

The Best of **BEST**

2021/22 academic year



BEST

BEDFORDSHIRE
SCHOOLS TRUST



**Our aim is to grow
the BEST in everyone**

WELCOME

Welcome to the Bedfordshire Schools Trust (BEST).

This brochure celebrates a selection of the exciting learning opportunities that enable all within our community of schools and nurseries to enjoy and achieve.

Currently, we comprise 10 schools and five nurseries, delivering a first choice education to over 5,000 children across Central Bedfordshire, from nursery age to advanced level study.

As you will see, we are committed to inspiring, supporting and challenging each other to be the best we can be.

The uniqueness of each of our schools is prized. Each has its own ethos, uniform and character. Each has its own Principal.

Each share a core belief in the importance of high expectations, hard work and the development of our BEST community.

We hope you enjoy finding out more about us.

Dr Alan Lee
Chief Executive Officer and
National Leader of Education

Ilona Bond
Chair of Trustees



OUR VALUES

Our vision is to grow the BEST in everyone.

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

Our original three core values were established as we launched BEST back in 2016. They helped us shape everything we have stood for in the last five years, and continue to stand for today.

One of our strategic aims for the 2021/22 academic year is to deepen these values across our trust.

We have also launched a fourth core value – **to have the courage to be compassionate**.

We want the BEST community to treat all with trust, kindness and honesty.

Compassion will be reflected in our policies, and be a lens through which our work is viewed, decisions are made and actions taken.

We want to show that we are tough on issues, but kind on people.

As the world deals with the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, showing compassion has never been more important.

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 schools work together to add value and compete to continually improve.

Provide community-based provision

Our schools 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.



**Putting children first
is a core BEST value**



**Lots of opportunities
beyond the classroom**

5 YEARS OF BEST

We've come a long way in five years.

BEST launched in the summer of 2016, succeeding BEMAT – the Bedfordshire East Multi-Academy Trust.

The relaunch came under new leadership and with a new trust-wide vision and set of values that would allow us to build solid foundations for success.

In the first five years BEST has grown, from six schools and two nurseries to a family of 10 schools and five nurseries.

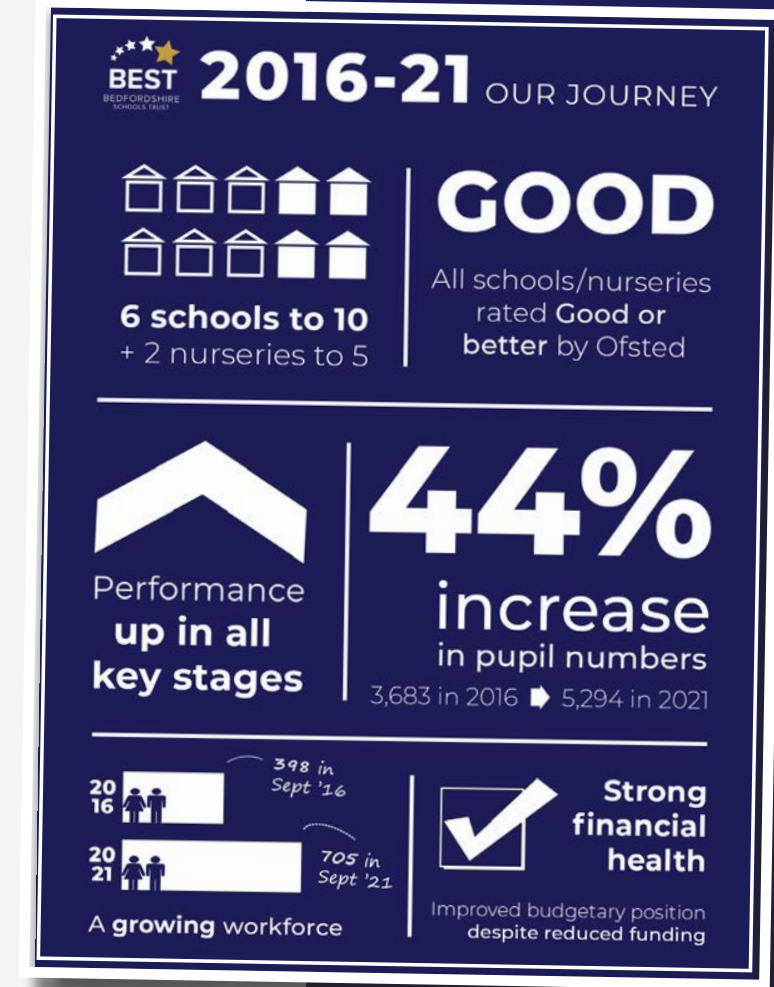
We have seen a 44% increase in school pupil numbers as well as an ever-growing workforce.

