



# Assessment report

The LETTA Trust

Project number: 19-00614

Accreditation valid from: 10/06/2019

Assessment conducted by: Matthew Filbee





## Investors in People

157-197 Buckingham Palace Road,

London, SW1W 9SP

+44 (0) 300 303 3033

The Investors in People brand, trademarks, methodology and assets are owned by Investors in People Community Interest Company (registered in England and Wales with company registration number 10420361). The Investors in People Standard and associated products is delivered by Investors in People Community Interest Company.

©2019 The contents of this report, the Investors in People name, designs, mark and logo are protected by copyright and international trademark law. This report should be considered commercial in confidence. Investors in People Community Interest Company is recognised as the Data Controller in the context of all data relating to Investors in People.

## Contents

Contents .....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
Executive Summary .....	4
Context .....	7
Assessment Approach .....	8
How The LETTA Trust was assessed.....	9
Detailed Assessment Outcome .....	10
IIP Benchmark.....	10
Overview of online assessment results.....	11
Principle 1: Leading .....	12
Principle 2: Supporting .....	14
Principle 3: Improving.....	16
Recommendations and Next Steps .....	19
Annex 1: Assessment outcome table .....	20

## Acknowledgements

The IIP Practitioner, Matthew Filbee, would like to express his appreciation to a number of people who have assisted in the conduct of this Investors in People Assessment. They include:

- Rabea Begum for central coordination. This was a very well-organised assessment.
- All of the people with whom conversations took place for their openness and honesty and their willingness to be involved. Also all of those who completed the online assessment survey. Their comments on the organisation and how they perceive their role within it were objective and helpful.

## Executive Summary

**The overall conclusion of this Investors in People assessment is that the Standard is met and The LETTA Trust has achieved Gold accreditation.**

In forming the Trust the leaders have reviewed, agreed and embedded many of the good practices that were evident in Stebon and Bygrove Primary Schools at the time of the last Investors in People assessments of those two schools. The third element, the Teaching School, has a culture entirely consistent with the other bodies and the whole Trust in that it is an Outstanding provider and shares the same ethos of high quality provision and innovation.

The leadership team has been a constant and so all of the positive aspects of the culture of Stebon and Bygrove can be found throughout the LETTA Trust. There has been no sense of complacency and the organisation has taken the opportunity to review and improve many aspects of the workplace in forming the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The commitment to people through the employee life cycle from the outstanding initial teacher training (ITT) through to developing leaders remains exemplary. Leaders are clear that what makes the LETTA Trust special is not the buildings but the people and the culture they have created. The goal of helping make good citizens of its pupils can be applied to trainee teachers as they turn into outstanding leaders through the nurturing and guidance they receive throughout the LETTA Trust. This is an organisation that is delivering on its' own vision day-in, day-out and LETTA has to be acknowledged as a key part of the wider success story of education in Tower Hamlets over the last 20 years.

Many staff stay at the LETTA Trust having initially started through the ITT. The staff retention rate is excellent and many leadership positions are filled internally. The Assessor came across examples of long serving staff whose roles have been expanded through management support, guidance as well as training and development. As a result they feel motivated, valued and have a real sense of fulfilling their potential.

The role model leadership from the top can be found in many places around the Trust. The line management structure where teachers line manage TA's and everyone has a weekly one-to-one remains rare in the education sector but the benefits of this approach were tangible in terms of performance management, role clarity and ability to prioritise, coaching relationships, better flow of communications and the sense of being supported. The senior leaders are all very strong leaders with what many described as a nurturing style that has created a real 'family' and community.

Developing people is seen as being central to the success of the schools. CPD opportunities are second-to-none with staff greatly benefitting from the comprehensive programme of training opportunities delivered by national and internationally renowned speakers. A school priority last year was evaluating CPD approaches and this resulted in changes to the CPD Strategy with more time now given to people for reading and research. This learning formed the basis for a series of presentations to colleagues.

The IIP Practitioner was impressed by the dedication, professionalism and commitment shown by the entire workforce to providing high quality education but also the positive impact it is having on the community, especially the employability of local residents. There are a range of parent workshops, clubs and volunteering opportunities available to them.

People reported the LETTA Trust as being a friendly organisation that cares deeply about its staff and lives the values it has defined for itself. It has very high standards but this is matched by high levels of care and support for people. There is a healthy balance between

the high standards expected of individuals at the LETTA Trust and the support and recognition people receive for their hard work and dedication. The school has taken to closing at 6pm to ensure staff leave by then at the latest.

