BELLEVUE|EDUCATION

Educating the future

Bellevue Education Governance and Development Policy

Contents

Introduction

Bellevue Education Group embraces ten independent preparatory schools in the UK, a sixth from college in London and an international school in Switzerland. Children and students in Bellevue Schools cover an age range from just a few months to over 18, the majority falling in the 3 to 11 bracket.

Bellevue Education is committed to excellence in education. Each Bellevue school is run independently, built on the foundation of the same shared values: we believe in broad curricula, delivered in innovative ways that excite and engage children; we believe in investment – in teachers, buildings, and technology; and we believe that exceptional results should be a by-product of the education that we offer, not the exclusive focus. Bellevue pupils are encouraged to aim high and we aim to provide them with everything they need to succeed. Our schools are committed to providing an educational environment that challenges, nurtures, excites and involves every single pupil in the school.

The school improvement and governance model developed for Bellevue Schools establishes a clear framework to ensure that the Group's governance committee provides excellent support and well-focused challenge to the schools.

The process is designed to facilitate the sharing of best practice and resolution of challenges between the schools. It stimulates a strong focus on development through self-evaluation and incorporates a timetable of annual reviews to ensure regulatory compliance.

Ultimately, the model is designed to ensure that the leadership of schools develops a clear and sharp focus on the learning and well-being of the children in their care, secure in the knowledge that the administrative and business functions of schools are fulfilled rigorously.

1   Governance

The role of governors within the Group is conducted by the Education Committee. This consists of the Schools Director and Governors for each of the following areas;

- Quality of Achievement; encompassing pupil achievement, teaching and learning
- Quality of Personal Development; encompassing, behaviour, safeguarding and EYFS
- Quality of Leadership and Management; including community links

Each member of the Education Committee has worked at Senior Leadership level in schools, with the exception of the Schools Director they are not employees of the company. They are informed in their work by the CEO, Finance Director and Marketing Director.

Governance Meetings

The cycle of governance is conducted as follows;
- Autumn Term (September) - Quality of Achievement; Appraisal moderation
- Spring Term (January) - Quality of Personal Development; feedback on Safeguarding Review
- Spring Term (March) - EYFS Review / 16-19 Review and Boarding
- Summer Term (May) - Quality of Leadership and Management; Arrangements for Appraisal
-

Each governance meeting is conducted in a cluster of 3 to 4 schools. Schools are expected to present;
- The self-evaluation of their performance
- Key strengths and areas to address
- How these are integrated into the School Improvement Plan (SIP)

In addition, during the meetings heads receive updates on;
- Areas of educational practice that form the focus across the Group
- Marketing and Finance
- Regulation and Compliance

Alongside the heads presentation of the self-evaluation, the rotation of hosting schools for the governance meetings enable the education of members of the Education Committee, to develop an understanding of each school. They also work at schools to undertake specific tasks or projects within their areas of specialism.

2   Termly Reviews
The purpose of a Termly Review is to conduct an overview of the preceding term and establish areas for action as identified by the schools monitoring of data.

2.1   Learning Review
The Learning Review runs annually; it is a chance to look at the opportunities each school provides. The reviews are run by the Hosting Head and the Guest Head, who are responsible for a team drawn from within the schools. The review runs for three days, one of which will be attended by a member of the Education Committee or an employee of Bellevue Education.

Purpose
The purpose of the review is developmental; both for the hosting school and the staff conducting and leading the review activities. There will be a clear focus on the teaching and learning children experience within the school environment, together with the overall quality of care from which they benefit. In addition, parents and staff will have the opportunity to contribute their ideas for the development of the school to the reviewers.

