



ACTION PLAN

Creating a united BEST

Year Five: 2020-21¹

¹ To be reviewed, RAG rated and submitted to Trustees in January 2021, by the CEO.

Strategic Objectives

2016-28²³

MISSION: to grow the best in everyone

1 VISION 2028:

- a. to deliver 20 schools and 10 nurseries, within a Primary-Secondary structure (CS)
- b. all schools/nurseries to achieve a minimum Ofsted Good grade, with 30% achieving an Outstanding grade (AW)
- c. financial sustainability, with 5% of GAG in reserves (NB)

2 CAPACITY + COMMITMENT: to deliver our objectives on:

- ⇒ Outcomes
- ⇒ Opportunities
- ⇒ Talent
- ⇒ Autonomy and accountability
- ⇒ Leadership

3 IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY: to deliver outcomes in the top 20% nationally

4 SHARED SERVICES: to add value

5 QUALITY ASSURANCE: to ensure best value

² Delivered through a series of annual action plans; each being approved by Trustees

³ The 2016-28, extends the 2016-21 plan.

BEST Operational Model

Improvement at scale

- ⇒ Vision
- ⇒ Capacity and commitment
- ⇒ Improvement strategy
 - ⇒ Shared services
 - ⇒ Quality assurance

Sustainable improvement

- ⇒ Establish sufficient capacity
 - ⇒ Analysis of needs
- ⇒ Deploy and support leadership
- ⇒ Access to effective practice and expertise
- ⇒ Monitor improvements in outcomes.

Theoretical concepts provided by: *'The Seven Pillars of School Improvement at Scale.'* (Forum Strategy. 37: 2018) and *'Sustainable improvement in multi-groups schools.'* (Greany, T. p 12: 2018)

BEST
Vision-Performance-Sustainability
2016-28

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 school 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 schools 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 school. 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 schools. Other contracts and SLAs reviewed.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50th percentile targets hit, in all schools. Re-designation of BEST Teaching School. BEST TS gains Appropriate Body status.	Schools 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 50th percentile targets hit, in all schools.	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 schools; 2 nurseries; 1 teaching school; 1 SCITT, with 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 schools 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 schools 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 school joins BEST. Another Nursey is opened. Final year of 3 year Capital and Estates SCA programme – new Conditions Surveys and review of onward priorities. Plans in place for 2 tier move.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all schools.	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. Greater economies of scale realised from growth of BEST. Schools complete restructuring to ensure future sustainability. All schools working toward contributing at least 5% of their GAG income to the pooled reserves. Review and benchmark auditor services. Produce more of the financial statements in house to keep audit costs down. Maintain balanced budgets with contingency line reinstated. Review central staffing levels and workflow to ensure quality of delivery is still high but also achieving better value as the trust grows. Modelling for 2 tier and 0-18 school to estimate the extent of the restructuring required. Set LVA 2021/22 budget for primary structure. Incorporate Campton Lower School and LVA nursery into trust systems and procedures.
2021-22	Intensify change to 2 tier preparations. Details to be confirmed. Another school joins BEST. Another Nursey is opened.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all schools.	Modelling for 2 tier and 0-18 school fine-tuned to clarify restructuring plan. Continue efficient budgeting and achieve target level of reserves set in policy, with all schools contributing at least 5% of their GAG income to the pooled reserves. 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	State of readiness for 2 tier change. Details to be confirmed.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all schools.	Support the schools with financial planning and set budgets in the spring term which are in line with 2 tier transition to their new primary/secondary structure. Restructuring to be completed. Add further to designated 2 tier contingency funds. Continue strengthening viability of individual schools.
2023-24	Implementation of 2 tier structure begins. Another school joins BEST.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade. All 50 th percentile targets hit, in all schools.	Strategically employ contingency to ensure smooth, efficient transition to 2 tier. Continue to increase reserves to 5% target.
Summary Targets 2020-24	BEST comprises: 12 schools; 4 nurseries; 1 training school; 1 SCITT, with high quality and efficient central service provision. A Primary-Secondary – 2 tier – structure is in place.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade, with outcomes in every school/nursery above the 50th percentile.	Financial sustainability, with 5% of GAG in reserves.
Phase Three - Delivering excellence (Being the BEST: growth beyond Bedfordshire, Outstanding inspections and exceptional performance)			
2024-25			
2025-26			
2026-27			
2027-28			
Summary Targets 2024-28	BEST comprises: 20 schools; 10 nurseries; 1 training school; 1 SCITT, with high quality and efficient central service provision. A Primary-Secondary – 2 tier – structure is in place.	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum 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.	Financial sustainability, with 5% of GAG in reserves.

