Balcarras
From strength to strength

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2024

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Statement of Values and Aims

We want Balcarras to continue to be regarded as one of the very best schools in the country.

We are proud of our values:

- We believe that all children have a right to feel safe at school and we endeavour to make sure that every student is engaged and inspired by their education.
- We believe fundamentally in the value of comprehensive education.
- We believe that all children should receive an outstanding education regardless of ability, prior attainment or background.
- We are committed to inclusion for all our pupils and we will continue to strive to make sure that our provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is second to none.
- We believe in a partnership with parents, business and the local community.
- We believe in a broad and balanced curriculum.
- We believe that the school should provide a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- We are committed to the highest academic standards.
- We are committed to ensuring that all children receive outstanding PSHE provision. We believe that it is our job to help to mould young people so that when they leave school they are equipped for life in 21st century society.

We continue to set the same priorities:

- High Attendance
- Excellent Behaviour
- making what takes place in the Classroom the most important thing we do

Finally, we continue to strive to make Balcarras exceptional by putting extra curricular, environment and enjoyment at the heart of everything that we do.

Context

We launch this new School Development Plan in the midst of a global pandemic and there is little doubt that recovering from the effects of the pandemic, will be a crucial feature of this SDP. The previous SDP was hugely successful and by its culmination we could quite justifiably claim that Balcarras was one of the most successful state schools anywhere in the country. As we engage in another cycle of improvement, we want this to continue to be our aim.

As well as meeting the challenges created by the pandemic there are other headwinds of which we need to be aware. Our per pupil income has fallen by over 10% in the last decade and although we are currently balancing the books there is no doubt that we are operating at a higher Pupil Teacher Ratio than ever before. This places more pressure on the school and its staff and we should all be aware of this as we shape the school's plans in the years ahead. It is also worth us being aware that

whilst recent announcements of increases to minimum funding are welcome, they are likely to be offset by increasing costs such as raised contributions to national insurance. In short, we are going to be operating in a very tight financial climate.

As we launch this plan, there is a national dialogue taking place about sexual attitude amongst young people. In June 2021, Ofsted wrote a report into Sexual Abuse in schools. Balcarras has responded to the issues raised in this report and we will continue to do so through the course of this plan.

Balcarras continues to be an inclusive and welcoming school with a high proportion of EHCP students. Unfortunately, the funding for EHCPs is in need of desperate reform because schools are financially punished for being inclusive. We will continue to campaign against this policy whilst doing our very best with the scant resources available.

As we set out on this latest SDP it is worth noting that for the first time Balcarras is part of a Multi Academy Trust—The Balcarras Trust. Balcarras will take its responsibilities to the Trust seriously and will work closely with other schools in the Trust. We are aware that other schools who have established MATs have seen a dip in their performance. We are determined that this will not be the case here. The crucial way to avoid this is to ensure that whatever activities Balcarras engages in, whether it be supporting other schools or taking a role in system leadership—that proper capacity is put in place to facilitate such work.

As this plan launches so too does our sister school—The High School Leckhampton. We are fully committed to supporting THSL and look forward to many years of collaboration.
We are very proud that Balcarras was selected as a Teaching School Hub and our work in this regard will start as this plan commences. We will combine this work with our role as a Maths Hub.

PROGRESS STATEMENT

The pandemic has subsided but the problems it has created have not yet gone away. We are still dealing with high levels of anxiety and our attendance rate is lower than normal, although still much higher than national averages. Our persistent absence rate is higher also. The school has responded to these contextual issues and this is detailed below.

At the time of writing this review we are just days away from the Autumn Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. School funding continues to fall in real terms and the funding for SEND students continues to be in total chaos. In July the government gave teachers pay rises of 5% or higher and support staff an average of 9%. Our income only increased by 2% so these wage increases caused our real income to fall. Whilst we do not oppose fair wage increases for the staff of the school we do reject the idea that these rises can be imposed by central government without any funding to support them.

The Balcarras Trust continues to take shape and Balcarras itself is now adjusting to life as part of a larger trust. This has necessarily led to some changes in how we operate. However, the school has always been outward facing and minded towards collaboration. Our work as a Teaching School Hub and a Maths Hub continues to give the school a high profile regionally and nationally.

This time last year we raised concerns about funding. In the end the government did provide a supplementary grant which went some way to allowing us to finish the year in balance. However, the 2023 Autumn Statement said that the core schools budget would only increase by 1.8% for 2024-25. It remains to be seen at what level costs will rise but our guess is above 1.8%.

Attendance is beginning to recover towards normal. We are currently operating at 96%.

We have worked hard to address sexual harassment and misogyny amongst Balcarras pupils, we have conducted various pupil meetings and actioned the outcomes both in main school and the 6th form. All the actions and outcomes have been carefully recorded in a separate document that can be viewed by Governors and trustees. The outcomes have been discussed thoroughly at Community Governors committee.

Progress of our Students

We are hugely ambitious for our students at both GCSE and A-level. We want them to make outstanding progress, no matter what their starting point. The SDP will set ambitious targets at GCSE and A-level both in terms of progress and raw results. We believe it is important to keep raw targets as part of the plan. Whilst progress measures are the best way to monitor the performance of the school, there will be some volatility in these because of the effects of the pandemic. GCSE results in 2020 and 2021 render value added measure for the A-level results of 2022 and 2023 more or less redundant. Similarly, a lack of KS2 data means that it will be impossible to publish Progress 8 measures in 2024 and 2025. For this reason, we think it prudent to continue to track raw results and to set targets in this area.