The review will benefit the school, staff and children by;
- Recognising what the school does best
- Offering constructive challenge on the practice of the school
- Giving staff and children the opportunity to express their views about their experiences within school
- Identifying next steps for the professional development of the staff collectively and individually
- Developing a sense of collegiality between the schools in the Group
- External assessment and validation of the schools self- evaluation
- Providing a consensus for change moving forward

Review Charter
The main elements of the review will consider;
1. The Learning Experience for Pupils and Parents
2. Staff Experience at the School
3. The Role of Leadership

Each of these will be considered in the context of four key areas;
- Challenge
- Ownership
- Dialogue
- Engagement

1. Learning Experience for Pupils and Parents
This considers how the school offers children a learning environment that promotes;

Challenge for each child through;
- Clear, high expectations regarding attitudes and habits that will support their progress.
- Opportunities for all children to progress their knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits.
- Teaching that promotes good progress and outcomes.
- Accurate assessment of children's needs so that they are provided with effectively resourced activities that challenge and support.
- Clarity as to the purpose of their learning and expected outcomes, including an understanding of their personal goals.
- Teaching that models desired standards and promotes expertise and scholarship.
- The chance to extend their scholarship or interests within or beyond the classroom and the scope of the curriculum.
- Experiences that captures their imagination.

Ownership within a school where children;
- Feel safe, welcomed and valued for their own individuality in an environment where equality of opportunity and diversity are promoted.
- Recognise that their achievements are valued and shared with those they care about, the learning experience is designed to take account of their abilities, background and interests.
- Are able to make an impact to their learning environment, contributing within and beyond lessons.
- Self-regulate their behaviour, recognising the boundaries agreed with the teacher.
- Show good learning habits in behaviour and approach to work and persevere in the face of challenge.
- Take pride in their work including the desire to access work independently.
- Set their own expectations in relation to the quality of work and progress and comment on their work critically and constructively.
- Willingly take on responsibilities within the school.

Dialogue - Where children benefit from;
- High quality relations between children and the adults responsible for their education; including parents, support and supervisory staff.
- An understanding of the decisions others make about their learning environment, including opportunities to contribute and discuss these.
- Advice on the how and why of learning including feedback that addresses any misconceptions established through questioning.
- Guidance on how they can judge their own performance including clear direction on the specific aspects of their work.
- Discussion and questioning which establishes, guides and challenges their knowledge enabling misconceptions to be addressed.
- Opportunities to reflect on and respond to feedback including guidance on how to critique their own work as well as that of others.

Engagement with their learning environment so that children;
- Show good learning habits in behaviour and approach to work, allowing to make the most of their time in lessons and beyond given sufficient time and resources to develop their own understanding of the learning.
- Are willing to apply themselves independently with effort and concentration and persevere in the face of challenge.
- Clear in their understanding of the purpose of their learning.
- Proud of the work they have produced and able to explain its merits.
- Benefit from an environment that stimulates their interest in the learning and gives a high priority to their achievements.
- Develop attitudes that will support their future learning success.

2.2 Safeguarding Review

The process will be conducted by a Registered Inspector attached to either ISI or OFSTED, depending on the inspection framework that the school is part of. The Safeguarding Review will ensure that the governance of Bellevue/BPET fulfil their statutory duty in ensuring that Safeguarding is fulfilled at a school level.

The Safeguarding Review will fall in the second half of the Autumn Term.

Subsequent to the Safeguarding Visit
Spring Governance Feedback
In the January Governance meeting the Head will present the main findings of the Safeguarding Review and any additional actions. All Safeguarding issues must be dealt with in this window of opportunity.

In the event of regulatory changes impacting on elements of Safeguarding, Governance will ensure that these are sent through to all Heads. Alongside this the Governance will give a list of actions that Heads will need to conduct. The list will be followed up as part of the Regulation and Compliance check.

2.3 Regulation and Compliance Check

This will take place separately from the main body of the review. The process will be conducted by a Registered Inspector attached to either ISI or OFSTED, depending on the inspection framework that the school is part of.

The Regulation and Compliance check will be a two day process normally falling after the Spring Half-term.

While the Governance will support and monitor regulation and compliance, it is imperative that schools are responsible and proactive in checking their own regulation and compliance.

