

The Best of **BEST**

2025/26 Academic Year





Welcome to The Best of **BEST**

It is a pleasure and a privilege to introduce this edition of the Best of BEST. We are a Trust that cherishes everyone and aims for human flourishing. I hope you enjoy reading the following pages and come to visit us: you will be impressed.

Delivering excellence to more young people

During 2024-25, BEST continued its excellent record of all schools and nurseries within our Trust achieving Outstanding or Good Ofsted inspection grades. Indeed, Robert Bloomfield Academy was graded Outstanding for the fourth time in succession!

Such exceptional standards have led to schools being oversubscribed across BEST, with pupil numbers growing from 3683 in 2016 to 8511 in 2025. Our Trust believes in community-based education and offers a wide-range of school structures, including lower, primary, middle, upper and secondary to meet ever-rising demand.

In 2026, BEST will celebrate its 10 Year Anniversary. As part of this anniversary, BEST has embarked on a Big Community Listen (details to follow). This began with senior leaders expressing their views on what it is like to lead BEST schools. Below is an AI summary of their views:

“BEST is where schools keep their own identity, but never stand alone. Support is genuine, trust is earned, and values guide every choice. Children come first, people are seen, and collaboration lifts whole communities.”

BEST Senior Leaders, Summer 2025

BEST Big Community Listen

We are determined to improve continually, treat each other with kindness and keep your views at the heart of all we do. Please get involved with your Big Community Listen, as your views really do matter and will shape our future. Together, we will continue to ‘grow the BEST everyone’.

BEST Big Community Listen

2025

NOVEMBER

- Planned and agreed all activity
- Start activity (through to March 2026)

2026

MARCH – APRIL

- Analyse data and feedback
- Report writing

MAY

- Present Big Community Listen to Mission, Vision and Values 10-year anniversary
- Share report findings with CEO/Board

JUNE – JULY

- Support learning from the Big Community Listen and any onward actions

'This academic year sees BEST celebrate its 10-year anniversary. This is a fantastic opportunity to reflect on what has been a strong period of performance and growth. Over the last 10 years new schools have joined the trust, pupil numbers have grown significantly, staff numbers have increased to the point where BEST is a major local employer and parents have demonstrated trust in BEST by sending their children to BEST schools.

The anniversary also offers an opportunity to reflect on the past 10 years and is a chance to look to the future. A central part of this will be the 'Big Community Listen' where over the whole year BEST will be seeking views and actively listening to the views of the community and all those with an interest in BEST and its schools.

This is a great opportunity to feedback views and help shape the future developments. Understanding the views of the community and key stakeholders will be essential in helping to shape the future so this activity is vitally important as BEST moves forward.

The results of the Big Community Listen will feed into forward thinking and the next 10 years at BEST so please make sure you have your say and help shape the future of education in the area.'

Royal Recognition for **Educational Leadership**

Chair of Trustees, Ilona Bond, had the great privilege of attending a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, held in recognition of outstanding service to education.

The invitation to this prestigious event is a mark of high esteem and national appreciation, extended only to individuals who have made significant contributions to public life and community service. Ilona's dedication and longstanding commitment to education earned a place among other distinguished guests invited to celebrate the occasion.

Hosted in the splendour of the Palace gardens, the event brought together a diverse group of individuals, all of whom have given exceptional service in their respective fields. The Garden Party, attended by members of the Royal Family, offered a rare opportunity to engage in conversation and reflection with fellow guests who share a passion for public service and positive impact.

Speaking after the event, Ilona said, *"I was very humbled to have been invited to this garden party and had the most enjoyable afternoon in the beautiful gardens of Buckingham Palace, with the highlight being that I got to meet the King and briefly speak with him. He was very well informed about the world of education and spoke passionately about the importance of education for our young people.*



Whilst I was the one to be invited I felt that I was representing the many people I work with both in BEST and the other educational organisations I am involved with who on a daily basis serve the young people in our care."

This recognition shines a spotlight on the vital role education plays in shaping society and highlights the importance of dedicated leadership within the sector. It also serves as an inspiration to others who continue to work tirelessly to improve educational outcomes and opportunities for all.

Ilona's invitation to Buckingham Palace is not only a personal milestone, but a proud moment for the entire organisation and the wider educational community.