Sixth Form
Balcarras to continue to be the highest performing school in the southwest.

A* to B rate
Target 75%

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
62	67	70	71	74	77	72	64	

A* to A rate
Target 40%

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
27	34	40	38	43	57	45	29	

A* to C rate
Target 95%

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
84	88	91	91	93	92	89	85	

ALPS Value Added
Target Alps 2 or better

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
4	2	2	2	NA	NA	2	4	

DfE Value Added
Target 0.3 or better

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
	0.2	0.27	0.34	NA	NA	NA	NA	

Post 18 destinations

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
100% destinations	98	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

60% into Russell Group Universities	51	29	56	45	52	57	49	41	
10 students into Oxbridge/Medics	3	1	6	5	8	7	5	5	

Our 2022 performance at A level is the best we have ever achieved during an examinations season. 72% A* to B and 45 A* to A is exceptional and will put Balcarras amongst the highest performing sixth forms anywhere in the country. Our programme of academic intervention and support worked well and there was real consistency of results across the departments. In terms of destinations our number into Oxbridge/Medics dropped slightly as did the 49% joining Russell Group universities. We are pleased to continue to secure 100% destinations.

At A level in 2023 we scored the highest A* to B figure for any comprehensive sixth form in Gloucestershire. On the 2024 Parent Power leagues table (published Nov 2023) we were the second highest ranked comprehensive school in the southwest. Despite this we did see our overall performance dip from 2022. The year group did have lower prior attainment and because of COVID they had never sat a proper examination series. Nonetheless we are keen to strive back towards 70%+ for 2024 and have developed a range of strategies to ensure that this is achieved.

GCSE

Our ambition at GCSE is similar to that at A-level: we want Balcarras to be the highest performing school in the region.

Progress 8 of the school

Target 0.75+ (and inside the top 5th percentile)

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
0.61	0.6	0.32	0.82	N/A	N/A	0.68	0.70	

We did use 4Matrix to work out indicative Progress 8 Scores for 2020 and 2021. Both were excellent but without a valid national data set they have limited value. In 2020, the figure was +0.7 (5th percentile) and in 2021 it was +0.74 (3rd percentile). In 2019, +0.82 put us in the top 5th percentile.

The overall progress 8 of the school in 2022 was 0.68. This places the school in the 5.7% for all comprehensive schools nationally.

The overall progress 8 of the school in 2023 was 0.70. Based on data from the IDSR this places the school in the 92nd percentile. This includes selective schools and so the percentile will be higher when compared to only comprehensives.

Progress of different prior attainment groupings

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
LOW	0.31	0.8	0.4	0.41	N/A	N/A	0.67	1.37	
MID	0.63	1.0	0.4	0.92	N/A	N/A	0.87	0.59	
HIGH	0.57	0.4	0.2	0.79	N/A	N/A	0.40	0.64	

It is crucial that we continue to benchmark our students progress across the prior attainment range.

In 2022 all prior attainment groups had positive progress 8 scores. This shows the curriculum is effective for all. The new KS2 assessment style altered the method by which pupils are placed into prior attainment bands altering the profile of this cohort and placing more pupils in the MID prior attainment band.

In 2023 all prior attainment groups had positive progress 8 scores. This again shows the curriculum is effective for all. The progress of prior low attainers was exceptional and reflects the work of both subject staff and the individual learning department.

Progress of Pupil Premium Students
Target: to be higher than the national average for all students

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
PPM P8	0.18	0.3	-0.3	0.31	N/A	N/A	-0.14	-0.15	

The 2022 nationally reported figure given in the table above is the figure for disadvantaged pupils rather than for pupil premium. The national figure does not include service children. For this cohort the reported figure included 6 pupils. One of these pupils was in hospital education for all of KS4 and so not seen by the school. With this pupil removed the score is 0.08 (higher than for all pupils nationally). The national figure for disadvantaged pupils was -0.55. The small cohort size makes it difficult to draw general conclusions. More detail can be found in the school's pupil premium strategy statement.

In 2023 the progress 8 score of disadvantaged pupils was -0.15. This is disappointing but as the group includes only 7 pupils it is disproportionally affected by a small number of under attainers. Of the 7 pupils in the group 2 were school refusers and a huge amount of work was undertaken to support them. This included bespoke curriculums and an offer of online education provision.

Progress of SEND Students

Target: We want the progress of SEND children to be higher than the average for all students nationally

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
SEND P8	0.53	0.93	0.11	0.52	N/A	N/A	0.51	0.62	
EHCP P8	0.53	1.02	-0.29	-0.24	N/A	N/A	-0.10	1.38	

The 2022 figures given above are calculated using 4matrix rather than figures provided by the DFE. These will be given later this year.

The 2022 figure of SEND pupils includes 11 pupils on SEN support (9 of these had prior attainment data).

The 2022 figure for EHCP pupils includes 4 pupils. The small cohort size makes it difficult to draw general conclusions and the Individual Learning department will feedback to governors the specifics for each pupil.

The 2022 figures have been replaced by those calculated by the DFE.

The 2023 figures have been generated using 4matrix as the national data has not yet been published by the DFE. The SEND support group contained 14 pupils 12 of which have prior attainment data. The ECHP group contained 4 pupils all with prior attainment data. The progress of both groups was outstanding and demonstrates the effective work of the individual learning department.

