

EVERY BEDFORD BOROUGH CHILD CAN!



Action Plan

for Education Strategy 2024-2034

February 2025





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 **Year One and Two** of this period as this is the period during which we will lay the foundations for success. This is also a time of great change in education as a new government reviews its approach and prepares to design and embed new ways of collaborating, improving, regulating, organising and delivering. We will review this Action Plan at the beginning of 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.

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.





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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 and persistent absenteeism will have reduced significantly and 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.
- Right from birth, families will be empowered to know the best ways to support and play a role in their children's learning.

Proposed Year One and Two Key Actions (co-developed through discussions)

- **Attendance** – Our school leaders saw this as the priority. Without children being in school, they cannot learn and the rest of our interventions will fail. As part of our directory of best practice, we will identify which schools have been successful in improving attendance so that other schools are able to learn from them. We will also have a boroughwide focus on improving attendance coordinated by Children's Board for Health and Wellbeing. This will become an annual conversation where we discuss collaboration across organisations and consider ways in which we can work together to address the identified barriers to good attendance faced by pupils and families. We will involve Early Years settings in this work to ensure positive attitudes are embedded from the earliest interactions with learning.
- **Pupil Wellbeing** – We are developing a new approach to measuring pupil wellbeing which will be in place by September 2025. We will review the impact of this during 2026 and use it to create a plan and interventions to support pupil wellbeing across all key stages, including early years which uses a different measure.

- **Transitions** – The Brilliant Transitions For All project is now embedded and work is being undertaken to standardise transitions from primary to secondary. A Transitions Bridge has been developed that outlines the process on a month by month basis and from September 2025, all pupils will start secondary school with a standardised transition booklet. We will then review the impact of this during 2026 and make any changes and improvements necessary.
- **Additional Support and Clear Pathways** – We have put in place a Team Around The School pilot project in 17 schools (12 Primary and 5 Secondary) this is to support early identification and intervention approaches for exploring pupils' needs. We will review the impact of this and consider whether this is a model that can be more widely replicated in other schools and settings.
- **Supporting Schools to be as Inclusive as Possible** – Bedford Borough is the Lead Local Authority in the East of England for the Department for Education's Change Partnership Programme. Bedford Borough has been asked to 'test and learn' different approaches to supporting mainstream inclusive practice as part of this programme. We will continue to build a culture of inclusion. We will continue to develop our three-tier model of Alternative Provision that ensures early intervention is in place and schools are supported to include all pupils. In 24/25 all secondary schools have been allocated a one-off grant of £20K to reduce exclusions and we will monitor the impact of this and identify what else we need to do to ensure effective early intervention and reduce exclusions.

- **Families** – We recognise that school resources are stretched and not all have access to Family Support Workers, whilst the number of issues families face is rising. We will map which schools have access to Family Support Workers and consider whether it is possible to design new models of partnership and support for those who don't, working in partnership with Early Help. We will do this in partnership with Early Years, learning from their partnership model with Children's Centres.

Success Measures

- Improve attendance overall to be at least 1% above national in 24/25 and maintain being above national in 25/26.
- Secondary 24/25 persistent absence to be at least in line with national and to be at least 1% below national in 25/26.
- Primary 24/25 persistent absence to be at least 1.5% below national and 2% below national in 25/26.
- By the end of the academic year 24/25 all schools will have ensured that an Early Help Assessment has been completed in a timely way for pupils at risk of exclusion.
- By the end of the academic year 24/25 all schools will have ensured that a review of needs has been completed for pupils with EHCPs who are at risk of exclusion.
- Benchmark in place for Pupil Wellbeing at all Key Stages by end of 2025, improvement seen in 2026.
- All Schools to have a clear Family Support Offer or Pathway by end of 25/26.

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.
- Schools and Early Years Settings that are struggling to improve are identified, supported and fast-tracked for additional support.
- Alternative Provision is effective and a key part of the wider education system with early intervention and support pathways in place.