BEST Pre-Consultation Position

School/Nursery	Structure	PAN	TIMESCALE	
Samuel Whitbread Academy	11-18 Secondary	240	2023	1680
Robert Bloomfield Academy	11-16 Secondary	180	2023	900
Etonbury Academy	11-16 Secondary ⁴	180	2023	900
Pix Brook Academy	11-16 Secondary	180	2023	900
Gothic Mede Academy	Primary	90	2023	630
Lawnside Academy	Primary	90	2023	630
Langford Academy	Primary	45	2023	315
Gravenhurst Academy	Primary	15	2023	105
St Christopher's Academy	Primary	60	Current	420
AN Other Academy	Primary	60	2022	N/A
Shefford Nursery	Nursery	64	Current	N/A
Arlesey Nursery	Nursery	68 + 40 WAC	Current	N/A
Langford Nursery	Nursery	40 + 40 WAC	2019	N/A
AN Other Nursery	Nursery	tbc	2022	N/A

TOTAL = 6480

⁴ ETA and PBA will have a shared 6th Form facility

BEST as per CBC 2tier Consultation 2nd-30th June 2020

School/Nursery	Structure	PLAN	TIMESCALE	Total NOR
Samuel Whitbread Academy/Robert Bloomfield Academy <i>(Creation of a 0-18 All Through school)</i>	Secondary	Secondary school with a 210 pupil admission number, with capacity to expand to accommodate traditional RBA children	2023	1470
	Primary	Primary school with a 150 pupil admission number	2023	1050
	Nursery	Nursery provision based on identified need	2023	Not known
Etonbury Academy	11-16 Secondary ⁵	Initial decrease in published admission number from 180 to 150 with subsequent increase to 240 through growth	2023	750 - 1200
Pix Brook Academy	11-16 Secondary	Initial decrease in published admission number from 180 to 150 with subsequent increase to 240 through growth	2023	750 - 1200
Gothic Mede Academy <i>(Relocation to a new site east of Arlesey)</i>	Primary	Increase in published admission number from 60 to 90	2023	630
Lawnside Academy	Primary	90	Biggleswade cluster TBC	630
Langford Academy	Primary	Decrease in published admission number from 45 to 30	2021	210
Gravenhurst Academy	Primary	remain at 15	2023	105
Campton Academy <i>(Relocation to a new site on Hitchin Road, Shefford)</i>	Primary	Increase in published admission number from 26 to 60	2023	420
St Christopher's Academy	Primary	60	Current	420
Shefford Nursery	Nursery	64	Current	N/A
Arlesey Nursery	Nursery	68 + 40 WAC	Current	N/A
Langford Nursery	Nursery	40 + 40 WAC	2020	N/A

Total = 6435-7335

⁵ ETA and PBA will have a shared 6th Form facility

BEST Strategic Objectives 2018-23⁶⁷

Strategic Objectives		Academic Year				
		2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1	Vision	Implement	Refine	Improve	Re-visit/Plan	Implement
2	Capacity + Commitment	Implement	Refine	Improve	Re-visit/Plan	Implement
3	Improvement Strategy	Implement	Implement	Refine	Improve	Plan
4	Shared Services	Implement	Implement	Refine	Improve	Plan
5	Quality Assurance	Implement	Implement	Refine	Improve	Plan

