

EXCELLING, IN ALL AREAS

BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

- corporate strategy, 2024-2027



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LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Nicky Hardy, Nick Oxley (Co-Chairs of Governors) and Dr Simon Uttley, Headmaster

Four years ago, the school leadership embarked on the first corporate strategic review in the school's history, based on a three-year time horizon, stakeholder engagement and deep thinking by top leaders. We did this for two reasons: first, in a time of reactive, often knee-jerk thinking, we wanted to push back against this and use the time to reflect, and second, we wanted to ensure our planning was always in the context, and through the lens of our explicit Catholic identity, requiring we take the long view. In a bizarre turn of fate, Covid aided this process, as we ran a skeleton staff and sought to wrap our arms around the most vulnerable. We saw our school at its best during this period, fully embracing the prophet Micah's three-part mandate to *act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly*.

The result has been a document that has served us well, particularly reflecting – and, when Ofsted visited – richly evidencing the 'Intent' element of the triptych governing the new framework (Intent, Implementation and Impact).

Now, as Co-Chairs of Governors and Headteacher, we are launching the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy with the bold title, '*Excelling in all areas*'. We begin by our reflections on what has been achieved 2021-4, as well as brief themes for development which will be brought out in detail following each think piece.

This is a strategic document, taking the longer view, infusing core principles, and allowing for greater imagination. It needs to be read in conjunction with each year's normal Operational Plan.

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People Strategy

Our People Strategy, drawing on national best practice, was based on efficiency and compassion. From a demand side, it required a rethink of advertisement and recruitment to ensure (a) we formulated the best package possible in a competitive marketplace and (b) we explored a variety of recruitment channels and properly evaluated each one. The result was a transparent, inclusive, and attractive approach which allowed us to navigate, albeit not without challenge, through the excesses of staff shortages brought about by national policy and the effects of Covid.

Our professional development programme is now more focussed around the most efficacious drivers to success, such as pedagogy, curriculum remodelling and ensuring teaching meets the needs of the vulnerable *ex ante*, not *ex post factum*.

Quality first teaching was warmly recognized in our most recent Ofsted inspection. though not yet in every case. Some staffing turbulence out of Covid has presented opportunities and challenges, with some excellent new staff but also the need for them to become fully inducted.

Staff communication, which some had felt needed improving, has been improved through the mixture of staff briefings, three day a week and the 'View from the Bridge' staff newsletter each week. The staff CPD briefings, TeachBriefs, and the work to ensure greater clarity, consistency and not being seen to make decisions late on have all been fruitful.

Coaching between staff has also been welcomed, drawing on the gifts and talents of established colleagues as well as exciting new hires. Notwithstanding the ongoing work to improve corridor order, staff feedback by review has been positive, leading to an improvement in staff survey feedback (December 2023 survey), though there remains work to do to address in particular low level poor behaviour which has spiked in some quarters post-lockdown. While this is a national phenomenon, we do not accept any complacency and

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would anticipate the road out of Lockdown will continue in to the three years of this new Corporate Strategy period.

Approximately 15% of non-teaching staff have progressed through in-house opportunities, and 20% of teaching staff. Senior staff actively scaffold opportunities for staff to advance, predicated on the needs of the school, better understood in the light of the three-year corporate planning approach. Equally, the school roll, advancing from 850 to 1025 has also grown opportunities, as well as challenges, given the age and design of the school which does not lend itself to an increased student population.

Initial teacher education at BHF is excellent, led for many years by Sue Matthews and now by Louise Amieiro. Staff work with a range of Higher Education providers, as well as through other vehicles such as 'Straight to Teaching.' The school is popular with HEIs as it presents the right level of challenge, with plenty of support and guidance, again a testimony to the staff. The Early Career Teacher framework works effectively, and we have a healthy number of trainees keen to work with us. Prior to 8 years ago, initial teacher training had been effectively withdrawn from the school. Now, the position is reversed, contributing to a buffer against the excesses of national teacher shortages. Work is also in place to promote staff resilience and mental health, both as an objective good as well as being a retention tool.

In summary, at the time of writing staff recruitment and development is in a relatively healthy state, with just two teacher vacancies, enhanced by, the 21-4 Corporate Strategy. Judgment: substantially achieved.

Going forward

- *We need to ensure we maintain our standard as an excellent employer, drawing on local and national good practice.*
- *We need to ensure we are open to all pathways and ensure consistent quality.*
- *We need to continue to offer advancement / promotion opportunities for all staff.*
- *We need to ensure staff are fully resourced to address behaviour issues arising from the recent phenomenon of a spike in poor behaviour.*

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Becoming a lead Catholic school

In terms of Catholic life and mission, the school has made great strides in the period of the last Corporate Strategy. The headmaster, a licensed Section 48 inspector, has brought back a series of measures from his experience across several dioceses. The school has embraced Catholic social teaching, as well as character education and has secured the Romero Award at Developer Level, a quality mark which reflects, *inter alia*, progress in embedding Catholic social teaching. The school now awaits external scrutiny by the Association of Character Education (ACE) for character development. Induction of all staff invites them to understand the centrality of Catholic identity to the school, and the chaplain provides resources and advice, especially for staff new to working in a Catholic school. The challenge, going forward, is embedding a greater understanding across the school population and the staff body in a climate where understanding of Church is limited and parish attendance nationally is, at best, plateauing (see below, section 4, *Keeping us honest – authenticity in our Catholic identity*).

In terms of religious education, the department is fully staffed with specialists and has enjoyed, year on year, some of the best results in the school, firmly benchmarked with English and Mathematics. Post 16 recruitment is also healthy, and Sixth Form General RE is in operation, though with capacity to develop further. Excellent leadership, as well as depth in leadership, are real assets for the school.

Finally, in terms of prayer and worship, it is exciting to see non-specialist, but committed Catholic teachers, founding and leading prayer groups. Also, a range of retreats for the students, the Corpus Christi and Sacred Heart procession at Douai Abbey to strengthen our Benedictine patronage, as well as the optional staff retreat and mandatory 'ethos day' have all strengthened the core offer. Going forward, and since last year, our aim has been to strengthen student leadership of prayer and liturgy, a hallmark (and condition) of an

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outstanding judgment in this area. The other area of inconsistency is Tutor time prayers, which is an ongoing challenge calling for a degree of standardisation to ensure children's experience of the frequency and quality of prayer is consistent.

Blessed Hugh is an 'Eucharistic school' – at its heart configured towards thanksgiving in every way. Awards and recognition, including the Headmaster's Student of the Week, the Deputy Headmaster's Breakfast, the award of school Colours, awards' assemblies and the annual Speech Night ensure the school remains perpetually tilted towards thanksgiving and hope. As per the 21-4 Corporate Strategy, the school had a successful 'School Mission' prior to Covid, and we look forward to another within the next three years.

Our work to support hard to reach families has been greatly enhanced by allocating a dedicated colleague to this role. The direct as well as tangential impact included the best attendance of any Reading secondary school during COVID as well as the lowest permanent exclusion figures of any similar school in the area. However, fixed term suspensions have been high in 2023-4, reflecting the need to issue serious sanctions for poor behaviour associated with a few students whose levels of maturity, as per the national population, seems to have been particularly hampered by Lockdown. The inclusion of an additional element in the process prior to any exclusion is helping to reduce the incidents, in addition to which, at Blessed Hugh, the year group most affected by this type of behaviour is the (at the time of writing) outgoing year 11. Taking the wider view, the national phenomenon of an apparent breakdown in the social contract between some parents and schools, such as in providing support for school action, appears to have some basis. The need for parents to prioritise attendance and avoid taking holidays during term time has also been severely weakened nationally, so important given the correlation between attendance and achievement¹.

¹ <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/the-link-between-absence-and-attainment-at-ks2-and-ks4>

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The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher's work on Koinonia , linking together a range of schools around both our shared, Catholic identity as well as a commitment to professional development and continuous improvement, is now in year 2 and continues to generate useful data. The hard link with St Mary's university – one of the country's few Catholic universities – is enhanced by the Headmaster's role as Visiting professor at the institution. Recent work by Koinonia has included an examination of the implementation of the Religious Education Directory, a school leaders' retreat at Buckfast Abbey in Devon and a diversity programme helping year 6 pupils become secondary-school ready.

The school's distinctive atmosphere, where students are 'loved and cherished' (Ofsted 2023) is a hallmark of the school, recognised across the local authority. This contributes to the school's popularity, seeing it grow and being oversubscribed. In September 2024 the school has 186 first choice applicants, notwithstanding the presence of newer schools in the area. The focus on every child known by name, and valued as such, clearly remains powerful.

Going forward

- *We need to secure our recognition, at the highest levels, for both character education and the Romero award.*
- *We need to strive to aspire to a judgement of Outstanding in section 48, notwithstanding the challenge of the new framework and the distinct possibility of a 'Good' judgement.*
- *We need to maintain our Catholic identity and unique offer in the light of mandated academisation.*

Strengthen Key Stage 3 and improve the transition to secondary school; ensure more outstanding teaching and good teaching as the absolute norm.

A key focus in our last three years has been on students' and family experience, including transition from primary to secondary phase. Sourcing the right specialist Head of Year 7,

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bringing together the right SEND and pastoral team and ensuring that taster days and, in fact, all contact with school is as positive as possible has led to a significant upswing in quality. Parental feedback, record over-subscription and positive settling of Year 7s – in the context of Covid and post-Covid – speak to the efficacy of this approach. Our specialist ASD facility, the BMW centre, enjoys a district profile, and SEND, under new and dynamic leadership is making great strides to be on a par. These efforts were, again, fully recognised in our very recent Ofsted inspection, as well as the elective inspections the school commissions on a yearly basis (Safeguarding, SEND, vulnerable learners...).