Focus on raw results

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
5 Grade 4+ inc E&M **Target 90%**	78%	92%	83%	84%	91%	91%	91%	86%	
5 Grade 5+ inc E&M **Target 75%**	N/A	N/A	62%	68%	79%	79%	76%	75%	
% Achieving EBACC Grade 5 **Target 60%**	N/A	35%	35%	44%	52%	53%	47%	32%	
% Achieving EBACC Grade 4 **Target 65%**	N/A	56%	46%	55%	62%	59%	54%	43%	
EBACC average Fine Point Scores **Target 5.8**	N/A	5.49	5.24	5.65	5.95	5.96	5.68	5.37	

If we achieve the targets above at both GCSE and A-level Balcarras will be performing as well as any school in the country.

In 2022 the number of grades 4 and 5 including English and maths targets were achieved. These are very challenging targets and show the excellent attainment of the cohort.

The EBACC achievement figures for 2022 are below target and are limited by EBACC entries (59%).

They are however amongst the strongest in the school's examination history and so it should be noted that the fall in pupils entered for the EBACC has not led to a decline in those achieving it or the average points score. The figures nationally were 20% achieving the grade 5 EBACC and 27% achieving the grade 4 EBACC. The school would like to increase its EBACC entry and more pupils selecting to study languages at GCSE is key to this. We will prioritise languages in our presentation to parents and pupils in Feb 2023.

2023 saw a return to pre pandemic KS4 examinations and as such a fall in headline measures from 2022 was expected. The percentage of pupils gaining 4+ in English and maths and at least 3 other subjects was higher than in any non-pandemic affected year with the new style of GCSE. The same is true of the 5+ measure. Those achieving the EBACC was again limited by entry but remains well above figure nationally. These are 17% for EBACC at grade 5 and 24% for EBACC at grade 4. The school will need to consider its EBACC strategy as part of the next development plan.

Key Stage Three

Students joining the school in 2020 and 2021 will join without any KS2 data. To compensate for this, Balcarras will use a CAT 4 test to ensure that we have a way of benchmarking our children as they progress through the school.

We will continue to set highly ambitious KS3 targets based on FFT 5. Our system of target setting and monitoring is well established but we will continue to keep it under review.

We continue to monitor progress through KS3 very carefully. CAT tests were arranged for students in the current Year 8 and 9 so that we have a handle on their achievement through the school. We continue to benchmark the Prior Attainment of students here is the latest data:

Year	KS2 Avg SS	Pupils	High PA	Middle PA	Low PA
2022	106.5	205	70 (36)	102 (52)	23 (12)
2023	107.6	194	93 (51)	51 (28)	37 (21)
11	108.2	216	107 (55)	64 (33)	25 (13)
10	104.5	197	60	110	26
9	107.1	194	66	121	5
8	106.9	198	61 (35)	90 (52)	22 (13)
7	106.3	197	63 (34)	97 (53)	23 (13)

We are pleased that we continue to attract a genuinely comprehensive intake into the school.

The school continues to support a comprehensive intake with a fairly consistent profile of prior attainment. It is crucial that this continues to be the case.

Departmental Development

Each of the school's departments will set their own departmental development plan which will be informed, in part, by the targets above.

Departmental Development Plans are now in place and are based around the targets set out in this plan. They are comprehensive and ambitious. They are published on the U:drive.

Departmental development plans are in place for 2023-2024. These are written by subject leaders and are available on the U drive.

The Curriculum

Review of sixth form curriculum
Ever since the government's reform of A-levels in 2015 and the subsequent 20% real terms cut to post 16 funding, we have continued to regularly review our sixth form offer. We currently offer all students 4 A-levels in Year 12 with most of them dropping to three in Year 13. We will continue to review this model regularly through the course of this SDP. Our review will focus on

- The 4 A-level Model.
- Re-introduction of a vocation level 3 course in Creative Media. Should we proceed?
- The ongoing provision of the wider curricular offer particularly EPQ, futures, and speaker.
- Alongside our review of the school's PSHE provision we will include a review of sixth from PSHE as part of this.
- We want to boost the numbers into A-level languages.

We are keen to keep our suite of courses under close review as well. This will include looking at our provision of vocational level 3 qualifications.

For now, we intend to continue with a 4 A-level model in Year 12. We believe it gives our students the best chance of success. In November 2022, we decided not to run Creative iMedia at Level 3 in 2022 because we could not staff it with a qualified subject specialist.

Our review during 2022-23 led us to the same conclusion. We maintain 4 A levels although we would be keen to re-introduce Creative Media if we can find a way.

Review of GCSE curriculum
Our GCSE curriculum is providing some of the best Progress 8 outcomes in the country. Nevertheless, we want to continue to evaluate it. We will particularly focus on:

- Uptake into languages.
- Sustaining high numbers in DT.
- Making sure we have high numbers in the 'creative' subjects.
- Making sure our offer in Creative Media and Computer Science continues to be outstanding in a world where technology will continue to be paramount.
- Focus on progress in the Core Subjects particularly in light of our decision to change the banding system in 2020.

In the 2022-2023 Year 10 cohort 59% of pupils selected to study a GCSE language. For several years the figure has been around 60%. COVID has been particularly damaging for the study of languages and it is pleasing that this figure has not fallen to an even lower level. The department has a new head who has written an ambitious departmental development plan focused around increasing pupil numbers at GCSE.