⁶ Introduced 2018-19

⁷ Adapted from: '*Learning to Improve.*' (Bryk AS et al., 2015)

BEST Summary of 2020-21 Key Foci

Strategic Objectives	Key foci	Achieved Fully/Partially/Not
<p>VISION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to deliver 20 schools and 10 nurseries, within a Primary-Secondary structure (CS) 2. all schools/nurseries to achieve a minimum Ofsted Good grade, with 30% achieving an Outstanding grade (AW) 3. financial sustainability, with 5% of GAG in reserves (NB) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish 4-year Growth Strategy 2. Fully integrate Charity and Nursery (C+N) sector into BEST 3. Produce BEST House Strategic Plan 4. Clearly articulate 'what unites BEST schools' 	
<p>CAPACITY + COMMITMENT: to deliver our objectives on: outcomes; opportunities; talent; autonomy and accountability; and, leadership</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Further develop delivery groups and embed shared practice 6. Cultivate a culture of empowerment in which all are heard, wellbeing is prioritised, diversity prized and minorities celebrated 7. Ensure QA Cycles (Inc.: feedback loops) are at the heart of all provision and collated into a single document 	
<p>IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY: to deliver outcomes in the top 20% nationally</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Further develop the BEST SI team + programme 9. Ensure all Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade, with 30% achieving an Outstanding grade 10. Ensure all 50th percentile targets are hit, in all schools. 	
<p>SHARED SERVICES: to add value</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Publish BEST Education Services Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document, integrating SI, CPD + SCITT 12. Publish BEST Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document 13. Publish BEST Shared Services Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document, integrating Capital + Estates (Inc.: HR, IT + H+S), Governance + Communications 	
<p>QUALITY ASSURANCE: to ensure best value</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 14. Gain Safeguarding Quality Assurance Mark 15. Ensure all areas of schools performance are at least 'Good' (from School Improvement Plans – SIPs) 16. Ensure high quality shared services provision (from BEST Q+A Cycle) 	

1. Vision: to grow the BEST in everyone

Objectives:

- a) BEST’s vision (Inc.: key priorities), values and operating principles are owned by all
- b) Operate efficient + effective communications channels throughout + across all levels within BEST

2020-21 Foci:

- 1. Publish 4-year Growth Strategy
- 2. Fully integrate Charity and Nursery sector into BEST
- 3. Produce BEST House Strategic Plan
- 4. Clearly articulate ‘what unites BEST schools’

Ref	Actions	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
1	Publish 4-year Growth Strategy	Growth Strategy – vision; underpinning philosophy; enrolled stakeholders; delivery timetable; success criteria (CS)	
2	Fully integrate Charity and Nursery (C+N) sector into BEST	Charity + Nursey documentation – legal constitution; vision, values, organisational principles + charts (AL)	
3	Produce BEST House Strategic Plan	BEST House Strategic Plan - vision; underpinning philosophy; delivery timetable; financial sustainability (CS).	
4	Clearly articulate ‘what unites BEST schools’	BEST School values statements in all schools (AW). VVO collated for all schools, represented in a single overview document + displayed in all BEST schools (CS)	

2. Capacity + Commitment: to deliver our objectives

Objectives:

- a) Create a MAT infrastructure to deliver an effective school improvement platform
- b) Build a team to add best value

2020-21 Foci:

5. Further develop delivery groups and embed shared practice
6. Cultivate a culture of empowerment in which all are heard, wellbeing is prioritised, diversity prized and minorities celebrated
7. Ensure QA Cycles and Feedback are at the heart of all provision