Pedagogy has been strengthened by a focus on a clear house style, in partnership with Brighter Futures for Children. This is having an impact (external scrutiny; Ofsted) though more work is needed to ensure total consistency. The other measure which has helped is the cross-phase work with Primary colleagues to ensure Year 7 material and delivery, build on the substantially improved primary offer, and do not represent any kind of dip. The innovative model of the Head and his local Primary colleague Head operating as Governors in the two schools has proved highly effective and greatly enhanced their knowledge of the other phase.

Curriculum cohesion, through departments reviewing their practice, as well as benchmarking with other schools and settings, has been very successful, and warmly commended as such by Ofsted. There is a clear, reasoned, and principled line of sight from both the start to the end of the curriculum journey, as well as the lowest to the highest achievement levels. All of this is clearly set out for parents and carers, in our completely transformed school website, as part of the school's core commitment to 'parents as partners'. Finally, the increase in students undertaking a modern language at Key Stage 4 was commended by Ofsted as part of our ambitious curriculum, focussed not on a path of least resistance to hit an academic metric, but, instead, in doing the right thing for children.

Assessment is effective, though, at the time of writing, remains under review. An Assistant Headteacher is researching alternative language to better convey to parents the nature of progress. In addition, the development of character education is now explicitly referenced in school reports, so as to offer parents' more granularity around their child's development, in

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keeping with a school committed to educating the whole person. At the same time, assessment is not deficient and was recognised as effective by Ofsted (2023).

Literacy and numeracy have been a major focus, enhanced by both our literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, as well as our refurbished, and repurposed library. Progress is being made in what is such a crucial area. The 3 levels of literacy intervention now established: phonics for students working at KS1 level, Hackney Lit for those within KS2 but not yet KS3 ready and Accelerated Reading for those almost at KS3.

Mathematics – a key area for development at the time of the last Corporate Strategy – has moved forwards significantly, reflected in outcomes and applauded by Ofsted. The department, once quite weak as a result of staff shortages, is now one of the strongest, with excellent leadership. A similar story is science, which has moved forwards considerably under new leadership.

Extensive surveys of parents, carers and teachers have allowed leaders to more closely align their work with the targets and priorities of the whole school community. Very early on, the move to more mixed ability has had the direct effect of removing the ‘sink’ group that the school had 8 years ago. Now a blend of mixed ability teaching, with some light setting, has delivered better results, consistently, as well as greater student (and family) engagement.

Careers’ education is excellent and, with other examples of guidance, was warmly commended by Ofsted (2023). This is evidenced by the excellent hit rate with destinations and the trend low NEET (not in education, employment, or training) rate. We have successfully replaced our excellent careers’ advisor, against a challenging recruitment landscape. Trips, speakers and other activities, focussed on further and higher education, as well as apprenticeships and employment, are excellent.

The school is always working to close the gap in performance between more vulnerable children and those not deemed so. This is a priority, too, for Reading’s town-wide improvement agenda, represented by the Education Partnership Board of which our Headteacher is Vice Chair. Covid proved to be a major national disruptor, with evidence

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showing the most vulnerable were most affected. At the same time, we have seen a trend improvement in PP and non-PP and we are working hard to ensure every lesson foregrounds our more vulnerable learners, not to the detriment of others, but through the type of questioning which drives progress and builds confidence. To this end, the Universal Offer is our house statement of purpose as to what students can expect in every lesson. We are not there yet in ensuring total consistency, but the gap is closing.

Teachfest and coaching effectively replaced the 'Raising the Bar' initiative in the 21-4 Corporate Strategy, as did the expansion of the National Professional qualifications. The school continues to work well with PIXL (Partners in Excellence) as well as with Wellington College. Though strong local links (such as Leighton Park, a local independent school with some similar values) are an increasing feature of the outward-facing approach of the school) see below (*BHF Plus – Blessed Hugh contributing to the common good*).

Work remains to ensure consistency in how teaching assistants and teachers work together to ensure the best outcomes for students, though progress has been made, reflected by Ofsted's inspection. In common with many schools, the challenge of recruiting and retaining Teaching Assistants has been significant.

A real strength of the school is the culture of openness, with senior staff making daily visits to classes to assess the climate for learning of students (not to conduct lesson observations). The quality of industrial relations, using the metric of disputes and staff retention, are well above average, aided by an open, pro-Union and collegiate approach to leadership.

Behaviour of students deteriorated post-Covid, in our case particularly in Year 11 but elsewhere also. This international phenomenon has taken a toll on staff and leaders are looking at strategies to address what is a national problem. Our focus remains (a) consistent good teaching (b) clear and humane behaviour policy (c) strong pastoral support and intervention (d) work with hard-to-reach families to ensure that all parents work with the school in a spirit of partnership, believing they are valued and have dignity in what can, certainly when outside agencies are involved, feel a bureaucratic process.

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Finally, the Sixth Form has improved in quality significantly during the 21-4 phase. This is reflected in attainment and achievement as well as the increasing number of top-quality destinations post 18. 2023 saw the school's first Oxford success, as well as an outstanding success for the autism unit where a student secured a place at the University of Durham. In addition, our NEET figures post 18 are, trend-wise, very good, though with a likely dip in summer 2024 given the particular, and unusual dynamics of some students in the year group. Sixth Form numbers remain stubbornly sticky, still not at a financially viable position. The reasons are nuanced. KS4 standards have improved and, while more students - and particularly more academically able students – stay at our school, students also now have the confidence to aspire to local grammar school sixth form settings where, they tell us, they *may* benefit from a strong academic reputation. At the same time there is some evidence this is abating, and more savvy students are aware that a strong performance in our school (comprehensive and diverse, though with a very strong sixth form academic climate) places them favourably when approaching top universities, keen to increase their diversity, both in terms of applicants and types of school. What is clear is that the Sixth Form leadership have driven quality, turned the sixth form into a well-regarded setting to which students of high ability can justifiably be directed, and have done so within the ethos of the school.

Going forward,

- *We need to complete the process of ensuring a high degree of consistency in pedagogical method and effectiveness.*
- *We need to grow the Sixth Form, so it is financially viable and ensure B+ and B grades.*
- *We need to continue our review of assessment to ensure we use best-in-class.*
- *In light with our Ofsted target, we need to ensure that all teaching foreground's the needs of more vulnerable learners, so as to raise standards and aspirations.*

Improve our estate and maximise revenue streams consistent with our ethos.

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Building our Autism facility, the Blessed Mary Ward Centre, has been one of the most significant developments in recent years. Another has been to secure the excellent staffing and leadership which have led to the centre gaining a district-wide reputation for excellence, with some truly excellent outcomes.

Conversely, our efforts to develop sporting capacity through collaboration with existing clubs has not progressed, largely due to the weakness of partner offers/status once due diligence was undertaken. Current models under review all require long-term financial liabilities for the school and are not deemed to be prudent. As the school will be mandated by the Diocese to become an Academy in the medium term, there may be opportunities to secure Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) funding², though this is yet to be seen.

We have made efforts to improve school security, short of the reconfiguration of the building. The visitor entrance arrangements are significantly more secure, also benefitting from an electronic booking-in system which works effectively. CCTV is extensively embedded and has made a significant positive difference.

At the time of writing, there are exploratory talks with Brighter Futures or Children (Reading B.C. arm's length education provider) about increased classroom capacity linked to an expanded SEND provision. These are at a very early stage and the school remains committed to ensuring quality prior to quantity.

Notwithstanding disappointment regarding large-scale physical development, the school has benefitted from outstanding financial management from the school business manager such that its financial position is much stronger than many. Recently we have made a significant improvement in the teacher ratio spend which has improved our medium-term financial

² Not available to maintained schools. Some evidence that some Academies have 'done well' in sourcing such funding. It is becoming more common for secondary schools to buy in a specialist bid writer for this purpose.

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position. In addition, the Head teacher is attracting significant funding for the school for the work he is undertaking as Co Vice Chair of the Reading Education Partnership, focussing on achieving better outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged children, across the town. The newly appointed Head of Operations will take this forward in her enhanced role.

Going forward:

Investigate funding sources:

- *Maintain staffing ratio at or below average for benchmarks.*
- *Secure increased physical capacity.*
- *Secure reconfiguration of school entry and exit to improve safety.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Governors and Headteacher would like to thank all who have contributed to this document, especially Jackie Wiltshire for formatting, Lucy Hillyard for critical friendship and quality assurance and, of course, those who prepared the think pieces which fed directly into the three-year medium-term planning.

As with all our work, we commend it to the intercession of Blessed Hugh Faringdon, to Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, and to the Lord.

The School Prayer

Father

pour out your Spirit

upon our School

and grant us

a renewed vision of your glory

so that we may experience your power,

be faithful to your Word,

and consecrate ourselves to your service.

We pray that your love may grow among us,

and your kingdom come;

through Christ our Lord.

Blessed Hugh Faringdon, pray for us. Amen

It has been a pleasure to be invited to act as 'critical friend' for the BHF 2024-2027 Corporate plan.

Following on from my review of the initial document and updates since, I note there to be clear intent within the plan regarding leaders ambitions for the forthcoming period. The plan is values driven and aims to secure excellence in all aspects of school life, embracing the breadth and depth of the academic and wider provision the school intends to offer. Chapter 1, 'Going forward' summary points, are concise, set the scene and really do look forward. Leaders ambition means there are no limits on pupils.