Mindfulness at the Heart of BEST

Mindfulness remains central to **BEST's core value** of compassion and is a key part of our training entitlement for all, **supporting the wellbeing and effectiveness of staff, students and families.** Its reach continues to grow, with 1,095 students receiving mindfulness teaching this year as part of the curriculum.

Sessions are led by mindfulness-trained staff or the **Trust's Mindfulness Coach, Will George**, helping students improve focus, regulate emotions and develop compassion. This impact was highlighted in Langford Village Academy's recent Ofsted report, noting **pupils' strong emotional awareness** and the **calm atmosphere** created through mindfulness.

Our newest BEST members, Castle Newnham Primary and Secondary Schools, have quickly embraced the programme. Sixteen staff have completed the Foundations Course, with four progressing to train as mindfulness practitioners. Engagement from the CN team has been particularly encouraging.

“ If I start with some mindfulness with myself first, it makes me stop and really listen, and gives me the energy to be open, calm and supportive.”

We are proud of our growing community of more than 150 mindfulness 'graduates' over the past five years, many of whom report significant benefits to wellbeing, performance and relationships. Last year, we extended our offer to parents and carers; over 50 took part, with highly positive feedback. One parent shared: “If I start with some mindfulness myself first, it helps me really listen and be open, calm and supportive.”

Looking ahead, a new Mindful and Compassionate Leadership programme will launch in Spring 2026, led by Maggie Farrar. This will help school leaders deepen their practice and support a positive culture across the Trust.

Celebrating a Career Defined by Purpose and the **BEST** Values

Deputy CEO Craig Smith leaves BEST having championed its values and shaped its success. We celebrate a career dedicated to people, purpose, and growth.

Q1. What originally inspired you to pursue this career and choose BEST?

I worked in education for around 25 to 30 years and was looking for a change. I wanted a role that was empowering. After meeting with the CEO, it became clear that he was looking for someone to take on the non-teaching and learning aspects of the role — something I knew I could do well. I'm also part of the local community, and my children attended BEST schools, so it felt like the right fit.

Q2. How has BEST changed over the years, and what changes stood out the most to you?

The most distinct and significant change has been the size — in terms of schools, staff, and pupils. What stood out to me most is that, despite this growth, the ethos, values and approach have remained the same.

Q3. What are some of your proudest moments or accomplishments during your career at BEST?

The obvious answer would be the major projects, such as the Pixbrook opening, onboarding of Castle Newnham, Lawnside and Campton and the new sixth form at Etonbury — all of which I'm extremely proud of.

Q4. What will you miss the most?

It's the people. You can't work somewhere for a long period of time and truly feel satisfied without acknowledging the people around you. I'll really miss the day-to-day interactions and the sense of BEST being at the heart of the community.



Q5. If you could go back and do one thing differently in your career, what would it be – and why?

I don't think I would change much. It may sound like a stereotype, but I was the first in my family to go to university and the first to get a professional job. Starting from there and eventually becoming Deputy CEO of a large Trust is, to me, a real success.

Q6. What are you most looking forward to in retirement?

I had a somewhat vague, yet partly clear, three-part plan in my mind: looking after myself, prioritising my health and wellbeing, and doing activities that I enjoy—such as playing the guitar and reading books. I also wanted to pursue some form of purpose, whether that be paid work, which I am currently still doing for the Trust, or voluntary work.

Q7. How have your views changed on mindfulness from the start of your career to now?

Like many people, we often feel we need a shield, convincing ourselves that everything is fine. What I have learnt through mindfulness, however, is that it is perfectly okay not to be okay.

Mark Liddiard joins **BEST** as Chief Operating Officer

After more than 23 years leading major projects at The Football Association, Mark Liddiard becomes COO of the Bedfordshire Schools Trust, succeeding Craig Smith. We talk to Mark about his journey, his new role, and what drives him.

Q1. What originally inspired you to pursue this career and join BEST?

I first stepped into education 17 years ago as a school governor, later serving as both governor and chair at other schools. Those experiences gave me a real insight into how schools operate and the impact strong leadership can have on children's lives. I was drawn to BEST for its values and strong local reputation, and when the COO role opened up, it felt like the natural next step. Craig Smith has done an exceptional job building the Trust, and I have big shoes to fill.

