

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2017 – 2020

Final Review (October 2020)



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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 continue to set the same priorities:

High **A**ttendance
Excellent **B**ehaviour
making what takes place in the **C**lassroom 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

The School Development Plan 2013-16 was overwhelmingly successful. Balcarras was top of the Gloucestershire GCSE rankings consistently and was recognised as one of the most successful state schools anywhere in the UK. We achieved an average of 65% A/B at A-level which is very impressive. Balcarras continues to be a school of choice; indeed the school is more popular than ever. The physical environment continues to be something that we prioritise and a number of key improvements were made over the last three years. Finally it's worth noting that we entered 2017 with a budget in surplus and with significant reserves to fall back on. It is right to recognise the contribution of our former head Chris Healy in making the outgoing plan such a resounding success. The landscape we enter now is fraught with challenges:

- The overall Schools Budget has reduced by 8% in real terms over the last decade. Going forward our financial position is precarious and we look set to lose out from a National Fair Funding Formula. This SDP will have to exist in a world of shrinking budgets and increased pressures
- Selection has returned as an issue in education policy. 5 of Gloucestershire's 7 grammar schools have expanded in the last two years and the other two may well follow suit. Responding to this will be crucial in the years ahead
- Curriculum change continues to dominate the work of teachers and heads of department. The whole curriculum is in transition and we must be mindful of this as we plan the school's development

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- There is considerable pressure on school places in Cheltenham. Balcarras will do all that it can to help the authority to meet increasing demand in the years ahead. We will put forward a bid to sponsor a new school in South Cheltenham in 2017. However, in doing this we remain absolutely committed to Balcarras. We won't do anything that damages or impairs the education of the children who go to this school
- The government seem likely to further encourage schools to set up or to join Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). During the course of this plan we will need to think carefully about our status and there is every chance that we will set up a MAT during the next three years
- There is strong evidence that a teacher recruitment crisis is on its way. Whilst we don't struggle to attract teachers to Balcarras, it is something we must be mindful of. We will look to continue to recruit new entrants to the profession via our School Direct programme.

Update from the Head:

We can be very pleased as we publish the final review of the 2017-2020 school development plan. The document we signed off back in 2017 was hugely ambitious and incredibly detailed. As we review it now we should take great pride in the fact that we have brought this ambitious plan to fruition.

At the heart of the plan was the desire to continue to achieve the very finest academic outcomes possible. Our Progress 8 of +0.82 in 2019 was the highest in the school's history and in that same year we also achieved incredibly high value added at A level, +0.33. Taken together there isn't a school in Gloucestershire that can rival this level of performance. In fact across the 13 local authority districts that make up the South West, there is only one school, Colyton Grammar School in Devon (P8 =0.98 A level VA +0.28) who has a higher combined figure. We should take enormous pride in this and the fact that our performance in 2020 was similarly strong. For three years running Balcarras has been named as the highest performing comprehensive school in the South West (2017,18,19) by The Sunday Times.

We have made significant strides in the curriculum areas we highlighted during the course of this plan. This year P8 value added in English was above +0.45, maths and science have flourished under new leadership, P8 scores in MFL have increased, numbers into music have also increased and DT goes from strength to strength under Jenny Swanepoel's leadership. Our work on KS3 has been excellent and we are confident that our new system of assessment is now well established. We have continued our regular review of the curriculum and have made some small changes at KS3. The pandemic forced a change regarding AS levels and as we conclude the 2017-20 the future of our A level curriculum model continues to be a live issue and is likely to form part of the next SDP.

Organisationally this SDP has seen big system changes. For example, we have introduced a new management system, cashless catering, new payroll systems, a new praise system, a new VLE and a new website. All of these changes have been managed well and I am certain that each of them have helped to take the school forward.

The work on The High School Leckhampton has been a constant feature of this current SDP. I am delighted with the progress we have made. The appointment of Mrs Helen Wood was the latest piece of a big jigsaw puzzle. It is a puzzle that is really taking shape.

Linked to this work we have spent a lot of time putting in place the final preparations for our conversion to MAT status. It is fitting that it will take place on December 1st just as this plan comes to an end.

Although we never envisaged working during a pandemic as part of this SDP, it is worth noting that the final 12 months of the plan have been overshadowed by the onset of COVID 19. The move to review many of the school's systems proved invaluable as we quickly adapted to life in the pandemic and this is particularly true of the VLE. I believe that the school has responded well at all levels to life in the pandemic. Our risk assessments have been well judged and we have strategically made the right calls, particularly as regards to sticking closely to government guidance.

I think we can judge the 2017-20 SDP to be a huge success on a range of fronts.

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ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

We believe in a broad curriculum offer in the Sixth Form and we're committed to ensuring that our students are well rounded and well prepared for the next phase of their lives. At the same time we want to strive for the highest academic standards.

A-Level

We continue to set ourselves challenging targets at A-level but we **believe** we can achieve them.