The key from the outset, is to identify what actions and intentions within the plan need pace to build the required momentum, and what might require a more stepped approach, slower and steadier across the next three years. As leaders recognise and refer to throughout the document, although intent is clear, it will be the implementation of the plan, and the precision of this, which ultimately determine its impact on the school community.

*Essentially, leaders should consider the 'do less', but 'well' approach. This means getting the foundations in place so that there is absolute consistency across classrooms and the school. This way, all staff commit to and share the vision and expectations of leaders. Therefore, in focussing on implementing and embedding the **principles of instruction** and **calm corridors** in Year 1, aligns perfectly with the schools Universal Offer, supports all pupils, and reinforces the culture of safety of all. Once these solid foundations are in place, the plan will be able to gather pace in years 2 and 3.*

I shall look forward to working with the team throughout the next phase of development.

Lucy Hillyard

School Effectiveness Officer

Brighter Future for Children

KEEPING US HONEST: AUTHENTICITY IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION – SIMON UTTLEY

Section three looks at Catholic life and mission at BHF in the coming years, with section five looking at religious education and concluding with section six on collective worship.

Part one: Catholic education in England and Wales

So, a quick potted history of the history of Catholic education in England and Wales. At around 600 A.D. the Catholic Church is the first provider of schools and universities, the earliest schools being Cathedral and monastic establishment which were founded in the late sixth century onwards. By the 1100s, we have the foundation of Oxford and then Cambridge Universities and at 1534 we have the reformation, where monastic and religious houses were suppressed.

The Catholic Church's role as a provider of public education was forced to go underground or abroad to avoid persecution, but by the 1800s, most of the English Catholic schools which had had to move returned to England because of a relaxation of penal laws. The penal laws seem a long way away, but we are a minority, we were persecuted for centuries, we are still not fully trusted in some quarters and – entirely a personal view - we are probably at our best when we are a bit *under the cosh* and our 'stuff' matters to us that bit more. The point I am making is that the fact that the wheels grind between our schools and the State from time to time is by no means a bad thing. We need to keep honest and true and. And, as Grace (2002:48) said, we are constantly called to find the balance between rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's, including in how we constitute our schools, set priorities and make spending decisions. None of this is easy, and perfection should never be the enemy of necessary pragmatism, but as leaders of Catholic schools, we do well to be reminded of the tightrope we are called to walk between 'delivering' for our two 'Masters'.

So, challenge 1:

Clarity over who we are serving at what particular point, and a recognition that some tension can be a good thing.

Continuing our story, the Catholic Poor School Committee was the forerunner to the Catholic education service of today, and the clue is in the name. Poverty. In 1850 we have the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in England Wales and, because education is so important, the Church decided the education of the poor was to be the first priority, building schools before churches. Also, in this period we see the intersection of the impact of the Irish poor arriving and also the early thinking on what we might call modern Catholic social teaching, with Cardinal Manning in London, and Pope Leo XIII ultimately writing *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, addressing social inequality while also criticising capitalism and communism as flawed and ultimately harmful ideologies. Catholic education is clearly posited here as education for justice, within an eternal worldview – not party-political affiliation. And of course, this focus or option for the poor remains at the heart of our Catholic schools – or should do - ensuring we foreground the poor and vulnerable, however defined, because, as Catholic school leaders, we believe – don't we? – that as Catholic schools, Christ walks our corridors, and that it is to him that we answer.

So, challenge 2:

Retaining an absolute focus on the poor and vulnerable, given the widest definition to include those with additional needs, recent arrivals to the country and those in the care of the local authority.

By 1944, and the passing of the Education Act, legislation aimed at bringing a new order to a country slowly coming to the end of 6 years bitter conflict, and the compact with the State is formalised in a way that is recognisable today. This system, eighty years on, will see 2175 (or 9% of entire schools' estate) maintained (or academized) Catholic schools providing the Catholic community education that is free and of a similar, or better, quality than other local providers. But it also ties the schools yet further into the machinery of Government which, in 1944 still looked fundamentally Christian.

So, challenge 3:

Mission integrity –be wily as serpents and gentle as doves when it comes to reading educational business cycles. Focus on moral outcomes, not transitory metrics. Clear implications to our focus on character education.

Most recently, our schools have suffered a major shortage in teachers. Generally subject to the authority of the local Ordinary, and canonically bound to ensure not only a quality of education

that is on a par with the best in the neighbourhood, (Canon 806/2) but also, fully within the teaching of the Church (Canon 800/2), staff in Catholic schools, including non-Catholic colleagues, are to be “outstanding in correct doctrine”, the witness of a Christian life, and exercise teaching skill (804/2) on pain of possible removal (803). Less clear is where we are supposed to source such wonderful people, with the obvious rider that we do everything we can to grow our own. Certainly, there are great people out there, though increasingly few and far between, (Holman, M., 2017: 187) and the shortage of Catholic teachers sits within the overall state of a much-reduced teaching profession in England. And yet our schools do statistically better, are oversubscribed and held up and revered. Which brings us to the 4th challenge.

Where will our teachers and leaders come from if we do not actively foreground teaching as a vocation, along with vocations to priesthood and the religious life? So, as well as Government requirement to improve pay and conditions in the light of post-covid ways of working (which on the face of it render teaching much more demanding), we as a school also have a responsibility to ‘talk up’ teaching – ideally at system level across Reading.

We have our critics from within

I think any sense of mission integrity requires us to be aware of criticisms from within the Church. One of the most influential lay voices, James Arthur, has argued persuasively that the Catholic maintained school of today, as against say 40 or 50 years back, is effectively hollowed out. This is because of the departure of the ‘Religious’, including priests, sisters and brothers, the lack of (properly formed) Catholic teachers and the ever-greater alignment with the State, (Arthur, J. 1995:231), effectively moving from an ‘holistic school’ to a ‘dualistic’ school, which:

“separates assemblies, school liturgy and religious events in general are seen as having no relevance to, for example, the teaching of science [dividing education and religion] conceptually and practically.” (Arthur 1995:227)

Arthur (1995) suggests that this means Catholic schools would cease to be confessional but instead would attend to the ‘full diversity of religious faith and commitment within a school’ (229). Arthur’s suggestion is that admitting the wider community rejects the possibility of evangelisation and catechetics.

While I don’t accept the thesis that the lack of professional religious and near 100% confessional Catholic staff means the end for Catholic education, (though some very senior Catholics, clerical and lay, do) this remains a powerful critique.

So, challenge 4:

-develop and maintain a strong and distinctive ethos with Christ at the centre, infusing all that we do.

-ensure the Church is aware of what we are doing to support faith and contribute to the common good.

-seek ever greater alignment between parish and school, to overcome 'cultural' barriers and misconceptions.

Our schools as a place of witness and gentle evangelisation

The other day. I was walking down the Basingstoke canal with my earbuds in listening to a book on audible when a chap came along and wanted to say good morning. As you can imagine, being English, I fought back my deep and smouldering resentment at having been disturbed and instead reciprocated with a hearty Halloo. Over the course of the next 20 minutes, this gentleman told me his story, about his family and why he liked this canal, and how close he'd come to taking his life some time ago, and how the love of a friend prevented it and how he had begun to turn things around. Then we parted company, my fellow traveller and I, but not before my erstwhile selfishness had been challenged and not before leaving an impression on me – the power of encounter and accompaniment, of telling one's story And telling one's story not as a straightforward morality tale, or that kind of stream of opinion you might hear from the omniscient 'bloke in the pub', or as preachy, but rather through what I call the 'slow reveal'. The gentle manifesting of a truth – not the rabbit out of the hat, but the old Polaroid print gradually 'developing' in front of us. Somehow, the blend of the testimonial, the slow reveal and the walk disrupted my complacency, and, in its gentleness and unexpectedness, it changed me.

The Greeks had a great word for the slow reveal, - *Alethia* - variously translated as "unconcealedness", "disclosure", "revealing", or "unclosedness". The literal meaning of the word ἀλήθεια is "the state of not being hidden; the state of being evident." It also means factuality or reality.^[2] It gets more interesting when we look at the antonym, or flip side, of Alethia - Here we find words redolent with traits sometimes manifested by our saddest children : words like "oblivion", "forgetfulness", or "concealment". Or to slightly stretch contemporary tropes, loneliness, low self-esteem, self-denial and isolation. All the things we don't want for ourselves, and all the things we don't want for our students.

So what?

The scriptural paradigm of the slow reveal, of course, is the Road to Emmaus, where Jesus gently teaches and discloses not by a bolt of lightning – all that would have done is created a binary question for the disciples, is it him or isn't it – no, the message, the teaching was in the slow reveal for two reasons: first, because faith must build on understanding, not pure emotion, or taboos, or convention, or fear; and, second, because Jesus was affirming the absolute dignity of the disciples to form their own view. Understanding, and dignity. Two core elements at the heart of our school, writ large in Catholic social teaching.

So this slow reveal, brought about by accompaniment and, first, encounter, turns out to be strong medicine indeed. For me as a Catholic educator, this is the mode of evangelisation proper to our schools, and it requires adults in our schools to be aware of the power they yield as role models.

'Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses' (Pope Paul VI, 1976)

So, challenge 5:

The kind of people we hire is way more important than we ever give credit. We must hire outstanding role models, who are also great teachers, or members of support staff.

This has implications on advertisement, reputation, interview, diversity (representation), induction, ongoing formation and well-being.

