

EVERY BEDFORD BOROUGH CHILD CAN!



# Action Plan

for Education Strategy 2026-2028

May 2026



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES  
At the heart of everything we do

# INTRODUCTION



## Introduction

This Action Plan has been co-developed with council officers, school leaders and partner organisations through a series of discussions and workshops.

The **Education Strategy: Every Bedford Borough Child Can** is a ten year strategy that focuses on where we want to be as a local area by 2034.

This Action Plan focuses specifically on **Years Three to Four** of this period, during which we will continue to lay the foundations for success.

Year 1	2024 - 2025	Year 6	2029 - 2030
Year 2	2025 - 2026	Year 7	2030 - 2031
<b>Year 3</b>	<b>2026 - 2027</b>	Year 8	2031 - 2032
<b>Year 4</b>	<b>2027 - 2028</b>	Year 9	2032 - 2033
Year 5	2028 - 2029	Year 10	2033 - 2034

We will review this Action Plan each academic year in light of new data and any other changes. We will then consider whether we want to make any additional plans or amend any of our approaches. If there are any legislative or policy changes, we will review this plan in light of those.

Our shared vision is that:

EVERY BEDFORD BOROUGH  
PROFESSIONAL **WILL**:

- WORK TOGETHER
- INNOVATE
- LISTEN
- LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER AND FROM BEST PRACTICE

This Plan is based on the premise that in pooling our resources, time and effort and focusing on what matters most, we can achieve great change. Therefore, we are beginning with the absolute priorities that we believe will have the greatest impact. These have been developed through discussion. This does not mean other things are unimportant. Many other things are of course going on that will not be tracked through this plan, others will be tackled later.

On an ongoing basis, this plan will be reviewed annually and new targets and actions developed for the year ahead based on what the data is telling us, what our school and setting leaders tell us they are seeing in school and in relation to the national educational context.



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES  
At the heart of everything we do

# OUR GOALS

# GOAL ONE

## ALL OUR CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT, NURTURED AND ENABLED TO THRIVE



### Aims by 2034 (included in strategy)

- We will have designed ways to understand and track pupil wellbeing, so we understand areas of strength and weakness and are able to respond accordingly across the local area to issues we know matter to our pupils including bullying, safety, online safety, inclusion and mental health. Pupil wellbeing will be improving.
- Attendance will have improved with persistent and severe absenteeism reducing significantly. We will have a strategy in place to address emotional based school avoidance and intervene early to support schools to address it.
- Timely early intervention will lead to reduced Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions for all children, especially those with SEND. There will be no permanent exclusions of primary pupils or those with EHCPs.
- Together with partners we will ensure there are clear pathways for schools and settings, families and pupils who need additional support.
- Transition points will be more successful for all pupils especially those with SEND and identified vulnerable groups.

### Proposed Year Three and Four Key Actions (co-developed through discussions)

#### Attendance

- Work with internal and external partners to develop the 2026 -2030 Attendance Strategy.
- Continue a boroughwide focus on improving attendance, with a particular focus on identified groups where attendance is lower than peers.
- Promote collaboration across organisations and continue to consider ways in which we can work together to address the identified barriers to good attendance faced by pupils and families linked with the Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) work. Training to be designed and offered to schools via Education Psychology and Early Help.

#### Pupil Wellbeing

- Evaluate the results from the SHEU survey and all stakeholders to use the results to create a plan and interventions to support pupil wellbeing across all key stages, including early years. (Areas to include bullying, safety, online safety, inclusion and mental health)
- Work with Children’s Health and Wellbeing Steering Group members to develop the 2027 Children’s Plan.

### Transitions

- Review the impact of the KS2-KS3 transition booklet, transition bridge, SEND guidance and data collection sheet and make any changes and improvements necessary.
- Further enhance transition for vulnerable pupils including those with SEND.
- Support SEND pathways ‘Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)’ linked with Bedford Borough SEND action plan.
- Evaluate the results from the annual Parent Carer survey and use the results to support pupil transition.