***ALPS 1 2020 is derived from CAG's + Ofqual positive adjustment.**

Target	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
ALPS 2	ALPS 3	ALPS 2	ALPS 2	ALPS 2	ALPS 1*	DLB/SMT/HODS
70% A*/B	62%	67%	69.06%	71.16%	72.88%	DLB/SMT/HODS
90% A*/C	87%	88%	90.6%	91.2%	92.55%	DLB/SMT/HODS
60% attending Russell Group Universities	51%	29%	56%	45%	TBC	DLB/SMT/HODS
8 students into Oxbridge/Vets/Medics	3	1	6 (3 Ox, 3 med/vet)	5 (2 Ox, 3 med/vet)	8 (1 ox, 7 med/vet)	DLB/SMT/HODS
100% destinations	98%	100%	100%	100%	100% tbc	DLB/SMT/HODS

The A-level results attained in 2020 were the best in the school's history at A*-A, A*-B and A*-C. This does need to be understood in the context of the unprecedented accreditation process experienced in 2020. The excellent level of consistency demonstrated by departments in adding value was reflected in the fact that a rating of ALPS 2 was received based on heavily adjusted grades. With the restoration of CAGs and the retention of grades that had been adjusted positively, an ALPS 1 was secured. Further steps to be taken in 2020-21 will be designed to maintain and emulate this excellent level of progress and attainment. As a result of the disruption to education caused by coronavirus, it was decided to discontinue to offer of AS-level for the 2020-21 academic year (agreed at the Governors Curriculum Committee October). DL will lead a thorough review of the post-16 curriculum offer. ALPS Connect has also been secured to ensure that DL and HODs are able to use ALPS data more flexibly, and with individual sets and / or focus groups within the Y12 / Y13 cohort.

We now have 5 years of incredibly strong value added – achieving a strong ALPS 2 across that period which places the school comfortably in the top 10% of priorities nationally.

GCSE

Target	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Progress 8 Above 0.75	0.61	0.60	0.33	0.83	1.11	DLB/SMT/HODS
KS4 ALPS 2	2	2	3	2	N/A	
90% of students achieving Level 5 in English and Maths plus three other 5s	82% (figure achieving 5A*/C with Eng and Maths)	78%	62%	68%	79%	DLB/SMT/HODS
70% achieving the EBACC at level 5	60%	52%	35%	44%	52%	DLB/SMT/HODS
Progress 8 of PPM students to be above national average for all students	0.32	0.26	-0.27	0.32	0.72	DLB/SMT/HODS

The GCSE results for 2020 were determined using centre assessed grades and so national figures for progress 8 will not be calculated. The figures presented here are an estimate based on last year's data.

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The % of pupils gaining 5 grade 5+ including English and maths rose significantly from 2019. The target of 90% was set before it was clear how challenging the new GCSEs would be on reflection a target of 75% for this measure would be more suitable. The DfE have altered how they report EBACC performance to an average EBACC point score rather than reporting those achieving a strong EBACC making comparison with other schools difficult. Again, as we have become more familiar with the new style of GCSE the target set may have been overly ambitious and 60% may be more suitable. Progress 8 of pupil premium students is significantly above that for all pupils nationally. It should be noted that this figure shows high volatility due to the small number of pupils in this cohort each year. The profile of intake has not altered significantly over the term of the plan or for our more recent intakes. Targets should therefore remain stable. The school should continue to aim for a progress 8 score of above 0.75 and an ALPS of 2. A target of 75% % grade 5+ including English and maths should be set for the course of the next plan. Due to changes in EBACC reporting methodology an EBACC average points score of 5.75 should be set as the target for the next plan.

Rather like at A level our average across 5 years is incredibly strong and would place the school easily inside the top 5% of schools nationally.

Key Stage Three

During the course of this plan the new KS3 grades will be established across every year group. We will establish a new data system for tracking progress.

Target	2017	2018	2019	RESPONSIBLE
New Data system	Developed	Working well	Review	GTS/EJC

This system will be easy to use and interpret and it will track students' progress using KS2 as its starting point.

The new grading system is now fully established and working well. The SMT have reviewed the system and will continue to do so in the future.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum Change

We are in the midst of the greatest period of curriculum change any of us can remember. We will prioritise this in the school's INSET programme and we will encourage staff to attend external INSET. We will carry out a Curriculum Review in the autumn of 2017. Our guiding principle is that we want our curriculum to continue to be broad and balanced.

Target	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Curriculum Review	Review		Review		DLB/SMT

This review will include a decision on our future A-level provision. Many schools have adopted three A-levels from the start of Year 12. We currently are still doing 4 AS and then 3 A-levels. We will review this in the autumn of 2017.

The review is not due this year, but the A-level has seen changes which are important to include in the report.

As a result of the disruption to education caused by coronavirus, it was decided to discontinue to offer of AS-level for the 2020-21 academic year. DL will lead a thorough review of the post-16 curriculum offer. ALPS Connect has also been secured to ensure that DL and HODs are able to use ALPS data more flexibly, and with individual sets and / or focus groups within the Y12 / Y13 cohort. We remain committed as a school to a broad and balanced curriculum through our KS3, GCSE and A Level offer.

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Curriculum Areas * for further details see department development plans.

