

Beckfoot Trust

A Personal Perspective from David Horn CEO Beckfoot Trust

Feb 17

The Beckfoot Trust was formed in 2013. Our vision is to create a cluster of exceptional Bradford schools from the Secondary, Primary and Special sectors. At present we have seven schools within the Trust and are looking to expand the group to 10 schools by the end of 2017 so that we have four secondary, four primary and two special schools.

Alongside being a part of the team that created a truly great school at Beckfoot, this initiative is the most exciting and challenging project I have ever been involved in. We are absolutely determined to demonstrate through the Trust that Bradford students can achieve great things as learners. But equally it is to do more to ensure that the local community can be confident that their child will be able to attend a good school.

We know what we stand for and from the word go, we have been very selective about the type of school that joins us. See if you agree!

- They have to be Bradford schools within a 20 minute car journey to Beckfoot. That means we can get to and from each of our schools easily – essential for collaborative practice.
- They have to be comprehensive in intake, secular and co-educational. We have no interest in shaping admissions, promoting a specific faith or segregating children by gender. In short we want our communities to reflect the society these young people will move into once they leave education.
- They have to approach us. The Trust never approaches schools to join the Trust, preferring to work with those who genuinely seek us out, share our values and absolute commitment to create a great school for their students.
- It doesn't matter what the previous Ofsted judgement is, we have schools within the Trust with previous Ofsted judgements that range from 'outstanding' to 'special measures'. What we want to be confident of is that a burning desire exists amongst the leaders of the school to smash down glass ceilings and create truly remarkable learning environments for students and staff to work within.
- Finally schools have to have humility. We have a very strong view on what makes great schools and as such we are prescriptive about key aspects of school improvement strategy, particularly around leadership, teaching, assessment, curriculum and student welfare and of course business management. Whilst we believe passionately in the power of collaborative practice where 'the best idea wins', we are hard edged and expect impact quickly. We do expect students and staff to be challenged to take risks and move beyond their comfort zone. But equally we expect them to feel cherished and well supported. Leaders of schools have to therefore accept and embrace challenge.

The Trust has already had significant success. Three of its schools are outstanding and the other 4 are making great strides forward. We have an exceptionally strong central team both educationally and commercially and we are supported by our own Teaching School.

Please read the 'Beckfoot Trust Values and Purpose and Principles' below. I hope they resonate with you.

Thanks for reading.

Beckfoot Trust Values and Purpose and Principles

Trust Values

Every learner should enjoy contributing to their school, learn enthusiastically and succeed beyond expectations.

Enjoy - Learn – Succeed

Trust Core Purpose

Beckfoot Trust schools create remarkable learning environments in which students expect success because of their ambitious attitude to learning, the challenge provided by staff and the support they receive at home.

This will be accomplished when:

Each school creates outcomes for learners that rank them in the top 20% by comparison with students in similar schools by their first inspection. And, schools achieving top 20% recognition are modelling best practice within and beyond their schools.

Trust - World Class Learners

In Beckfoot Trust schools:

1. Our students always come first and expect to achieve great things
2. Students make excellent progress because staff retain a relentless focus on learning and teaching
3. Students own their learning and are accountable for their progress
4. Students expect to lead and shape the progress of their school and community
5. Excellent attitudes to learning and attendance are celebrated
6. Nothing less than excellent behaviour is acceptable
7. Lessons are smart, they stretch, challenge and include everyone
8. School life is enriching and purposeful for everyone
9. Personalised support unlocks talent and potential
10. Parents engage fully in supporting students to achieve great things

Trust – World Class Leaders

Leadership shapes the culture and climate of an organisation. It is leadership that inspires colleagues to make greater discretionary effort to achieve more for the students, the school and themselves. The three key strands to leadership are:

1. Future thinking: Leaders shape the strategic direction of the school
2. Engagement: Leaders create alignment to the strategy by building and sustaining positive trusting relationships
3. Delivery. Leaders deliver improvement in all key facets of school life

Trust - World Class Organisation

In Beckfoot Trust schools:

1. We lead with vision, are systematic, accountable and absurdly aspirational
2. Leaders are emotionally intelligent, visible and outcome driven
3. By abandoning the unnecessary, we cherish staff and talent is nurtured
4. Analysis and self-evaluation is incisive and concise
5. Action planning is specific and measurable
6. Quality assurance is accurate, consistent and externally verified
7. Problem solving is collaborative and inclusive
8. Effective professional development and performance management are embedded
9. Governance is challenging and reflective
10. We all believe in:
 - Equality and respect for difference
 - Open and honest working relationships
 - Optimistic and positive approaches
 - Determined and resilient strategic thinking
 - Sharing our experiences for the benefit of learners everywhere