Despite the very high standards and expectations placed on staff, interviewees spoke of a relatively stress free school, with clear roles and colleagues who are happy to share their experiences with each other. This is a highly collaborative environment. It was seen that the school does build in time for reflective practice and research as individuals and groups.

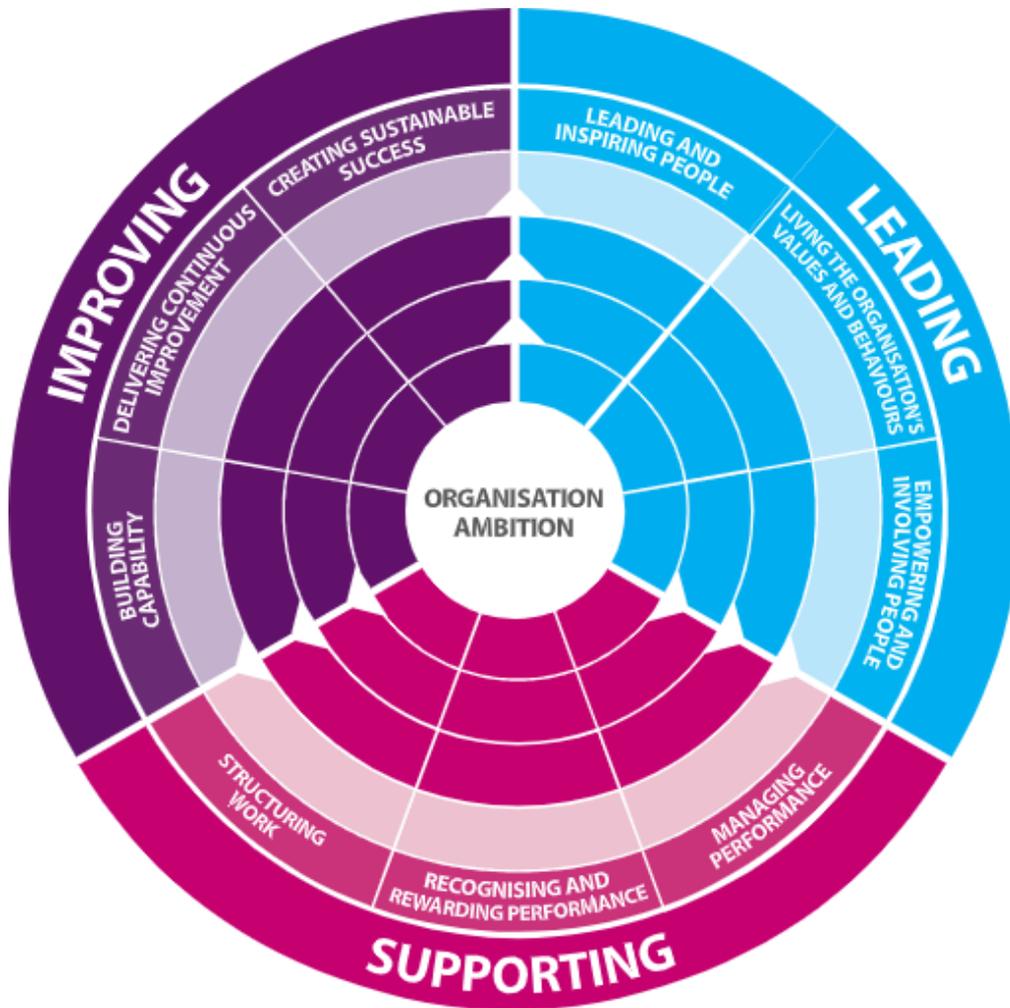
Levels of pride in the organisation, its purpose and its achievements are high. The senior leaders recognise that the way in which people are led, managed and developed is central to raising performance and its continued success. The organisation has engaged people who are fully committed to the vision, values and ambition of the Trust.

New people are bringing in new ideas and innovation. This, along with the exciting prospects brought by the creation of the MAT, will ensure that LETTA, Stebon and Bygrove have a sustainable future. The transparency of communication has become even more a part of the culture and staff feel an integral part of that future. Everyone felt fully involved in the creation and development of the MAT and continue to have a voice in its plans for expansion.

The LETTA Trust is a very rich and uplifting place to visit. The immense commitment to the learning and development of great teachers who go on to be great leaders was displayed by everyone the IIP Practitioner met. Their pride in the schools, the children and their colleagues, was obvious and tangible throughout the survey results and interviews.

Further recommendations for improvement can be found on page 19.