The challenge for **every** curriculum area is to achieve results in the top 5th percentile for Value Added. It is actually quite difficult to set specific targets at this stage because the government have not yet fully outlined their new performance measures.

English

We continue to achieve superb results in English at GCSE but the implementation of the new curriculum means that it will remain an area of focus. We want to find ways to boost the achievement of boys so that it is closer in line with the performance of girls.

Target	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Improve Progress 8 for boys in English	0.20	0.11	-0.44	-0.05	0.37	DS/EJC/GTS
Boys National	-0.24	-0.44	-0.44	-0.45	N/A	
Girls Progress 8 for comparison	0.75	0.95	0.40	0.70	0.84	DS/EJC/GTS
Girls National	0.24	0.38	0.38	0.39	N/A	

Performance throughout the year was strong and so we based our centre assessments on these. We were confidently able to award 13 students with a grade 9 in English Language and 22 students with a grade 8 which meant that our 8/9 percentage figure was 18% in 2020 (as opposed to 13% in 2019). 7+ was 36% (28% in 2019); 5+ was 89% (75% in 2019); and 4+ was 95% (85% in 2019). The performance in English Literature was extremely similar. Boys did very slightly better at the top end (7 boys (8%) got a grade 9 in Literature and 5 girls (5%)). We felt able to award more grade 6s to girls than boys in Language (31% of girls got a 6 at Language as opposed to 20% of boys) whereas the situation is reversed at grade 5 where 22% of girls got a 5 and 32% of boys got a 5. This is probably a fair reflection of the work done by the middle ability students where it is still a push to get middle ability boys to develop their written answers in sufficient detail particularly when responding to previously unseen extracts. The numbers are more even in Literature which may be down to the fact that texts are studied in class and perhaps the middle ability boys respond more favourably to the familiar narrative of a whole text rather than to short extracts from unknown ones. The department has now taken the decision to teach Language and Literature separately in Y11 and is trialling this this year. Changes to the examinations have led to some tweaks in the taught content for the remainder of the year.

Mathematics

In a similar way we will need to focus on the development of maths in the new system. Simon Critchley will be entering his second year as Head of Department and will have a relatively new team to develop.

Target	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Maths Progress 8 Above 0.75	0.53	0.75	0.38	0.86		SMC/DL
KS4 ALPS 2	2	2	3	2		

The grades awarded by the centre at GCSE were in line with our best results from previous 3 years. This meant that the vast majority of students were delighted with their GCSE results in maths and now have the opportunity to take their next steps in their education. A Level grades were not awarded as high as last year but were fair for the cohort of students we had. It is worth remembering as part of this final review that the department achieved ALPS 2 at A level in 2019.

Science

Science too will be under new leadership (Simon Jones took over in Sept 2017)

Target	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Science progress 8 above 0.75	0.69	0.63	0.82	1.25		SJ/EJC
KS4 ALPS 2	2	2	2	1		

Review summary:

GCSE results in science for 2020 were again outstanding and improved further on the 2019 results. The department achieved an estimated Progress 8 figure of 1.41. 32 students (17% of the year group) achieved a grade 9-9 with 52% of the cohort 7-7+ compared to a national average of 11%. Pleasingly there was very little difference between the progress of boys vs girls. 95% obtained a grade 4-4 or higher, this compares to 65% of students nationally. We were delighted that there was a significant improvement in the progress of students in the bottom 3 sets, compared to previous years. In 2019 the department achieved ALPS 1 which meant that our science results were the best for any school in the country.

A level results in biology, chemistry, and physics for 2020 were again excellent. A*-B attainment was 78%, 72% and 70% respectively in biology, chemistry and physics. This equates to an ALPS 3 or better in each subject area

MFL

Target	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Languages progress 8 above 0.5	0.54	0.22	-0.12	0.17	N/A	JAH/DL

A progress 8 figure for languages will not be calculated this year due to the way grades were awarded. It is not possible to estimate an overall languages value but estimates for the individual subjects are: French: 0.53, Spanish: 0.44, Russian: 0.82. Take up continues to be strong and results good.

Humanities

Target	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Humanities progress 8 above 0.75	0.87	1.03	0.48	0.78	N/A	MKS/NMS/HE/RJA

Humanities continues to be a strength of the school. All three heads of department are involved in teaching and learning initiatives this year which means that they adapt and progress the subjects in an exciting way and they lead CPD for the rest of the staff in the school. Mike Stoker and Harriet Ebanja were awarded SLE (Specialist Leader in Education) status. The official data for humanities has not been published for 2020 but, the internal calculations for results at KS3, 4 and 5 were outstanding.

Other Curriculum Issues

D&T

D&T will be under new leadership (JSW 2017) and will have three new teachers. It is important that the department continues to thrive and that recruitment continues to be strong.

There has been more change across the department this year with the retirement of Mark Jay and the recent appointment of Gavin Johnson. We hope this change will strengthen the teaching in Product Design and relieve some pressure across the department. Recruitment continues to be exceptionally strong across the department with 76 students opting for Product Design, 50+ for Food and a huge 25 into Textiles. This is a marked improvement from last year and ensures that Textiles continues to be viable moving forward. A level numbers

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are also very strong with two groups in Y12 as well as Y13 Product Design. Art Textiles continues to be popular and whilst Food numbers are a little lower, they look stronger again this year with many outside candidates choosing the subject. The subject area is in very strong health.

