

Birkett House Strategic Development Plan 2026-29

Context.

Birkett House is a vibrant all age special school based in Wigston, the southeast of Leicestershire. Our students come from across the county and have a diverse learning profile from the most complex to those taking entry level GCSE's.

A school's improvement plan is an essential tool for guiding strategic growth, ensuring alignment with both internal priorities and external pressures. It provides a structured framework to address changing educational needs, such as new technology, enhancing wellbeing, and promoting sustainability. Externally, the education sector is influenced by policy changes, technological advancements, and societal expectations, all of which demand forward-thinking strategies. Internally, a deep understanding of the school's unique context, its students, staff, resources, and community—ensures that objectives are relevant and achievable. A crafted plan fosters resilience, continuous improvement, and a shared vision for success.

It is vitally important for a school to look after the well-being of its students, their parents, and its staff because a healthy, supportive, and positive school environment forms the foundation for success, growth, and community cohesion. Students who feel safe, valued, and understood are far more likely to engage meaningfully with their learning, develop resilience, and form positive relationships with their peers and teachers. The well-being of parents is equally important, as they play a vital role in supporting their children's education. When schools actively involve parents and show care for their mental and emotional needs, it builds a bridge of trust and communication between home and school. Staff well-being is a critical part of a successful educational environment. Colleagues who feel valued, supported, and respected are better equipped to provide high-quality teaching and emotional support to students and their families. When staff are happy and healthy, their positive energy directly influences the classroom atmosphere and student outcomes. Beyond individual benefits, caring for everyone's well-being strengthens the school community. It fosters an atmosphere of kindness, respect, and mutual understanding, where everyone feels they belong. Furthermore, in an age where young people and adults alike face increasing pressures from social media, academic expectations, and life stressors, the role of the school as a place of stability and care has never been more essential. A focus on well-being ensures that education is not just about academic progress. Ultimately, when a school takes care of the well-being of its students, parents, and staff, it invests in the long-term success of its community.

It is essential for a school to ensure that its curriculum offer is consistently improving, as education must evolve to meet the changing needs of society and its learners. In today's rapidly developing digital world, one of the most effective ways to enhance teaching and learning is through the thoughtful use of artificial intelligence (AI). AI can be a powerful tool to support teachers by reducing workload and improving planning. By integrating AI thoughtfully, schools can foster innovation while protecting staff well-being and ensuring high-quality, personalised education for all learners. Furthermore, introducing AI and digital literacy into the curriculum helps children and young people develop essential skills how to use them safely, when navigating the digital world responsibly.

Alongside technological advancement, it is equally important that the school remains financially stable to sustain long-term improvement and provide high-quality education for future generations. Financial stability allows the school to invest in staff development, updated technology, inclusive resources, and well-maintained learning environments. A modern, forward-thinking school must also reflect greener governance and environmental responsibility. Embedding sustainability into decision-making not only reduces waste and costs but also models environmental awareness for students, teaching them to value and protect the planet.

Objective 1- Student, Staff & Parent Wellbeing

To foster a culture of well-being, support physical health, mental health, strong connections among students, staff, and families so that everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Workstream 1.1: To build a whole school wellbeing framework of programs, resources, systems and ways of working that promote whole-person wellness for students, staff and parents

Workstream 1.2: To strengthen relationships and a sense of inclusivity and belonging across students, staff, and families within our community

Workstream 1.3 To review the current curriculum to ensure that it is reflective of a sustainable culture of wellbeing.

Outcome - A sustainable culture of well-being is embedded across the school, with strong, positive connections among students, staff, and families, leading to improved resilience, engagement, and a thriving school community.

Threads: Whole-School Wellbeing Framework - Mental Health & Emotional Support Systems - Workload Reduction - Positive Behaviour, Belonging & Inclusion - Parent & Family Engagement, PE & Movement Curriculum Review & Identify New Opportunities

Objective 2- Quality of Education

To ensure our curriculum offer is consistently improving to meet the needs of our diverse population of learners. Initially focusing on how AI can be used as a tool to support teacher efficiency and improve planning as well as supporting children and young people to better understand new technologies and safer use of ICT.

Workstream 2.1: To ensure there is a systematic, inclusive, and responsive approach to curriculum development over time.

Workstream 2.2: To explore and implement a digital strategy that uses AI tools to support teachers working more efficiently while maintaining professional curiosity, innovation and safeguarding.

Workstream 2.3: To equip children and young people at Birkett House with the knowledge and tools to use technology safely and effectively.

Outcome- To ensure we have maximised the power of ICT to transform how teaching and learning is delivered as well as empower children and young people to keep themselves safe using new technologies.

Threads: Curriculum Assessment Review & Enhancement - AI-Supported Planning and Workload Tools - Digital Competence & Online Safety - ICT Infrastructure & Classroom Technology – Data Driven Assessment and Teaching

Objective 3- Opportunity, Sustainability & Resource Efficiency

To ensure we operate a sustainable, resource-efficient, and financially responsible school. Through careful use of resources, sound financial principles, and greener governance we will ensure long-term viability while modelling environmental and social responsibility for students, staff, and families.

Workstream 3.1: To ensure the school remains financially secure, efficient, and able to invest in long-term priorities.

Workstream 3.2: To embed environmental responsibility and sustainability into the school's decision-making, and daily practice.

Outcome- *The school demonstrates a sustainable balance of resources, financial strength, and environmental responsibility, to ensure long-term resilience and a greener future for the whole community.*

Threads: Financial Sustainability & Resource Planning - Environmental Sustainability & Carbon Reduction - Estates Management & Sustainable Buildings Development - Governance, Compliance & Risk Management - Community Partnerships & Funding

Vision

By the end of this cycle we hope to create a thriving, inclusive school community where wellbeing, high-quality education, and sustainable practice enable every learner and staff member to flourish—now and in the future.