The LETTA Trust assessment outcome



The LETTA Trust final award outcome



## Context

The LETTA Trust is made up of the London East Teacher Training Alliance, Bygrove Primary School and Stebon Primary School. The Trust was established in July 2017. There is a social equality and justice mission for the organisation and 4 values and 4 strategic goals. The LETTA Trust will be almost two years old when the assessment takes place. In the second year leaders have demonstrated more strategic thinking and have put in place a good infrastructure ready for further growth. From the website:

### **Vision, Values and Ethos**

LETTA Trust schools are committed to working in partnership and learning from each other. Together we strive to give children the best chance of happiness and success at school and beyond; to growing active citizens with a strong moral compass who will make a positive difference in the world. Our vision is a promise to our pupils; our values determine how we work together.

### **Our vision**

Our vision is that every child in every school in our trust:

- Loves learning, achieves their very best, has fun at school and feels excited about the future
- Knows how to make friends and get along well with people; to treat them with fairness, compassion and respect
- Grows healthy and strong, believes in themselves and has the confidence and resilience to follow their dreams
- Feels part of their community, proud of their school and inspired to make a positive difference in the world

### **Our values**

Our values determine how we work together:

- **Aspiration:** aiming high; broadening horizons; creating possibilities
- **Innovation:** taking risks; daring to be different; pioneering research; shaping the future; leading the way
- **Equality:** inclusive; excellence for all; celebrating diversity; all for one and one for all!
- **Generosity:** open doors; collaboration; challenge and support; community-minded; team spirit; Ubuntu

### **Ubuntu**

Our guiding principle is the philosophy of Ubuntu; a southern African philosophy that speaks of our interconnectedness, of the importance of relationships, of openness and generosity to one another.

*“Ubuntu does not mean that people should not enrich themselves. The question is: Are you going to do so in order to enable the community around you to be able to improve?”*

Nelson Mandela

## Assessment Approach

Following the initial Context discussion in March 2019, from which details for the organisational analysis were elicited, the organisation was assessed primarily using the online assessment and interviews. Staff were informed of the IIP Assessment and Accreditation process and they were asked to take part in completing the online assessment and a possible interview. As an organisation of approximately 150 members of staff, all staff were asked to complete the online assessment. 129 completed responses were returned (76%). This was above the international IIP guidelines and therefore the sample is considered statistically significant.

Online assessment responses were analysed to determine key themes or issues and these were used as one basis on which interviews were designed and administered. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 18 people, from all functions and levels. Each person was interviewed one-to-one and confidentiality was assured. Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Respondents appeared to willingly share and discuss their experiences and attitudes.

Data on which the assessment was based included that elicited from the online assessment and interviews, observations and documents provided by LETTA Trust. Documents were provided and included LETTA Trust' strategy, induction, appraisal process, examples of communication and staff recognition and key performance metrics.

### Survey Response Rate

#### Overview



## How The LETTA Trust was assessed



The online assessment was deployed to 169 people and there was a response of 129. This was above the international Investors in People guidelines and therefore the sample is considered statistically significant.



Based on the findings from the online assessment, the IIP Practitioner interviewed 18 employees from across the organisation.



No observations took place at this assessment but the IIP Practitioner had freedom to observe the workplaces.



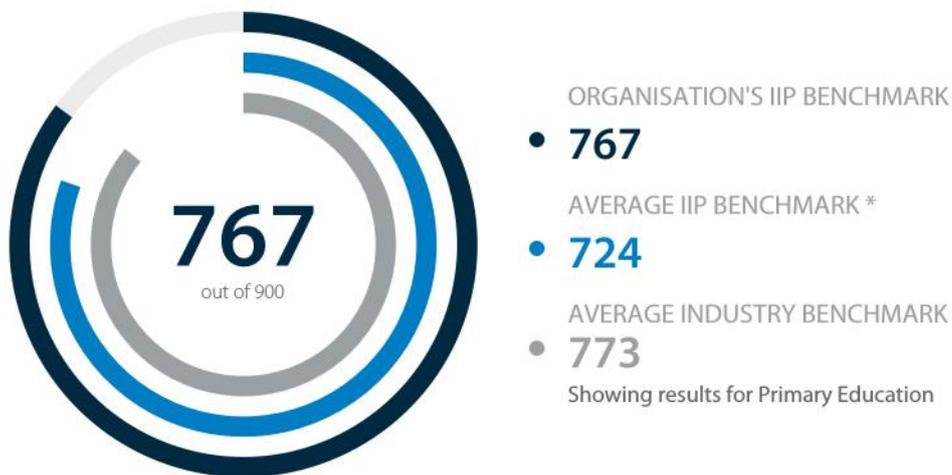
School Plan, Head's Report to Governors, Strategic Plan, CPD Plan.

