

## **BEST May 2009 Newsletter**

### **BEST Acquisition**

The trust is in place – five schools have changed their designation from community to foundation and the founding trustees met on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009. The founding trustees are Tim Ilett – Chair of Governors Hitchmead School and Chair of BEST, Tim Walker, Headteacher Hitchmead School, Christine Watson, Headteacher Langford Lower, Caroline Howell, Headteacher Derwent Lower, Rob Robson, Principal SWCC and Adrian Rogers Headteacher Robert Bloomfield. Heather Hill will be joining the board as an Associate Member representing Raynsford Lower. Ian Kite was appointed Chief Executive Officer and Cathy Bailey Company Secretary.

The board ratified five strands of work which are being undertaken by staff in schools in the SWCC pyramid. If you would like to join any of these groups or like further details please contact [best@swcc.beds.sch.uk](mailto:best@swcc.beds.sch.uk)

1 Raising Achievement for All

2 Seamless Learning – Transition and Progress 0-19

3 Whole Families Matter

4 Community Regeneration

5 All Through Infrastructure and Services

A schedule of meetings is to be put into place over the next few weeks for these Leadership Partnerships. Meetings will be held at The Bungalow (Langford). Lead professionals for each LP will be established and the range and scope of the work to be augmented with involvement of all staff at a BEST Conference which will be organised for the autumn term 2009.

### **Co-operative Discussions**

BEST is a co-operative trust and over the next year to eighteen months BEST will be working with the Co-operative College to build up individual and organisational membership with all member schools, parents, children, young people and the community. The structure will follow the organisation described in the statutory proposals. There will be a grass roots membership based around three regions which coincide with the catchments of the three middle schools. Members of the trust will be eligible to be elected to one of the three regional councils and from the council onto the board of trustees. It is anticipated that the founding trustees will be joined and gradually replaced by their democratically elected colleagues. This will not necessarily mean that the founding trustees will not be on the board in the future but they will be elected rather than self appointed. The founding trustees are required to fulfil statutory requirements and provide leadership during this transitional

phase. These aspirations will modify and change over time but the board will be working towards the fulfilment of the BEST Vision.

### **Vision**

**BEST** is an alliance of unique educational institutions committed to collegiate educational provision across our community. We will take collective responsibility for the success of all children in BEST schools. BEST will be a powerful voice and one local accountable organisation delivering a commonly designed curriculum from 2+ to 19.

**Our collective actions will show a widespread conviction that we mean business together.**

The concept and actuality of BEST is new and the details of how this transition will be managed are yet to be decided but there is likely to be a recruitment drive via [www.best-schools.org.uk](http://www.best-schools.org.uk) and members are likely to enjoy the same benefits as cooperative membership. The money to fund this process will be provided by DCSF via the Co-operative College

In addition, as a member of the cooperative group BEST can make bids to the Co-operative Foundation and the Co-operative Fund and is looking forward to developing Trustee Partnerships with other Co-operative Group members. Visit [www.co-operative.coop/](http://www.co-operative.coop/) and follow their quick links to find out about all the benefits co-operative membership via BEST can bring schools and children.

The BEST vision, mission and action plans were also discussed and ratified and work has begun on delivering the vision under the five headings described above. The range and scope of these plans are enormous but the headlines are outlined below. Each of the strands has a group of staff working as a Leadership Partnership. If you or any of your staff would like to get involved please contact [best@swcc.beds.sch.uk](mailto:best@swcc.beds.sch.uk)

## **Strand 1 - Raising Achievement for All**

### **Schools working collaboratively to raise standards**

The group of staff working on this element have generated a range of ideas for the Raising Achievement for All strategy. These ideas include;

