

# Birkett House Strategic Development Plan 2023-26

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## 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.

The school has changed and grown in recent years responding to the increasing number of young people in Leicestershire requiring a specialist setting. The main site in Wigston is a purpose-built environment that opened in 2017. This building very quickly became full and internal adaptations were completed to expand what we could offer but ultimately this expansion has come to an end unless significant investment is sourced to expand infrastructure. Knowing the school was reaching its capacity the leadership team proactively looked externally to find new partners to mirror its incredibly successful and well-established satellite provisions with Thomas Estley and Leysland Countesthorpe College. The school has a long and well-established partnership with these schools offering an inclusive model where students can benefit from being in a mainstream setting but supported by specialist staff. With this model in mind over the last three years we have opened new links with Little Hill Primary School (Wigston) and Thistly Meadow School (Blaby). Opening these new provisions not only expands the number of pupils on role, but it also gives our students a very genuine pathway through their education dependent on their needs. We describe this approach as having 'no glass ceilings.' If a young person requires a more specialist education for their entire school life it can be offered on our Wigston site but equally, if a young person has an aptitude for certain subjects or would benefit from more social inclusion the mainstream / special school hybrid option is there.

However, this expansion has now brought about its own challenges. The age demographic of the school's population will become more balanced over time with an approximate 50 / 50 split between primary and secondary age pupils. The increased size of our base site five years ago has allowed for an increase in pupils over time which now means we need expansion in our senior provisions.

On the outset this may not seem a problem but internally this means teachers and staff will need to change and adapt their approaches. Our curriculum offer may need to change to ensure equality of opportunities. Currently, most parents are given the impression their child will naturally progress to our Senior department. This may not be the case in the future therefore we need to re-consider our options.

Nationally and regionally, we are in an era where schools are encouraged to foster relationships with other sector providers. The Multi Academy Trust (MAT) agenda has not gone away and there is a current drive to have all schools as part of a MAT by the end of the decade. As a school we want to remain in control of our ethos and values so as we move through this period it is important for us to examine the benefits the MAT approach may bring. For example, working more collaboratively within a MAT would support Systems Leadership models to drive school improvement. This may mean we would be encouraged to look outwardly reducing the danger of the school possibly stagnating because of working in isolation. We can start to look at these options currently with our existing or potentially new partners.

No school should ever stop refining its work so within any School Improvement Plan (SIP) curriculum planning, improved delivery and therefore improved outcomes should remain a continuous thread. The school was recently inspected by OFSTED as part of the normal cycle of inspection. Whilst we are rightly proud of the many strengths highlighted through this process, we must also reflect on the two key findings for improvement, review our maths curriculum and secure our monitoring and tracking of IEP outcomes. These key findings are overtly recognised in Workstream 2.5 and 2.6.

The principles of all our work over the next three years should be rooted in four cornerstones:

- Improving the quality of our educational offer.
- Helping our students have the highest expectations in support of their behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Developing our learners beyond the academic so their broader development fosters their interests and talents.
- School leaders, in its broadest sense, have a clear and ambitious vision for the school.

Finally, if we were to ask any student and parent what they truly want from a school they would probably answer quite simply, 'to have the best education possible and be safe'. Throughout this document we will clearly identify the 'golden thread' of safeguarding which will have influence on all we do.

## **Objective 1- Collaboration**

The delivery of collaborative approach to ensure a constant and sustainable delivery of school improvement.

*Workstream 1.1: Identify the benefits of joining an established Multi Academy Trust*

*Workstream 1.2: Identify the risks and benefits of establishing a Multi Academy Trust*

*Workstream 1.3: Identify potential partners and organisations to offer challenge to drive school improvement.*

**By doing this we will identify the best option to improve Birkett House's system wide offer and educational outcomes to all pupils**

## **Objective 2- Quality of Education**

We will ensure our curriculum offer is consistently improving in order to meet the needs of our diverse population of learners

*Workstream 2.1: Staff are motivated and well trained*

*Workstream 2.2: Ensure curriculum leads and groups understand and deliver an improving subject offer*

*Workstream 2.3: To reduce the numbers of behaviours that challenge.*

*Workstream 2.4: Our accreditation and qualifications prepare leavers for life after school.*

*Workstream 2.5: To ensure the mathematics curriculum is precisely sequenced towards clearly defined end points.*

*Workstream 2.6: To ensure that there is a comprehensive overview of the targets that pupils are set through their IEPs and that targets are precise enough to allow pupils to make the maximum amount of progress possible.*

**By doing this we will ensure our curriculum offer is continually reviewed and changed to reflect current best practice**

### **Objective 3- Educational Offer**

We will review our educational offer in line with the changing profile of our learners enacting evidence led change

*Workstream 3.1: To explore with existing partners the potential to expand pupil capacity*

*Workstream 3.2: To identify potential new partners at Key Stage 3 and above that could potentially expand our offer to provide vocational courses and supported internships.*

*Workstream 3.3: To review our curriculum and environments at Key Stage 3 and above ensuring there is a consistent curriculum offer across all our sites*

**By doing this we will ensure our curriculum offer is individualised and aspirational to reflect the profile of learners.**

With the identification of Objectives, which give us clear priorities to work towards, each has been broken down in to a Workstream. Workstream's provide the focus to deliver the broader objective and are broken down further in to Workpackets. Each Workstream has a clear improvement outcome that is rooted in the OFSTED framework so we can be assured developments are aligned to our wider work. It is important that our Development Plan is a live and dynamic document. Therefore each Workpacket is set and reviewed at least every six months and in many cases monthly. By doing this we can be assured our work has pace but equally flexibility should the schools circumstances or agenda's change. Each Workstream and Workpacket will have a clear 'Owner' but also a responsible body for monitoring, This could be an individual Governor, Committee or Full Board and ensures any changes or slippage can be identified and explored more quickly.

Glossary –

L&M = Leadership and Management

QE = Quality of Education

PD = Personal Development

B&A = Behaviour and Attendance

MAT = Multi Academy Trust

SAT = Single Academy Trust

RSC = Regional Schools Commissioner

CPD = Continuing Professional Development