Importantly, performance is up in all key stages across the board – driven by our school improvement model.

There's been plenty of success outside the classroom, too – none more so than at Twickenham in 2019, when Samuel Whitbread Academy became the first school ever to win a national rugby championship double (the school is pictured lifting the U18 Vase, left).

★ Find out more about our journey so far in our *5 Years of BEST* brochure.

Contact us for a copy, or pick one up from one of our schools.





CAMPTON ACADEMY

Campton | Reception - Year 4 |
Ofsted – Outstanding (2010) |
www.camptonacademy.org.uk

Campton Academy – BEST's most recent addition, having joined in November 2020 – is a successful, friendly lower school with high standards. It provides a happy and safe environment with a family atmosphere.

Pupils are seen and treated as individuals and are taught a structured, broad curriculum. Teachers and support staff deliver stimulating, exciting and enjoyable lessons, with a focus on ensuring everyone achieves their personal best. They strive to provide equal opportunities for all and are skilled in identifying needs and providing support to address these.

As a values-based school, it aims to ensure all pupils develop the skills and knowledge to become confident, lifelong learners who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Every pupil is supported to achieve their very best. The school strives to provide outstanding educational and extracurricular experiences for its pupils and has a deeply inclusive culture.

The school is proud of the strong pastoral and academic support systems it has refined over the years and believes these to be key to its success.



ETONBURY ACADEMY

Arlesey | Year 5 - 11 |
Ofsted – Good (2020) |
www.etonbury.org.uk

Etonbury Academy is a school where every child can shine. Pupils are confident, love learning and flourish. Staff are dedicated professionals who care and nurture every individual child by unlocking their full potential to be the best they can be.

The extended secondary school's proven track record and first class learning environment provide a seamless education from Year 5 through to Year 11.

The school believes in educating the whole child – inside the classroom and beyond – by providing an engaging curriculum and a vibrant programme of extracurricular activities.

Etonbury is at the heart of the community; a local school with a global outlook, preparing young people for the future.

Its facilities, resources and specialist teaching are second to none. So, too, is the commitment to pastoral care. This is a place where every child is safe, secure and supported.

Every single member of the learning community – students, staff and parents – are part of the success story. Together, they make Etonbury a school to be proud of.



OUR SCHOOLS



GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY

Arlesey | Reception - Year 4 |
Ofsted – Good (2017) |
www.gothicmede.org.uk

Gothic Mede Academy is a values-based lower school for children aged three to nine years old. The school's learning, interactions and strengths are rooted in its values.

The ambitious school takes pride in everything that it does, which is reflected in the school motto: *Pride in ourselves, pride in our school, pride in our community.*

The staff, governors and whole school community aim to provide a safe, happy and nurturing environment where children are prepared for the wider world with a variety of opportunities and experiences.

Through a growth mindset approach to learning, adults and children alike strive for improvement, talk about their learning and understand that challenging themselves and making mistakes are the best ways to develop.



GRAVENHURST ACADEMY

Upper Gravenhurst | Reception - Year 4 |
Ofsted – Outstanding (2011) |
www.gravenhurstacademy.org.uk

Gravenhurst Academy is a small village school where pupils of all abilities thrive. The rural school is proud to provide a personalised, values-based education, where children are cherished and celebrated through their whole journey.