In the 2023-2024 Year 10 cohort 56% of pupils have selected to take a language at GCSE. This is a fall from the number in the past few years. Language uptake is suffering nationally and this has been recognised with a new more accessible GCSE being introduced in 2024. The languages department

have worked hard to reinstate visits to other countries and have increased their extra-curricular offer to try and engage more pupils.

In the 2022-2023 Year 10 cohort 74% selected to study at least one design and technology subject. The numbers are now consistently high enough that an additional classroom has been given to the department and refitted and a workshop.

In the 2023-24 Year 10 cohort 78% of pupils selected to study at least 1 design and technology subject. A slight increase on the previous year.

In the 2022-2023 Year 10 cohort 33% of pupils selected to study art, 24% drama and 6% music. These figures show that all 3 of these creative subjects are viable at GCSE.

In the 2023-24 Year 10 cohort 29% of pupils selected to study art, 21% drama and 7% music. These subjects remain popular and as contributors to the open element of progress 8 calculations play a key role in the school's overall success. The IGCSE in drama has now been replaced with a standard GCSE.

In the 2022-2023 Year 10 cohort 2 classes of Computer Science and 2 classes of creative iMedia were needed to accommodate pupils selecting these subjects. Computer science is delivered by 2 specialist teachers. The progress 8 scores for each of these subjects calculated via 4matrix shows pupils taking them in KS4 made good progress.

In 2023-2024 there remain 2 computer science classes and 2 creative imedia classes. The numbers in computer science fell slightly and this has been recognised by the subject leader and actions are in place.

The 2022 results for the core subjects were strong with progress 8 of the English Element 0.35, of the maths element 0.59 and value added of 0.84 for the science element of the EBAAC. This indicates the change in banding has not had a negative impact on results. It has allowed more flexibility in maths and science where papers are tiered.

The 2023 results for the core subjects were strong with progress 8 of the English element at 0.36, maths 0.69 and value added of science at 1.02. This is strong indication that the change in banding has not had a negative impact.

Review of lower school curriculum including development of curriculum policy and PSHE/Citizenship policy.

As part of this SDP we will draft a new curriculum policy and PHSE/Citizenship policy. These two policies will link in order to tie together our whole school curriculum aims.

The taught curriculum and PSHE/citizenship curriculum will be mapped to ensure that all aims of the policy are met and that pupil progression is clear.

A curriculum policy is now in place as is a PSHE policy. The curriculum is mapped and these are available on the schools website. Learning walks focus on if the curriculum is delivered as intended. An overarching personal development strategy that links the PSHE, RHSE, citizenship and careers policies is a next step.

The restructure of our Personal Development Curriculum has been hugely successful. We reviewed it at SMT level towards the end of last academic year. We have continued to develop it via minor tweaks but by and large we are pleased with its deployment.

SEND Provision

We want to maintain our high standards of support and progress for students with SEND. The SEND Code of Practice states that teachers are responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their classes, including where pupils access support from teaching assistant or specialist staff. It states that high quality teaching, differentiated for individual pupils, is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have SEN; all teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs. With this in mind, it is important that we provide focussed CPD for staff and continue to improve their knowledge and expertise in supporting students with SEND.
We will also continue our focus on tracking the progress of students with SEND across the school and on setting targets and providing interventions to meet their needs. Our specific targets for this plan will be:

- Tighter target setting and review system for KS3 interventions for students on SEN Support.
- Building capacity and developing roles and responsibilities within the ILD team as KLY's role extends across the Balcarras Trust.
- CPD opportunities for teaching staff to up-skill in knowledge of different areas of SEND.

The biggest change since the SDP started is that KLY is no longer the SENDCo. This role is now being fulfilled by JMC and this is for Balcarras school only and not the Trust. In the short time that JMC has been in the role there has been greater training and support of the teaching assistants to enable more focussed support of pupils in lessons. This has included the support and induction of several new teaching assistants. JMC has also instigated Lunch and Learn sessions to support staff as they seek to adapt their teaching to the pupils' needs. JMC is also working more closely with SEND pupils to write the pupil passports used by teachers.
JMC has now been in post for a year and has completed her NASENCO qualification. JMC has continued to develop and training the staff with what the current requirements are with SEND.
Changes that have been made;

- TA in charge of PD pupils has been appointed
- TA in charge of numeracy has been appointed
- TA in charge of SEMH has been appointed.
- TA in charge of literacy was already in place but has worked the literacy coordinator to but a new reading support programme
- Y7 pupils reading age tested at start and end of year – and this will continue
- Y7 pupils set in maths as they arrive at the school with break down information for KS2 SATs
- Pupils are clearly allocated and labelled for their specific additional or SEND need
- Greater emphasis on graduated pathways and working with the pastoral team to write and monitor MyPlans

Teaching and Learning

Continuing Professional Development

We have always prided ourselves on the high quality of teaching in the school. As a teaching school hub, we will continue to play a leading role in teacher development across our region but we must also continue to focus on our own practice. We will continue to provide high quality CPD for staff across the school.

Professional Development has continued to be a focus. There is ongoing work on developing the programme for all staff as well as working on bespoke programmes for individuals. A clear vision for the programme has been shared with staff.

Use of Appraisal

We relaunched our system of appraisal as part of the last SDP. We must continue to ensure that it is fit for purpose and that appraisal is supporting the wider development of the school. This is particularly important as we work on our Covid recovery for staff and ensuring that we invest time and training in their development and aspirations for the future. The SMT will ensure that the appraisal system links directly to the school's priorities for improvement. This will be reported directly to the LGB.

