



SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2025-2028



Balcarras
Teaching School Hub



MATHSHUBS
GLOW



The
Balcarras
Trust

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Introduction: what do we believe in?

We want to continue to be real advocates for comprehensive and inclusive education. We believe in building a society where people are encouraged to support one another and to celebrate each other's contribution and success.

We want the school to encourage the development of confident young people who are ready to contribute to their society.

We continue to believe in the importance of:

ABC

and

EEE

Attendance: Promoting good attendance is first and foremost done by making school enjoyable for young people. Beyond that most important responsibility the school should look to continue to develop its systems so that we work closely with young people who, for whatever reason, do not attend as we would wish.

Behaviour: For many years we have built and developed a positive behaviour culture which has just improved year on year. However, this has not happened by accident. We do things habitually and organise the school's systems well. These systems in turn help to support strong behaviour. We encourage all staff to buy into this positive behaviour culture. We don't want a school where every pupil does what they are told. We want a school where children seldom need telling because they just *know* how to behave.

Classroom: beyond getting the culture right, as referenced above, the most important thing to do is to continue to recruit superb teachers, make sure the school's systems support them, and then just get out of the way and *expect* that they will inspire and motivate the pupils. Focussing on the classroom as the 'engine room' of progress will continue to be our watchword.

Beyond ABC we have **EEE:**

Enjoyment

Put simply we want school to be fun. We want the pupils to be keen to come to school every day. This means that the five lessons they will attend should be engaging and lively. It means that there should be extra-curricular activity to look forward to for ALL pupils. We want the corridors of the school to be buzzing with happy and engaged youngsters, chatting to one another and learning to socialise.

Extra-Curricular

There should be something for everyone. The school should celebrate those members of staff who are willing to give their time.

Environment

We want the schools' buildings and facilities to be a metaphor for its standards. We will continue to invest what resource we have into the upkeep of the buildings and the development of our facilities.

Context

As we set off on a new cycle of development planning, we continue to face strong headwinds. Our real terms funding is reducing year on year. At the same time our remit continues to expand. We have had to get used to doing more with less and we don't believe this is likely to change. At the time of writing the crisis in High Needs shows no sign of abating and I think we will have to be highly skilled and adaptive to ensure that the crisis in funding does not impact the SEND pupils in the school. Inevitably we will have to review elements of the school's work so that we are able to balance the budget into the future. Although the pandemic is now fading into memory the forces it unleashed are still affecting schools. We have seen an increase in anxiety generally but especially amongst female pupils. We will need to continue to address this issue and to ensure that these pupils are given the very best support.

We are a comprehensive school and we are proud to be so. We continue to operate in a selective county and, as we write this plan, several of the selective schools are consulting on changing their admissions policies in order to become more local. This is a threat to the comprehensive schools of the county. We will best meet this threat by continuing to offer a vibrant and successful comprehensive education that allows **ALL** children to flourish no matter what their starting point. Carefully tracking the progress of all pupils and ensuring that they all have strong outcomes will be key to our future success.

Core Areas of the Plan:

1. Curriculum

Continue to provide a Broad and Balanced Curriculum

We want to maintain the strength of the core curriculum whilst maintaining the vitality and life that the creative curriculum offers the school. There is room for both. Whilst we are convinced that we have a strong curriculum we should continue to keep it under review.

Creativity at the heart of the Curriculum

Continue our support for Design Technology, Art, PE, Drama, Music and the creative curriculum

- Maintain significant gains made in take up of DT and value-added scores at both GCSE and A level
- Boost GCSE music take up to 20+ and take up at Year 12 to 12+
- Support for leadership of Drama during period of staff leave
- Continue to see strong take up art at GCSE and A level and photography at A level.

Development of MFL

Our offer for MFL across three core languages and two extra-curricular languages is very strong. Across this plan we would like to:

- Boost take up of MFL at GCSE to 65%+
- Boost take up at Year 12 to 45+

- Value added outcomes at GCSE to be +0.8 (not withstanding that VA figures in Russian are misleading)

Future of IT/Computing?

Through the course of this plan we will continue to review the place of computing, IT and creative media in the curriculum. Our provision is strong but ideally we would like to expand our offer at Key Stage 3 and re-introduce creative media at post 16. Both of these developments will require extra capacity and will need to be thought about very carefully.

2. Teaching

Relentless focus on the quality of teaching and learning by focusing on the following:

- Continue to ensure that the school's INSET programme is informed by the latest research and evidence
- Continue to develop our offer around continuing professional development
- Continue to make NPQs available to as many staff as possible
- Continue to use the expertise of those staff who have been on NPQs (20+ in the last three years) to drive a conversation around teaching and learning
- Continue to prize recruitment so that we hire the very best staff
- Continue to play a leading role in the training of new teachers through the work of GITEP

3. Achievement

We want our pupils to achieve well at both GCSE and A level so that doors are opened to them beyond the school.

Our aims are:

- Progress 8 in top 5% of all schools nationally.
- A8 at 6.1 or above.
- 5+ English and Maths at 80% (top 50 comprehensive schools nationally)

Strong Progress in the following areas:

- Low PA
- Mid PA
- High PA
- EHCP
- SEN
- EAL
- Disadvantaged/Pupil Premium
- Boys/Girls

Continued Development of English to Ensure strong outcomes for all pupils

Work with the English department to improve progress outcomes in line with those in the other core departments.