Through its ethos of growing together, learning together, the school achieves good academic standards and its dedicated, hard-working staff are committed to ensuring each pupil is given the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Gravenhurst also provides inspirational learning through outdoor activities in the school's wonderful grounds, which includes a woodland area, meadow and allotment.





LANGFORD VILLAGE ACADEMY

Langford | Reception - Year 5 |
Ofsted – Good (2017) |
www.langfordvillageacademy.org.uk



Langford Village Academy is small, friendly school which converted to primary at the start of the 2021/22 academic year, as part of Central Bedfordshire Council's wider two-tier transition in the area.

The well-designed curriculum enriches pupils' lives through a good range of engaging activities. The school is values-based and pupils learn important morals such as tolerance, respect and thoughtfulness. This contributes strongly to effectively developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth.

There is a strong partnership between pupils, staff, parents, governors and the local community. The school provides a nurturing and caring environment where pupils enjoy their learning and make excellent progress.

The school is a Forest School and as such ensures pupils have engaging learning experiences in the outside environment.

The school also contains BEST Nursery (Langford) on site.



LAWNSIDE ACADEMY

Biggleswade | Reception - Year 4 |
Ofsted – n/a |
www.lawnsideacademy.org.uk

Lawnside Academy, which joined BEST in 2019, puts its children at the heart of everything it does. Each day its hard-working staff strive to improve the provision, opportunities and experiences offered to pupils, and develop skills that will last throughout their lives.

The values-based school strives to nurture a passion for lifelong learning in everyone, encouraging all children and adults to be confident and independent.

It aims to provide opportunities for each and every child to develop their courage, perseverance, self-esteem and aspiration, while all the time feeling safe to take risks, make mistakes and challenge themselves.

A happy environment exists where children can learn, laugh and smile, where all are part of the family and feel a strong sense of community.

Lawnside values everyone for who they are, celebrating individuality and diversity, and creating a culture where all children have their voice heard and encourage each other to achieve the best they can in all areas of school life.



PIX BROOK ACADEMY

Stotfold | Year 5 - 11 |
Ofsted – n/a |
www.pixbrookacademy.co.uk

Pix Brook Academy opened as a new free school in September 2019. At its core is the moral purpose to educate the socially responsible citizens of the future and it ensures all members of its community – staff, pupils, parents and governors – are clear on the importance of this mission.

The pastoral support provided to pupils combined with the inclusive and creative curriculum enables pupils to make excellent progress.

State-of-the-art facilities means the school is able to provide both breadth and depth of provision in terms of technology, sporting amenities and educational resources. There is also a highly qualified and committed staff body who were appointed as specialists in their field.

Pix Brook is very much part of the local community and has strong relationships with schools in the area. These links form the basis of the learning journey for its young people and every opportunity is taken to ensure their academic performance is matched by their development as well rounded and thoughtful young people.



ROBERT BLOOMFIELD ACADEMY

Shefford | Year 5 - 8 |
Ofsted – Outstanding (2014) |
www.robertbloomfield.beds.sch.uk

Robert Bloomfield Academy is a thriving, happy and successful middle school. The excellent standards achieved by pupils over their four-year journey are the result of their hard work, the support of parents and the expertise of a dedicated body of staff.

The school also has an exceptional learning environment, enhanced by specialist facilities, which enables it to offer a full range of opportunities within and beyond the classroom.

Robert Bloomfield is a caring community that values each child and provides them with the opportunity to fulfil their potential and enjoy learning. The school believes in building a child's confidence, adaptability and resilience for the future, within an ordered and structured environment, where high expectations are the norm.

Pupils respond well to this and are very proud of their school. This is reflected in the high commitment and standards they bring to so many aspects of school life.

The school's sporting record is excellent, with many regional and national successes, while performing arts are equally strong, covering music, drama and dance.





SAMUEL WHITBREAD ACADEMY

Clifton | Year 9 - 13 |
Ofsted – Good (2017) |
www.samuelwhitbread.org.uk

Samuel Whitbread Academy provides an exceptional academic and extracurricular experience in an excellent learning environment where students are expected to work hard and achieve their best.