We have invested in the National College's Training Programme which offers a wide variety of excellent training opportunities for staff across the school and includes training opportunities for governors.

The focus on teaching and learning during appraisal has been successful and it continuing to be embedded in. It is clear from the objectives set for 2023/24 that staff have embraced this change and that they are keen to keep working on it. We will be revisiting these objectives in May at the twilight INSET. A new proposal is to allow more collaboration between colleagues by enabling great autonomy and variety with the lesson observations that occur as part of the appraisal process.

National Professional Qualifications and the Early Career Framework
The new suite of NPQs have been launched and we will make them available to our staff in the school where appropriate. We are also fully committed to delivering the ECF to our new ECTs and alongside that are supporting the development of professional mentors to deliver this.

The PD offer that Balcarras is putting together is being reviewed and improved. There is a whole school focus on teaching and learning which is evidence based. All staff despite their role in school will have a teaching and learning objective for their appraisal this year.

Personal Development of our students

Pastoral Care and Mental Health
The provision of outstanding pastoral care across the school is paramount to Balcarras's success. The House Team are central to maintaining good behaviour across the school as well as providing the care and nurture that pupils need. Anecdotally, the cases of poor mental health in students, as we gradually emerge from the pandemic, seem higher than ever before. The Pastoral Team will need to ensure that the mental health of all pupils is monitored, and support put into place wherever it is needed. One of the key areas for focus for the duration of this SDP will be the ongoing pastoral care of all pupils as the pandemic subsides.

Coming out of the pandemic, the mental health of pupils across the nation is a major concern. At Balcarras, there is a higher number of pupils with poor mental health than previously, and the school has seen a significant number of pupils who self harm, or make an attempt at suicide.
The pastoral team is very conscious of the challenges this brings to the school. In the summer of 2022, the school spent £15,000 creating a pastoral support centre, to support pupils who were having a "bad day" at school and needed somewhere to go and calm down, away from the noise of the school. Balcarrras also appointed a pastoral support worker in the summer of 2022. This is a new position to the school and the incumbent is charged with supporting pupils with their mental health needs and gently encouraging pupils back to lessons when they feel able.

We have also reviewed our provision map for mental health and re-published it on our website.

The wellbeing room for main school is now well established and providing excellent pastoral care for some of our most vulnerable pupils. The Pastoral wellbeing lead is now fully embedded into the pastoral team and providing outstanding guidance and support for the pupils and families as well as also providing superb administrative support for the pastoral team including, My Plan meetings, referrals to outside agencies, oversight of TALC, oversight of Young Minds Matter and a whole host of holistic support.
While this has been an expensive innovation for the school, we are convinced that the benefits for the pupils with regards their wellbeing and mental health are invaluable.
Balcarras continues to expand it's work with outside agencies to the benefit of good mental health for it's pupils.
Since this SDP was written Balcarras is now a Young Minds Matter school, a close partner with Young Gloucestershire as well as having a very close relationship with the inclusion team from Gloucestershire County.

PSHE
A new PHSE/citizenship policy will be written to make the schools intent and implementation of this area clear.

The PHSE/citizenship curriculum will be reviewed and mapped to make sure it meets the intent set out in the school's policy, meets our pupils needs and shows progression where appropriate.

The school has created a new Personal Development lesson that takes place weekly, for 30 minutes. This means that a comprehensive personal development programme can be fully delivered to support pupils as they progress through the school.
In the summer of 2022, the Personal Development Co-ordinator was taken out of the tutor team, so that, along with her 5 additional free periods each fortnight, she was able to dedicate all of pm registration each day to monitoring and improving the personal development and PSHE programme.

Personal development is now fully embedded into the school. The Monday afternoon PD sessions are thoroughly planned and being delivered by the tutors in the school. Feedback from parental consultation has been very positive about the PD provision in the school.

The school has set up a separate document which details how the school is responding to the recommendations made by OFSTED set out in: *Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges, June 2021.* A separate working party has been established which will involve oversight from the school's governors. Two things are crucial. Firstly, it is vital that a culture based on mutual respect exists in the school so that no individual ever feels unsafe or undermined. Although we believe this is the case we must never be complacent. Secondly, we should review our procedures for dealing with concerns so that we are absolutely confident that our staff have all of the necessary training and knowledge to perform this function to the highest standard.

We arranged an external review of our safeguarding and child protection procedures in July 2022. This was shared with the LGB and the Trustees. It was very positive about our procedures and practice. The report did make some recommendations which have been implemented.

In response to the OFSTED report the school arranged a series of pupil focus groups to discuss the issues that the report raised. The results of these have been shared with staff and the LGB.

Careers
Our careers provision is already strong but by gearing the school towards the Gatsby Benchmarks we will make it even stronger. This SDP will focus on:

- Fully integrating employability skills and future options into the pupil's education through curriculum lessons and tutor sessions, so that they are equipped to make informed and suitable choices for their future steps. This will be underpinned by the GATSBY benchmarks.

- To allow access to as many 'careers' experiences as possible from Year 7-13.

- To ensure that pupils from Year 10 upwards receive 1-2-1 personal guidance to support future pathway choices. This will be rolled out from 2021 starting with Year 11 upwards.

- Enrol more students on Unifrog by 2024 (Year 8 upwards by then) if possible, to ensure all have access to up to date information for tracking and personal use.