### Additional Support and Clear Pathways

- Extend the Team Around The School (TAS) Pilot delivery model across all schools to embed a collaborative, whole-system approach that reflects the recommendations of ‘Experts at Hand’ (DfE White Paper). This will ensure that pupils, particularly those with SEND, receive timely, coordinated, and effective support.
- The Inclusion Service to lead on embedding collaborative ways of working across services and with schools, children and young people and their families to address the historically high levels of exclusion.
- Review the CPD offer to schools from services involved in providing the continuum of universal, targeted, and intensive training to schools and amend and centralise the offer to ensure ease of access and prevent duplication.

### Families

- Evaluate the access to Family Support Workers mapping exercise and in partnership with Early Help, co-construct new models of partnership and support for those who don’t currently have access to Family Support Workers.
- Continue use the Care Circle initiative to provide supervision and promote retention of Family Support Workers.

### Reducing Exclusions

- Work with all internal and external partners (including pupil & parent voice) to develop a Strategy which further develops our three-tier AP model and reduces exclusions.
- Utilise the findings from the external review of the Alternative Provision offer to implement improvement.
- Monitor the impact of the Secondary ‘Securing Education Panel’. (extend to Primary)
- Develop the early intervention for children at risk of suspensions and possible exclusion in primary schools.

### Success Measures

- Attendance Strategy owned and embedded in practice, leading to improved attendance for all pupils and particularly the most vulnerable (SEND and disadvantaged).
- Improve attendance overall to be at least 1% above national in 25/26 and maintain being above national in 26/27 and 27/28.
- Secondary 25/26 persistent absence to be at least in line with national and to be at least 0.5% below national 26/27 and at least 1% below national in 27/28.
- Primary 25/26 persistent absence to be at least 1.5% below national and 2% below national in 26/27 and 27/28.
- Through pupil voice (Bedford Borough Engagement & Development Team and schools), children and young people report improvements in the wellbeing identified areas. (Areas to include bullying, safety, online safety, inclusion and mental health)
- 2027 Children's Plan produced.
- Agreed standardised transition booklet and data collection sheet to be used by all in primary and secondary schools to ensure smooth transition from Y6 to Y7. Primary to Secondary Transition Bridge published on the Local Offer website.
- Pupil voice and parent carer surveys evidence that children and young people report improvements with transition and satisfaction with opportunities and pathways into adulthood.
- All Schools to have a clear Family Support Offer or Pathway by autumn 2026.

- Strengthening inclusion across education settings by developing, implementing, and embedding an Experts at Hand model within a system-wide graduated pathway to ensure needs of pupils are met locally, and there is evidence that there are early signs of reduced escalation.
- There will be a significant reduction in the number of children being permanently excluded in Bedford Borough. A new Strategy will be in place to address exclusions and pathways to access support and early intervention for children at risk of exclusion will be well understood.



## GOAL TWO

### THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENSURING PUPILS ARE SET UP FOR SUCCESS



#### Aims by 2034 (included in strategy)

- We will ensure that educational attainment and progress across key stages is in line with the best of our statistical neighbours for the cohort and where possible, exceeding
- Every child in Bedford Borough will be a fluent reader by 7
- The disadvantage gap will have reduced so that it is in line with the best of our statistical neighbours across all key stages and for pupils with SEND and with English as an additional language
- Pupils will have access to opportunities in school and through work experience and informal learning to use and experience innovative technology
- Children and young people understand their choices and have access to appropriate post-16 opportunities
- Right from birth, families will be empowered to know the best ways to support and play a role in their children's learning; providers and services work collectively to ensure all children receive the best start in life so that they thrive.
- Alternative Provision is effective and a key part of the wider education system with early intervention and support pathways in place

#### Proposed Year Three and Four Key Actions (co-developed through discussions)

##### Curriculum

- Work together to implement effective curriculum delivery and leadership across all settings, using evidence-based practice.
- Continue to promote local and national support such as RISE and Curriculum Hubs and further embed interventions including curriculum consultancy, subject leadership support and PSG networks.
- Work together to build a culture of inclusion across the curriculum (Inclusion by design).