Q2. What does your role as COO involve, and how do you support BEST schools?

As COO, my focus is ensuring the Trust's central services run seamlessly so our schools can excel. I lead the teams responsible for HR, IT, compliance, policies, health and safety, estates, governance, safeguarding, and communications — providing Principals and staff with the resources, guidance, and support they need to focus on teaching and student outcomes. I also work closely with local stakeholders and partners to strengthen community ties and support the Trust's continued growth.

Q3. What initiatives are you most excited about that will benefit students and the community?

I'm passionate about programmes that make a real difference for students — from improving facilities to promoting wellbeing and strengthening school



community links. Seeing young people flourish academically, socially, or through extra-curricular opportunities is incredibly motivating and helps prepare them for adulthood.

Q4. How do you approach leadership while maintaining school autonomy?

I've spent my career leading high-performing networks, and the principle is simple: empower people with the support and training they need to excel. My job is to support our Principals to run their schools well. Autonomy lets leaders develop their own school identities, ultimately benefitting their students and communities. Craig created a culture of trust and excellence at BEST, and I'm committed to building on that by ensuring our central services team enables every school to thrive and perform at their best.

Q5. What excites you most about the future of BEST and your role within it?

What excites me most is helping shape the next phase of BEST's growth. Working with talented Principals and leadership teams, I'm motivated by the opportunities to innovate, develop programmes that enhance student experiences, and strengthen the Trust in its communities. Knowing that the operational work we do today sets the foundation for schools to thrive tomorrow is incredibly rewarding.

To grow the **BEST** in everyone

Our mission statement may only be six small words long, but it carries a big meaning.

We passionately 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 approach shapes who we are and what we do

Inclusion and Opportunity at the Heart of Every Child's Journey

Director of Safeguarding and SEND, Thomas Rowell champions inclusive, high-quality education, supporting leaders to help every child and staff member thrive.

Q1: What does “being the best we can be” mean to you?

To me, being the best we can be means being the best we can be for everyone in our community. I'm driven by a desire to ensure that every individual has opportunities for excellence, and that no one is left out. Inclusion isn't an add-on — it's fundamental.

Q2: What inspired you to apply for your current role?

I was genuinely excited by the opportunity to make a difference for so many people. The chance to help more children access the amazing education available in our schools and nurseries was incredibly motivating. I'm passionate about supporting our talented team of colleagues across all our schools to improve in every area — and for every child. For me, it's about helping leaders develop and thrive within their own school communities.

Q3: How do you support schools with these growing needs?

I enjoy working alongside school leaders, especially SEN Coordinators and Safeguarding Leads, offering guidance through complex situations. At the heart of it all are the children and families we serve, and it's rewarding to see professionals grow, foster inclusion, and remove barriers to learning.



“At the heart of it all are the children and families we serve, and it's rewarding to see professionals grow, foster inclusion, and remove barriers to learning..”

Q4: What are some of the biggest obstacles schools are facing?

We are working against a backdrop of tight school funding and limited resources, which makes it even harder to meet rising levels of need in mainstream education. However, our belief remains firm: children must be at the centre of everything we do. To continue delivering high-quality provision, we have to be creative, innovative, and deeply compassionate in our approach.

Q5: What are you looking forward to in the coming years?

I'm excited to see our schools continue to be beacons of inclusion — places where parents choose to send their children because they know they'll receive the best possible education. I hope to see a system where parents no longer feel they have to fight for support, but instead feel confident that their child is truly at the centre. I'm also excited about developments in the local area, and the role that BEST schools can play in being part of the local solution.

BEST School Improvement Team

At BEST, our School Improvement Team sits at the centre of our mission to “grow the BEST in everyone.” Through expert guidance, collaboration, and high-quality professional development, the team enhances teaching and learning across our 11 schools and five nurseries, as well as supporting partner schools across the county. Led by our Director of Education, Alison Wilshaw, the team brings together highly qualified specialists dedicated to ensuring every child receives excellent teaching, strong support, and the best opportunities to thrive.