- Male progress 8 outcomes for the English element to be above those for all pupils nationally.
- Male progress 8 outcomes for the English element to be closer to the female outcomes in Balcarras.

At Level 3 we want:

- A level 70%+ A to B
- ALPS 3 or better
- Vocational performance to be strong
- Strong Destinations Data
- High take up to Russel Group/Oxbridge/Degree Apprenticeship

4. Leadership

As laid out in the context section there are plenty of headwinds. Here are our priorities as a leadership team:

- Funding continues to be an issue—more with less
- Continue to attract a comprehensive intake into the school—important that we don't take the school's reputation for granted
- Advocates for inclusion—as the funding around high needs evaporates it is even more important that we advocate for inclusion at a senior level
- Senior Team Development—lots of us have been doing the job for some time! It is important that we continue to be outward facing. We should continue to review changes made this year with the creation of three Associate Assistant Heads
- Middle Leadership Development—strong middle leadership is the single most important factor behind our success. We should continue to invest in it and to provide opportunities for middle leaders to grow professionally
- Sixth Form—continue to ensure that quality is not reduced as the size of the sixth form grows
- Community engagement—during the course of the last plan we developed our relationship with the Parish Council. We should deepen and embed these links
- Strong relationship with parents—during the course of the last plan we re-invented our systems for parental liaison. We should continue to keep them under review
- System Leadership—we want Balcarras to play a key role in system leadership through the following:
 - The Balcarras Teaching School Hub
 - GLOW Maths
 - The Gloucestershire Initial Teacher Education Partnership
 - Bein proactive members of the Balcarras Trust

5. Behaviour and values

We want behaviour to continue to be strong in the school. We have created a very positive culture around behaviour year on year. We want the culture to be 'relaxed' and 'purposeful' so that, in a way, good behaviour and self-regulation is just seen as the norm. We must always remember that what we do in a positive sense, in welcoming pupils into the school and creating opportunities for

them to thrive, will affect the overall culture in the school. Our approach to behaviour must not be seen as negative. In fact we want 95%+ of our interactions to be entirely positive.

How will we know if we are being successful?

- High levels of attendance
- High levels of engagement in extra-curricular—regular survey
- Low levels of suspension (20% of county average)
- Very low levels of Permanent Exclusion
- Low level of behaviour referral

We should continue to prioritise the importance of the school canteen. Ensuring that children have access to high quality food at as low a price as possible is vital to ensuring that they are successful academically and that they are healthy.

6. Attendance

Before the pandemic we had achieved attendance above 97%. We want to do this again whilst also reducing persistent absence below 8%.

We will continue to develop our strategies to encourage high attendance through rewards and ensuring that it stays high profile.

Equally we have made significant strides in developing our support for pupils for whom attendance has become a challenge through our EWO service and the House teams. There is strong evidence that this bespoke work improved our attendance outcomes in 2023-24 and we want to build on this success through the course of this plan.

7. Preparation for next steps

It is crucial that we continue to make careers education high profile in the school. We want to ensure that we are 100% compliant with the Gatsby Benchmarks

We want 100% destinations data at both post 16 and post 18.

But preparation for next steps is not just about having a strong careers provision. It is about the development of confident young people happy in themselves. In this sense our work in this area feeds into section 8.

8. Opportunities to thrive

We want Enjoyment to be at the core of what we do:

- Lively and engaging teaching (linked to section 2)
- Extra-Curricular offer—something for everyone. We will continue to benchmark this
- Continue to actively encourage extra-curricular work amongst the school staff—we must value it and celebrate those members of staff who volunteer their time
- Agency and Advocacy—creating opportunities for our pupils to shine and to grow in confidence. Opportunities for pupil voice and pupil leadership
- Particular outreach to those who are struggling to engage—careful monitoring of Pupil Premium pupils but also other pupils who do not engage for whatever reason

9. Inclusion and belonging

We want inclusion and belonging to be at the heart of everything we do.

SEND

We are proud of our provision for pupils with SEND. We will continue to be advocates for inclusive and adaptive education. We will keep SEND's profile high through regular INSET, staff meeting agendas and bespoke training through our 'lunch and learn' programme.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Balcarras is a diverse community and we are proud of that diversity. We have recently appointed an Associate Assistant Head who has the promotion of EDI inside their brief. We want EDI to be high profile and intrinsic to the very nature of the school.

Personal Development Curriculum

We have developed a strong PD curriculum which is fully mapped. Our PD lead has time to monitor the quality of our provision just as any other middle leader would. It will be important that we continue to adapt and flex the curriculum as we go forward.

10.Safeguarding

In short we want safeguarding to continue to be high profile and fit for purpose.

We will continue our practice of engaging an external review of safeguarding once every two years. The next will be in 2026-27

We should also continue to ensure that those who have oversight of safeguarding i.e. the DSL team have regular training but also receive the appropriate pastoral support.

Reviewing the Plan

We will establish a committee of staff and governors to review the plan annually.