The upper school offers a well-balanced curriculum with plenty of choice to prepare students for the next stage in their lives.

Most students continue on to the Sixth Form, which is one of the largest and highest performing in the area and provides a huge range of courses designed to match the expectations of universities and employers.

Pastoral care at Samuel Whitbread is exceptional and there are dedicated pastoral support teams for each year group. Extracurricular opportunity is a vital part of the school's ethos and students are expected to get involved in at least one club or activity.

The school's sporting successes are particularly impressive with a number of county, regional and national titles across multiple sports over recent years.

The Whitbread Sports Academy offers programmes to sixth form students in rugby, netball and football, and has partnerships with Northampton Saints and Saracens Mavericks as part of this.



ST CHRISTOPHERS ACADEMY

Dunstable | Nursery - Year 6 |
Ofsted – Good (2019) |
www.stchristophersacademy.org



St Christophers Academy is a multi-faith primary school situated on the border between Dunstable and Luton, serving a diverse community from both areas.

The school has been described as 'a village school within a town' as there is a strong community presence, with generations of the same families having passed through its doors.

Pupils benefit from a challenging and enriching curriculum while, as a values-based school, there is a strong philosophy of caring and an ethos that places children at the heart of everything it does.

St Christophers holds the Investors in Pupils accreditation, received for its "whole school approach" to participation, empowerment of children by involving them in everyday decision making, the strong relationships between pupils and staff, and how it helps young people to improve their confidence, achievement, attendance and behaviour.

St Christophers joined BEST in 2017 as part of its drive to work more collaboratively with other schools and to bring greater benefits to its children and families.



OUR NURSERIES

Our nurseries provide first class, family-orientated care accessible to all.

We recognise that an appropriate and positive nursery experience will help children feel confident as they begin their educational journey.

Our structures fully support the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, placing the child and their family at the centre of all learning and development.



We have three facilities which come under the BEST Nurseries banner:

- ★ BEST Nursery (Arlesey)
- ★ BEST Nursery (Langford)
- ★ BEST Nursery (Shefford)

We also have school-based provision at Gothic Mede and St Christophers Academies.

Together, they provide nursery sessions, wraparound care and holiday clubs for children from the age of four months to 12 years, all year round.



EDUCATION SERVICES

The BEST Education Services and School Improvement Team is at the heart of all our work with schools.

With a focus on engaging with schools to improve the educational experience for learners, the team has a proven track record for accelerating pupil progress.

There is also an CPD offering, with BEST appointed to deliver the new Early Career Framework and NPQs in the area this academic year.

Led by our Director of Education Alison Wilshaw, the team consists of highly-qualified and dedicated professionals who are specialists in their areas.

We work collaboratively with our schools to maximise impact in the classroom. The support is always tailored to the specific needs of each setting.

Some recent examples of our work include:

- ★ SI team worked closely with core subject areas to assist Etonbury Academy's journey of improvement and achievement of a Good Ofsted report.
- ★ Curriculum development sessions in our lower schools to support the journey to two-tier.
- ★ A Leadership Ladder of Programmes offered to all teaching and support staff in BEST.
- ★ A Specialist Leader of Education Conference organised for SLEs across Bedfordshire and neighbouring local authority areas.

We also work with other schools in the area that are outside of BEST, to share our expertise. Our partnership is a large one, and we work to deliver educational services to 132 schools.



We are focused on improving schools



Central support for a wide range of areas

CENTRAL SERVICES

BEST Central Services is set up to work closely with our schools and nurseries.

We provide high quality responsive services that support their day-to-day running. By prioritising these essential services we empower schools and nurseries to concentrate on what they do best – educate learners.

The driving ethos behind Central Services is to assist schools and nurseries to improve, rather than to remove their ability to be responsive.

We work across a range of operational areas including:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| ★ Finance | ★ Policies and Compliance |
| ★ HR | ★ Communications |
| ★ Capital and Estates | ★ Governance |
| ★ Health and Safety | ★ ICT |

Chief Operations Officer Craig Smith and Chief Finance Officer Nafia Baust lead on these Central Services and work closely with Principals to ensure the services provided meet their expectations and function at a high level.