##### Writing

- Provide access to high quality CPD and ongoing support at all Key Stages as well as structured opportunities for practitioners to share best practice.
- Monitor the implementation of Voice 21 during year 2 of the training programme for 20 schools with a view to sharing best practice across all schools. Embedding the oracy programme and curriculum framework.
- Continue to promote best practice such as the Early Years RISE, Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs offer and early speech and language support.

- Monitor EYFS provision and the teaching of oracy to ensure it is of the highest quality, with all EY settings and reception classes drawing on best practice.

### Reading

- Promote the National Year of Reading 2026.
- Helicopter Stories and Poetry Baskets to support communication and language and early-writing in EYFS settings.
- Establish an agreed definition of a 'fluent reader' along with exemplar videos of Y2 pupils reading a standard text.
- Work in partnership to support schools with the introduction of the proposed year 8 statutory assessment to assess reading fluency and comprehension.

### Maths

- Continue to signpost and promote the full suite of CPD opportunities provided by the Enigma Maths Hub to drive improvement.

### Reducing The Disadvantage Gap and Vulnerable Groups Interventions

- Work collaboratively with partners to implement the strategic, evidence-based LA-wide action plan that supports all schools in closing the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.

### Post-16

- Explore the implementation of a minimum standard of KS4 – KS5 transition to support students for the next phase of education, training, or employment.

### 0 to 5 years Provision

- Working with Health, Children's Services and Family Hubs, to implement the co-produced 'Best Start Plan' identifying how every child in Bedford Borough has the best possible start in life - enabling them to thrive from conception to age five, and supporting them to be healthy, happy, and ready to learn.
- Early Years Settings that are struggling to improve are identified, supported and fast-tracked for additional support.

### Success Measures

- A recognised Self-improving system contributes to strong educational outcomes and where leaders support and hold each other to account.
- We will have a borough-wide agreed definition of 'Fluent Reader' by the end of the academic year 25/26
- By July 2026 the Year One Phonics % points are in line with national and in July 2027 is at least 0.5% points above national and continues to exceed national in future years.
- Continue to close the gap for Bedford Borough disadvantaged pupils in Year One Phonics and their national non disadvantaged peers by 2% in July 2026 and by a further 2% each year.

- KS2 reading attainment to be in line with national in July 2026 and to be at least 2% above national by end of the academic year 26/27.
- Improvement in writing attainment at KS2 by end of the academic year 25/26 to be at least within 3% points of the national % and to be at least within 1% point of national in July 2027.
- To extend further the success in outperforming the national performance measures in the MTC so that Bedford Borough continues to exceed the national % achieving the maximum mark and the mean average by at least 0.3 each year.
- Improvement in Maths attainment at KS2 for the expected level by the end of the academic year 25/26 to be at least at the national % and to be at least 1% above national by the end of the academic year 26/27.continue to exceed in future years.
- Pupils achieving English and Maths GCSE Grade 5 and above, to be at least in line with National by July 2027.
- The gap between Bedford Borough Disadvantaged pupils and their national peers closes by at least 4% points for all outcome measures at all key stages by July 2026, by an additional 4% points by July 2027 and continues to close in future years.
- Young people understand their choices and have access to appropriate post-16 opportunities.
- Pupil voice (BB Engagement & Development Team and schools), and parent carer surveys evidence that young people report improvements with transition and satisfaction with opportunities and pathways into adulthood.

- Every child in Bedford Borough has the best possible start in life - enabling them to thrive from conception to age five, and supporting them to be healthy, happy, and ready to learn.
- Bedford Borough is on track to achieve the following levels of GLD 71.2% in 2026, 73.7% in 2027 and 75.2% GLD in 2028.



