

Balcarras Trust 3-Year Strategic Plan 2026-9

Our Ambition:

The Balcarras Trust Strategic Plan sets out our shared ambition for every pupil across all of our schools over the next three years. It is rooted in our vision and values, and reflects our commitment to providing an exceptional, inclusive education in which every young person can achieve and thrive.

Our strategy is shaped by six core principles:

- inclusion,
- ambition,
- investment in people,
- belonging,
- readiness for the future,
- and civic responsibility.

We believe schools play a vital role within their communities. Our schools do not work in isolation; they are strengthened through partnership with families, local organisations and the wider community. We are committed to developing young people who not only achieve academically, but who also understand their responsibilities to others and are prepared to contribute positively to society.

As a Trust, we are committed to maintaining the exceptionally high standards already established within our schools, while ensuring that excellence is consistently realised across schools at different stages of development. At the same time, we will respond proactively to the changing national educational landscape, particularly in relation to SEND, inclusion, curriculum breadth and the wider needs of children and young people.

Through this strategic plan, we aim to strengthen our position as a high-performing, inclusive Trust where academic excellence and personal development are equally valued, where strong schools contribute meaningfully to their communities, where capable and well-supported staff enable pupils to thrive, and where every child is known, supported and inspired to succeed.

Our vision: Inclusive and ambitious education for all.

The Trust will establish the highest educational standards in our schools. We believe strongly in the value of comprehensive education, and we are committed to the belief that all children should receive an outstanding education regardless of ability, prior attainment or background.

Certain values underpin the work of the Trust and are non-negotiable. We insist that all of our schools are comprehensive and focused on the achievement of every child. We ensure that our schools are inclusive and welcoming, including those children who have specific barriers to learning. We value the contribution of our teachers and support staff because they are our most prized asset. We will always look to establish close working relationships with our parents and families.

Our Mission Statement

The Balcarras Trust is committed to delivering outstanding inclusive, comprehensive education in each of its schools. Every child within the Trust will be expected, encouraged and supported to reach their full potential and, when they leave school, to be fully equipped to go on to be successful in the next phase of their lives.

The Trust will establish and maintain high standards of teaching, pastoral care and behaviour in its schools. No child will be “left behind”. There will be excellent opportunities for extra-curricular activities.

Each member of staff in the Trust’s schools will be an excellent role model and will play their part in ensuring that each of the Trust’s schools will have its own special ethos. Students will feel proud of their school.

The Trustees will, at all times, uphold the highest standards of financial propriety and make efficient and appropriate use of the public money made available to them.

Underpinning all the activities in the Trust is the belief that, however strong the performance of the Trust’s schools may be, there is always room for improvement. Everyone associated with the Trust, the trustees, governors, school leaders, staff and pupils will share this aspiration.

The Balcarras Trust is committed to its role as a ‘system leader’ in the wider educational environment. The Trust oversees the GLOW Maths Hub and the Balcarras Teaching School Partnership, both of which are leading providers of Continuing Professional Development for educators.

OBJECTIVES		2026/7 – STRENGTHEN & REFINE	2027/8 – EMBED, REVIEW & SCALE	2028/9 – SUSTAIN & INNOVATE
OBJECTIVE 1: <u>Excellence for Every Child:</u> Raising the achievement of every child through inclusive practice.	APPROACH	• Enable schools to strengthen adaptive teaching and high-quality SEND provision, using evidenced based practice. • Develop a Trust-wide inclusion framework. • Support schools to use assessment intelligently to close gaps early. • Evaluate our approach to improving literacy, numeracy, and oracy. • Work alongside schools to strengthen targeted interventions for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners. • Continue to strengthen attendance and behaviour systems linked to inclusion. • Use Trust SIP to support Headteachers to identify areas of improvement and to take effective action to improve the quality of teaching.	• Quality assure implementation of the inclusion framework across all schools. • Use Trust-wide data analysis to identify and address variation between schools and pupil groups. • Establish Trust-wide communities of practice for SEND, literacy and disadvantaged pupils. • Further develop cross-school support and intervention programmes and shared expertise. • Expand opportunities for family support and multi-agency work across the Trust.	• Evaluate impact of inclusion strategies and refine provision. • Develop increasingly specialist Trust expertise and outreach in SEND and inclusion. • Share best practice externally through partnerships and system leadership. • Embed consistent inclusive classroom practice across all schools. • Develop pupil leadership and pupil voice in inclusion and belonging initiatives. • Ensure all schools sustain strong outcomes for vulnerable groups.