Policies
- Prior to the start of the academic year schools will be sent a compliant policy pack, which they will need to personalise according to the responsibilities and staffing in their school.
- By final week of September, the Consulting Inspector will have checked that these policies are either in place on the school website or on the ISI portal, and that these match.
  Findings will then be reported to the school and Education Committee
- After any DfE release, schools will be sent a summary of changes to regulation and compliance with policies and practices this will impact upon, these changes will be incorporated into Group policies.

This structure is intended to ensure that all policy scrutiny occurs prior to the visit. The visit will focus on the implementation of policy.

Where there are outstanding areas of non-compliance, within five working days of the visit the school will complete a response to show;
- date of completion of actions
- proposed actions if this cannot be addressed, to be established prior to the next governance meeting

This should be sent to;
- Consulting Inspector
- Governance

3   Heads Development

Management Meetings

Heads Management Meetings occur on a termly basis at Head Office. Meetings are for all Heads in the Group.

The meetings are based around core themes identified through governance or school visits, usually at the instigation of the Heads. In this, they ensure they are central in establishing and fulfilling key strategic needs for the Group's schools, while facilitating the sharing of best practice and the building of school networks.

Heads Appraisal

Heads are appraised on a two year cycle, under the terms laid out in the Bellevue Group Appraisal policy.

In the first year the appraisal will be based on the effective delivery of key elements of the School Improvement Plan. The objectives for appraisal will be identified by the Governor for Leadership and Management in consultation with the Director of Schools and Education Committee; the Head may request that the appraisal be conducted by another member of the Education Committee, this should be done in writing to the CEO, Mark Malley.

On a bi-annual basis the governor for Leadership and Management together with the Schools Director will work with stakeholders within the school community to provide a 360 appraisal of the effectiveness with which they fulfil their post. The objectives within this will focus on the personal and professional development of the Head in their role.

Once the Heads appraisal is completed in July the appraisal system cascades through the rest of the staff within the school.

Heads Induction, Support and Mentoring

Bellevue have developed a three-day induction course considering the core skills for new Heads; where possible this is delivered to the Head prior to joining the Group.

In addition to the usual support given by the Group, new Heads have access to;
- Heads training through the relevant association; both ISA and IAPS have Heads programmes
- A Group Mentor - a Head within the Group with whom they meet on a termly basis
- A Heads Friend - an independent person who sits outside the Group and who can be consulted in times of need

4   Building Leadership Capacity in Schools

Cluster Meetings

Members of Senior Leadership Teams and Subject Leaders meet on an annual basis in order to share and review practice. This also allows the reinforcement of links within our school network.

Working Groups

These are convened through the heads Meetings. They are set up to identify particular priorities across the Group; they offer Heads the opportunity to take wider responsibility on key strategic areas and staff in key roles within their school to take practice into other environments.

Emerging Leaders Programme

A programme that prepares staff for the challenge of leadership. Through the School Reviews and in consultation with Heads, a cohort of staff who we feel have the capacity to take their skills beyond the classroom in developing teaching and learning. The course is recognised as an appropriate pathway into further study.

5   Interaction between schools

Bellevue Education Group sees interaction between its schools as pivotal to developing and sharing excellence. In addition to the Heads' meetings and central training noted above, several other initiatives promote the sharing of best practice between the schools;

Heads' visits: each head visits and is visited by other heads on a regular programme for a carefully focussed day, whose activities may include lesson observations, discussion of particular challenges and successes and development ideas.

Sporting, Academic and Cultural events: Bellevue Education Group is developing a series of events to promote interaction between staff and pupils at different schools.

6   Central Support

Bellevue Schools benefit from central support and economies of scale in a number of key areas. These are either provided by or facilitated by head office. Office staff provide sales, marketing and website management support, accountancy services and human resources management. Schools also take advantage of central purchasing in areas such as insurance, software licences and information management systems.

END