The team oversees capital build projects and our estates strategy to ensure all schools benefit from well-equipped, safe and highly effective learning environments that are well maintained and appropriate for their needs, both now and in the future.

Our services are subject to a rigorous quality assurance system and continual improvements. There is also a clear risk management process for supporting schools by ensuring they are compliant, especially around safeguarding, policies and website activity.

We are a relatively small team but the purpose is clear – listen, understand, then deliver for BEST schools and nurseries.



BEING PART OF BEST

We have worked hard to create a strong ethos and culture at BEST.

Our Principals and school leaders have autonomy but also benefit from working in a structure that provides a high level of support and a framework for sharing the best learning across the trust.

Our approach to working with schools is one of 'high autonomy, high accountability' – supporting Principals to manage their schools as effectively as possible and to respond to the needs of their local community.

The support from the centre – be that school improvement activity or wider support work – enables schools to focus on teaching and learning as much as possible while also empowering leaders to devote as much effort and resource as they can to the main activity of learning.

We firmly believe we have a highly-functioning model that empowers schools to achieve the best they can, but offer support when they need it most.

Whether it is our high quality central services or the economies of scale that come with size and efficiency, we believe we have the infrastructure to help without unnecessarily reducing autonomy.

Likewise, we believe strong governance is critical to highly effective performance, so we empower our Trustees and Local Governing Bodies to lead on their nominated areas.

Governors are empowered via our effective Scheme of Delegation and we have invested energy into creating a strong support offer and programme for governors.

We want you to run your school. We are here to support and challenge you to be the best you can be.



High autonomy, high accountability culture



**Our responsibility is
to invest in our people**

WORKING FOR BEST

BEST is one of the biggest employers in the area, with more than 700 members of staff at the start of the 2021/22 academic year.

We're proud of the special ethos that runs through our family of schools, nurseries and central team.

We share a vision to grow the BEST in everyone – and that includes our people.

Our aim of providing an outstanding education to our young people can only happen if we recruit, retain and develop the highest quality staff.

And we want to make sure everyone feels valued in the workplace, whichever they work within the BEST family.

As a single employer, we are able to offer all of our staff a fantastic range of benefits.

These include an excellent working environment, great opportunities for career development and training, and discounts and deals to save money.

★ All vacancies across BEST are advertised via the education recruitment website MyNewTerm.

Scan the QR code, *right*, to see our latest vacancies or visit www.mynewterm.com and search for the Bedfordshire Schools Trust to find our careers page.



If we don't have any suitable roles, you can join our Talent Pool to express an interest in future opportunities.



SCAN ME

NEXT STEPS...

Joining a multi-academy trust is a big decision.

We passionately believe we have a strong set of values and our ethos works for our schools and nurseries. We welcome expressions of interest from schools that would like to find out more about the benefits of joining the BEST family.

If your school is considering joining BEST we would be delighted to help you with the next steps. These include:

- ★ Arranging a personal meeting with our Chief Executive Officer Dr Alan Lee and Chief Operating Officer/Deputy CEO Craig Smith.
- ★ Organising for you to visit our schools to talk to the Principals about what it is like being part of our trust.
- ★ Talking to you further about our school improvement model and how we would anticipate working with you moving forward.
- ★ Answering any further questions you may have to help you understand more about our Central Services and how this can bring added value to your school/s.
- ★ Discussing with you our due diligence process and how we would manage the application and transition to BEST.
- ★ Ensuring your school and your community are treated with respect at all times.

For a confidential, informal discussion or an expression of interest, please email our CEO Dr Alan Lee on alee@bestacademies.org.uk



“The operational side of BEST is really strong which allows me, as a head, to concentrate on the day-to-day running of the school. It’s 100% win win.

– Ian Evason
Principal, Etonbury Academy



Being part of BEST
adds value to schools



BEST

BEDFORDSHIRE
SCHOOLS TRUST

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