Ref	Actions	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
5	Further develop delivery groups and embed shared practice	Delivery groups – structural change; characteristics of a BEST school; staff matter – created, programmes created + implementation begun (CS+AW)	
6	Cultivate a culture of empowerment in which all are heard, wellbeing is prioritised, diversity prized and minorities celebrated	Improved communication networks across BEST (CS+AW+NB). Wellbeing Charter (AW). Diversity + Minorities Framework (CS)	
7	Ensure QA Cycles (Inc.: feedback loops) are at the heart of all provision and collated into a single document	QA Cycles evidenced as driver of best practice (CS+NB+AW)	

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators

2020-21 – Lead: [Alison Wilshaw](#)

3. Improvement activity: to deliver outcomes in the top 20% nationally

Objectives:

- a) to deliver a BEST-wide effective school improvement strategy, focused on the needs of individual schools
- b) to build capacity through the TS to provide a systemic programme of school-to-school support beyond BEST

2020-21 Foci:

- 8. Further develop the BEST SI team + programme
- 9. Ensure all Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade
- 10. Ensure all 50th percentile targets are hit, in all schools.

Ref	Actions	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
8	Further develop the BEST SI team + programme	Extended, more qualified and improved focused BEST SI team in place. (AW) Comprehensive + bespoke SI Programme in place. (AW). Evident demonstrable impact	
9 + 10	Ensure all Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade, with 30% achieving an Outstanding grade and all 50 th percentile targets hit, in all schools	All Ofsted inspections achieve a minimum Good grade, with 30% achieving an Outstanding grade and all 50 th percentile targets hit, in all schools (AW)	

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators

2020-21 – Lead: [Craig Smith](#)

4. Shared Services: to add value

Objectives:

- a) To deliver expert support
- b) To benefit from economies of scale and operational synergies

2020-21 Foci:

11. Publish BEST Education Services Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document, integrating SI, CPD + SCITT
12. Publish BEST Financial Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document
13. Publish BEST Shared Services Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document, integrating Capital + Estates (Inc.: HR, IT + H+S), Governance + Communications

Ref	Actions	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
11	Publish BEST Education Services Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document, integrating SI, CPD + SCITT	BEST Education Services: vision; underpinning philosophy; enrolled stakeholders; delivery timetable; success criteria (AW)	
12	Publish BEST Financial Services Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document, integrating SI, CPD + SCITT	BEST Financial Services: vision; underpinning philosophy; enrolled stakeholders; delivery timetable; success criteria (NB)	
13	Publish BEST Shared Services Vision, Strategy + Provision (VSP) document, integrating Capital + Estates (Inc.: HR, IT + H+S), Governance + Communications	BEST Shared Services: vision; underpinning philosophy; enrolled stakeholders; delivery timetable; success criteria (CS)	

BEST Actions and Key Performance Indicators2020-21 – Lead: **Alison Wilshaw + Craig Smith****5. Quality Assurance: to ensure best value**

Objectives:

- a) To devise a structure to ensure best value
- b) To nurture a culture of evidence-based decision-making⁸

⁸ Adapted from: 'The 3 Challenges Every New CEO Faces.' (Kissel, NH and Foley, P 2019)

2020-21 Foci:

14. Gain Safeguarding Quality Assurance Mark
15. Ensure all areas of schools performance are at least 'Good' (from School Improvement Plans – SIPs)
16. Ensure high quality shared services provision (from BEST Q+A Cycle)

Ref	Actions	Key Performance Indicators/Impact	Evidence + Evaluation
14	Gain Safeguarding Quality Assurance Mark	Inc. Safeguarding Quality Assurance Mark achieved (CS)	
15	SIPS analysed, focus areas identified + intervention strategies in place.	Ensure all areas of schools performance are at least 'Good' (from School Self-Evaluation + School Improvement Plans – SEFs + SIPs) (AW)	
16	Collate multiple evidence sources, analyse + intervene as required.	Ensure high quality shared services provision (from BEST Q+A Cycle) (CS+AW+NB).	