## Detailed Assessment Outcome

### IIP Benchmark

The IIP Benchmark below shows The LETTA Trust's overall performance for the online assessment compared to the IIP average for all organisations who have completed the online assessment and against the average Industry Benchmark for Primary Education. Please note this benchmark is based on live data and is correct as on 13/06/2019.

### Benchmark



\* This reveals the average IIP Benchmark for all organisations who have undertaken the survey.

An overview of the results from The LETTA Trust's online assessment can be found below and are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

## Overview of online assessment results

The table below shows how your employees responded to the online assessment for each indicator of the IIP Standard (including the average per indicator and the difference to other organisations that have completed the online assessment).

### Indicator summary

	Strongly agree	Agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Average Indicator Score	Difference from IIP Average
INDICATOR 1 Leading and inspiring people	35.9%	41.5%	12.6%	6.0%	1.7%	1.6%	0.8%	6	+0.4
INDICATOR 2 Living the organisation's values and behaviours	41.7%	40.0%	9.9%	5.6%	0.8%	1.1%	0.9%	6.1	+0.2
INDICATOR 3 Empowering and involving people	36.6%	40.7%	14.9%	4.5%	2.1%	0.6%	0.6%	6	+0.2
INDICATOR 4 Managing performance	39.1%	40.9%	10.1%	5.6%	1.6%	2.1%	0.6%	6	+0.3
INDICATOR 5 Recognising and rewarding high performance	19.0%	39.7%	17.4%	13.0%	5.0%	4.7%	1.2%	5.4	+0.3
INDICATOR 6 Structuring work	46.1%	38.8%	9.5%	3.1%	1.4%	0.4%	0.8%	6.2	+0.3
INDICATOR 7 Building capability	37.7%	40.3%	12.1%	7.4%	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%	6	+0.5
INDICATOR 8 Delivering continuous improvement	32.4%	42.1%	14.1%	7.6%	1.4%	1.9%	0.6%	5.9	+0.3
INDICATOR 9 Creating sustainable success	42.6%	41.5%	9.1%	4.7%	0.6%	1.4%	0.2%	6.2	+0.4

*NB: The Average Score is the average response from all employees who participated in the online assessment. To help interpret this score, number 7 represents a response of 'Strongly Agree', so the closer the Average Score is to 7, the more positively the result can be read. 4 is a neutral response.*

## Principle 1: Leading

The LETTA Trust has an overall three-year Strategic Plan which acts as an umbrella plan for each area and then there are plans for each component part, Bygrove, Stebon and the Teaching School as well as the central operations team. The creation of the Trust was done with full staff involvement and consultation. Good two-way communication has continued subsequently through a range of meetings (daily briefings, weekly phase meetings and one-to-ones) and Inset Days. Staff were aware of the priorities and considered the communication of them to have been effective. Some felt that there are too many meetings and leaders are trialling new approaches to planning meetings and seeking to reduce the overall number of meetings.

People appreciated the focus on communication and continually striving to improve LETTA Trust as a place to work based on research. The culture is open and leaders know that the more they share, the more motivated people are to perform and collaborate. Levels of trust are high, particularly towards the CEO, Teaching School staff and Heads of Schools. Despite everyone being busy, leaders have maintained good levels of visibility and remain approachable to all staff.

How the school's purpose, values and vision will be lived is described in the Strategic Plans. The Plans include a range strategies, objectives, goals, milestones and measurable targets and is thoroughly monitored by leaders and board members.

*"The culture is very warm. We want to create a place where people want to work."*

*"There are a lot of meetings and they do cram it in, but when you start thinking about which meetings to stop they all seem to have a purpose."*

*"The passion of the leaders is so inspiring. The SLT are fantastic."*

*"There was a lot of two-way discussion during the setting-up of the Trust and we had a myth-busting box where people could leave questions which were answered at weekly sessions."*

*"At times the information flow up and down has been tricky but that is starting to change."*

All interviewees reported continued excellence in the way in which they are managed with one-to-one's (weekly line management meetings) happening for all. Informally, the vast majority of staff reported supportive managers. At Bygrove there was no Head of School the previous year but everyone reported a much better year this year.