	OUTCOMES (KPIs)	<u>KPIs & Desired outcomes</u> 1.1a Secondary: Progress 8 score is +0.5 or higher. Pupils achieve stronger overall attainment and are better prepared for their next stage of education. 1.1b Primary: . 1.2a Secondary: Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8 score exceeds the national average for all pupils. Disadvantaged pupils achieve outcomes at least in line with, and ideally above, national expectations for all pupils. 1.2b Primary: 1.3 The Trust-level attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils is closed. Pupils' outcomes are less strongly affected by background or economic disadvantage. 1.4 SEND pupils' progress exceeds the national average for pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their individual starting points. 1.5 SEND pupil attendance exceeds the national average for all pupils. Pupils with SEND are well supported, included and able to participate consistently in school life. 1.6 Suspension and permanent exclusion rates remain below national and local authority averages each year of the plan. Schools are inclusive, safe and well-managed environments where pupils remain successfully engaged in education. 1.7 At least 95% of pupils give favourable responses in the annual pupil survey across agreed core questions. Pupils feel safe, supported, listened to and positive about their learning experience. 1.8 Every school receives first-preference applications equal to at least 100% of PAN. The Trust is a first-choice provider for families because its schools are trusted, valued and seen as high quality. 1.9 Each school maintains pupil roll at 95% or more of capacity. Schools are financially sustainable and sufficiently attractive to families to maintain healthy pupil numbers.
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<u>OBJECTIVE 2: Exceptional Teaching and Workforce Development:</u> Become the leading regional Trust for teacher development, retention and professional excellence.	APPROACH	• Create a coherent Trust-wide professional development framework, including building leadership pathways from ECT to senior leadership. • Map out Senior leadership professional development opportunities. • Strengthen subject-specific excellence networks. • Establish a strategic approach to staff wellbeing and workload management. • Continue to refine and enhance teaching using evidence-informed practice. • Build leadership capacity through strategic succession planning across all schools.	• Evaluate and expand leadership development programmes. • Develop talent management and succession planning systems. • Expand NPQ participation and internal leadership pathways. • Introducing cross-Trust peer review and collaborative practice visits.	• Position the Trust as a regional hub for teacher development. • Grow internal capacity for leadership coaching and mentoring. • Evaluate impact of professional development on teaching quality and outcomes. • Develop retention strategies for key staffing areas.

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	OUTCOMES (KPIs)	<u>KPIs & Desired outcomes</u> 2.1 Maintain annual staff retention rates above national MAT averages, benchmarked against Education Policy Institute (EPI) workforce sustainability data, with classroom teacher turnover below the median MAT turnover rate reported by EPI, experienced staffing that strengthens educational quality, culture and continuity for pupils. 2.2 Achieve full staffing in identified shortage subjects (including Maths, Physics, Computing and MFL) by the start of each academic year, while maintaining vacancy and re-advertisement rates below national MAT benchmarks identified through EPI and DfE workforce data. High-quality specialist teaching capacity across all schools, reducing curriculum disruption and reliance on supply staffing. 2.3 Achieve staff satisfaction and wellbeing survey outcomes that place the Trust within the top quartile of comparable MATs, benchmarked through nationally recognised sector datasets such as Edurio and EPI workforce indicators, including positive responses relating to wellbeing, workload and confidence in leadership. A positive and sustainable working environment that supports wellbeing, professional engagement and long-term retention. Staff retention rates are high.		
OBJECTIVE 3: <u>A Broad, Modern and Enriching Curriculum</u> Deliver a curriculum that combines academic excellence with creativity, character, technology and enrichment.	APPROACH	- Support schools to continue to strengthen curriculum breadth and ambition. - Build further on our enrichment entitlement and support schools to increase participation. - Strengthening schools' capacity to use and teach AI, digital literacy, and future employment skills. - Support schools to develop pupils' oracy and communication skills. - Provide strategic support for schools to improve careers education and employer engagement.	- Introducing a Trust-wide enrichment entitlement. - Develop employer, university, and community partnerships centrally. - Expand opportunities in arts, sport, leadership, and outdoor education. - Strengthen Trust-wide careers education and Gatsby benchmark delivery.	- Evaluate curriculum impact on pupil engagement and destinations. - Develop pupil leadership opportunities linked to enrichment and civic responsibility. - Share innovative curriculum practice across schools. - Expand partnerships that support community engagement and social mobility.