Music

Music will also be under new leadership (HJC). We need greater numbers into music GCSE and A-level. It will be important for Helen Chong to build on the momentum provided by the significant investment of funds which will occur in 2017.

Moving in to 2020-21, eight out of eleven (73%) of AS students are continuing to A Level, Recruitment for AS internally is low with only two students applying for Music (one without having done GCSE! That is positive), so less than 10% of the GCSE group have applied. Largely due to those that are potential AS/A Level students are 'good' in so many areas and see Music as something they can keep going without the exam study. However, seven external applications mean a potential group of nine. Uptake for GCSE has been maintained with fifteen going into year 10. Improvements in year 9 SoW have helped decision making.

IT

Also under new leadership (AMH), and for the first time with specialists right across the curriculum, we want to see IT/computing thrive with strong numbers at GCSE and A-level

Target	2017-2020	RESPONSIBLE
Successful induction of new HOD. They make a significant impact to the work of the school. SMT to monitor	On-going	GTS/SMT

The computer science department is now fully staffed with subject specialists (Stephen Cooper in 2019). All lessons at KS3, KS4 and KS5 are delivered by specialist teachers. The department will now work on developing the material it delivers at KS3, introduction of the creative iMedia course at KS4 and raising the overall profile of the subject.

Rewards

We are confident that there is a positive ethos right across the school, but we don't take this for granted. We are happy that the school's sanctions policy is working well but we believe that the rewards system needs reviewing. Gary Towers will oversee this work, but we have established a staff focus group under the leadership of Nick Fivash. They are currently researching this issue and will make recommendations in the autumn term.

Target	When	RESPONSIBLE
Full review of the rewards system and new system in place	2017-18	GTS/NJF/other staff

The school has been using its online praise and recognition system (Epraise) for the whole of the academic year. It has been widely used by teachers - 115,000 merits had been awarded by early July 2020. More than 1000 students will receive certificates when they return to school in September 2020 to recognise their excellent effort. Epraise is fully compatible with the new MIS system and the school will continue to refine and develop the way it recognises effort to further engage students and parents.

PSHE

PSHE is an absolutely essential part of our curriculum and it is vital that we continue to develop our programme particularly in light of issues such as mental health which are becoming more prevalent nationally.

Target	When	RESPONSIBLE
Review PSHE Curriculum	2018	HMD/SMT/Governors

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We have continued to use Fiona McDowell, the Schoolbeat police officer, who has been invaluable in helping us to deliver the 'Schoolbeat' curriculum. In addition to delivering sessions throughout our PSHE days, Fiona has also attended several Year 7 tutor sessions which has improved their learning even further. We still follow the PSHE Association's Programme of Study as well as receiving guidance from the GHLL organisation. Towards the end of the academic year, tutor time resources were created ready for the DfE's compulsory changes in September. In September, tutors will deliver a PSHE session every fortnight during PM tutor sessions. These tutor sessions will be in addition to our whole school PSHE days. Tutors can choose what day to deliver the session on and they have two weeks to get through the content.

Careers

Our careers provision is excellent, but we should continue to look for ways improve it further. Recently we have improved the facilities for careers and improved our communication to parents. We want to build on these gains further.

Target	When	RESPONSIBLE
Review Careers provision	2018	VB/EJC/Governors

Careers has continued to be embedded across the school with emphasis on the curriculum and whole school approach to meet Gatsby Benchmarks. Big areas of development would have been made in the spring term but Covid 19 has seen a lot of events and ideas cancelled notably WE week and a change to practice interviews and the PSHE sessions as well as a move to Compass+ and rolling out Unifrog to wider staff and pupils. Further work will be needed in 2020-21 to embed all 8 Gatsby Benchmarks and reinstall 'employability' in the school amongst pupils. JL and VB feel that the profile of the careers dept has definitely been raised and more students now engaged in the programme. Planned work for post 16 also did not take place. However, whilst the school was closed huge progress was made developing online resources and 'virtual' careers opportunities for students using the VLE. The Online careers event was termed 'World Class' on twitter by World Class schools. VB has spent time with network groups and local enterprise to secure our position in the county for opportunities going forward. We hope to be involved in the creation of an official county careers hub by the LEP.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Priorities

We will continue our relentless focus on improving the quality of our teaching and learning. In doing so we will concentrate on the following areas

- The quality of marking and feedback
- Ways to close the gap between girls and boys
- Ways to develop greater independence of learning
- Continue to prioritise literacy as the core building block of everything that we do

Target	2017-2020	RESPONSIBLE
Teaching and Learning/INSET plan to be developed at the start of each year	On-going	RJA/EJC/SMT

This year the Teaching and learning focus has been in two areas – both were a little curtailed by Covid19 but will be continued in the next academic year.