We continue to prioritise the development of our careers programme and we work towards the GATSBY benchmarks. We have increased the amount of careers experiences and recently updated our careers policy on light of new national guidance.

Rewards
During the previous SDP we created a new Rewards System in the school. It is excellent and during the course of this SDP we need to ensure that it is embedded and developed. As part of this SDP we would like to extend this new system into the Sixth Form. We should actively seek the views of our young people through the various 'pupil voice' channels that we have.

In 2023 Jamie Weller took on the role of leading rewards. We continue to use the epraise system and he is looking to develop a series of challenges to keep the systems profile high. In addition the school has added a vending machine to reward pupils with a free copy of one of the books from the literary canon as a reward for particularly praise worthy actions.

Pupil Voice
As part of this SDP, we will review the way we engage with pupil voice across the school. Adrienne Niblett will review our current systems and draw up a plan with recommendations. The school's SMT and pastoral staff will be involved in developing our procedures and at an appropriate stage we will present our findings to the Governors.

We have implemented a new Pupil Council model in the lower school and it is working well.

Various improvements have been made to the school on recommendation of the student council:

- Buddy the School Dog was appointed at the end of 2022-23
- Hygiene contract with PHS was abandoned in favour of new contract with Rentokil
- New water stations were purchased
- School has responded to requests for improved queuing system in the canteen
- We are currently actioning requests for a further food outlet in the school

Extra-Curricular
We are proud of our provision of extra-curricular activities in the school. During the course of this SDP we will look for ways to make it even stronger and wide-ranging. There should be an institution wide culture of seeking further opportunities and this should be supported from the LGB and SMT and then right across the organisation. Offering recognition and praise for staff who engage in this work is crucial.

We are pleased that most of our extra-curricular opportunities are now back up and running. In October 2022 the school organised a survey to see what engagement with extra curricular had been like in the first term.

All Pupils Years 7 -11								
Year Group	Total Pupils	% Response	%Yes	%No	% 1 Activity	% 2 Activities	% 3 Activities	% More Than 3
7	198	94	90	10	32	23	13	22
8	195	91	83	17	26	28	13	16
9	198	91	69	31	25	20	11	12
10	217	90	77	23	21	23	11	22
11	194	91	80	20	34	17	10	19
Total	**1002**	**92**	**80**	**20**	**28**	**22**	**12**	**18**

Pupil Premium Pupils Years 7 -11								
Year Group	Total Pupils	% Response	%Yes	%No	% 1 Activity	% 2 Activities	% 3 Activities	% More Than 3
7	20	85	82	18	18	35	6	24
8	20	90	72	28	27	30	0	10
9	24	83	70	30	35	20	5	10
10	14	71	70	30	10	30	10	20
11	12	75	50	50	20	20	10	0
Total	**90**	**82**	**71**	**29**	**25**	**28**	**5**	**14**

We are pleased with the level of engagement and will use the data gathered to intervene with students who are not engaged.

The range of opportunities on offer is strong.

Pupil engagement in extra curricular activities will again be surveyed in 2023-2024. The plan is for this to take place at the start of the half term after Christmas to allow pupils to tell us about the activities they participated in during the first school term.

Covid Recovery

The school has already established a separate 'Covid Recovery' group under the leadership of Mark Constance. This group will oversee our strategy over the next year and report directly to the SMT and to the Governors. They will publish a document separate to the SDP. Their work will focus on the following areas:

- Ensuring that the school is ready to revert to remote learning if the need arises.
- Developing our strategy regarding the spending of the Covid Catch Up Premium.
- Developing our strategy around initiatives to ensure that students do not underachieve because of lost learning during the pandemic.
- Ensuring that stakeholders across the school are involved in a conversation about the wellbeing of our young people in the broadest sense.
- Similarly, the group will consider ways that the school can help to maintain staff morale and wellbeing.

This is by no means an exhaustive list and the school's approach is set out in a separate document.

Balcarras has developed a remote learning strategy which can be rolled out at very short notice. The school used the COVID Catch Up Premium to support academic tutoring and a range of initiatives as part of our wider COVID Recovery Plan. This work is reviewed separately.

We now use the national tutoring funding to deliver school-based tutoring to 36 pupils. This sits as part of our strategy to ensure that we make up for lost learning in the pandemic.

The school surveyed its parents in October 2022. The results of this were discussed with the LGB. The results also informed topics for the Parent Forum Meetings 2022-23. Five Parent Forums have been calendared. Staff morale continues to be high on the school's agenda. It is a regular fixture at SMT and LGB meetings.

In 2022-2023 national tutoring funding was used to offer all pupil premium students additional online tutoring. 50 pupils engaged with this. While useful the reduced level of funding and drop off rate of pupils has led the school to make the decision not to use this programme in 2023-2024.

The school has adopted the DFE staff wellbeing charter and is working with a wellbeing committee to try and develop this. It has already developed procedures around return to work after a period of mental illness and clearer support for maternity leave. The trust conference day was designed to provide staff with a toolkit for wellbeing.

Development of the Sixth Form

Curriculum offer
We will continue to review our sixth form offer particularly as regards offering 4 A-levels and the EPQ.

Recruitment
It is important that we continue to recruit well into the sixth form. We will set a target of 400. We need to consider the growth of the sixth form very carefully. There is no doubt that there will be increased demand for sixth form places across the town but the school will have to work closely with the Trust to ensure that our strategy dovetails.

