

BDAT Briefing Note for Schools and Governors: January 2020

Welcome back to your January BDAT Briefing. 2020 brings another new Government with potentially another set of education policies. This newsletter will help keep your finger on the pulse of what is happening nationally, locally and at school level. Happy reading.

What does the Conservative majority potentially mean for you and your school?

On the 12th December, the Conservative Party won their biggest Conservative party election win since 1987, propelling Boris Johnson back into Downing Street with a mandate for his education priorities. So, what does it mean for our schools?

Well the good news is the Conservative manifesto was largely about “*business as usual*” with commitments to backing head teachers on issues like discipline, promises to build more free schools and small grant funding pledges for PE teaching, the arts and wraparound childcare. Johnson has also already pledged to increase school spending by £7.1 billion by 2022–23, although the Institute for Fiscal Studies has said this will result in spending per pupil being “*no higher in 2022–23 than it was 13 years earlier*”.



More surprisingly however, near the eve of the election, was the unexpected announcement to pilot a trial of no-notice OFSTED inspections and to increase the length of inspections from two to three days. There was also the ambiguous promise to “*ensure that parents can choose the schools that best suit their children*”, with no real detail of what that could actually mean. More information is likely to follow in 2020, if and when the PM manages to “*get Brexit done*”.

The new role of the Academy Trust as a civic leader for our communities?

In the run up to the 2019 election, a new rhetoric has emerged from system leadership bodies such as the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) and Forum Strategy positioning academy trusts as civic trusts with responsibility for running schools to give children in a local area a brilliant future. “*The role of Trusts is to help our communities thrive by giving children the best opportunity to learn inside and outside the classroom*” (CST)

Both groups argue that to be successful and have most impact, Academy Trusts must work alongside other civic partners and charities to make a strategic contribution to the greater good and focus on sustainability, collaboration and empowering people to work to improve the outcomes for the whole local community.

This thinking is a very different way of thinking about how MATs operate within a local area and is pertinent in helping us think about why we exist. For more information, Forum Strategy released an interesting blog in December 2019: <https://www.forumstrategy.org/blog-a-new-narrative-for-a-new-decade/> and Leora Cruddas from CST also wrote about this concept: <https://trust-journal.org.uk/2019/10/03/school-trusts-as-new-civic-structures/>

Whatever you make of this it does appear that the role of Academy Trusts may be set to change again as we enter the new decade.....

OFSTED CONFIRM ACADEMY AT ST JAMES HAS IMPROVED AT A RAPID RATE AND IS NOW GOOD IN THE MAJORITY OF AREAS

Approaching their third anniversary following academy conversion, staff and students at the Academy at St James had plenty to celebrate after OFSTED deemed the school to be strongly “good” in the majority of areas.

The two-form primary school, which had previously been rated as inadequate by OFSTED prior to Academy conversion, got a fantastic four good judgements out of a possible five and was praised for the *“rapid improvements made since becoming an academy”*. School Leadership was deemed to be “good” with leaders described as *“ambitious about pupils’ attainment”* and the Trust was credited as having *“secured a stable and committed team”*.

During the two-day inspection OFSTED noted improvement across most areas of the school, particularly noting the *“success in improving the standards in English and mathematics.”* The school was also praised for ensuring pupils have access to a broad curriculum and making reading their top priority.

For the youngest children, the early years’ leaders and staff were deemed to be making much stronger progress following effective use of training and the new phonics programme was credited as helping many more pupils to read with accuracy at an earlier stage. As a result of their findings, and after considering the latest 2019 data which shows phonics to have improved to broadly national average, OFSTED rated early years as “good”.



Most importantly and perhaps the biggest areas for celebration, was the feedback from school pupils and the excellent way they conducted themselves during the inspection.