Many managers view the SLT as role models and inspirational leaders and often find themselves saying and thinking 'what would X do in this situation?' Visibility, accessibility and consultation are all part of the style, as is a clear vision and real commitment to nurturing staff and helping them to fulfil their potential. The Leadership Team has set out to managers what they should be doing and management expectations are clear. Staff are able to access excellent leadership development opportunities through external leadership consultants and visiting experts who talk at sessions put on by LETTA which staff can attend. This has been put to good use recently by the new Leadership Team at Bygrove.

There is a good cohesion in the senior team and a set of genuinely inspiring leaders. Managers were seen by their staff to be positive and effective. Ultimately, line managers know what is expected of them. Equally, people know what to expect from line managers and provide some feedback through surveys and informally. The schools have used surveys to get feedback on management and 360-degree feedback has been used previously, although not this year. Managers interviewed described how they ask their teams for regular feedback. Staff had full confidence in the leadership and management and if anything felt this had improved this academic year, possibly as a result of some changes in leadership

positions and a growing improvement in communication up and down and subsequent levels of trust in middle leaders.

*“I do get feedback as a leader but that probably hasn’t formally happened for a while, the upward feedback element, but we do use an annual survey.”*

*“I’ve not been asked to give upward feedback on my manager specifically but we’ve got that kind of relationship where it happens naturally. There is a survey as well.”*

*“At times there are gaps and things that need to go up the chain don’t and that can allow things to escalate into bigger issues than they needed to be.”*

*“Great leadership is modelled consistently from above which makes it easier to manage people in that way yourself. Plus we are having middle leader training at the moment.”*

The LETTA Trust values are integrated into people processes such as recruitment and selection. The values are: Aspiration, Innovation, Equality, Generosity.

Belief in the authenticity of the values was very high. People felt that they are lead, managed and developed in line with the values. There was widespread appreciation for the guiding principle and philosophy of Ubuntu. It is rare to visit an organisation where the values and ethos are so consistently and authentically lived.

*“The values are the golden thread that runs through the trust.”*

*“The values are like the heart and backbone of the school.”*

*“We used a spring INSET to do a self-evaluation against the values and a look forward, people felt the values are a reality day-to-day.”*

Staff at LETTA Trust do feel empowered to make decisions. LETTA Trust have set clear parameters with values, targets, a scheme of delegation and overall goals and have recruited people who are proactive and do feel empowered to deliver. There were plenty of examples of staff taking the lead on projects including Maths Mastery, Disney Musicals and research projects that were shared with colleagues.

*“We are empowered, occasionally it can feel a little controlling. They want consistency which I get, but that can sometimes feel at the expense of your own creativity.”*

*“They have recruited passionate, proactive people and given us our independence.”*

*“The trust in you is what keeps me here, you are given freedom.”*

People were positive about consultation around the creation of the Trust with INSET days used in a consultative, inclusive way. Phase meetings give people more of a say at the local level and everyone reported these being effective and collaborative. People felt trusted to make decisions and were clear on what needs to be escalated.

*“We are working on staff wellbeing and having lots of conversations about how to improve and getting good ideas.”*

### **Opportunities for improvement**

Continue to improve communication up and down the Trust to help build trust in middle leaders and overcome some perceptions that the CEO and Heads of School receive a polished version of events.

There was some feedback that the high levels of consultation when establishing the Trust has scaled back somewhat. Keep on consistently seeking the employee voice and ensure that they are left feeling that their contribution makes a difference.

## Principle 2: Supporting

People across the school were clear about their own objectives and how they link to the schools' overall vision and objectives. People described a range of methods by which they contribute to developing their teams and the schools' objectives. Examples given included one to one reviews, evaluation of activities and achievements, staff meetings, research projects and class and individual target setting. Objectives cascade from the top and leaders are good at sharing their objectives with the teams to help ensure there are fully aligned goals and targets. Compliance with performance management and the quality of the discussion has been good, and many of those interviewed feel they have had a meaningful review of their individual performance and personal objectives. There is good clarity of tasks and objectives in many forms at LETTA meaning that staff do know what is expected of them and do receive feedback on a regular basis from colleagues and managers.

Leaders do invest time in managing performance, and there is an excellent (and in schools, all too rare) system of one-to-ones (now with a proforma) in place for everyone. Staff reported getting feedback in numerous ways including the performance reviews and team meetings. Trainees have regular observations and the feedback goes two-way with numerous surveys used to check-in with trainees and evaluated. The behaviours associated with the values are instilled and discussed at induction and one-to-ones. The values and behaviours are not formally built into the appraisal paperwork and this could be an improvement for the future. However, SLT have a set of key questions to ask staff that are sent out before and these include attitudes linked to the values.