## GOAL THREE

### A COLLABORATIVE SYSTEM WHERE PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS WORK TOGETHER AND LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER



#### Aims by 2034 (included in strategy)

- We will have refreshed our governance arrangements to ensure that the group oversees delivery and quality assures the action plan, holds annual progress reviews and facilitates bringing organisations together to drive change.
- We will communicate effectively across organisations ensuring partners know where to go for support and knowledge sharing.
- We will develop a clear annual programme of events where we share best practice in our local area and invite in others we can learn from.
- We will collaborate to solve common problems such as recruitment and retention.
- We will work with partners to ensure we are making the best use of funding and resources to deliver our shared priorities
- We will continue to develop our CPD offer so that interventions are evidence based and meet need. Schools will be able to book through an online system.
- We will build on existing Headteacher and Teacher networks so that there are opportunities for school leaders at all stages of their career to connect, network, support and learn from one another
- We will utilise all of the resources of our local area including universities, cultural institutions, libraries, employers, parks and green spaces – all of whom will play a role in delivering this strategy
- Families will be key partners in their child’s learning. We will involve families and children in co-production and design of any new services and ways of working that impact them
- We will build on existing Governor networks/forums to build a culture that encourages open dialogue, exchange of ideas and mutual support to sustain a drive for continuous improvement in governance and supports the recruitment and development of high-quality governors.

#### Proposed Year Three and Four Key Actions (co-developed through discussions)

##### Sharing Best Practice

- Annually update the ‘Little Purple Book’ Directory of Excellence in Practice and develop/refine the contents through feedback from schools and partners.

##### Communications

- Introduce a consistent QA framework for collaborative projects across schools, ensuring impact is captured through evidence of pupil outcomes, staff confidence, and case studies.

#### Leadership and Culture

- Continue to build the community of practice to ensure the development of a school led system. This will mean the Peer Review opportunity will be extended to include governors, and leaders at all levels in schools across Bedford Borough.

#### Structures and Networks

- Building on existing documents and networks create a good practice document for small schools.

#### Recruitment and Retention

- Implement the co-constructed action plan to address the lack of diversity in the school workforce.
- Establish a working party to explore how to encourage more people into the profession, retain existing staff and develop a Borough schools vacancies landing page.
- Secure full-time funding for the education staff wellbeing coordinator post to continue to provide wellbeing initiatives across all schools and settings and promotes the discounts and benefits scheme created for Bedford Borough based staff.

#### Governance

- Further enhance governors’ knowledge and strategic development by extending the regular Governor forums to include the following – Chairs, Safeguarding, SEND, Clerks, wellbeing and Sustainability.

- Promote the ongoing Governor’s CPD programme to schools.
- Conduct an annual survey (summer term) to support planning the next Governor CPD programme.

#### Success Measures

- ‘Purple Book’ document produced annually, that outlines best practice and where schools can go for support.
- The Quality Assurance (QA) framework effectively captures impact from CPD and projects and contributes to the design of future sessions and collaborative projects.
- A recognised Self-improving system contributes to strong educational outcomes and where leaders support and hold each other to account.
- Guidance documents support the organisation, leadership and best value principles for small schools.
- At least 75% of buy back schools attend the termly governor forums. The forums enable lead governors to participant in a professional network that involves two-way communication between governors and the local authority and highlights effective practice and local and national legislation.



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES  
At the heart of everything we do

# HOW WE WILL USE THIS PLAN

## How we will use this Plan

As outlined in the strategy, this plan will be overseen by the Education Improvement Governance Group (EIGG). This is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Valuing Families: Children's Services.

This action plan is being finalised in **April 2026**. It will be publicly available. An interim report on progress against each goal will be submitted in **July** of each year to EIGG, and a formal review in the autumn term, this will inform a plan refresh at the start of each calendar year (see below).

In **spring 2029** a new 3-year action plan will be published.



Once a year, the Service Director – Education, SEND and School Infrastructure (Chief Education Officer), will also provide an update on progress to the Children's Health and Wellbeing Board.

We reiterate that actions not included in this plan are not considered unimportant and that this does not represent the entirety of all work being done to improve educational experience and outcomes for pupils in Bedford Borough.

## Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please contact us at our address below.

Për Informacion      معلومات کے لئی      برای اطلاع      Za Informacije  
ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ      Informacija      Per Informazione      তথ্যের জন্য      للمعلومات



**01234 276792**



**School Improvement Team**

Bedford Borough Council  
Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street  
Bedford  
MK42 9AP



**schoolimprovement@bedford.gov.uk**



**www.bedford.gov.uk**