Proposed Year One and Two Key Actions (co-developed through discussions)

- **Curriculum** – We will work together to implement effective curriculum delivery and leadership across all settings, aspiring to ensure they are using evidence based practice and can articulate and evaluate the impact and efficacy of the schemes they are using. We will embed this through interventions such as the Pioneer Learning Trust Curriculum Consultancy and subject leadership support and CPD networks.
- **Writing** – In 2025 we will have an area-wide focus on improving writing and in particular for those from a disadvantaged background. This will focus on mastery and will include opportunity to access high quality CPD and ongoing support at all Key Stages as well as structured opportunities for practitioners to share best practice. We will write to all schools with a clear set of aspirations and a CPD programme they can access including Winning at Writing, Fixing Full Stops and Writing and Stamina.
- **Maths** – In 2025 we will have an area-wide focus on improving mathematical skills and in particular for those from a disadvantaged background. This will focus on mastery and will include opportunity to access high quality CPD and ongoing support at all Key Stages as well as structured opportunities for practitioners to share best practice. We will write to all schools with a clear set of aspirations and a CPD programme they can access including Enigma Maths Hub and Maths PSG.

- **Reading** – We will make 2025 the Year of Reading in Bedford Borough and will have a series of initiatives during this time. We will initiate a Reading Taskforce which will develop a specific Reading Action Plan that will define what we mean by fluency and focus on what the roles of different partners and organisations will be in working together to make a shift in reading across the borough. We will mobilise community and business support. This will be a cross-phase group involving early years, childminders, PVIs as well as schools and libraries and it will report into the EIGG. We have a number of programmes in place already including Reading Fluency Project for Years 1 and 2 and Helicopter Stories for Early Years.
- **Reducing the Disadvantage Gap and Vulnerable Groups Interventions** – 35 schools are currently taking part in a project to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils led by Mark Rowland. Once this has concluded we will review impact and consider rolling out to further schools so we have a shared approach across the local area.
- **Alternative Provision** – A new Alternative Provision Framework and Behaviour, Learning and Inclusion Strategy will be implemented. A new Securing Education Panel has been created to replace Fair Access Panel to support increased collaboration between Secondary Schools and early intervention for children at risk of suspensions and possible exclusion.
- **Understanding the World and Enriching Our Pupils Experiences** – We will focus our efforts on increasing EYFS attainment in this area. Through the Local Education Culture Partnership, we will find better ways to collaborate across sectors and ensure that all Bedford Borough children have access to creative and stimulating experiences, creating and delivering a joint action plan that makes the most of all local assets.

Success Measures

- We will have a borough-wide agreed definition of 'Fluent Reader' by the end of the academic year 24/25.
- The EYFS Measure 'Understanding the World' to have improved by at least 5% to be in line with national by the end of the academic year 24/25 and to be at least 2% above national by 25/26.
- Continue to close the gap for Bedford Borough disadvantage pupils in Year One Phonics and their national non disadvantage peers by 2% in 24/25 and by a further 2% in 25/26.
- Improvement in reading attainment at the expected level KS2 by the end of the academic year 24/25 to be at least at the national percentage and to be at least 2% above national by end of the academic year 25/26.
- Improvement in writing attainment at KS2 by end of the academic year 24/25 to be at least within 5% of the national % and to be at least at national by 25/26.
- The gap between Bedford Borough Disadvantaged pupils and their national peers closes by at least 5% points for writing at KS2 at the expected standard in 24/25 and is in line with national by the end of the academic year 25/26.
- The attainment gap between the highest and lowest performing schools for KS2 measures is reduced by at least 10% points in 24/25 and by a further 10% points in 25/26.
- By the end of the academic year 24/25 an Inclusion Strategy will be in place.

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 and created an independently chaired group that will oversee delivery of an action plan, hold annual progress reviews and bring organisations together and 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 and the training and recruitment of governors.
- 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.

Proposed Year One and Two Key Actions (co-developed through discussions)

- **Sharing Best Practice** – We will build on existing documents and networks to share performance data and best practice in schools and trusts to create a 'Little Purple Book' Directory of Excellence in Practice so that school leaders know which schools they can contact to share learning, exchange ideas in specific areas e.g. increasing attainment in specific cohorts or subject areas, increasing attendance, reducing exclusions etc. This will share specific areas of best practice for individual schools and also reference schools outside of Bedford Borough who we have made contact with through our partnering or visiting initiatives.
- **Holding Ourselves to Account and Making Best Use of Our Resources** – We have appointed an Independent Scrutineer who will lead a review of governance arrangements beginning in January. As a result we will redesign our governance so it is as effective as possible. We will relaunch a new governance framework by the end of the academic year 2024/25 with refreshed Terms of Reference and clear sub groups. We will also have representatives from other partnership boards with responsibility for feeding back.
- **Communications** – we will develop a Communications Strategy by the end of academic year 24/25 and implement it fully from 25/26 at which point we will review it. This will include working to ensure CPD events and training are coordinated so schools and settings are able to access and understand programmes and calendar.