*“Standards are very high but they have really helped me and kept me going. The training from the Teaching School goes above and beyond anything else I’ve heard of.”*

*“The line management meetings are so supportive and always start with a ‘how are you?’”*

*“You get loads of feedback and it is carefully couched. Lots of coaching, it feels natural.”*

*“I’m not clear if or how we assess people’s behaviours against the values.”*

Reward and recognition scored relatively highly in the IIP surveys (two-thirds agree or strongly agree that their manager recognises them when they do a good job) compared to other organisations but still this topic scored lowest in the survey - 5.4 out of a possible 7. When explored during interviews there was not a common thread and most expressed satisfaction with the levels and forms of recognition. As one interviewee put it, ‘this is a job that is never done’ and perhaps the recognition can never be enough. Leaders feel they are generous and do a great deal to recognise staff’s contribution. This was confirmed by the vast majority of people. A minority felt that the full extent of their effort, the hours worked and commitment risked being taken for granted as everyone is expected to work at that level therefore it is not seen as anything special. Achievements are acknowledged but people are quickly urged to ‘crack on’ to the next thing such is the relentless pace at LETTA Trust.

It was apparent that the organisation is trying to recognise people and uses a number of different approaches that are regularly reviewed. Recent joiners have brought in new ideas and are encouraging further innovation in this area including a new reward system. There are meetings (including daily briefings) which are used to thank staff for their contribution. Most managers are effective at thanking their teams and giving praise where it is due. Events to celebrate successes are always appreciated and staff referenced the pantomime and barbecues and LETTA five-year anniversary event as highlights.

*“We get really lovely speeches and thanks at the end of the year, not so much during the year. Sometimes you are left wondering if all your hard work is noticed.”*

*“The What’sapp messages mean a lot and shows they are noticing. That drip feed of positive messages really keeps you going.”*

*“We have some lovely events like a Christmas do, pub quizzes and an Easter egg. Sometimes we get the pizza in – it all helps.”*

*“The daily briefings are good and used to check-in with us and give a well done.”*

*“We celebrate as a school and I am encouraged to share my practice with others which makes me proud and in turn feel valued.”*

*“If you’ve got something nice to say, say it – that is encouraged here.”*

LETTA Trust operates in a structured way in line with a well-run organisation. A huge effort has gone into establishing the Trust and all the requisite documentation. The Trust has done a thorough and high quality job on the plans and procedures required. These include a Scheme of Delegation which sets out roles clearly along with authorisation levels, good accountability and clarity around decision-making. Each role has skills and capabilities set out clearly via job descriptions and person specifications and people know what is expected of each role. The first year of the Trust required everyone, particularly those in operational roles, evolving their understanding of responsibilities but this appears to have settled well now and people are working effectively. This was achieved through some excellent learning opportunities that included specialist training and visits to established Trusts.

*“In an ideal world they’d keep working on the work-life balance. There is an expectation that every minute counts here and a bit of clock watching if you pause for breath. It creates pressure for people.”*

*“The work is never done, sometimes it is nice for a leader to say ‘you’ve done enough’ or it is ‘good enough’ and we do get that.”*

*“We have an occupational therapist come on site for staff, it is preventative.”*

*“I’d say there are some workaholics here. There is a lot of ‘can you just...’ and it is the kind of place where not everyone takes their lunch break, so you start to feel awkward if you do have a proper 30-minute break.”*

*“When policies change now they highlight the change in yellow. It is a small point but shows that they care about our time and are doing things in the right way.”*

### **Opportunities for improvement**

Consider how to best review people on their behaviours as well as their performance against objectives, ideally this would be built into formal review mechanisms. While this happens to some extent currently and through reviews against competency frameworks and via surveys, it might need refreshing in light of the Trust values.

Keep on working at recognition so that everyone feels appreciated for their significant work and contribution at the Trust. Press ahead with the planned reward system. Some staff said they ‘occasionally’ get positive feedback which mirrored the survey results where a third of staff ‘somewhat agreed’ or below to the question of whether they feel appreciated.

Enable more flexible working practices on the rare occasions it is possible, e.g. the ability to work from home on a polling day.

Now that the Operations Team have got a better handle on staff absence, ensure that this good practice is shared with managers on how to best manage sickness. A number of people expressed how demotivating it has been in the past to see people not held to account and/or sickness not seemingly managed.

