuing to be taught daily and monitored by the English Lead. Strategies have been put in place to address this - the SI Team and GMA are supporting with this. I have adjusted/delegated some of my responsibilities to enable me to do more monitoring.

DR provided trustees with:

- an overview of the phonics scheme, how it is implemented and plans going forward
- an update of the actions taken to address SEN pupils accessing the same curriculum; TC from GMA is supporting with this. SENCO Lead works across both schools and came off timetable September 2022
- an update on behaviour – the school has an above average % of children with EHCPs and more in the pipeline. The school is expected to fund the first 12 hours of one to one support for each of these pupils
- an update on attendance and discussed the need for class teachers taking responsibility to bridge gaps in learning through missed schooling
- an explanation of how following LVAs transition to primary, a high level of focus has been spent preparing for year 6 SATs, this may have been to detriment of whole school learning but this is being addressed to ensure quality learning in each and every class.

DR advised a staff meeting did take place post inspection and staff are aware that had this been a Section 5 inspection the outcome may have been different. Learnings have been made and this will help shape things going forward at both LVA and GHA.

DR has met with her Chair of Governors to go through the plans; the plans will be shared with all LGB members at their next meeting on 1 February 2023. A meeting is also scheduled with SLT to share the plans and obtain input.

Trustees thanked DR for her time and asked that she continues to work closely with the BEST SI Team and AW will feedback to the board to provide assurances that she is satisfied things are moving in the right direction.

Trustees would like DR to provide the Performance Committee meeting with an update on 28 February 2023.

Action: YH to send DR an invite for the first part of the Performance Committee meeting on 28 February 2023.

DR left the meeting

Confidential: [REDACTED]

Matters Arising

Pre-read: Health & Safety Report distributed prior to the meeting – see document for more detail

GDPR: No ICO reportable incidents since the last trustees meeting. Report to be shared at March Trustees' meeting.

Safeguarding: No trustee reportable safeguarding incidents since the last trustees' meeting. Audits are scheduled.

Health & Safety: No Riddor reports since the last trustees' meeting. The data within the report enables accurate monitoring and comparisons.

Question: Of the 73 accidents reported, 42 relate to ETA – why is this and should trustees be concerned?

Answer: There has been reviewed and there are is no cause for concern. However, the review did highlight a potential need for guidance on 'what is a reportable incident'.

Subsidiaries' Executive Committee Meeting Update

Pre-read: Subsidiaries' Executive Committee meeting minutes 10 January 2023 distributed prior to the meeting
AL provided a summary, advising there is a stronger preference for nursery growth via school based nurseries as opposed to independent nurseries.

Following the resignation of the Nurseries Lead in May 2022 a 'Nursery Manager' approach was adopted but with limited success. The decision was made to appoint a Nursery Hub Manager to oversee all of the nurseries and manage LVA nursery. A qualified teacher with a Masters' Degree has been appointed and will start on Monday. The nurseries are popular and the outcomes are variable.

The nurseries are currently predicted a £3k loss – this figure includes pay awards but no fee increases; BEST Central Executive are confident there will be a surplus by the end of the year.

BEST House is running well with a year end forecast of £14k to £15k.

BEST Nursery Ofsted Inspections

Pre-read: Shefford Nursery and Langford Nursery Ofsted Reports distributed prior to the meeting

Shefford Nursery

The Shefford Nursery Manager (NM) has worked closely with BEST to improve the provision following their RI Ofsted judgement last year – the hard work paid off with a recently awarded and well-deserved 'Good' Ofsted judgement.

AW advised the 'inspection felt very different'. There had been a big clear out; curriculum statements are on the wall and staff had come in over the weekend to help set up. The inspector, who had sought feedback from the previous inspector, commended and congratulated the NM on the strides that had been made. A very good report.

Staff were smiling and the feedback was very different. The recognition was a reward for a job well done.

Langford Nursery

In September 2022 an Extraordinary Trustees' meeting was held to discuss the LVA Ofsted Inspection in July 2022 in which the provision received an 'inadequate'. Staff resignations were a significant fallout of the inspections, thus resulting in a temporary manager and agency staff in place at the time of Ofsted's unannounced revisit in December. The grade remained unchanged.