Our work includes strategic leadership and rigorous quality assurance, with School Improvement Partners providing tailored guidance and monitoring to ensure school priorities result in meaningful impact. We offer bespoke school review packages, including Teaching and Learning Reviews and subject audits, helping schools celebrate strengths and address areas for development.

Professional development sits at the heart of our offer, from Early Career Teacher support to advanced leadership pathways that build confidence, expertise, and long-term capacity. We also train the next generation of teachers through our “Train to Teach” programme.

Beyond our trust, we contribute to the wider education community through partnerships, commissioned support, and the sharing of best practice. By championing innovation and evidence-informed practice, our team ensures schools are equipped for today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

Meet our team



Alison Wilshaw
Director of Education
National Leader of Education



Cheryl Hargraves
Director of Professional Development



Amy Morris
Director of English



Alan Stuppel
Director of Maths



Joanne Boniface
Director of Science



Thomas Rowell
Director of SEND & Safeguarding

Our **Central Services** team offers an expert level of specialist support to our schools and nurseries

We work closely with our school and nursery leaders to understand their needs and provide targeted, high-quality support. At the same time, our scale as a multi-academy trust allows us to deliver strong value for money through shared resources and purchasing power.



100%
SATISFACTION

School/nursery leaders who answered 'Highly Satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with internal services in BEST Central Services Annual Survey 2025

We support the day-to-day running of our schools and nurseries over a range of key operational areas, including:

- ★ Finance ★ HR
- ★ Capital and Estates ★ Health and Safety
- ★ Equality and Diversity ★ Policies and Compliance
- ★ Communications ★ Governance ★ ICT
- ★ GDPR and Data Protection

Chief Operating Officer Mark Liddiard and Chief Financial Officer Kim Rowe lead on these areas and oversee teams that, while small, are switched on and effective. Don't just take our word for it – the feedback we receive in our Central Services Annual Survey speaks for itself, year after year.

What our school said about us...

“All BEST Central Services are easy to access. Any questions or actions are resolved quickly and efficiently.”



CAMPTON ACADEMY



OUR SCHOOLS



Campton Academy Celebrates 150 Years!

2025 marked a truly **special milestone** for Campton Academy, as **we celebrated our 150th anniversary**. To honour this historic occasion, a variety of events and activities were organised throughout the year, bringing together pupils, staff, families, and the wider community.

The celebrations culminated in a very special Open Morning on Saturday 8th March — exactly 150 years since the establishment of the original school board in the parish in 1875. We were delighted to welcome so many former pupils, families, ex-staff members, and local residents, who shared fond memories and stories from their own school days, spanning many decades.

A key highlight was the **creation of a beautiful school tapestry, made**

collaboratively by pupils across the school. This stunning piece of artwork now hangs proudly in our school hall, serving as a lasting reminder of our shared creativity and heritage.

Classroom activities focused on the rich history of the school, with children engaging in art and history projects that connected the past with the present. A whole-school photograph was also taken — a snapshot in time to be treasured by future generations.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this anniversary so memorable. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our school's proud past — and to look forward to an exciting future.

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





CASTLE NEWNHAM

Family Reading Mornings Bring Community Together

At Castle Newnham Primary, our **new Family Reading Mornings** have been a wonderful success. Every Friday morning, parents, grandparents and carers joined their children with a book and a smile. Transforming Reception and Year 1 classrooms into a bustling hub of shared stories and literary adventure. The atmosphere was magical, with soft chatter and rustling pages replacing the usual morning rush.



The initiative has strengthened home and school connections and inspired a love of reading across our community. We ended the term with our first Reading Café, where families enjoyed books, biscuits and great conversation.

Thanks to the fantastic response, Family Reading Mornings will now be a regular event for Reception to Year 4 - continuing to make our school a place where stories truly come to life.

Castle Newnham Celebrates Diversity and Culture

On Tuesday 25th June, Castle Newnham Secondary proudly celebrated our **inaugural Culture Day – a vibrant celebration of diversity and cultural pride** designed and led by our Junior Leadership Team.