## Principle 3: Improving

There is a real commitment to developing people while they are at LETTA Trust and for their career beyond should they leave. People described an immense range of learning and development needs, how they are met and the learning applied. The quality of training provided by LETTA to its partnership schools and beyond is very high. There are high levels of expertise in house but this doesn't stop the Trust bringing in experts and consultants to train and develop people on a range of topics including leadership. Staff at Bygrove and Stebon are fortunate to be able to access this range of CPLD courses and many felt that the high quality learning was part of what kept them at the Trust. Not many schools benefit from the same highly professional educational training arm that is the Teaching School on their premises and an integral and valued part of the Trust.

*"We had CPD as a school priority and trialled different ways of learning. We learnt many things including to give people a menu, a choice and to give people freedom to research. The presentations have been brilliant."*

*"We ensure all of our CPD is embedded in research."*

*"The CPD opportunities here are amazing and they really support your career."*

*"They are always thinking about my potential and future."*

Managers described how they made sure that people's identified needs were met. This was said to be ensured through the use of Performance Management reviews, line management meetings, phase meetings and regular curriculum reviews as well as the day-to-day interaction between Leadership Team and staff. Several individuals described how they had spoken to a senior leader who had provided career advice and guidance. The approach to CPLD is rigorously tested and last year's school plan tested the notion that all learning is good with its 'success through excellent professional development' priority. This led to various findings including a re-write of the Trust's Professional Learning Strategy with time given to staff reading and research projects which have subsequently been presented at staff meetings. This has resulted in much sharing of learning but also a deeper appreciation for individuals and awareness of their interests. As a result inclusivity and relationships have improved which has been a great bi-product of the work.

The recruitment and selection process was seen as effective by recent joiners. At interview people considered recruitment and selection to be fair. People were very positive about the recruitment and selection process they had been through with a lot of positive feedback for the team in setting a professional, but friendly tone from the outset. The induction and first year of teaching was highly praised. The LETTA Trust recruit a high number of trainee teachers each year and have very high retention rates. The programme is subject to a self-critical evaluation and further improvements identified for next year include new specialisms around Maths and SEN. This all helps provide trainee teachers with exposure to cutting-edge research and practice and high levels of support provided by the mentors who have been through an innovative training programme themselves. Recent innovations have included the cradle to grave map for the Trust setting out the journey people can expect to go on and stresses to people that the Trust is interested in them and their development.

The organisation recognises that the best ideas often come from the people doing the job at the frontline and all felt encouraged to put forward ideas for continuous improvement. Every phase were able to provide examples of continuous improvement. Staff confirmed that managers are encouraging them to seek new ways of working and ideas, especially through meetings and the research projects. Despite being a high performing organisation itself with many schools visiting it as an exemplar, the Trust looks outside for further inspiration and innovation with many people describing visits to other schools and how firms from Canary

Wharf visit the school. Leaders have good external networks and attend a range of conferences, plus the CEO is an Ofsted Inspector which all helps to ensure the Trust is exposed to different approaches and new ideas.

*“There is no room for complacency here and we get real challenge from the governing body.”*

LETTA demonstrated high levels of collaboration and good communication where staff were able to discuss how they can contribute to improving their performance and ways of working at the organisation. This came down to good staff-management relations and managers that listen to the ideas from everyone. There are good examples of people working locally with managers and colleagues to try new approaches. There was no sense of any blame culture and people felt able to take risks when trying new approaches.

People felt able to speak up and put ideas forward in their own teams due to the positive relationships that are in place. Many were passionate about making LETTA the best organisation it can possibly be and were proud of the improvements that have been made in the last two years.

*“You are encouraged to try new ways of working. Ideas get supported and you are given permission to change – there is a real give it a go attitude which is good.”*

*“We are on a journey. Assessment systems and meetings can change several times over while we find a way of working that works for us.”*

*“We are more considered now and don’t try everything – we run pilots to replace what is not working and test to see if it is better.”*

The strategy is focused on the future (i.e. possible growth through other schools joining the Trust) and has been well-communicated over the last year, notably through the meetings. People did feel that they were actively engaged in short-term and long-term planning and demonstrated ownership of the Trust. This has all built confidence in leaders and people interviewed felt that LETTA Trust is well placed to move forward and deserves to grow. Over 90% of survey respondents consider it to be a great place to work.

Everyone held the view that LETTA Trust had managed change well through converting to a Trust. Leaders acknowledged it has been a time of change but have tried to be as open as they can be while keeping the staff focused on delivering the job in hand. LETTA has been open and transparent with staff about changes and challenges. There is a refreshing honesty about what has worked and what has not which has helped build trust. This has been helped by a commitment to at least match, or better, local authority terms and conditions. People are given responsibility to champion and lead on change.