OFSTED confirmed that *“pupils’ behaviour has been transformed”* and *“staff have increased pupils’ interest in learning and eagerness to be at school every day”*. The report quotes *“Pupils are responding very positively to the changes. They want to come to school every day so they don’t miss out..... Pupils say that staff take good care of them.... They feel safe because they trust the adults in school to sort out any problems they may face”*. As a result, attendance at school has improved and the school was judged to be “good” by OFSTED for both Behaviour and Attitudes and Personal Development.

To read the full report visit: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/143847>

WELL DONE TO EVERYONE INVOLVED – A CRACKING RESULT 😊



BDAT Business

Trust launches three-year strategy at annual leadership conference

In November the BDAT Board launched its three-year business strategy for 2019 – 2022 titled “**From Growth to Great**”. This plan sees a deliberate move for the Trust away from being driven by growth and numbers to focussing on being a great Trust and great employer.

The three-year strategy is underpinned by a one-year annual delivery plan for 2019-20 setting out the plans and priorities for the coming year. To read the full strategy visit <https://www.bdat-academies.org/about-us/trust-development/>

The conference also had a key focus this year on staff wellbeing with key notes from Andy Sammons, author of the Compassionate Teacher, who reflected on his career to date and how he manages to achieve a realistic work life. Attendees also enjoyed a presentation from Rest Bandit who provided

useful hints and tips on how to work hard but rest smarter.

Trust Annual Review 2019 allows open conversation with DfE and Diocese

BDAT had an annual review with the Regional Schools Commissioners Office on 7th November where we discussed Trust performance to date and progress.

Richard Noake, Director of Education for the Diocese of Leeds, was also present meaning we could report to both bodies we are accountable to at the same time.

The meeting went well and focussed largely on summer 2019 data. Inevitably some schools were of more concern than others, however the Trust and DfE views were completely aligned and reflected the areas of concern which we had predicted in our previous meeting (in fact DfE confirmed our predictions, particularly around OFSTED, were spot on). Governance and finance were also discussed and raised no issues across the MAT. The meeting was less forward-looking than usual as due to Purdah restrictions, civil servants were unable to ask us about future plans. We did however take the opportunity to share our strategic plan “From Growth to Great”.



BDAT Annual Staff Satisfaction Survey 2020 Coming Soon

We believe our staff are our biggest asset. As such we want to be an employer of choice which listens to and looks after our workforce. Developed by the **BDAT Staff Voice group**, made up of representatives from across our Academies, our new survey seeks to get your views on what works well and what we can do even better.

Keep an eye on your inbox for more details in January.... We look forward to hearing what you think.

We're upgrading My BDAT Benefits

We are excited to introduce you to your improved discounts platform.

The site now boasts improved benefits, including an increase in digital and instantly redeemable offers. As well as this, our local discounts now offer more choice and great savings.

What's next?

The switch to the improved platform will happen before the end of September, at which point you will need to re-register for an account.

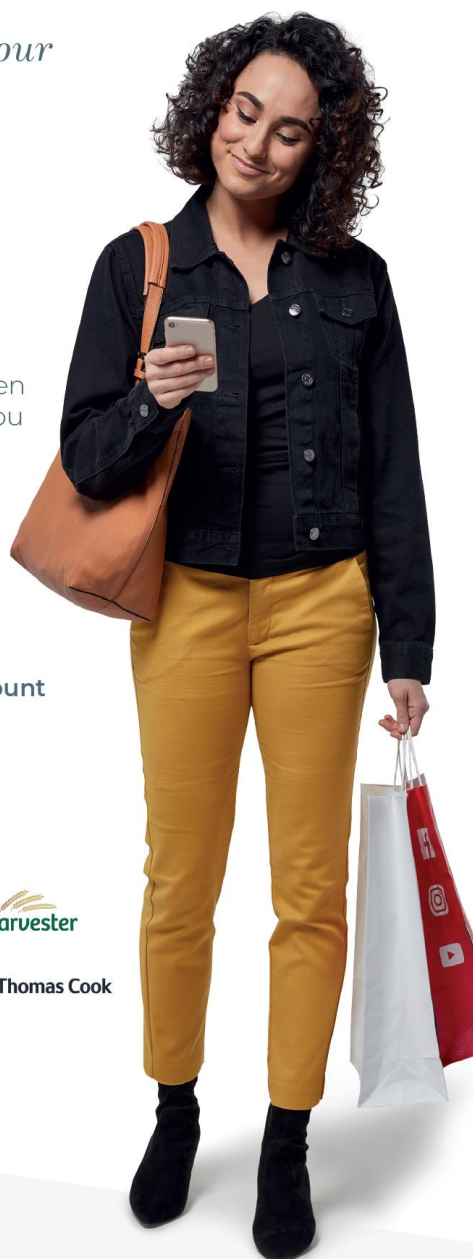
How do I re-register?