Pupils across both our junior and senior phases embraced the opportunity to express their heritage through traditional clothing and cultural activities. In the

secondary phase, students participated in African Kente weaving, samba music workshops, and explorations of Ancient Greek theatre, immersing themselves in both historical and contemporary cultural experiences. It allowed students to connect, share, and celebrate each other's backgrounds, reinforcing the inclusive and welcoming environment that lies at the heart of our school ethos.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are committed to building on this strong foundation by continuing to empower our pupils. This begins with the student-led selection of our Head Boys and Head Girls – a step that reflects our belief in pupil voice and leadership.

- ★ Bedford | Reception - Year 11
- ★ Ofsted – Secondary Good (2024)
- ★ Primary Outstanding (2013)
- ★ castlnewnham.school




ETONBURY ACADEMY

Ofsted Praises School

Etonbury Academy is **“a welcoming and nurturing place to learn”**, concluded Ofsted inspectors following their visit in April, during which they offered high praise for the school. Inspectors were impressed with all aspects of provision, highlighting how much pupils enjoy attending, as well as the high expectations set by staff, which pupils rise to meet.

The report **celebrates pupils' strong sense of belonging to the school community**, how they feel safe, cared for, and known as individuals, and the consistently strong outcomes they achieve.

Etonbury's curriculum was commended for its ambition and breadth, along with the school's extensive and well-planned character development programme.

Behaviour was judged to be excellent, attendance is high, and pupils consistently demonstrate kindness and respect towards one another.

First Cohort Achieves Outstanding Results and University Success

August 2025 marked an historic milestone for Etonbury Academy as we **celebrated the achievements of our first-ever cohort of A Level and BTEC Level 3 students**. An impressive **96% of students secured places at their first-choice universities**.

There were some outstanding individual performances, with several students achieving A* and A grades across the



board. Heads of department were also celebrating strong subject outcomes, including:

- **Art** – 100% A*–B
- **Maths** – 64% A*–B
- **Sociology** – 50% A*–B
- **History** – 50% A*–B
- **Health & Social Care** – 57% Distinction*–Distinction
- **Sport** – 50% Distinction
- **Travel & Tourism** – 45% Distinction*–Distinction

Our students have gone on to study a diverse range of subjects at universities across the UK, including English, Geology, Law, Criminology, Forensic Science, Mathematics, 3D Animation, Accounting, and Psychology.

- ★ Arlesey & Stotfold
- ★ Year 5 - 13
- ★ Ofsted – Good (2020)
- ★ etonbury.org.uk





GOTHIC MEDE ACADEMY



County Champions: Dance Squad Triumphs

At Gothic Mede Academy, we are dedicated to providing a rich and varied educational experience where every student can discover and nurture their unique talents. A shining example of this commitment is the spectacular success of our **Dance Squad**, who were recently **crowned County Champions**.

This talented group of students took to the stage at the prestigious Street Dance competition, delivering a phenomenal performance that captivated the judges. Their powerful routine, creatively inspired by the theme of 'Diversity', was a testament to their exceptional teamwork, discipline, and passion.

This remarkable achievement is the result of months of dedication in their after-school club, delivered in partnership with the professional coach from BX Dance.

More than just a trophy, this victory represents the spirit of ambition and pride that defines Gothic Mede Academy. We are committed to offering high-quality enrichment opportunities that empower our students to build confidence, express themselves, and strive for excellence on any stage.

We are immensely proud of our County Champions, whose dedication and creativity serve as an inspiration to students across our entire trust community. Their success highlights the outstanding opportunities available to all children within Gothic Mede Academy.

- ★ Arlesey
- ★ Preschool - Year 4
- ★ Ofsted – Good (2023)
- ★ gothicmede.org.uk



GRAVENHURST ACADEMY



A Record-Breaking Year of Growth and Celebration at Gravenhurst Academy

This past year, Gravenhurst Academy reached an exciting milestone, setting a **new school record by achieving full capacity** for the very first time in our history. Since opening our doors in September 1898 with just a handful of village children, our school has grown steadily and now proudly welcomes 75 pupils on roll, including children from neighbouring villages. This **growth reflects the strength of our Academy** and the enduring appeal of our warm, close-knit school community.

In celebration of our small rural setting, Gravenhurst Academy invited a town farm to visit us. Ark Farm set up their travelling farmyard within our school

grounds, and we hosted a wonderful morning with ducks, chickens, goats, a rabbit, pig, donkey, and a friendly farm dog. Pupils took turns to hold, groom, and play with the animals, showing some of our core school values: kindness, nurturing and caring for others.