- Preparation for the new Ofsted framework. HoD's had some training on the quality of Education area. EJC/GTS are leading this going forward.
- An investigation into teaching strategies to support boys in the literacy-based subjects has been successful. A consultancy report was produced, a year 10 survey undertaken and DS undertook a meeting of the literacy based subject HoDs. This work will be continued next year.

Focus on the most able

As well as the priorities above we will continue to track the progress of the most able and look for ways to boost their achievement even further. We will make this a high profile issue and we aim to continue the success of recent years where we can prove beyond any doubt that our bright children do better academically than they would in a grammar school. In addition to our work in the school we will launch a programme of Stretch and Challenge events for Year 5

Targets	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	RESPONSIBLE
Progress 8 of High Ability students to be higher than every grammar school	0.57 Average of grammars = 0.30 Highest grammars = 0.51	0.40 Average of grammars = 0.60 Highest of grammars = 0.92	0.32 Average of grammars = 0.72 Highest of grammars = 1.12	0.79 Average of grammars = 0.68 Highest of grammars = 0.91	N/A	DLB/GTS
Stretch and Challenge programme to be reviewed annually	<p>A variety of Stretch and Challenge initiatives are embedded within subjects and across year groups. These include programmes such as Aim High for Year 11 and Boost for post-16. Gary Towers and Nick Fivash continue to refine the approach to Stretch and Challenge and are currently focusing on two main streams of work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with departments to review the existing Stretch and Challenge provision at a subject level. 2. Investigating ways to help students develop more effective independent working skills. The importance of this has been emphasised by the difficulties faced by many of our students during lockdown. 					NJF/RJA/GTS
Stretch and Challenge Programme for Year 5 to be established	<p>A programme of events is organised for Year 5 students from the main feeder primaries to provide insights about the specialised teaching the school provides. This had to be cancelled this year as all the sessions take place in the summer term. It is the intention to continue with this programme in the future.</p>					GTS/NJF

We continue to benchmark the progress of all students in the school. The most able are certainly doing well in a comparison against grammar schools. In 2019 – the highest achieved P8 was by a girl’s grammar school – 0.91. It’s worth noting that Balcarras girls achieved +0.92. So in fact no selective school out-performed Balcarras.

School data

To aid the quality of our teaching and learning we will carry out a full review of the school’s data systems. Gary Towers will oversee this work and it will cover KS3 and KS4. We will have a new data tracking system at KS3 and 4.

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
Review of school data systems	2017	GTS/SMT
New systems in place	2018	GTS/SMT

The new data system (4 Matrix) is working well.

Bromcom was introduced as the schools new MIS in September of 2020. This is a cloud-based system allowing staff to access information from anywhere. This is important as it will allow staff that work across the Balcarras Trust MAT to complete key tasks regardless of location. This has been a major piece of work for the school.

Appraisal

We will continue to ensure that the appraisal system supports the SDP and its priorities.

Target	When	RESPONSIBLE	
Regular review of Appraisal targets	October each year	HODS/RJA/SMT	

The appraisal system did run smoothly for most of this year. The objectives were set in October and the first observations were completed by February half term. Many interim reviews were also completed. The cycle will be completed by October half term again. No one will be penalised due to the school closure (Governs support has been given to this approach). However, the summer term is usually a time when many staff complete the objectives set. Staff have over the three years continued to approach the appraisal system with professionalism.

SIXTH FORM

We want our sixth form to be the most vibrant and attractive post 16 A-level centre in the county. We aim to have over 400 students enrolled on A-level qualifications, although we do offer a small amount of vocational courses as well. We want to continue to offer an excellent range of extra-curricular activities so that there is a positive and aspirational ethos in the sixth form. We are genuine in our aspiration to drive for 70% A*/B at A-level whilst at the time adjusting to the demands of curriculum change.

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
Sixth Form of 400+	On-going	DL/SMT
Review of A-level Curriculum Offer	2017	DLB/DL/SMT
70% A*/B and ALPS 2	On-going	DL/SMT/HODS
Extra-Curricular Programme reviewed regularly	On-going	DL/SMT

The Sixth Form leadership team has consolidated once again after the difficulties experienced in 2019-20. MBC has returned to his role as Head of Y12. EXD is on maternity leave and will be replaced for 2020-21 by ARO. Sustained focus on recruitment and retention pre and post lockdown has brought the cohort to our traditional target of 400 (204 Y12 / 196 Y13). DL is leading a thorough review of the curriculum offer. Targets of 70% A*-B and ALPS 2 to be maintained next year, with the aspiration to surpass both. We currently have a sixth form of 405.

Special Educational Needs and Disability/INCLUSION

We want to maintain our high standards of support and progress for SEND pupils. The major changes to SEND at a local and national level continue to have a significant impact on the work of the department with increased administration alongside reduced input from external agencies. The school has developed a growing reputation for its SEND provision and numbers of EHCP pupils choosing Balcarras are likely to remain high and potentially on the increase. The new GCSE specifications, final exams and grading system will no doubt disadvantage pupils with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants will need to be sure of new specifications in order to offer pupils the best support and guidance in KS4. All of these changes will require a further development of in-house expertise and close liaison with the pastoral team as meeting our pupils' needs becomes a more complex issue that calls for a holistic response.