Ever closer relationships with parish and pastoral area

Clergy, including those in formation, regularly visiting school, regarding it as an ecclesial and missionary space.

Knowing our students

In Blessed Hugh, every two years, we do a survey of 60% of the student population and soon it will be 100%. The Survey is, rather clumsily, called What matters to me? In the survey we ask the students what other concerns we give them multiple-choice or open questions, such as violence or theft or Racism or poverty or war or conflict or discrimination et cetera et cetera and over a range of about 20 questions what we try to do is to reduce what matters to these young people.

And then our commitment is of schools that our charitable service and co-curricular offer for the following year will reflect what our young people have told us. No point, asking people their opinion and doing nothing with it. I think this is useful but does not go far enough. Understanding our students' experiences – respectfully- must be hard wired into all we do, not an add-on.

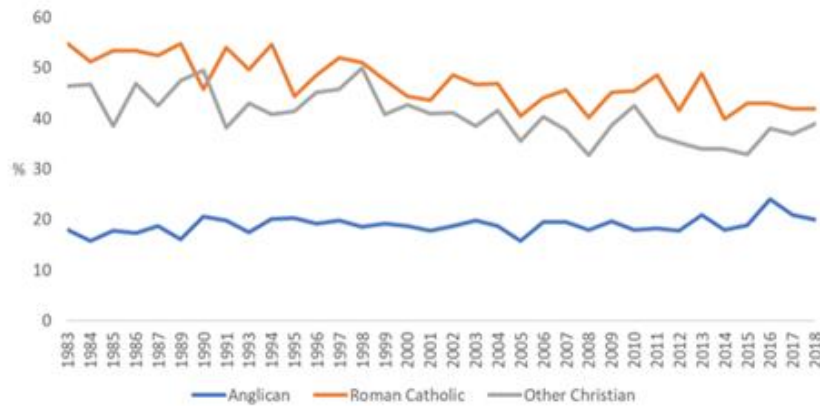
So, challenge 6:

The Catholic school should 'know the sheep' and ensure the unfolding of the student's story is a feature of teaching and pastoral care.

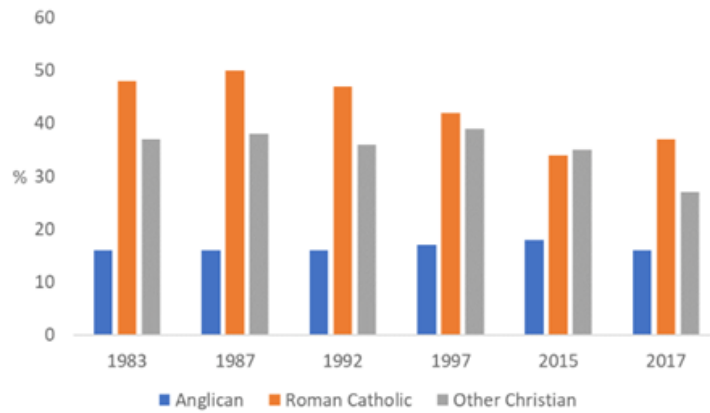
The school needs to survey a substantial proportion of the school every year and use the results to inform the school's charitable and campaigning work.

The parish as a node in the Golden Triangle

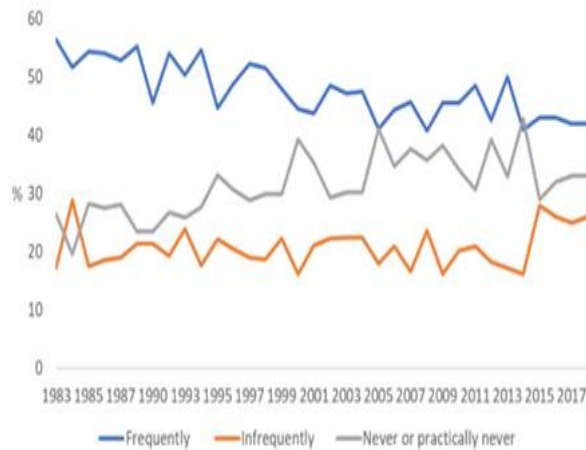
44% of all British cradle Catholics no longer identify as Catholics, with 2 in 5 identifying as having no religion at all (BSA)/Catholics in Britain 2023.



Mass attendance has been higher among Catholics than other Christians, but still in decline (Catholics in Britain, 2023).

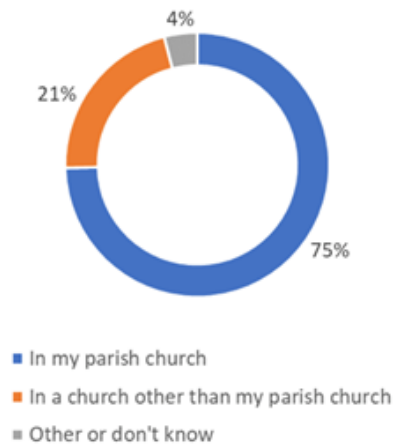


At the same time, regular attendance has decreased among all Christian groups with a slight improvement towards the end of 2017 (Catholics in Britain, 2023).

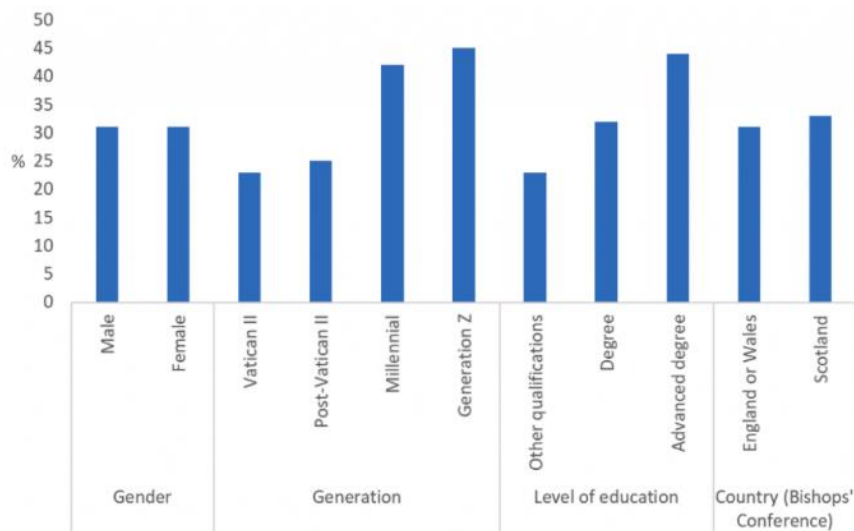


Deconstructing the data on specifically Catholic attendance patterns shows a decrease in frequent attendance and an increase in infrequent attendance.

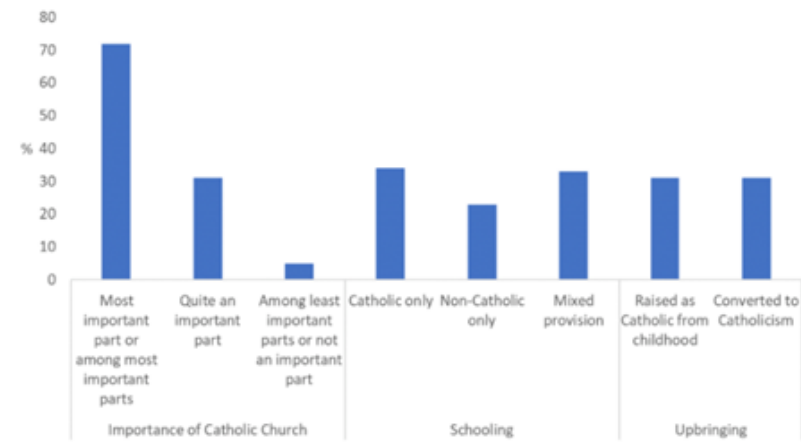
Around three-in-ten Catholics reported attending Mass on (at least) a weekly basis (31%). Within this group, 25% attended every week, with 3% attending 3-4 times a week or on a daily basis. Another 10% attended fortnightly or every month. A quarter (25%) reported attending less often – every two to three months or just once or twice a year – while 6% said that, for them, it varied too much to say. The remainder, 28%, said they never attended Mass beyond going for special occasions).



The vast majority (74%) reported that they went to their local parish church, but 21% went most often to a church that was not their local place of worship (Catholics in Britain, 2023).



One analysis segments worshipers as follows: Pre-Vatican II: aged 79 and over (born up to 1940); Vatican II: aged 59-78 (1941-1960); Post-Vatican II: aged 40-58 (1961-1979); Millennial: aged 23-39 (1980-1996); Generation Z: aged 18 to 22 (born from 1997 onwards). As can be seen, there was higher weekly attendance amongst Catholics who are Millennials or in Generation Z (in both cases, over two-fifths reported going this often). In the two older generational groups, weekly attendance was much lower, at around a quarter of each group.



Based on schooling, we can see that the proportion attending weekly was 23% amongst those who had no Catholic schooling, compared to 34% of those who only attended Catholic Schools (at primary and secondary levels) and 33% of those with mixed provision (having attended both Catholics and non-Catholic schools) (Catholics in Britain, 2023).

In summary, the picture is one of general (trend) decline in practice with some indicators that the decline has tapered out, and that the younger generation may be less opposed to regular practice than general national surveys of religiosity would indicate. Religion, possibly like a career in teaching, is one of the elements a person can dip into for a while, and dip out of, as the concept of choice moves beyond being merely sovereign, to a form of *bricolage* (Levi Strauss, C. 1962), offering sporadic and even random challenges and adducing similar responses.