- A joint staff recruitment and development strategy
- A joint CPD strategy
- An all through teaching and learning strategy
- A bid to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to improve technical English – this bid has been successful and will make a significant contribution to the improvement of technical English across the pyramid.
- Learner voice – the further development of schools learner councils providing the infrastructure for the election of a Learner Trustee
- A recruitment/deployment strategy that will encourage the most able staff to teach and support children and young people at Key Stage 4, regardless of phase
- Further joint appointments to be in place for September '09
- Further cross phase sharing of staff
- A strategy to share sites for learners
- GCSE taught in middle schools from September '09

## **Strand 2 - Whole Families Matter**

### **Schools working collaboratively to provide comprehensive support services for children, young people and their families**

Whilst a successful co-location bid will provide some facilities it is the role of the WFM team to put together the strategy that will see the development of a range of services and facilities for children, young people and their families across BEST schools and the pyramid. The developments under discussion fall under the following headings

- Children and Family Services
- Student data management system
- Investment in pyramid special school facilities and special needs provision
- Investment in residential facilities
- The development and investment in vocational facilities and programmes
- Extended schools services and provision

### **Strand 3 - Seamless Learning Transition and Progress 0-19**

#### **Schools working collaboratively to produce whole pyramid events and activities**

- Sports Teams
- Choir Day
- Orchestra
- Engineering Goblin Cars
- Drama project 'Dreamer of Dreams'
- Cheerleading CCooper
- Sponsored trust teams 'elite' sports academy
- Whole trust project Anthony Browne week (Robert Owen) display / drama
- SWCC students supporting the learning of middle and lower school learners. Enrichment Programme and Whitbread Champions.

1. Teaching Assistants
2. Coaching
3. ICT
4. FM Broadcast
5. Counselling / Relate
6. Engineering – Goblin Cars
7. Herb and Vegetable Gardens

- Engineering specialism to develop joint curriculum development with Universities (Bedfordshire and Cambridge Caius / Engineering)
- BEST Conference – 'Working Together'
- All through curriculum development

**BEST Track and Field at Sandy track** – Children and young people will compete in track and field at the Sandy track. This event has been organised and facilitated by staff from Robert Bloomfield and may be the first step towards the schools producing a BEST Athletics Team.

**BEST Dreamer of Dreams – Arts and Drama Day/Evening** - Children and young people working with each other to produce an art and drama performance in just one day. All schools are invited to take part and come together in the evening to put on the combined performance.

**BEST Choir Day** – Again, children and young people practising as individual choirs to come together to produce a combined performance.

**BEST Cheerleading** Cross and vertical phase cheerleading groups are continuing; with young people from Etonbury, Henlow, Robert Bloomfield and SWCC benefiting from an injection of cash from Extended Schools for uniforms, equipment and a transport fund as well as money to train coaches.

**Earth from the Air** A cross phase group has had its first meeting with a view to producing curriculum materials to integrate the EFTA exhibition and are looking forward to meeting again later this month to bring their ideas to the table. Another idea is to work with [www.wecommunic8.com](http://www.wecommunic8.com) on incorporating images from the various exhibitions and the fair-trade / ecological / sustainability message into school planners and diaries.

**If you have a project or event that would be of benefit to the whole pyramid and or the pyramid and the community let BEST know and we will source funding and resources for you.**

#### **Strand 4 - Community Regeneration**

- Co-location of services (community hubs) – capital projects
- Community Learning Opportunities – ICT Hubs in Lower / middle schools
- Herb and vegetable gardens kitchens and catering (Novelli / LandshareC4 / Gallifordtry Plc)
- Extended Schools provision of services

#### **Herb and vegetable gardens kitchens and catering**

Progress is being made with this exciting sustainable project. Langford, Raynsford, Bloomfield and SWCC are all involved and at various stages in their development of an integrated healthy food production, cooking and catering service in association with JCNovelli and Gallifordtry FM. BEST is leading this project and has several sources of funding in mind – JCN, Langford Nursery, support from the schools involved as well as a bid to Extended Schools. BEST is also looking to the LandshareC4 website to provide local enthusiasts to maintain the gardens for a share in the produce. The DCSF could also be providing support as part of their Intergeneration Fund (see below), which has been put in place to support and encourage the older generations to get involved with curricular, extra-curricular and support activities with children and young people in schools.