Sunny Skies for Our Summer Show

We also held our annual summer production of Roald Dahl's Little Red Riding Hood, from his Revolting Rhymes collection, in our outdoor theatre. Everyone enjoyed singing the songs and performing for friends and family—while the sun kindly shone for us all.

- ★ Upper Gravenhurst
- ★ Reception - Year 4
- ★ Ofsted – Outstanding (2024)
- ★ gravenhurstacademy.org.uk





LANGFORD VILLAGE ACADEMY



A Year of Outstanding Progress

Last year marked a hugely successful chapter in the life of our school. We saw meaningful progress, growing stronger both academically and as a community.

We were especially proud of the significant improvements in attendance and positive behaviour, with feedback from pupil surveys reflecting the strong culture we continue to nurture. Most importantly, our pupils made **outstanding academic progress**.

Our KS2 SATs results were particularly impressive, achieving a National Average of 62% combined in Reading, Writing and Maths.

A Year of Creativity, Learning and Inspiring Experiences

Our Year 6 pupils took to the stage with confidence and creativity in their end-of-

year production of Alice in Wonderland, followed by a heartfelt and memorable leavers' assembly. While our Upper Key Stage 2 Parents' Evening strengthened school-family partnership.

Our **enriched curriculum** came alive with events like Maths Immersion Days, World Book Day and a deep dive into Victorian history, giving pupils hands-on, engaging learning experiences. A year highlight was a visit from former High Sheriff Bav Shah, who inspired pupils with insights into his role and the importance of community involvement. Pupils were captivated by the presentation, describing it as both informative and motivating.

- ★ Langford
- ★ Reception - Year 6
- ★ Ofsted – Good (2024)
- ★ langfordvillageacademy.org.uk



LAWNSIDE ACADEMY

Welcoming New Pupils and Enriching Learning Experiences

We welcomed 60 new children in September 2025 as we transitioned from a lower school to a full primary setting. We have been working closely with families and the community to ensure a smooth changeover.

Lawnside Academy offers **exciting and enriching educational visits** for all year groups. These trips are a **vital part of the primary curriculum** because they bring learning to life, build confidence and independence, and allow pupils to **deepen their academic understanding** in real-world contexts.



they explored the habitats and behaviours of animals from across the globe.

UPPER KEY STAGE 2 (Years 5–6)

We visited the National Space Centre in Leicester. Pupils explored interactive galleries, the Rocket Tower, an immersive planetarium show, and the thrilling Tetrastar Spaceport experience.

Bringing Learning to Life In School

Children also enjoyed in-school experiences, including a magical puppet show of Snow White, Rose Red, Bear Brown by the Theatre of Widdershins for Reception and Key Stage 1.

Highlights from Last Year's School Visits

RECEPTION

Children visited Paxton Pits Nature Reserve and had a rare sighting of an elusive otter. They also attended a musical, puppet-filled performance of The Smartest Giant in Town (by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler) at the Gordon Craig Theatre.

KEY STAGE 1 (Years 1–2)

Pupils enjoyed a seaside adventure to Southend-on-Sea, including a visit to Sealife Adventure. Children also paddled in the sea and experienced a ride on the Southend Pier Railway — the longest pleasure pier in the world.

LOWER KEY STAGE 2 (Years 3–4)

Children had fun at Whipsnade Zoo, where

- ★ Biggleswade
- ★ Reception - Year 6
- ★ Ofsted – Good (2023)
- ★ lawnsideacademy.org.uk





PIX BROOK ACADEMY



Celebrating Milestones and a Bright Future Ahead

As BEST celebrates its tenth anniversary, we reflect with immense pride on the remarkable growth of Pix Brook Academy. Just seven years ago, our academy was a small acorn, planted with a clear purpose: to educate socially responsible citizens of the future. The roots laid down were crucial and pathed the way for a commitment to nurturing every student.

I am honoured as the **new Principal** to work tirelessly on developing Pix Brook so we can stand proud, like the Oak tree within our academy logo. Like BEST, we too are celebrating a significant, historic moment: having a **cohort in all year groups, from 5 to 11, for the very first time**. My focus is on sustaining our growth and ensuring the **successful delivery of our first set of GCSE examinations in the Summer of 2026**.