1. Go to www.mybdatbenefits.org
2. Click on 'Register For Free'
3. Enter your Scheme ID of 5060
4. Fill out your personal details to create an account
5. Click 'Continue'

We hope you enjoy the upgrade and all of the improved offers.

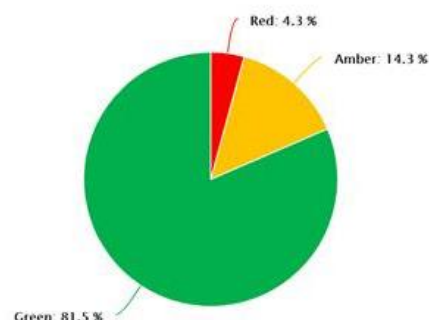


My BDAT Benefits



Thank you to all our Business Managers and support staff who helped our big push on compliance for Health and Safety and Estates Management last term

In September we introduced the new Every Compliance system across all the schools in the Trust to help provide reassurance to school leaders and business managers that our school estates are safe, secure and fit for purpose. Following a spate of activity across schools, at the end of the Autumn term we are pleased to confirm we are now **95.7%** compliant in all categories with plans in place to resolve the last few areas. Well done everyone!



Training Opportunities for Schools and Governors

Following feedback from schools and governors we have two training sessions scheduled for the New Year.

- **Top Tips for Financial Compliance**
17th January, 9.15-12.15 at Belle Vue Girls Academy

Following the completion of the latest annual accounts, our auditors will be providing essential training for all our Heads, Business Managers and Governors with a financial brief on the latest compliance and regulatory

guidance from the ESFA where schools can sometimes fall down when making spending decisions. To book your place email Barbara.blackham@bdat-academies.org

- **Managing Hearings: Disciplinary and Grievances Training**
30th January, 9.30-11.30 at BDAT Offices

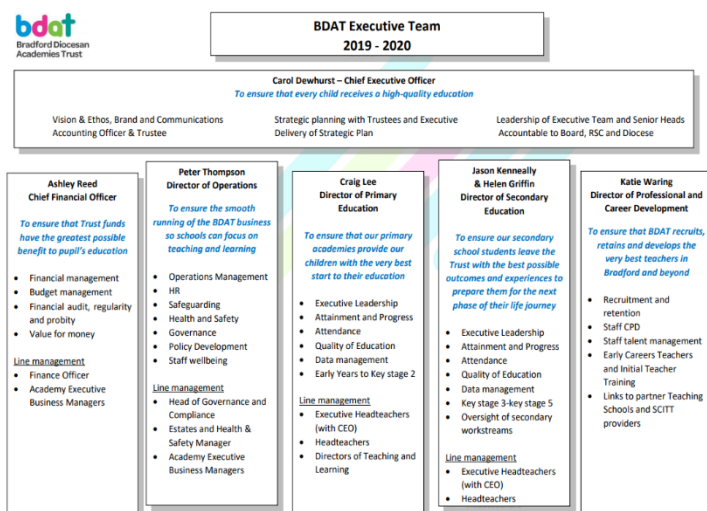
Following on from the successful training session BDAT and Fusion hosted last month for investigating officers, we have arranged a second session to take place aimed at School Leaders, Central Staff and Executive/Consultant Heads who may be responsible for Chairing or making decisions at hearings.