AW advised next steps – these include:

- Strong recruitment drive – expanding beyond MyNewTerm
- Arlesey NM will support the new Hub Manager with a two week handover
- Shefford Assistant Manager will support LVA nursery one day per week
- Another room leader will join the safeguarding team
- Langford nursery staff training going 'back to basics'; training worked at Shefford and confident can put right
- Half-termly safeguarding audits
- Following a conversation with the local authority, two SEN children have moved to an alternative provision
- Meeting with the local authority to discuss practical help
- Keyworker information available – photos and bios to be circulated to parents each time a new staff member joins the nursery
- Weekly parent/carers newsletters
- One meet and greet session has taken place with parents/carers – two more have been scheduled
- All staff met to go through the Post-Ofsted Plan and to offer suggestions
- Parents/Carers will be talked through a high-level view of the post Ofsted plan

Question: What are the parents/carers biggest concern?

Answer: One of their biggest concerns is the closure of the provision/loss of the WAC club.

NB confirmed the additional staffing requirements/costs are included in the predicted year-end figure.

Actions to be reported back to Ofsted by 8 February 2023.

Capital & Estates Committee Meeting Update

Pre-read: Capital & Estates Committee meeting minutes 10 January 2023 distributed prior to the meeting

The new ETA block is now complete and focus will move to the internal refurbishment of the sixth form block – the tender process will start this month.

The LVA and PBA Wellbeing gardens are now finished and officially open for use.

SCA have made enquiries for two new classrooms and advise they will not be seeking trust monies.

The budget update is healthy. 'Additional funds' will be allocated at school level across all schools but we would like schools to spend the money in accordance with BEST guidance, to ensure no cross over with trust-wide initiatives; funds total £232K.

Pendleton Centre have forecasted £60K profit, of which BEST will receive 50%. A new contract is being drawn up with SLL with clauses that enable release from the contract and minimise the financial risk to BEST.

Monthly Cash Flow and Management Accounts

The monthly cashflow for November has been received – December is due shortly.

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

NB advised increased energy costs are approximately 75%.

Action: NB to quantify the energy costs in 'pound notes' and what that means for BEST at the next Trustees meeting.

Policies for Approval

Pre-read: The proposed policies as listed below were distributed prior to the meeting – see policies for more details.

Owing to time constraints within the meeting, the policy consultation with trustees took place via email 26-27 January 2023 and the following decisions were made:

- Trustees unanimously approved the '*Appraisal Policy – Teaching Staff*' Policy for Union Consultation
- Trustees unanimously approved the '*Appraisal Policy – Support staff*' Policy for Union Consultation
- Trustees unanimously approved the '*Equality Policy*' for trust-wide distribution

Pre-read: BEST Admission Arrangements Sept 24 distributed prior to the meeting – see document for more details

BEST is required to determine their Admission Arrangements by 28 February 2023 for September 2024. As agreed by trustees on two previous occasions and again unanimously by email between 26-27 January 2023, there will be no changes to the BEST admission arrangements for 2024.

Langford Village Academy PAN

CBC have advised that they will not be supporting a PAN of 60 at LVA, leaving BEST to decide on a PAN of 30 or 45. LVA have received 55 applications for September 2023, of which, 36 are first choice applications; 20 of the 36 first choice applications are siblings thus potentially removing a place from a local resident should a PAN of 30 remain.

Recommendation: PAN of 45 as 30 would be below the number of first choice applications received. However, this is caveated with a requirement for parity, by delivering a solution of not using 'split classes' in line with the schools of the local area. Thus, ensuring pupils of LVA have access to the same standard of education as others within the area.

Decision: Trustees unanimously support the abovementioned recommendation.

2Tier Update

Pre-read: 2Tier Progress Tracker document distributed prior to the meeting – see document for more detail
CMA new build completion by September 2024 is no longer looking viable owing to land legalities. CBC have proposed a partial opening but there are concerns that this may compromise the plans/preferred design. Ecological reports are underway and will be available by Easter and will help determine next steps.

RBA plans are pleasing and show significant upgrade and refurbishment – the works will take up to two years to complete.

Conflict: CS, AW and NB Left the meeting

BEST Senior Leaders Appraisal – CONFIDENTIAL Item

Pre-read: BEST Senior Leaders Appraisals 2021/22 summary document distributed to trustees prior to the meeting

[REDACTED]

Next Meeting: 10:00am on Tuesday 14 March 2023 at BEST House

J. Bond

Approved and electronically signed 14/03/23