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
Progress of low ability/SEND cohort to be tracked from KS3	On-going	GTS/KLY
Awareness of new GCSE course content and exam requirements	On-going	HoDs/KLY

CPD opportunities for ILD team to up-skill in support strategies	On-going	KLY
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The decision to test Year 9 students for exam access arrangements earlier in the academic year proved to be a wise one in light of the subsequent national lockdown. It has meant that whilst some schools are having to do this at the start of Year 10, ours has been completed and teachers have been informed about students who qualify for exam access arrangements (e.g. a reader, extra time) from the start of GCSE courses. Systems and policy about exam access arrangements are now well established and KLY works closely with CPJ to ensure all deadlines are met and that candidates are supported in line with their needs in exams.

KLY has created spreadsheets to track progress data, having first trialled a new system with Y11. This entails tracking the progress of students on the SEND register and KLY following up any 'below target' grades with subject teachers, the student and parents. As much continuity as possible has been given in timetabling TAs to exam classes. This ensures that TAs become familiar with course content and exam preparation.

Lockdown was used, in part, by the department to access CPD opportunities. KLY sent out information on a variety of online courses and materials that TAs were able to access from home. TAs continue to be invited to whole school inset sessions that apply to them and KLY and TM organise alternative sessions when necessary. KLY has recently completed the NASENCo Award course at the University of Gloucestershire to qualify as a SENDCo and she has acquired knowledge and training that will help inform future inset sessions.

We continue to track the progress of EHCP and SEND pupils closely. In 2020 EHCP pupils had a P8 score of 0.57. In 2019 it was -0.23. In 2020 SEND pupils had value added of 0.06. In 2019 it was 0.52. It is worth remembering that the number of pupils is small and there is no national comparator because the DfE do not publish data for SEND students.

PASTORAL CARE

We want to ensure that the quality of pastoral care we give in the school continues to be exceptional. Paul Greenway will have responsibility for the pastoral system from September 2017 and Siobhan Winterbottom has already taken over responsibility for Graveney House. In terms of behaviour we will take nothing for granted and will continue to insist on excellent levels of behaviour across the school. We will carry out an annual review of our safeguarding procedures which will be co-ordinated by Becky Atkin but done by an external source.

Targets	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	RESPONSIBLE
Attendance at 97.5%+	97.0%	97.1	97.2%	97%	LM/HoHs/Tutors
Maintain low levels of exclusions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	LM/SMT/HoHs
Safeguarding Audit (External)	Completed	Completed	Completed	Covid	RJA

Attendance: The attendance figures are for the period September 1st to March 13th 2020. The year group breakdown was at that point: Year 7 97.40%, Year 8 97.20%, Year 9 97.10%, Year 10 96.40%. Year 11 96.70%. We know our Summer term is always very good so we would have had our best ever attendance.

Exclusions remain very low. 32 total exclusions were given, there were no permanent exclusions or managed moves.

No external safeguarding audit took place this year due to Covid 19. However, the safeguarding policy is in line with Government guidelines and updates have been made due to COVID 19 regarding safeguarding pupils at home. The welfare of our students is always our main priority and will remain to be so.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017 - 2020

TEACHING SCHOOL/MATHS HUB/SCHOOL DIRECT

Our work as a Teaching School continues to provide real benefits for the staff and students of Balcarras. We want to continue to provide even greater opportunities for CPD in the future.

The GLOWMaths Hub is established as one of the most successful anywhere in the country. We will continue to support Steve Lomax in his work as he strives to create even higher levels of engagement across the region.

Out School Direct provision is excellent but like other providers we have struggled to recruit this year. We will aim for recruitment above 7.

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
High levels of engagement in T.S. activity	Annual Review	EJC
High levels of engagement in Mathshub activity	Annual Review	Steve Lomax
School Direct attracts 7+ trainees	Annual Review	RJA

The GLOWMaths Hub continues to be recognised as one of the most successful Maths Hubs in the country with the National Centre of Excellence for Teaching Mathematics (NCETM) producing [national case studies](#) of the impact of the work of the GLOWMaths Hub. GLOW mailing list is now over 2750 members and 244 different schools have engaged with the GLOWMaths Action Research Groups in 2019/20 with over 268 (an increase despite Covid-19) delegates have attended GLOWMaths events. Twitter @GLOWMaths has 5,900 followers.

The Teaching School continues to be a 29 school strong partnership and the number of events this academic year has been as strong as ever. The events that were cancelled due to COVID 19 will go into next years program. We have designated a batch of staff from Balcarras, Pittville, CKIS, Glenfall and Thomas Keble to be SLE's (Specialist Leaders of Education) and they will be deployed to offer school to school support. The teaching school status remains for 2020-21 but will then end. We are bidding to become a Teaching School Hub.

FINANCIAL POSITION

The school has done an excellent job of adjusting to significant reductions in the budget since 2012. Whilst we have made big reductions in several budget areas the overall morale and atmosphere in the school is positive.