To book a place visit
<https://event.bookitbee.com/bdat> or email
governance@bdat-academies.org

Who is who on the BDAT Executive Team?

We have had a few changes on the BDAT Executive Team recently.

To find out who is responsible for which areas visit
<https://www.bdat-academies.org/about-us/bdat-trust-structure/>



Movers and Shakers

Some good news and recognition for Trust colleagues in recent months

- Our Chair, **Tessa Mason**, has been awarded a **Fellowship of the Chartered College of Teaching (FCCT)**. This is an impressive accolade reserved for the most committed teachers and leaders who have shown a significant and sustained contribution to the teaching profession and their own professional development. As the highest and most prestigious category of membership at the Chartered College, it is clear recognition of Tessa's achievements, skills and expertise as a teaching professional. Tessa attended a reception at the House of Lords in November where she formally received her Fellowship.
- BDAT Trustee – **Roland Clark** was recognised as a **Doctor of the University of Bradford** this December. Roland is one of eight national and international figures the University honoured in its December graduations.
- **Carol Dewhurst**, CEO and Trustee of BDAT, was awarded an **OBE in the New Year's Honours** for services to Education. Carol said *"I feel hugely privileged and humbled to receive this honour. I am extremely fortunate to work alongside a number of talented school leaders and Trustees and together we strive to improve outcomes and experiences for the children in our schools. This award is recognition of the hard work and commitment of the team at BDAT and the services they provide to education in our city"*.
- Finally, we are delighted to confirm that following confirmation that the SCA funding will be continued for at least one further year, the Board has confirmed the permanent appointment of **Helen Williams** as **Estates and Health and Safety Manager for BDAT**.



News from our Schools



BBEC prefects are inaugurated at the very grand Bradford City Hall

50 prefects from **Buttershaw Business and Enterprise College** were inaugurated into their School Parliament on 16th December at Bradford Town Hall.

The impressive event was attended by Judith Cummins (MP for South Bradford), the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Cllr Doreen Lee and representatives of the Governing Body and BDAT and BBEC SLT. The pupils also spent some time at the Town Hall in themed workshops considering areas such as democracy and what makes a good leader. Well done to everyone involved.

390 Pupils Raise the Roof at St George's Hall in the first BDAT Primary Prom

On Monday, 9th December pupils from across all 13 BDAT primary schools joined together to celebrate the first BDAT Primary Prom. Following a lot of hard work, effort and enthusiasm, this two-hour musical extravaganza brought together 390 pupils from across our family of schools to deliver 16 song and dance performances in the grand venue of St George's Hall. Representatives from each school worked with Mr Sam Dunkley from Performing Arts Etc to write three special BDAT songs including:

- What it is like to be part of Bradford
- What it is like to be part of a Church school
- What it is like to be part of BDAT.

Each school also chose their own performance ranging from Christmas songs, modern pop, a recorder and a brass band performance (**St Philip's, Academy at St James**), a Bollywood Dance (**Shipley**) plus much more.



Fantastic work from all the staff and students who made this happen. We can't wait for next year!



BDAT inter-schools competition goes to East Morton

Westminster CE Primary hosted the first primary BDAT inter schools maths competition. Nine of our primary schools entered a team of Y5 and Y6 children who are working at greater depth in mathematics including: St Oswald's, St Philip's, Wycliffe, Cullingworth, East Morton, St John's, Westminster, Academy at St James and Woodlands.

After a mixture of 10 challenging activities including larger constructions, escape the room, mystery puzzles, barrier games, a measures treasure hunt and a maths relay, East Morton won the BDAT trophy. We are hopeful that East Morton will host the next round!



Keep up with the latest news and share your stories
#wearebdot