LETTA Trust has a deep-rooted commitment to community involvement. Resources exist to encourage parental involvement through classes, volunteering and cooking together. There is a free Saturday school for disadvantaged children, a family learning room and free holiday breakfast clubs. It is hard for the Trust to measure the social impact it has had but it is likely to be significant as there have been successes in many areas including employment and through its links with housing and arts organisations. Everyone confirmed that they were able to be themselves and the workforce is diverse. Leaders and staff had a clear understanding of stakeholders and the community it serves and believe the Trust is having a positive impact on the community, Tower Hamlets and the education sector.

*“We do a lot for our community but it emerged from discussions with the team they’d like to do even more.”*

*“The community links are essential for us to achieve our vision.”*

### **Opportunities for improvement**

Continue to look to the future to identify and plan for the capabilities people will need to deliver success to the Trust.

Non-teaching staff do get development, but ensure that it is to the same very high standards afforded to the teaching staff and leaders, and that their career development is considered in the same progressive way.

## Recommendations and Next Steps

The following recommendations for the leadership team are based on the professional judgement and assessment of The LETTA Trust undertaken by Matthew Filbee.

1. Continue to improve communication up and down the Trust to help build trust in leaders and line managers and awareness at all levels of issues and responses. Provide regular opportunities for upward feedback and consider how to build upward feedback into performance management more systematically.
2. Some feedback that the high levels of consultation when establishing the Trust has scaled back somewhat. Keep on consistently seeking the employee voice and ensure that they are left feeling that their contribution makes a difference.
3. Non-teaching (e.g. finance and admin) staff do get development, but sometimes feel that their career development is not considered in the same progressive way. Check that line management is focused on both operational and people development aspects.
4. Consider how to best review people on their behaviours as well as their performance against objectives, ideally this would be built into formal review mechanisms. While this happens to some extent currently and through reviews against competency frameworks and via surveys, it might need refreshing in light of the Trust values.
5. Keep on working at recognition so that everyone feels appreciated for their significant work and contribution at the Trust. Press ahead with the planned reward system. Some staff said they 'occasionally' get positive feedback which mirrored the survey results where a third of staff 'somewhat agreed' or below to the question of whether they feel appreciated.
6. Now that the Operations Team have got a better handle on staff absence, ensure that this good practice is shared with managers on how to best manage sickness. A number of people expressed how demotivating it has been in the past to see people not held to account and/or sickness not seemingly managed.

The key dates for the next stages of The LETTA Trust IIP journey are set out below:

Accreditation date	12-Month Review	24-Month Review	Accreditation Expiry
10/06/2019	10/06/2020	10/06/2021	10/06/2022

## Annex 1: Assessment outcome table

		Not met	Developed	Established	Advanced	High Performing
Leading and inspiring people	Creating transparency and trust					
	Motivating people to deliver the organisations objectives					
	Developing leadership capability					
	Leading and Inspiring People					
Living the organisation's values and behaviours	Operating in line with the values					
	Adopting the values					
	Living the values					
	Living the Organisations Values and Behaviours					
Empowering and involving people	Empowering people					
	Participating and collaborating					
	Making decisions					
	Empowering and Involving People					
Managing performance	Setting objectives					
	Encouraging High Performance					
	Measuring and assessing performance					
	Managing Performance					
Recognising and rewarding high performance	Designing an approach to recognition and reward					
	Adopting a culture of recognition					
	Recognising and rewarding people					
	Recognising and Rewarding High Performance					
Structuring work	Designing roles					
	Creating autonomy in roles					
	Enabling collaborative working					
	Structuring Work					
Building capacity	Understanding people's potential					
	Supporting learning and development					
	Deploying the right people at the right time					
	Building Capability					
Delivering continuous improvement	Improving through internal and external sources					
	Creating a culture of continuous improvements					
	Encouraging innovation					
	Delivering Continuous Improvement					
Creating sustainable success	Focusing on the future					
	Embracing change					
	Understanding the external context					
	Creating Sustainable Success					

---

**Get in touch:**

Call us on 0300 303 3033 today

Follow us on Twitter: @IIP

Go online: [www.investorsinpeople.com](http://www.investorsinpeople.com)



The Investors in People brand, trademarks, methodology and assets are owned by Investors in People Community Interest Company (Company registered in England and Wales No: 10420361).

©2019 The Investors in People name, designs, mark and logo are protected by copyright and international trademark law. For more information or to report a possible infringement please contact [info@investorsinpeople.com](mailto:info@investorsinpeople.com). No part of this publication should be reproduced, sold or copied without the permission of the copyright owner.