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	OUTCOMES (KPIs)	KPIs & Desired Outcomes: 3.1 Achieve participation in at least one sustained enrichment activity for 95% of pupils across the Trust each academic year. Pupils develop confidence, character, belonging and wider life skills through sustained engagement beyond the classroom 3.2 Maintain sustained participation rates in education, employment or training for at least 98% of students after Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, remaining above both local authority and national averages as measured against Department for Education destination data. Young people progress successfully into sustained education, employment or training pathways, reflecting strong preparation for adult life and future success		
OBJECTIVE 4: <u>Attendance, Belonging and Wellbeing</u> Create schools where every child feels safe, known, supported and motivated to attend and succeed.	ACTIONS	• Share best attendance practice across all schools. • Support schools to clarify mental health and wellbeing support pathways. • Support schools to strengthen safeguarding and early help partnerships. • Continue to strengthen student leadership and pupil voice structures. • Continue to strengthen parent partnership programmes. • Secure improvement by helping schools to share effective pastoral practice across schools. • Support schools to ensure strong transition between phases and schools.	• Develop Trust-wide family engagement and parental partnership programmes. • Expand early help and external agency partnerships. • Introduce Trust-wide approaches to belonging and relational practice. • Develop student leadership and peer mentoring opportunities. • Support schools to review provision, using attendance and behaviour data to target support more effectively.	• Evaluate the impact of wellbeing and attendance strategies. • Embed a consistent Trust culture of belonging and inclusion. • Develop further community and civic engagement opportunities for pupils.

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	OUTCOMES (KPIs)	<u>KPIs & Desirable outcomes:</u> 4.1 Ensure all schools achieve or exceed their individual Department for Education attendance targets annually, with Trust-wide attendance remaining above national averages and persistent absence rates below national benchmarks for comparable schools. Pupils attend regularly, maximise learning time and remain fully engaged in school life, leading to stronger educational outcomes and wellbeing. 4.2 Achieve at least 90% positive responses in annual parent surveys across all schools, including measures relating to communication, safeguarding, and the quality of the curriculum, benchmarked against comparable MAT and national parent survey data where available. Strong parental confidence and engagement that supports positive relationships between families and schools and contributes to pupil success.		

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OBJECTIVE 5: <u>Sustainable Growth,</u> <u>Collaboration and</u> <u>System Leadership</u> Strengthen the Trust as a sustainable, collaborative and outward-facing organisation.	APPROACH	• Further strengthen Trust-wide collaboration structures. • Refine approaches to measuring impact upon local community. • Continue to strengthen shared services and operational efficiency. • Further strengthen governance and data-informed decision-making. • Develop our growth strategy including due diligence procedures to prepare the Trust for expansion, including the potential addition of primary schools. • Refine organisational structures and systems to enable sustainable future growth. • Improve estate sustainability and digital infrastructure. • Strengthen Trust identity while preserving school individuality.	• Central team to develop shared operational services where appropriate. • Develop Trust-wide benchmarking and efficiency reviews. • Explore further environmental sustainability initiatives across schools. • Explore carefully planned growth opportunities aligned with Trust values. • Strengthen stakeholder communication and Trust identity.	• Share expertise through regional partnerships and school improvement support. • Develop long-term financial and workforce sustainability plans. • Strengthening civic and community partnerships across all schools. • Ensure all schools contribute actively to Trust-wide improvement and leadership.

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	OUTCOMES (KPIs)	KPIS & Desired outcomes: 5.1 Ensure 100% of Trust schools achieve secure or strong judgements in Ofsted inspections. Consistently high standards of education, leadership and safeguarding across all Trust schools. 5.2 Ensure all schools set and maintain a balanced annual budget and build reserves to the agreed target level of operational sustainability. Financial resilience that enables long-term investment in educational priorities, staffing and school improvement. 5.3 Ensure all externally accredited functions, including GLOW Maths, the Teaching School Hub and GITEP, meet or exceed annually agreed performance indicators, including delivery targets, quality assurance measures, stakeholder satisfaction and funding compliance requirements. High-quality external provision that strengthens the Trust's regional reputation, influence and contribution to system leadership.		

Governance and Accountability

The successful delivery of this strategic plan relies on strong governance, clear accountability and effective collaboration across the Trust. The Trust Board will:

- set strategic direction,
- monitor progress against agreed priorities,
- ensure financial sustainability,
- and hold executive leaders to account for educational outcomes and organisational performance.

The Executive Team will:

- lead implementation of strategic priorities,
- support school improvement,
- develop Trust-wide systems and capacity,
- and provide regular evaluation of impact.

Headteachers and school leaders will:

- lead improvement within their schools,
- contribute to Trust-wide collaboration,
- and ensure that Trust priorities are reflected in school development planning.

Local governing bodies will:

- provide local insight and challenge,
- support community engagement,
- and monitor the impact of strategic priorities within each school.

Progress against the strategic plan will be reviewed annually by Trustees and adapted in response to emerging priorities, national developments and the evolving needs of pupils and communities.