#### **Strand 5 All through Infrastructure and Services**

- ICT Wireless network for the pyramid – standardised software, economies of scale and communications
- Data system serving all strands
- Providing non –teaching services for schools
- Hitchmead School – re and or co-location – virtual school
- Move to hard federation

The legal framework for all-through collaboration has been set up, BEST is making its application to the Charities Commission and looks forward to all schools in the pyramid becoming either full or associate members. In addition BEST will be leading

the formation of the national network of co-operative schools in association with the Co-operative College.

BEST is working with the SWCC Engineering and ICT department to develop a pyramid wide ICT (wireless) infrastructure. The initial technical surveys are being completed and BEST is looking for sources of funding to extend the infrastructure across the pyramid. This infrastructure is a necessary pre-requisite for the development of pyramid wide data services and communications.

**BEST has the power to innovate** and will be putting together a range of bids to provide services to its member schools and the pyramid. Already BEST has submitted a £2.5m **Co-location Fund** bid to build facilities for the co-location of governmental services in the pyramid. BEST has been working with NHS Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire Police, Training School, Bedfordshire School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) and Central Bedfordshire (Early Years and Extended Schools) to put the bid together. We will find out if the bid has been successful by the end of May.

BEST will also join **The Third Sector** as a charitable company limited by guarantee and is currently registering with the Charities Commission. This will enable BEST to work directly for the benefit of schools and their communities and bid for support from third sector funds such as Capacitybuilders and Futurebuilders. Other trust bids include:

### **Intergenerational Practice Fund Bid**

BEST will be putting in a bid with Extended Schools to the Intergenerational Practice Demonstrator Fund (£5.5m). The aim of the fund is to

‘bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities.’

One of the main strands is to facilitate volunteering – older people assisting younger people through mentoring and coaching and to encourage older people to work with young people on school projects to make them successful and sustainable.

It will also promote young and older people getting involved together in environmental projects, such as improving school site bio-diversity, recycling and to improve the wider community and community relations. It is hoped that having members of the community involved in positive activity together will reduce the fear of young people sometimes experienced by the older generations.

In addition, schools have a wide range of resources which would benefit the older generations, enabling them to remain more active for longer making the programme mutually beneficial and also make optimum use of school sites.

## **Sport England Bid**

The Rural Community Fund will provide resources to promote sporting activities amongst 16 – 19 year olds. Programmes which do this and also encourage young people to continue with sporting activities and involve the local community will have a clear advantage. There are funds for new builds, modernisation of old buildings and funds for major fixed equipment. Any recognised sporting activity or activities will be considered. Ideas under consideration are an all weather floodlit facility strategically located for the use of the SWCC pyramid schools and their communities, strategically placed heated swimming pools and the support of BEST teams drawn from age groups across the pyramid.

## **Phase 3 Children's Centres**

BEST is preparing tenders for three children's centres across the pyramid. Locations are Arlesey, Stotfold, and one of Henlow, Shillington, Stondon and Henlow Camp, Langford and Henlow Village. The deadline for these tenders is 28<sup>th</sup> May 2009 so if anyone is interested in starting a children's Centre or has a tender in progress please let BEST know asap.

Other bids will include, the E. ON Source Fund to support the production of sustainable energy and working with Groundwork in partnership with BRCC for a Big Lottery bid to Germin8.

If you would like to be involved in any of these projects contact [best@swcc.beds.sch.uk](mailto:best@swcc.beds.sch.uk)

## **BEST Conference**

BEST and its member schools will be organising a conference to build upon the work already being done by the five strand leadership partnerships. It is envisaged that all schools and their staff will be invited to attend for a day to explore and further develop areas of collaboration between pyramid schools.