I raise this simply by way of an observation: do we fully recognise schools – particularly our Catholic secondary schools as ecclesial spaces, with a privileged access to the ‘missing’? Is there any way we can optimise the relationship between school and parish mindful of our missionary paradigm? One way, which we do to a limited extent at present, but could be developed, is explore a greater role for Catholic high schools to assist in clerical formation (including Diaconate) by providing more substantive ‘placements’. Below is some research I undertook to establish a proof of concept.

When Pope Francis introduced us to the ‘smell of the sheep’ (Francis, Pope 2013:24) as a way of driving home a signature message – that Catholic clergy and Religious should accompany and engage, rather than retreat into managerialism – he was not afraid to develop this metaphor to become a trope of his pontificate. Those priests “who do not go out of themselves” by being mediators between God and men can “gradually become intermediaries, managers,” he said (Francis, Pope, 2013). When a priest “doesn’t put his own skin and own heart on the line, he never hears a warm, heartfelt word of thanks” from those he has helped. “This is precisely the reason why some priests grow dissatisfied, lose heart, and become in a sense, collectors of

antiquities or novelties — instead of being shepherds living with ‘the smell of the sheep,’” he said. “This is what I am asking you, be shepherds with the smell of sheep,” so that people can sense the priest is not just concerned with his own congregation but is also a fisher of men.”

The Pope urged priests never to grow weary of people’s requests and needs no matter how “inconvenient ... purely material or downright banal,” such appeals may seem. Priests need to look deeper at what’s driving the encounter: the person’s underlying hope and desire for divine comfort, for being “anointed with fragrant oil, since they know we have it.” The power of grace “comes alive and flourishes to the extent that we, in faith, go out and give ourselves and the Gospel to others, giving what little ointment we have to those who have nothing, nothing at all,” he said (ibid.).

The spiritual ecosystem of the secondary school – Catholic or otherwise - is a living manifestation of that seminal opening line of the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: ‘The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties’ of contemporary men and women...” (and, most definitely, boys and girls,) “these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.’ (Paul VI, Pope 1965:1). In other words, it is an authentic microcosm of the world as one will find, calling not for linearity and ‘flowchart’ responses to issues arising, but rather to a pastoral and doctrinal agility.

Less quoted is section 3 of the same Pastoral Constitution:

“Though mankind is stricken with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity.”

Young people, with all the material advantages enjoyed by many (though not all) compared to those of previous generations, are desperately searching. Issues around mental health and well-being, Covid breakdowns, social media aggression, the commodification of sexuality and the rest are well-trodden paths – rightly so – and not for this think piece. What is also clear, from my many years’ experience and reflected softly in the data above, is that these same young people are open, ready to engage and eager to listen to the authentic men and women of today: “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses” (Paul VI, Pope 1975).

When Jesus reveals himself to his, ostensibly, rather slow-thinking disciples at the end of a long walk to Emmaus (Lk 24: 13-35), he reminds us that revelation is so often experienced gradually, gently, and nearly always as the fruit of encounter. How often is our impression of an organisation, be it a company or a world religion, mediated through its representatives we meet?

So often we hear the *bumper sticker*, you can't be what you can't see. As the stranger becomes a friend, communication improves, hearts warm and folk start to learn from each other, rather than merely 'maintain a position' or hide behind old and lazy preconceptions.

The Catholic secondary school is, *par excellence*, an unparalleled training ground for such 'encounter', where Pope Francis' 'smell of the sheep' is manifest each day. Challenging, but not impossible, welcoming yet requiring the 'outsider' (ordained, in formation or otherwise) to 'earn their spurs' in gaining the respect of teenagers who, unlike many (though not all) of their primary counterparts, are less hardwired for deference. For many in formation for priesthood and the religious life, their regard for the place of the Catholic school in the ecosystem of salvation is genuine and, one would hope, a product of personal experience. At the same time, there is a difference in attending school and working there, not least in the sophisticated palate of strategies developed when one is surrounded by, and called to serve, teenage adolescents. Equally, for the Catholic secondary school, having Father visit from time to time to talk to a group or say Mass is beautiful, appreciated, necessary, but I would contend, no longer sufficient. Children need more of a relationship, as against fleeting visit, often to 'offer Mass' or reconciliation, less so to listen more broadly. As I say these words, I am conscious of the steep decline in clergy numbers, ageing, and increased demands on their time. All understood, but is that a good enough reason to give up? So what do senior clergy think about the place of the Catholic secondary school as a tool of formation and a manifestation of this 'Emmaus spirituality'?

For this research I used as a reference point the *Ratio Fundamentalist*, which sets out a model curriculum for those in formation, allowing the respondents to cross-refer those experiences they themselves had gained, or known others to gain, with the core elements of priestly formation. These included elements such as scripture, sacred liturgy, dogmatic, moral and pastoral theology, communication, homiletics and Catholic social teaching.

While none would have objected to being identified, as their identities were immaterial to the subject in hand, they are not disclosed. As we are looking primarily at the encounter between school and local Church, we are limiting this research group to those whose formation led to priestly ordination. This limitation is deliberate and fully recognises the need to look at the contribution of, for example, female religious, in subsequent investigations. Also, this research school is small, and therefore more informative than indicative.

Looking first at the value of placements, or internships in High School settings for clergy and religious in formation, the respondents, who could all point to some experience of spending time in schools themselves, varying from full-time teaching while in formation and post-Ordination, to visits to parish schools or organising retreats, were very positive about the experience.

” It gives them (those in formation) a realistic understanding of the struggles and challenges faced by professional people in general and teachers in particular, including most especially that of witnessing to the faith in a demanding context.”

For another it is ‘Essential for a rounded formation in a context outside of the seminary. It also will allow some basic skills in working with young people and staff.’ And for another, “It also exposes them to the student group and gives an understanding of the cultural and other pressures affecting their lives.”

Picking up on our metaphor of liquid modernity and ever-moving ‘tectonic plates’, one saw it as “Understanding the challenges of children growing up in a fast-moving, high-demand, culture”. This sense of both having much to offer as well as much to learn, was a hallmark of the approach to such placements that was valued by all respondents.

Drawing on the Emmaus spirituality, one respondent spoke of the value of:

“Encountering young people and school staff in a structured setting where there are everyday possibilities for ongoing and fruitful communication between those in and training for ministry and young people and school staff”

So, mission integrity point 7:

Explore the place of the Catholic school – and particularly the secondary school – in a greater role in supporting clerical formation.

Seeking common cause

Irrespective of whether those in authority wish to explore an idea such as that above, there surely remains more that can be done to maximise the impact of schools and parishes together. Catholic schools, of course, exist within the ‘golden triangle’ of parish, home, and school – with parents as first educators, supported by the sacramental life of the Church, raising their children within a curriculum underpinned by a view of Christ at the centre. The problem is, of course, for many of our children, this is not their reality. There can be clashes as the ‘corporate culture’ of the parish and that of the school become misaligned. From the school or home, disappearing children in the parish, post-confirmation (if not before) can be blamed on the assertion, fair or not that ‘there is nothing for them at church’; on the other hand, concerns over ‘flaky’ religious education in schools, and a general sense of finding adolescents difficult, can be a critique directed to the school from some parish voices. clerical or otherwise. Some align with Davie, 1990 in asserting that the fact that modern folk may still believe, but are just not into ‘belonging’, is a part answer. This very much links with the bricolage thesis (above) and, like the teacher who ‘tries teaching for

a while', the young person 'tries Buddhism, or Catholicism, or crystals...' for a while, where lifelong commitment is often seen as a concept for an 'older' (less 'emancipated'?) generation.

Whatever the analysis, at their best, the parish and school can work synergistically for the benefit of the common good.

"Indeed, "today missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the Church"... and "the missionary task must remain foremost"... "What would happen if we were to take these words seriously? We would realize that missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*. Along these lines the Latin American bishops stated that we "cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings";... "we need to move "from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry". (Francis, Pope 2013:15).

What could this look like for BHF, following agreement from the Diocese and pastoral area.?

1. Host a forum for those in parish youth ministry and provide an ongoing space for innovation and discussion.
2. Suggest a role in designing/hosting a web presence to help galvanise a sense of community across the pastoral area.
3. Support parishes involved in youth activity and act as a repository of good practice.
4. Offer more volunteer opportunities for (pastoral area) parishioners who wish to work with young people.
5. Through Koinonia, work with primary colleagues to look at how they work with parishes and what joint opportunities are available.
6. Undertake research into international best practice in school – parish – home relationship (to the extent it exists).
7. Support the John Paul II award, recognising young people's contribution and commitment to their parish.
8. Explore inter-parish / inter-school 'Mission' for 2025.

Catholic Life and Mission – what needs to be absolute?

- Students take on a leading role in planning, evaluating and delivering on the liturgical life of the school.
- Behaviour is exemplary not only in lessons but throughout the school.
- Chaplaincy provision is sector-leading and a resource across Koinonia/mulita academy trust.
- Catholic social teaching is fully embedded and complements and generates charitable work, policy formation and ethos.

- Character education is fully embedded and the school is a leading institution in this regard
- There is ever-greater understanding of how the curriculum is governed by an overarching Catholic worldview.

Prayer and worship – what needs to be absolute?

- Liturgy is of the highest standard, substantially driven by students who prepare, deliver and evaluate.
- The school building includes features which are coherent, meaningful reflections of the school's Catholic identity and Benedictine provenance.
- The Angelus and other traditional Catholic prayers are embedded in the life of the school.
- Art, music and drama regularly contributes to the catholic life of the school, including giving students deep cultural capital and ensuring they develop the ability to appreciate 'good' art.