Early indications are that recruitment will be strong for 2023. In 2022 we recruited 217 students which is excellent.

Recruitment was strong in 2023. We offered places to 230 students, and the cohort population settled on 221 by the time of the October census. This means the Sixth Form population is 434 which is the highest it has ever been. The number of applications received for 2024-25 is 513 (by deadline), and this is projected to increase further in coming years as the High School Leckhampton's students reach post-16.

Development of facilities
We are keen to extend the sixth form particularly as regards capacity in private study. We will continue to press for the funds to do this.

In November 2022, the school submitted another bid for money to extend the sixth form. This is the fifth attempt by the school to secure funding. The bid was submitted to a dedicated fund for post-16 provision (It was not the usual CIF bid).

We are hoping to submit a separate CIF bid to improve security right across the site.

So far our bids to CIF have been unsuccessful. We are looking to resubmit the bid for gates and develop our own proposal around adding social capacity to the sixth form.

Enrichment in the sixth form

We want to ensure that there are plenty of opportunities on offer for our students. There are a number of new initiatives underway. We should encourage their growth.

There is a very positive feeling around extra-curricular in the sixth form. Everything is back up and running in terms of enrichment activities, curricular and extra-curricular trips inter-tutor participation events, a number of which have been reviewed and extended compared to the pre-covid offer. The sixth form community is a vibrant one.

Development of school systems

Data
The previous SDP established new systems for data. They are working well but we will keep them under review

Our data systems continue to work well. We use 4 Matrix and ALPS Connect very well and they both allow us to track data and benchmark students effectively. Our decision to move to Bromcom continues to pay dividends.

The data system remain robust. Additional engagement from HODs and individual learning has meant that data showing pupils making less than expected progress is now acted on systematically.

IT
Our IT system is superb. We want to keep it that way.

Since we wrote this plan there have been a spate of cyber-attacks against schools including a high profile attack on a Cheltenham school. We have reviewed our cyber security systems and have established a new Cyber Security Protocol as part of our arrangement with RPA. This has involved enhanced training for staff and governors. We upgraded our security by moving to two factor authentication in the summer of 2022. We have asked Jeff Arris to conduct a further review and to report to the SMT/LGB in the new year of 2023.

The school is involved in several large IT upgrade projects. The physical school network is being surveyed and a plan being developed to update and future proof it. We are also working with Commercial IT to look at moving the school to being as much as possible cloud based.

Marketing/website/communications
We reviewed and refreshed each of these area during the last SDP. They are working well but we should keep them under review. The pandemic has necessitated a marked increase in the amount of communications sent out by the school. During the course of this SDP we anticipate that this will reduce back to more normal levels. We should continue to monitor the use of our website by analysing the number of 'hits' It is crucial as well that we continue to keep the site fresh and up to date.

We continue to receive regular updates from John Pearce. In November 2022, we updated the photo base of the website.

Further review of the website has taken place. It is up to date and offers a valuable insight into life in the school.

Parental Engagement
We will review our system of parental engagement. Although we have an established system it would benefit from being refreshed particularly in light of our experience in the pandemic. We will during the course of this plan:

- Establish a system of more regular 'parent forums' involving staff and governors, rather than the once yearly event we currently hold.
- Establish a more regular pattern of parental surveys based on the OFSTED standard framework
- Continue our regular programme of parental surveys on issues such as uniform, behaviour, COVID recovery, remote learning etc.

We have met the first two targets and will continue to develop the third.

In 2022-2023 we conducted a parental survey based on the Ofsted questionnaire and results of this were used to inform school decisions and communications. Year 7 parents felt this came too early for them and so in 2023 – 2024 we plan to survey parents just after the Christmas holiday.

In 2022-2023 we held 5 parent forums. These were successful and allowed us to engage with parents and discuss key issues with them. The number of parents attending was a little lower than we would have liked and so then plan for 2023-2024 is to hold 3 forums KS3,KS4 and KS5.

Development of the site

The school's site team has been in a state of flux for the last 4 years, with staff joining and leaving the team. However, in Sept 2021, it finally feels like there is a stable team and Alex is now an experienced Site Manager. There is lots to do around the site, as has been ever thus. Some priorities over the next 3 years are detailed below:

We will continue to prize the school's site as a metaphor for its standards. During this plan we will:

- Continue to prioritise re-decoration with a rolling three year programme.
- Look to increase the facilities for private study in the sixth form.
- Look to improve the facilities for specialist gym use.
- Complete the programme of roof replacements.
- Bid for CIF funding to expand the sixth form.
- Look into possibility of improving/replacing single story elements of the main block.
- Institute a 'Balcarras in Bloom' programme to increase the amount of pleasant. garden space around the school.

Alex, the Site Manager, left the school in October 2022. The groundsman, Joe, left the school in May 2022, and a site assistant, Mike, left the school in October 2022. For over five weeks the site team was just one person, and a group of five teachers took on the task of opening the building each day at 5:30am.
Recruiting replacements has proved very challenging. Balcarras is not the only school to find that recruiting site staff is nearly impossible in the current financial climate.

Larger developments of the site have had to be put on hold, and there is no doubt that the new site manager will have a significant workload simply catching up with breakages and maintenance for the first six to twelve months, once he is in position, hopefully by 8th December 2022.