The future for Pix Brook Academy is incredibly exciting. We are no longer a young school, but a maturing academy ready to demonstrate the full extent of our students' talents. Our values have been woven into the fabric of the school and our new tagline: **"Owning our Actions, shaping our Future"** supports students to reflect on their choices.

The new School Parliament and elected Heads of School marks an important moment for student leadership as we collectively strive to ensure our school is somewhere every young person can flourish.

- ★ Arlesey & Stotfold
- ★ Year 5 - 11
- ★ Ofsted – Good (2024)
- ★ pixbrookacademy.co.uk



ROBERT BLOOMFIELD ACADEMY



Outstanding Ofsted Rating Achieved for Fourth Time

Robert Bloomfield continues to go from strength to strength, and that was never more apparent than in the last academic year, when we were once again rated **Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted**. Remarkably, this was the **fourth successive time since 2008** that Ofsted inspectors have awarded us the top judgement.

The report, which followed a two-day inspection in February, described how high aspirations underpin the school's values and its determination for all pupils to become the best they can be. Inspectors noted how positive relationships support the success of students, who thrive in the **"welcoming and exceptionally inclusive middle school environment."**

The report also highlighted:

- how the Robert Bloomfield school spirit shines through in students' kindness and respect towards others;

- that the carefully designed curriculum extends beyond national expectations; and

- the excellent provision for children's personal development.

While we are so much more than an Ofsted judgement, it was gratifying that the hard work of our exceptionally dedicated staff was recognised. Their care for the students, combined with our lived **VOICE values – Vitality, Opportunity, Independence, Community and Excellence** – has created a wonderful environment in which all students flourish.

As we celebrate this continued success, we look confidently to the future and what the next 20 years hold.

- ★ Shefford
- ★ Year 5 - 8
- ★ Ofsted – Outstanding (2025)
- ★ robertbloomfield.beds.sch.uk





SAMUEL WHITBREAD ACADEMY

A Year of Outstanding Achievements: Academics, Sport, and Creativity Shine

We're proud to celebrate an **exceptional year of achievement** across academics, sport, and the arts.

Our students achieved **some of the best results in the Local Authority**, performing significantly **above national averages**.

Our GCSE outcomes were once again outstanding, with 72% of students securing a Grade 4 or above in both English and Maths - confirming Samuel Whitbread Academy as one of the top-performing schools in the area.

Students **achieved record A Level results** in our history, topping Local Authority tables. Securing places at their first-choice destinations, including colleges, apprenticeships, and top universities, such as Oxford, Cambridge, and other Russell Group institutions.

Sporting Excellence

On the pitch and court, our Academy shone on the national stage with talent, teamwork and resilience.

- Our football team reached their fourth National Cup final, showcasing consistency at the highest level.
- A huge congratulations to our U14 netball squad, who triumphed in the Sisters in Sport competition, winning the prestigious National Plate!
- In rugby, a series of stunning performances included a major victory over Rugby School in the national cup.

Leadership, Creativity & Global Citizenship

Our commitment to developing well-rounded global citizens and nurturing creative talent has never been stronger. Our **Student Society hosted a fantastic UN Conference**, welcoming students from 11 schools across the country for an engaging and vital debate on climate change.

Alumni Success

This year marked a **milestone in our alumni community**. Former student Hayder was awarded the Academy's first-ever BAFTA for his short film Rock, Paper, Scissors - a truly outstanding achievement. He is now deservedly in the running for an Oscar. Hayder returned to the Academy, BAFTA in hand, to deliver an inspirational keynote speech at the Year 13 Awards Evening, leaving a lasting impression on students and staff alike.



- ★ Clifton
- ★ Year 9 - 13
- ★ Ofsted – Good (2023)
- ★ samuelwhitbread.org.uk



ST CHRISTOPHERS ACADEMY



Celebrating Music and Performance

At St Christophers Academy, **we believe that music and performance are essential for building confidence and fostering a strong sense of community**. Singing lies at the heart of school life, providing students with a powerful platform for self-expression and collaboration — a reflection of the vibrant ethos that defines our school.