- **Structures and Networks** – In partnership with BBLE, we will review the way in which school support and networks are arranged, considering whether a more formal local cluster model might be a good way to share resources and knowledge across schools given limited resources. We will publish a clear list of networks staff can join with an explanation of each and how it fits into wider governance. We will also think about the specific requirements of small schools and develop a Small Schools Strategy.
- **Funding Allocations linked to Strategy** – Where we are issuing grant allocations through the Education Improvement Strategic Group (EISG), we will ensure that these are linked to the strategy and are in support of the goals identified here, with a particular focus on the key areas outlined in this action plan.
- **Leadership and Culture** – We will work to ensure that there is leadership at all levels of the education system, ensuring there is strong succession planning and ownership of strategic goals. In order to do this we are investing in a Peer Review Network working in partnership with Harpur Trust and Pioneer Learning Trust. We also have two year long programmes for Headteachers ‘Leading for Impact’ and ‘Insights into Excellence’. We are also developing a Future Leaders Cohort.
- **Recruitment and Retention** – Recognising the importance of a strong workforce, we will work to encourage more people into the profession, making it easier to find vacancies in Borough schools, coordinating recruitment campaigns, and coordinating ‘perks’ that are on offer to the education workforce.

Success Measures

- Funding allocated through EISG to projects that are in service of delivering our three strategic goals.
- New Terms of Reference in place for EIGG and any sub-groups and attendance improved on year on year.
- A clear structures and networks document that explains purpose of each one and is made available to all new joiners as well as those in post so they can see what is available and where they can get support from.
- We will put in place one annual schools survey across Education, SEND, Early Help and other services to baseline and measure satisfaction with areas highlighted in this review e.g. communication, clarity of offer, effective governance, clear pathways for support etc. and will use this as a way of measuring the success of some the non-SMART actions in this plan.
- ‘Purple Book’ document produced that outlines best practice and where schools can go for support – ideally accessed online.



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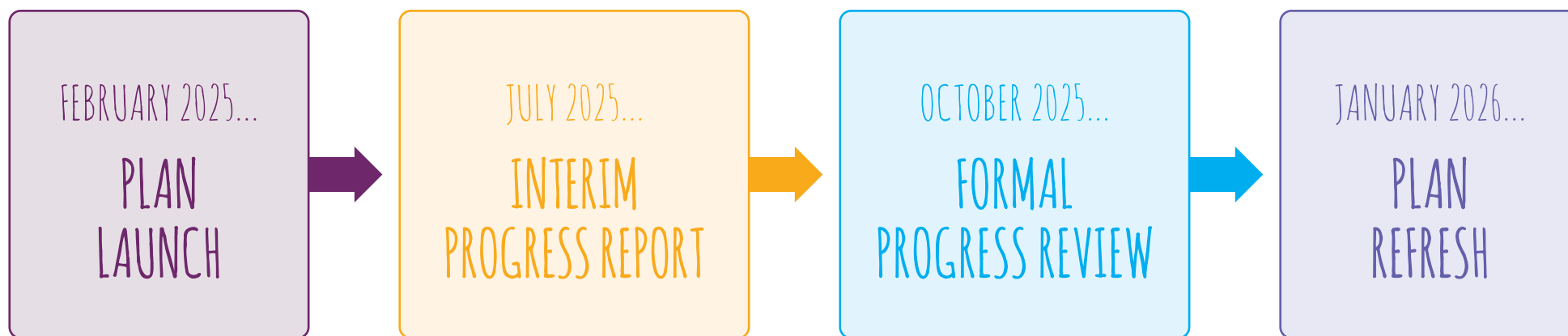
HOW WE WILL USE THIS PLAN

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, overseen by an Independent Scrutineer as outlined in the plan. The Terms of Reference and Sub-Groups will be refreshed during this academic year.

This action plan is being finalised in February 2025. It will be publicly available. An interim report on progress against each goal will be submitted in July of each year to EIGG, this will also be published. This will inform a formal review at the start of the academic year 25/26 and then every year.

In January 2026 we will refresh this plan for the next 2-3years. This cycle will repeat annually as shown below:



EIGG will appoint a Chair for each Goal who will collate this interim report and provide feedback.

Once a year, the Chief Officer – 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 Informacja Per Informazione তথ্যের জন্য للمعلومات



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