Although we have built up a good reserve, our in-year operating position is precarious. Despite the fact that the school will be at a record size next year (c.1440 pupils) we are forecasting that we will just about break even. Unless something changes in terms of our revenue, we will face being in deficit by 2019. We need to continue to look for ways to cut costs and to boost income. It is crucial that we continue to operate a lean teaching structure. We will continue to aim for a Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) above 17.0.

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
PTR above 17.0	On-going and reviewed every July	NAB/DLB
Excellent management of the school's finances	On-going in collaboration with Governors finance committee	MR/NAB/DLB

The budget continues to show that things will be tight in the coming years. However, future budgets are hard to predict and will depend very much on political decision-making. As The High School Leckhampton comes on line in Sept 2021, these finances will now be included as part of the Trust's budget planning. Currently there is a very efficient plan in place to ensure budgets are in balance.

Careful management of the school has meant that PTR remains high (the single biggest factor in keeping within budget) and any spending has been carefully considered. Maintaining the fabric of the building has been important and the school continues to update and improve wherever necessary.

Overall, the carry-over is very healthy (around £900K) and has increased significantly over the last six years, which will ensure we are well placed to whether any storm that might be round the corner.

Pupil teacher ratio for 2020-2021 is forecast to be 17.2 which is very good.

CAPACITY

Balcarras has been over-subscribed for over 15 years whilst this is obviously positive it does mean the school has been under pressure to expand. In 2016-17 demand for places far exceeded availability and based on our PAN of 194 we would have had 30 children inside catchment without a place. We agreed to take a temporary form of entry but we cannot do this again, at least not until 2019/20 when our existing large year group, currently in Year 9, will have left the school. We will continue to monitor the situation carefully. We are continuing to look into the possibility of becoming an 8 form entry school but it seems unlikely that we could make the necessary changes to the site with the finances available. To accommodate an extra temporary form of entry from 2017 we have been given a grant from the authority. We will spend this on extra catering facilities, extra outdoor social space, extra outdoor play space and extra science laboratories. In conjunction with this we have applied to the Borough Council for a small strip of land adjacent to the southern boundary of the school. If we are successful we will build three Multi Use Games Areas.

A second GCC grant was awarded to the school for taking an additional tutor group in Sept 2019. As before, the money was wisely spent on some key projects, which will significantly improve the school, including new MUGAs, new floodlights, outdoor water fountains, repairing the geography/art roof and also updating the computer systems around the school. Plans for a temporary housing of The High School Leckhampton on the site, in a purpose-built building are well advanced. This will add 120 pupils to the site from September 2021 and they will need access to specialist teaching rooms. Careful planning is already taking place to manage this additional capacity.

New School for Cheltenham

In addition to this we are actively looking into the possibility of sponsoring a new school for Cheltenham. This new school is very likely to be an all through 4-19 school with over 1500 pupils on roll. We have already established a steering group who will drive the process in conjunction with the governors.

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
Continue to look at the future development of the school and the possibility of extending its capacity	2017-18	DLB/SMT
To spend the grant from GCC to improve the overall facilities of the school	2017-18	NAB/DLB/SMT
To put in place a high quality bid for a new Free school for Cheltenham	2017	DLB/IGD/Governors
If the bid is successful to deliver a new school for Cheltenham by 2020	2017-2020	DLB/IGD/SMT

Planning for the new school was achieved in May 2020. This delay in planning has meant significant issues to the development of the new school. The new school will open in September 2021. The school will start on the Balcarras site in a purpose-built building. When the new school is ready, hoped to be April 2022, the school will relocate to the new site. A priority catchment area for the new school has been drawn up with GCC and the admissions policy is being finalised. The New Headteacher, Helen Wood, was appointed in October.

GCC grant has been deployed well.

New school bid successful.

New school will be delivered started Sept 2021 with Farm Lane site available in April 2022.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017 - 2020

THE SITE

The summer of 2017 will be a busy one at Balcarras. The new music block will be built and there are several other projects due for completion. It is likely that we will still have some capital funds available for the improvement of the site. We want to prioritise creating more social space for students to use.

Target	When	RESPONSIBLE
Continuous improvement of the site	Annual Review	NAB/DLB/MH

The site continues to look excellent. Changes in the team have meant there have been some tricky times when the site team was at least one man down. A new appointment has just been made in July 2020 and hopefully he will be a real asset to the team.

All the new works around the school are looking fantastic, including the MUGAs, the water fountains, and especially the music block. Even more improvements are due to be completed over the course of 2020/21.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROVISION

We are very proud of the huge range of extra-curricular provision we have at the school but we want to improve it still further. We are very keen to invest in extra sporting opportunities through the course of this plan. In addition, we will look to support the new Head of Music, Helen Chong, as she develops the extra-curricular programme still further.

Target	When	RESPONSIBLE
New opportunities developed	Annual Review	NAB/DL/HJC/MAH/others

Music: Until the Covid lockdown, previous success and extensive Music extracurricular provision continued. Now perform termly at Chapel Arts. Should have performed at Jazz It Up! Chamber Choir did enter Music for Youth and we were due to sing at Citizenship Ceremonies again. Christmas Concert again saw all ensembles performing. Voice Collective project in the autumn term was a huge success. Midsummer Music 2020 went virtual meaning no large ensembles but approximately 75 students submitted solo or small ensemble video recordings for a fabulous evening.