The school has continued to progress some key areas. Parents have attended the school twice in summer 2022 and November 2022 to develop the Balcarras in bloom strategy. A wonderful vegetable garden was planted, and 150 tulips were put in the ground along with numerous other areas tidied up.

A bid for the sixth form extension and site security were submitted in November /December 2022.

The bid for the 6th form was unsuccessful. Despite this, a sixth form pastoral meeting room has been created by repurposing a classroom which was too small to accommodate class capacity.
The site team in November 2023 has, for the first time in a long time, a full complement of site assistants. The team is working excellently and very well managed by our new site manager who is now fully embedded in the role. The grounds around the school are looking amazing, probably the best they have looked for a long time. The school continues to benefit from a rolling programme of new carpets, painting, new LED lights and excellent site maintenance.
However, significant cutbacks in educational funding are limiting the school's ability to deliver large new capital projects.

Our work with The High School Leckhampton

2 schools 1 site
For the academic year 2021-22 we will share the Balcarras site. This will necessitate a very close working relationship between the two schools.

The sharing of the Balcarras site worked remarkably well. THSL is now enjoying its own purpose built accommodation at Farm Lane. We have now re-purposed the Davidson Building to be the home of GLOW, the Balcarras Teaching School Partnership and the School of Business, Economics and Enterprise.

The Davdison Building is now a real asset for Balcarras. It was a masterstroke to negotiate for a permanent building.

Sharing of facilities/expertise into the future
Although our relationship will change from 2022, we are still likely to continue to share some staffing and resourcing.

We continue to work closely as sister schools.

Sharing policy platforms
In preparation for the launch of The High School we had to update many school policies. For one year key policies such as Health and Safety and First Aid will apply to both schools. This requires a very close relationship between the two schools.

Sharing of policy worked well. We have now established a new website for The Balcarras Trust which contains all Trust specific policies.

It is a bit like painting the Forth Rail Bridge but we have a policy shedule established.

Balcarras' role in system leadership

Teaching School Hub
As this SDP starts so does our work as a Teaching School Hub. This is a huge undertaking for the school but also a great opportunity. The main strands and priorities in Year 1 will be to set up the delivery of the ECF, NPQs and CPD, plus to look at our role in the new ITT landscape. In time we will look to re-establish our training program to support all 170 schools in the region. We have a delivery plan with targets for all the key strands that has been submitted to the DfE. This can be viewed in a separate document.

We met all of our KPI's in 2021-22. We are on target to do so again.

Another highly successful year under Liz Cullis's leadership. Bid for reaccreditation for 2024-27 was submitted in November 2023.

Maths Hub

The work of the GLOW Maths Hub continues to be of utmost importance for the school. The main aims of the next news years are to:

- Improve engagement of schools in Worcestershire to bring it in line with Gloucestershire (currently 60% in Worcestershire, Glos 72%).
- Steve Lomax the Maths Hub lead would like to develop collaborative working with the four Teaching School Hubs across the GLOW region.
- There will also be a focus to improve engagement of Early Years and KS1 teachers with mastering number.
- Finally, we aim to encourage more members of Balcarras Trust to be involved with running Maths Hub Work group.

GLOW Maths continues to be highly successful under Ed Neale as Maths Hub Lead and Steven Lomax as the Senior Lead. The Hub continues to meet its KPIs and these are reported separately to the Strategic Board.

2022-23 was another highly successful year for the hub. We achieved reaccreditation in September and all KPIs were met.

Outreach work

The Teaching School Hub and Maths Hub will be vehicles for our outreach work, but we will also look to develop our school support in other ways. Transition work with local primary schools will be one area to develop, and we will work with the LA and RSC to support the key priority areas in the county. We will also continue to work with the Cheltenham Education Partnership.

Our work with CLP continues under the direction of Jeremy Niblett and Gavin Johnson. We work closely with the Gloucestershire Education Forum and in October hosted one of the forum's study days. We have also allowed the Forum to use Balcarras as a venue for its meetings.

Balcarras was invited to speak at the Unity School Conference in Suffolk in November 2023. DLB spoke to about 150 senior leaders on the theme: "Securing Excellence."

School Direct

We will continue to recruit high quality trainees that we would want to employ in the trust. We will aim to recruit between 6 and 8 trainees each year keeping our focus on shortage subjects. We will continue to have open day events for applicants to experience secondary education before they apply.

We have embedded the Core Content Framework. We will continue to ensure that is implemented through the course of this SDP.

Balcarras is in discussions with GITEP and GASH Ltd about the possibility of taking on the SCITT accreditation from September 2024. The SMT will work with the LGB and the Balcarras Trust to oversee this process. This would be a key responsibility for Balcarras to take on but would sit well alongside our role in the Teaching School Hub for Cheltenham, Stroud and the Cotswolds.

Recruitment to teacher training is down across the country. GITEP and School Direct numbers for 2022/23 are half what they were in 2020/21. We have recruited 3 school direct trainees for this year, 1 in maths, history and physics. We continue to work closely with GITEP and have 3 of their trainees, 2 in English and one in MFL. Recruitment for teaching posts for September 2023 will need to be carefully managed.

Balcarras Trust is now the legal entity for GITEP and Balcarras school is one of the lead partners. School Direct has its final year of trainees this year, 2023-24. There are four; 2 in MFL, 1 in English and 1 in maths.
As a lead partner we are now offering all subjects that GITEP does and working with our partnership schools for placements. It is going well so far and by Christmas we will have interviewed 10 potentail trainees.