Character Education

A signature feature of our school going forward will be the delivery, and understanding of, character education.

A separate document is available, but the relationship with Catholic education is significant.

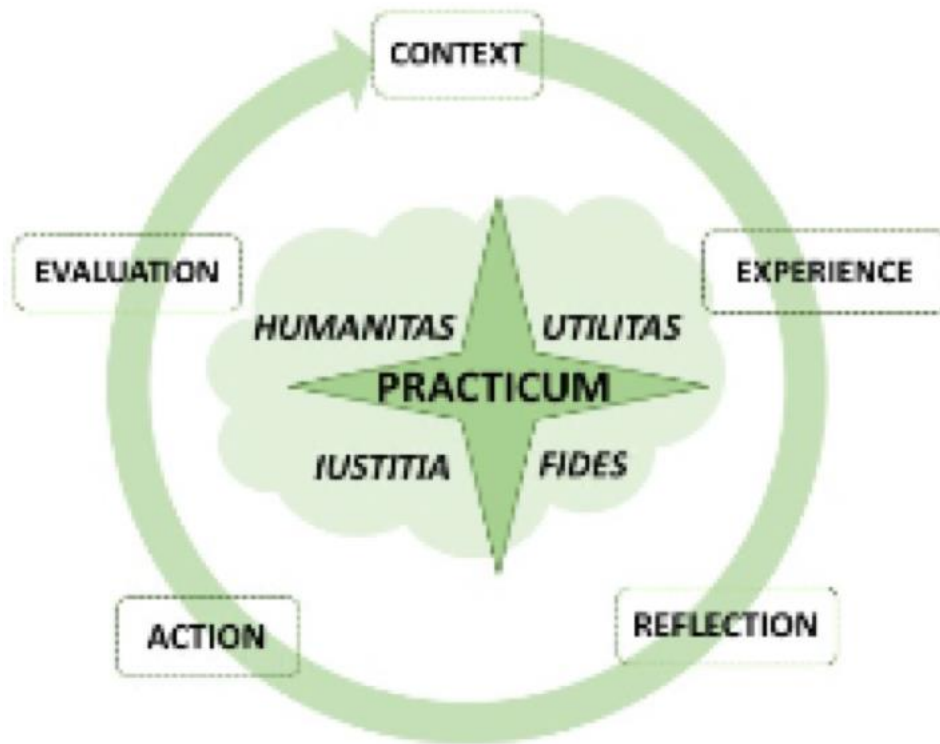
The approach we will adopt, bringing in character education, faith and justice, is represented in the (Jesuit) Ledesma-Kolvenbach paradigm. This approach identifies 4 facets of learning that should accrue from a 'unit' of learning.

Utilitas – the practical significance of what is learnt

Iustitia – the socio-political (macro) significance

Humanitas – the human-individual (micro) dimension to what is being learnt and

Fidesi – or the religious dimension



In addition, from time to time, specific learning can be undertaken by a variety of staff bringing to a subject their expertise, e.g.

- (1) history, art, music, religion with antisemitism and the rise of Naziism*
- (2) literature, history, religion – Shakespeare*
- (3) history, sociology, music – modern popular music*

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A CHARACTER- RICH CURRICULUM FOR A FLOURISHING LIFE – BEN WINSOR

Key Performance Indicators

Character formation: all staff to be trained to ensure extensive knowledge of character education at Blessed Hugh Faringdon School to embed and model virtues and qualities of living within the school community.

Character education: the curriculum, across all subject disciplines, encompasses and identifies explicit opportunities to develop character education. This is evident in both curriculum planning documentation and in practice.

Prayer: an increase in the provision of, and opportunities for students and staff to participate and lead prayer.

Moral discipline: fully understood by all stakeholders and evident through our behaviour policy and procedures – for both staff and students. consequences and sanctions fully encompass moral dialogue and understanding – improving restorative and therapeutic practices.

Participatory decision making: all stakeholders work collegiately to develop school policies and documentation.

Participation beyond the classroom: an increase in student participation and service beyond the classroom through charity and outreach work; diocese, local, national, and global community.

Curriculum provision for low ability and SEND: suitable curriculum in place for these students.

Catholic Education and Human Formation

‘God wants your friendship. And once you enter into friendship with God, everything in your life begins to change. As you come to know him better, you find you want to reflect something of his infinite goodness in your own life. You are attracted to the practice of virtue.’

(Benedict XVI, 2010)

In 1965 Pope Paul VI, in his Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educaationis*), explores the meaning of the universal right to education. All people of every race, age and background – enjoying the dignity of a human being, have a right to an education, ‘*fostering of true unity and peace on earth and the formation of the human person*’. (Pope Paul VI, 1965).

Pope Paul VI stated ‘therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy.... Moreover they should be so trained to take their part in social life that properly instructed in the necessary and opportune skills they can become actively involved in various community organisations, open to discourse with others and willing to do their best to promote the common good’. (Pope Paul VI, 1965).

This goes on to state that education should be ‘directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he belongs and in the duties of which he will, as an adult, have a share’. (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Vatican, 1965:1)

A key implication is that. In addition to having a technically competent broad and balanced school curriculum, every department must also be aware of, and informed by, an overarching Catholic world-view, and that every department contributes to the mission of the school. The broad and balanced curriculum at Blessed Hugh also offers a lens through which young people can view the world, grow in wisdom and see the work of the Creator. Rather than faith being the enemy of reason and intellectual development, faith demands both.

The sacred Synod declares that children have a right to appraise moral values, with a right conscience to embrace these moral values with personal adherence, along with a deeper love and knowledge of God. The Synod also states that those in a privileged position of authority, as educators, should ensure that children are never deprived of this most sacred right. As educators of our young people, this entrusts us with a moral responsibility to ensure that students in our school receive not only a knowledge-rich, broad academic curriculum, but also a character-rich education, enhancing and contributing to the human formation of each individual in the pursuit of a flourishing life.

‘ As you know, the task of a teacher is not simply to impart information or to provide training in skills intended to deliver some electronic benefit to society; education is not and must never be considered as purely utilitarian. It is about forming the human person, equipping him or her to live life to the full - in short it is about imparting wisdom. And true wisdom is inseparable from knowledge of the creator’ (Benedict XVI,2010a)

Authentic formation within Catholic education requires the teaching of the gospel – something well established in our Catholic school community. The education of the students within our Catholic schools, rooted in Christ, provides the Church with means to promote the Catholic school’s identity, however the human person is central. We are made in the image of God [Genesis 1: 27] . Children, and indeed all people are unique individuals, formed in the image of God, with an inherent human dignity. We are social beings who's formation is developed in terms of our relation to others and not just as individuals; ‘young people are to overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation... to make the world a better place’ (CCE, 1977:45) (Vatican the sacred congregation for Catholic education: The Catholic school) . The Catholic Church’s teaching and understanding of education is centred around a goal of formation of the human person – integrated with the ‘love of God and neighbour’ (Matthew 22:37-39). In being true to our faith, our Catholic schools are also called to help children of other faiths grow in authenticity to their traditions too.

One of our central aims as a Catholic School is to be an authentic countenance of the Church and represent the Church’s social teaching within our school curriculum and ethos. By making Christ known in our school community, we will further the human formation of our students.

The Catholic Church’s vision for Catholic schools and education is to be broad, balanced and provide a foundation for character education. The development and process towards human flourishing is enhanced through opportunities to live the virtues – a true measure of Catholic education, ‘*you will know them by their fruits*’, (Matthew 7:16).

Knowledge acquisition and learning within a Catholic education should be transformative for our students. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education stated in 1977 that ‘*education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a full understanding of, and communion with man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for others*’ (CCE,1977:56). As Catholic educators, we should strive for a broad and balanced curriculum, whilst also reflecting the extent to which we develop the whole person, with our curriculum centred around Christ character education, pursuing human flourishing and virtues.

Character Education

Schools should not simply be 'exam factories' or conveyor belts churning out grades and numbers. We as a school should strive for an enriched experience, developing students' character and equipping them to become flourishing individuals throughout their lifetime - positively contributing to society. The Jesuit Order established the virtues, or characteristics that we should aspire to possess as people of God. As a school, we seek to develop these qualities or characteristics in our students. These aspirational characteristics are set out in the following Jesuit Pupil Profile which we are introducing and which, this next three years of the corporate strategy will see embedded:

As with disciplinary knowledge and skill taught within our curriculum areas, the virtues – aspirational characteristics and indicators of good character formation, should be embedded in students' procedural memory and being. At the end of a child's school career, these characteristics should be deeply embedded in our students. Just as we strive for students to be able to learn knowledge and skills, for example within a science curriculum, and apply these to relevant contexts outside of their immediate learning, the virtues and indicators of character education should also be cognitively engrained in our students and 'applied', or lived out for the rest of their lives – for example, not just knowing the difference between good or poor behaviour choices, but to subconsciously demonstrate or 'live out' these characteristics when 'no one is looking'. We must examine our school curriculum to identify opportunities where virtues and character education are interlinked with the various curricular experiences and content and identify opportunities to

develop this. We must consider some key questions and elements of our mission as Catholic educators:

How can we 'realise' our School Mission?

'Nothing without God'

Lively faith, active minds and the best place to learn and work

Jesuit Pupil Profile

Pupils in a Jesuit school are growing to be . . .

Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and **generous** with their gifts, becoming men and women for others.

Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and **discerning** about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.

Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and **loving** by their just actions and forgiving words.

Faith-filled in their beliefs and **hopeful** for the future.

Eloquent and **truthful** in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.

Learned, finding God in all things; and **wise** in the ways they use their learning for the common good.

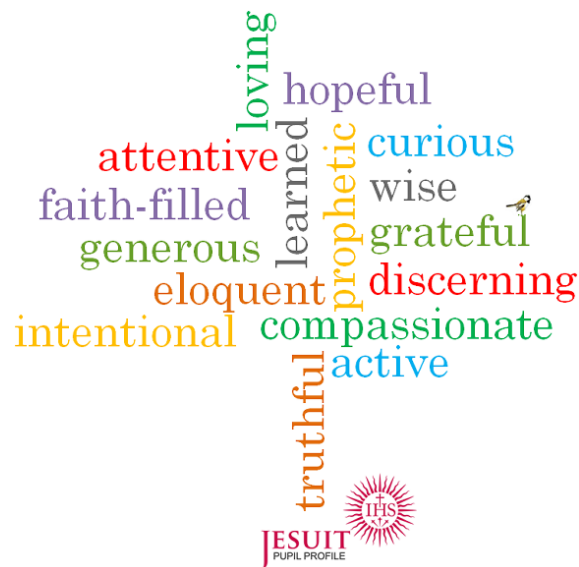
Curious about everything; and **active** in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and **prophetic** in the example they set to others.

How can we live this through *The BHF Way*? Our core aspirations for students?



How can we instil the Virtues – high moral behaviours and characteristics in our students to support us in living out our school mission to ensure students at our school possess a constellation of virtues- ‘good character’? We must also be aware, that as Catholic leaders within our school community, we have the privilege and moral obligation to develop character within our staff body. This group of already committed and dedicated staff will be instrumental in the character education of our students – for this alone cannot be achieved by a small group of senior leaders. It must be consistent and inherent across the staff.



Character Building in Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School



The *Catholic Education Resource Centre* have produced '*A Comprehensive Approach to Character Building in Catholic schools*'.

In this section I will explore some of the elements of this approach, providing a synopsis of the recommendations, based on the research underpinning it, and the implications for us as a school community to develop our curriculum to enrich the character education we provide.

The focus of this guide is centred around the purpose of Catholic Education to '*turn us into little Christs, to continue the process of our transformation in Christ that began in our baptism. How can Catholic schools help to develop, in both students and staff, the character of Christ*'.

'Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked'

(John 2:6)

What are the Challenges of Catholic Education?

(1) How can we encourage children and adults to develop a personal, prayerful, sacramental relationship with Jesus that will enable him to live more fully in them — to give them his very self, his character? Especially in the context of the de-churched and the never-churched, as covered by Simon Uttley in Chapter 3.

(2) How can the Catholic school become a living incarnation of Christ, a community that enables all its members to experience and live the virtues?

For us to continue to grow character education within the school curriculum, we must foster an approach whereby our ethos and teaching develops character in our staff and students through the spiritual and moral life of the school. Below are some things to consider:

The teacher as caregiver, model, and mentor

We must recognise the importance of teacher-student relationships. This is the foundation for character education in our school. The development of character, amongst the adults in our school is a vital tool in ensuring we can education our young people and develop the character virtues in our students.

*I have come to a frightening conclusion.
I am the decisive element in the classroom.
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.
It is my daily mood that makes the weather.
As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous.
I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.
I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal.
In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated,
and a child humanized or de-humanized.*

(Teacher and Child: A book for Parents and Teachers'. Haim G. Ginott, 1972.)

Some considerations for us as a school community:

- **How do staff model behaviour – in their interactions with students and all aspects of their work? Do they demonstrate good character and a virtuous approach? How can we develop these virtues within our staff?**

Developing students' personal prayer life

Why do some students stop practising their faith? This is something we see amongst the young people in our school community. This can be for many reasons. Perhaps some have never fully understood the meaning of their faith – perhaps their 'faith' has been seen as 'external behaviours' and not with the living God. Many are not taken to church. Students may not have an intimacy with God and prayer. For many, school offers the only opportunity for this. Some may not have a personal prayer experience – weakening their spiritual life. In the absence of this, students may grow further apart from their religion. We can provide time to pray in school, but as a Catholic school, we must equip students with the tools to pray such as developing conversational prayer. This, of course, sits within our mandate to show dignity to every member of our community, mindful of our students and staff of different faith traditions, or none, whose presence and contribution are of equal value. A pattern of prayer, e.g. thanksgiving and petition.

How can we improve the personal prayer life of our students?

- **Improve the opportunities and space for personal prayer.**
- **Develop further the collective worship experience and participation of our students – including student-led planning and delivery.**
- **Understanding of conversational prayer.**
- **Ensuring regular opportunity and facilitation of prayer – not only in collective worship, but throughout the day, on a personal level.**

A caring classroom community and moral discipline

Parents are the first teachers of children. We know that our students at BHF have a vast range of backgrounds, family circumstances and experiences. The love, care and guidance that students receive from the adults who work with them at school is essential. They need adults in their life to set a good example, guide them spiritually, and give them opportunities for positive relationships with staff and each other – something that may be less evident in their experience beyond the school gates. Students can gain mutual support and experience belonging, as part of their peer group, but unfortunately, this too can give rise to an experience of the very opposite. How do we address bullying in our community? Do we do enough to support both victims and perpetrators to fully understand the consequences and to realise high moral behaviours?

As a school we must strive to be proactive in establishing an environment of care and respect for each other. Staff must set the example in their interactions with each other and with students. We must continue to be proactive and take swift action when addressing behaviours that fall below these expectations.

Students and all human beings possess a need for belonging, security and acceptance. This can be achieved through a caring classroom and school community. If we continue to grow a community, meeting the expectation that all students are loved, cherished, feel accepted and valued, they will continue to grow and live out these behaviours towards each other.

Rules and discipline are necessary in school. These should endeavour to develop self-discipline, moral reasoning and respect for us and each other. We have a supportive and robust behaviour policy in place in school - students, parents and staff have a clear understanding of this, the 'right and wrong' behaviours, but do all understand the moral values that provide the foundation for this policy? It is easy to focus on rewards and sanctions, but we must work towards an understanding by all, that we adhere to the policy and rules because it is the right thing to do – respecting the rights and needs of others.

Students are 'taught' what the virtues are and how habitual practice will lead to a more fulfilling life, developing one's character. Do students realise the moral value of these virtues? How can we increase students' awareness of their behaviour, developing moral reasoning and understanding?

How can we further develop and grow a caring classroom and school experience – based on moral discipline?

- **Work towards expectations, processes, protocols and a behaviour policy, establishing rules enabling all to have a moral understanding.**
- **Improve the restorative work/actions following all sanctions - moral dialogue.**
- **Develop capacity for all staff to model character and positive behaviours.**

- **Further develop our therapeutic approaches to addressing the cause of poor behaviour choices and absence of moral values.**
- **Strengthen our education and response to bullying.**

Participatory decision making

Virtuous character can be developed with student participation, leadership and decision making – encouraging students to do the right thing, rather than just saying the right words. We have long-established student leadership positions within the school, including the junior and senior student leadership teams, along with the successful Peer Supporters programme and Student Council.

Synodality, a term taken from the Greek word for ‘walking together’, describing the process of working together, listening and collaborating with the members of the church, encompasses synodality. Pope Francis has expressed his belief that a synodal approach to governance is exactly what the holy spirit is asking the Catholic Church to achieve: “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission”. With this ambition in mind, we too can follow this path and strengthen the sense of ‘synodality’ and collegiality within our school community.

How can we develop and enhance participatory decision making, collegiality and student/staff leadership within the school?

- **Student and staff groups working with governors and leaders.**
- **Student contribution to school policies and processes.**
- **Strengthening of student voice.**

Teaching virtues through the curriculum

Examination of the curriculum content within the various disciplines to identify the intersections between the knowledge and skill content, and the virtues we strive to adopt is key, in order to develop character education across the curriculum. This needs to be viewed through the lens of moral and spiritual opportunity.

Wynne and Ryan (1993) explore the concept of curriculum as a ‘moral educator’ and the exploration of the conveyance of moral values by a hidden curriculum. Greater emphasis on moral education and character formation is a rediscovery of curriculum's core intention. Teachers can find their most potent instrument for moral education in the form and substance of the curriculum. This must be a focus for our subject leaders going forward – identifying opportunities to embed character formation through moral purpose throughout curriculum plans. What opportunities can we take to explore self-development, family, environment, human rights, democracy and peace?

(Curriculum as a Moral Educator. Wynne, Edward A.; Ryan, Kevin)

- **A full review curriculum planning to audit and identify opportunities to embed character formation and moral purpose.**

Caring beyond the classroom

Students who develop a greater personal sanctity through prayer and sacraments will be able to channel God's love to others. This service often begins within the school, for example, our peer support programme and various leadership opportunities within the student body. Caring beyond the classroom does not only include service within the school community but can include service reaching out beyond our immediate community to our local, national and global community. Through this service to others common students can develop students' character, relationships and the fulfilment of influencing and touching another's life.

How can we develop care and service beyond the classroom?

- **Increase our charity and outreach work – with moral understanding.**
- **Work with the local community**
- **Work within the diocese**
- **National and global outreach**

[A comprehensive approach to character building in Catholic schools \(catholiceducation.org\)](http://catholiceducation.org)

Next steps for Character Education at BHF

We have introduced and are working towards a greater understanding of virtues and character education within the school. Understanding of our school mission, the BHF Way and Catholic Social Teaching have supported our community in strengthening the quality of character education within the school.