PE: Despite a curtailed academic and sporting year the Autumn and Spring terms were excellent for competitive sport at Balcarras. Several students gained their County Badges and over 60 students will gain their minor, junior and senior sports badges at the beginning of the next academic year. Sporting highlights of the year include winning six of the eight boys and girls District Cross Country races and over 20 students making the District team. We entered the Year 7 and 8 girls into the District Rugby Engagement Tournament for the first time and they won their group, unbeaten in six games, winning a signed Gloucester Rugby shirt. We also entered the National Squash League for the first time for boys and girls with the girl's team making it through to the National Finals. We continue to dominate the District Badminton Tournaments with other noticeable successes in Swimming, Table Tennis, Hockey, Football and Rugby before lock-down. The new MUGA hard court facility has been finished and has been a great addition to the already outstanding provision for sport. We look forward to opening the facility, which will be proudly named after long serving PE teacher Paul Greenway, when things get back to normal. Jamie Weller successfully completed his NQT year and has been an excellent addition to the department alongside the return of Liza McCarthy.

Eco Schools: In January 2020, the school achieved the Green Flag award from Eco schools. The schools Eco committee have run several campaigns on plastic reduction and reducing energy. As a school we last gained this award in 2010. There are many pupils involved in different events, two pupils are taking part in a 'change makers' program on the environment. There is a green group made up of parents, staff and pupils that looks at reducing the impact of the school. Then there is an Eco committee, which is a pupil led group who helped gain this award.

Generally: there continues to be plenty on offer in terms of extra-curricular opportunities for our young people.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017 - 2020

PR/MARKETING/COMMUNICATION

We will carry out a full review of the school's PR, marketing and communication. This review will look to modernise certain areas of this work. We will launch a new website in 2017 and we hope that the school's Facebook page will continue to be very popular.

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
New website working well	Annual Review	JWP/GT/DLB
Full review of school PR	2017-18	DLB/Governors
An integrated communications plan including the safe and effective use of social media	2017-18	DLB/AXG/Governors

The website has continued to be updated, with new stories and sections. One of the new innovations has been the pastoral page, which offers support and guidance to pupils on various issues (mental health, social media, radicalisation, discrimination, drugs) this page was created by the pastoral team and so far has had 888 separate visits. News stories are continually added, in the ten months from 1/9/19 to 1/7/20 we had 85,858 hits on news stories. The most common way of accessing the website is still desktop computers 57%, followed by smartphones 33%, which means our responsive design is being utilised by users.

So far news about the High School Leckhampton has generated lots of hits on the school website (1,800 in one week from 24/6/20 to 1/7/20). Work has begun with e4 to design a clone of the school website for the new school. The idea is to have an interim page initially that provides news and information on this new school. The final website will then have a similar layout to the existing Balcarras website. There are no plans to create a separate Multi Academy trust website. Gary Towers has been overseeing this new work.

Regarding social media our Facebook page now has 1304 followers and Twitter has 1364 followers. Both are interacted with daily by parents, pupils and the local community who all engage positively (post engagement during lockdown was particularly high with one post alone about the masks being made for the NHS receiving 144,592 views. It also had 1800 share it and incredibly positive comments from the community and beyond.)

GOVERNANCE

The governance of the school continues to be a real strength. However, we will continue to prioritise governor training and governor involvement. Brett Jouny will take responsibility for reviewing the SDP and he will involve a panel of governors in this. Brett will also take responsibility for up-dating the SEF and overseeing preparations for an inspection. Linked to this we will also carry out a full review of the school's policy. We would also like to introduce a developmental session between the SMT and the governors where we're able to spend some time discussing the strategic direction of the school.

(Note: Liz Cullis took over the review of the SDP after Brett Jouny left in 2018).

Targets	When	RESPONSIBLE
Governors training continue to be up to date	Annual Review	Rosi Shepherd/NJH/DLB
Committee set up to review SDP	Ongoing	EJC/Governors
SEF is continually updated	Ongoing	DLB/RJA/Governors
Full review of policy	2017-18	NAB/Governors
SMT/Full Governance development session	2017-18	DLB/Rosi Shepherd

The school policies are regularly updated, and every policy has been reviewed within the last 3 years. The Governor's Community Committee have taken on the role of looking at school policies and each meeting two policies are reviewed and updated. This has been a positive initiative and helps to ensure the policies are up to date and also that the governors are aware of what the school policies contain. We have undertaken an external review of our governance. It gave Balcarras a clean bill of health whilst also suggesting some areas for development. We have now instituted biannual governor development sessions which have been a really useful forum for discussing strategy. Work continues with the Governors being heavily involved in the new school and the setting up of the MAT.

The SEF is updated regularly by Becky Atkin and Dominic Burke and will be sent to the governors in December and July each year.

Review undertaken by the SDP group: Liz Cullis, Howard Kellett, Sarah Robertson, Simon Jones, Caroline Timpson, Jess Heather and Will Rothwell.