Our students regularly share their talents beyond the school gates, forging meaningful connections within the local community. The **Year 6 choir brings joy to residents in local care homes** and spreads festive cheer by singing carols at Luton and Dunstable Hospital during the Christmas season. They also perform at other community events, such as Dunstable's multi-faith Torchlight Procession, showcasing their role as engaged and compassionate young citizens.

Performance opportunities at St Christophers Academy are varied and inclusive — from traditional Harvest Festivals and class assemblies to high-energy Rock Steady concerts, where students embrace their inner rock stars. These experiences ensure that every child has the opportunity to perform, grow in confidence, and develop a lifelong love of music.

Through singing and performance, students at St Christophers Academy not only explore harmony and melody, but also learn about empathy, teamwork, and the value of sharing their voices with the wider world.

- ★ Dunstable
- ★ Nursery - Year 6
- ★ stchristophersacademy.org





Arlesey Nursery



Langford Nursery



Sheffield Nursery

BEST Nurseries Thrive in 2025

2025 has been a remarkable year for our Nurseries, with all our settings reporting **increased numbers and thriving** as vibrant centres of early years education. Demand for high-quality, **nurturing childcare** has grown, and our teams have risen admirably to the challenge. BEST Nurseries has a long history of community-focused provision, from our first nursery at Samuel Whitbread Academy in 1989 to the thriving network we operate today. Surpluses are reinvested to enhance care, learning environments and staff development, ensuring children benefit from **highly qualified teams and excellent facilities**.

Families continue to seek nurseries that combine care with **outstanding early years education**, and our staff have responded with flexible, family-friendly provision that supports every child's development and learning.

Across Arlesey, Langford and Shefford, enrolments have risen, reflecting parents' confidence in our provision. Each nursery provides a **welcoming and stimulating environment for children aged 4 months to 5 years**. Our school-based nurseries at Gothic Mede and St Christopher's Academies continue to flourish, offering wrap-around care and holiday clubs that meet the needs of families across Bedfordshire.

The success of 2025 demonstrates the vital role nurseries play in laying the foundations for lifelong learning and wellbeing. BEST Nurseries will continue to grow, adapt and provide exceptional early years education to even more families in the years ahead.

- ★ Arlesey, Langford and Shefford
 - ★ Ofsted – all rated Good
 - ★ bestnurseries.co.uk
- * School-based provision at Gothic Mede and St Christophers brings our total number of nurseries to 5.*



Thinking About Your Next Step? Come and join the **BEST** family!

Whether you're a school exploring the possibility of joining a trust or a talented professional seeking your next challenge, we would love to hear from you.

For Schools

Becoming part of BEST means joining a community built on high autonomy, strong collaboration and exceptional central support. Our Principals lead their schools with confidence, backed by a high-performing central team that creates economies of scale to ease pressures on school budgets.

We don't have rigid criteria for joining. Instead, we consider each potential partnership carefully to ensure it serves the best interests of both the school and the Trust — with a shared ambition to deliver the very best outcomes for children and young people in their communities.

We employ over 1,000 staff across our schools. If you're interested in exploring what joining BEST could look like, we would be delighted to arrange an informal conversation with our senior executive team. You'll also have the opportunity to visit our schools and meet our Principals to experience first-hand what it means to be part of BEST.

Don't just take our word for it — here's what our Leaders say about us: **BEST is where schools keep their own identity, but never stand alone. Support is genuine, trust is earned, and values guide every choice. Children come first, people are seen, and collaboration lifts whole communities.**

Join the BEST Team

Are you a talented professional looking to make a difference in education? We would love to hear from you.

At Bedfordshire Schools Trust, our staff are at the heart of everything we do. We offer:

- **Opportunities to develop your career** across a high-performing, collaborative network of schools
- **A culture that values wellbeing, mindfulness, innovation, and staff growth**
- **Supportive leadership and central services** so you can focus on what matters most: teaching, learning, and student success

Whether you're an experienced professional or just starting your career in education, BEST is a place where your skills are valued and your development is supported.

If you're interested in joining our team, we would be delighted to arrange an informal conversation to explore opportunities. You can also follow our current vacancies on MyNewTerm.

Follow our current vacancies on MyNewTerm.



SCAN ME



BEST

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