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 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			

A* to A rate
Target 40%

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

A* to C rate
Target 95%

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

ALPS Value Added
Target Alps 2 or better

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

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			

Post 18 destinations

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
100% destinations	98	100	100	100	100	100			
60% into Russell Group Universities	51	29	56	45	52	57			
10 students into Oxbridge/Medics	3	1	6	5	8	7			

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			

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.

Progress of different ability groupings

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

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

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			

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			
EHCP P8	0.53	1.02	-0.29	-0.24	N/A	N/A			

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%			
5 Grade 5+ inc E&M **Target 75%**	N/A	N/A	62%	68%	79%	79%			
% Achieving EBACC High **Target 60%**	N/A	35%	35%	44%	52%	53%			
% Achieving EBACC Low **Target 65%**	N/A	56%	46%	55%	62%	59%			
EBACC average Fine Point Scores **Target 5.8**	N/A	5.49	5.24	5.65	5.95	5.96			

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

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 6 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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Development of school systems

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

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.