We must now consider the next steps in developing this further to ensure that we provide a curriculum which allows students to grow in their formation and flourish as individuals. This must begin with strengthening staff formation and character virtues. A greater understanding of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and fundamental realisation of a virtue education, leading to character building is an essential foundation for developing this within our students.

Reviewing the curriculum content and identifying opportunities to explore and deepen character education within every subject discipline will support us in embedding this into the experience of our students from Year 7, through to Year 13. Leaders must invest in seeking opportunities to do so.

Virtues and character should be an evident thread running through our curriculum, policies and all aspects of what we do within the school. Teachers are caregivers and models for students, and an awareness of our behaviours and the way in which we show good character gives opportunity for positive role models, influencing our students. This needs to be present in all staff. We will seek to identify opportunities for deepening understanding and staff virtue formation.

Prayer and worship play an important role in providing the foundations for students and staff to develop their faith. We must look for opportunities to strengthen this further through facilitating these opportunities for personal prayer and student participation – leading to a greater understanding of the meaning of prayer relating to character formation.

Robust behaviour systems provide a basis on which we can maintain positive behaviour and conduct throughout the school. Students and staff alike must appreciate the moral value of these systems – a deep understanding of the principles upon which these systems are built, enabling all to develop morality and a sense of belonging, security and acceptance. This can be strengthened by improving our restorative and therapeutic approaches.

Strong student leadership and service is an integral part of the school. Through participatory decision making, we can develop character rich individuals who do the right thing rather than just saying the right words. We can seek opportunities for student collaboration with school leadership, governance and contribution to the processes, protocols and policies we implement within school.

Personal sanctity enables us to channel God’s love to others. We do this well at BHF through leadership at all levels, along with the support we give to our staff and students. We can strengthen out charity and outreach work within our school, local, national and global community – with a full understanding and appreciation of the moral purpose underpinning this.

Moving forward, we will focus on a clear communication of the Church’s vision for Catholic education and the development of character virtues within our school. As leaders, we must evaluate our provision, identifying strengths and the virtues that need further development. Staff need opportunities for reflection on the virtues that will enable their formation as teachers and leaders, in order to strengthen quality first character education within the school. Tangential to this, we must audit the provision in place and develop plans for a realisation of the characteristics that we want to see within your students and staff – with clear and measurable impact.

Reading:

[Apostolic Journey to the United Kingdom: Meeting with the world of Catholic Education in the Chapel and Sports Arena of St Mary's University College in Twickenham \(London Borough of Richmond, 17 September 2010\) | BENEDICT XVI \(vatican.va\)](#)

[Gravissimum educationis \(vatican.va\)](#)

[Pope Benedict XVI in the UK - The Papal Visit](#)

[The Catholic School \(vatican.va\)](#)

[The Jesuit Institute - Jesuit Pupil Profile](#)

[Character Education | Diocese of Leeds - Education](#)

[Catholic-Character-EducationFINAL.pdf \(dioceseofleeds.org.uk\)](#)

[For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission. Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality \(vatican.va\)](#)

[A comprehensive approach to character building in Catholic schools \(catholiceducation.org\)](#)

Teacher and Child: A book for Parents and Teachers'. Haim G. Ginott, 1972.

American Educator: The Professional Journal of the American Federation of Teachers, Wynne, Edward A.; Ryan, Kevin, 1993.

5.0 Behaviour and character

CHARACTER FOR LEARNING -

JERMAINE WEBSTER AND SUE MATTHEWS

Key Performance Indicators

Safeguarding: High quality proactive processes and provision which are a model of excellence within the local authority and a benchmark for the Mother Theresa MAT in preparation for September 2027

Mental Health and Wellbeing: Each and every member of staff and child, in our school, feels secure in the knowledge that their wellbeing matters and that, where the need arises, they will be appropriately supported to feel safe and thrive.

Therapeutic Interventions: A regularly reviewed therapeutic interventions menu in collaboration with internal and external professionals to the benefit of all students at the time they need it.

Introduction

The choices an individual makes determines their future, and the purpose of developing good character is the ability to make good choices. Character allows us to flourish as individuals, and as a wider society. This is why the development of character, as well as achieving academic attainment, should be the purpose of education.

“Character becomes your destiny,” Lao Tzu, Philosopher

(Association for Character Education)

Drawing on thinking from the ‘Looking Back, Looking Forward’ introduction to this document where the following is outlined:

‘Behaviour of students deteriorated post-Covid, particularly in Year 11 but elsewhere also. This international phenomenon has taken a toll on staff and leaders are looking at strategies to

address what is a national problem. Our focus remains (a) consistent good teaching (b) clear and humane behaviour policy (c) strong pastoral support and intervention (d) work with hard-to-reach families to ensure that all parents work with the school in a spirit of partnership, believing they are valued and have dignity in what can, certainly when outside agencies are involved, feel a bureaucratic process.'

To place all our students in a position to demonstrate and develop character for learning and success, we must ensure that both staff and students are at their best removing or, as a minimum, diminishing any barriers that may stand in the way. We recognise that work remains to be done. Below is an outline of work done so far and the next steps to inform our priorities from September 2024 onwards.

- **Context**

Our ethos is our guide. It is the point of reference for all we do, why and how we do it.

- **Staff and Student Mental Health and Wellbeing**

No one would argue with the key importance of student and staff mental health and wellbeing to student success. We fully subscribe to this as demonstrated by the wide range of provision in place, our expertise in applying it as appropriate, our proactivity in constantly seeking to develop strategies that work, dispel those that don't and proactively seeking new and additional solutions to put staff in the best position to teach and students in the best position to learn and achieve. Instrumental to our approach is a regularly reviewed and up-dated Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy which covers both staff and students and sets the context for our work. It is supported by our Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan which is informed by the NSPCC guidelines in line with DfE expectations. If staff are not in a good state of wellbeing, they are not equipped to give of their best to the students. If students' wellbeing is not good, they are not able to settle to the demands of the curriculum, and this can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Our ongoing task, which we tackle head on, is to break down any barriers, plan ahead and put staff and students in the best place to succeed.

National Survey Findings:

Student Mental Health:

NHS 2021 Data Trawl Key Findings

- *Rates of probable mental disorders have increased since 2017; in 6- to 16-year-olds from one in nine (11.6%) to one in six (17.4%), and in 17 to 19 year olds from one in ten (10.1%) to one in six (17.4%). Rates in both age groups remained similar between 2020 and 2021.*
- *39.2% of 6- to 16-year-olds had experienced deterioration in mental health since 2017, and 21.8% experienced improvement. Among 17- to 23-year-olds, 52.5% experienced deterioration, and 15.2% experienced improvement.*
- *10.6% of 6- to 16-year-olds missed more than 15 days of school during the 2020 Autumn term. Children with a probable mental disorder were twice as likely to have missed this much school (18.2%) as those unlikely to have a mental disorder (8.8%).*

School Staff Mental Health

Teacher Wellbeing Index 2022: www.educationsupport.org.uk:

- *In a survey of **3,082 education professionals**: 75% of all staff are stressed (84% of senior leaders, 72% of schoolteachers) 47% of all staff always go into work when unwell (61% of senior leaders, 45% of school teachers) 78% of all staff experienced mental health symptoms due to their work (87% senior leaders, 76% school teachers)*
- *Record numbers of UK teachers and education staff have considered leaving the sector in the past academic year due to pressures on their mental health and wellbeing. Over half of staff have actively sought to change or leave their current jobs, citing workload as the main factor:*
- *59% of staff have considered leaving the sector in the past academic year due to pressures on their mental health and wellbeing (67% senior leaders, 59% schoolteachers)*
- *55% of staff have actively sought to change or leave their current jobs (58% senior leaders, 53% schoolteachers)*
- *68% of staff cited volume of workload as the main reason for thinking about leaving their jobs (83% senior leaders, 66% schoolteachers)*

Here at Blessed Hugh – Current provision

Students:

We continue to be key, proactive members of the Mental Health Support Team helping shape provision locally and continuing to collaborate and build links via regular formal and informal meetings with link professionals from Brighter Futures to the benefit of our community. We embrace opportunities to guide and support our students and consult with the MHST, to inform

our work with vulnerable children, via the Mental Health and Educational Psychologist Surgeries. We supplement this with training for staff as appropriate to ensure they have the skills and knowledge they need. An example is the Suicidal Ideation training offered by the MHST/CAMHS Clinical Lead to teachers in September 2023 and the trauma training offered to groups of support staff and Year Leaders over 2022 – 23 supplemented by the teacher session in October 2023. We have regular lunch time sessions for Year 7 students in collaboration with the MHST and Soundscape and are reviewing lunch time provision for Years 8 – 13 in discussion with the MHST, student representatives and key staff.

Our newly launched initiative with input from our Counsellors and the Assistant Headteachers with responsibility for safeguarding and behaviour focuses on improving the mental health of wellbeing of students by tackling bullying at all levels, encouraging students to seek help, educating those involved in bullying to understand the implications and acknowledge that it will not be tolerated. The 2023 – 24 programme incorporating guidance and training for staff across the school will be a key driving force over 2024 – 27 to gradually embed a culture where all in our school (staff and students alike) conduct themselves in accordance with everyone being born in the image and likeness of God.

Our established Mental Health Team shares an ongoing drive to ensure the best for all in our community, meets termly and comprises key staff across SEND, pastoral support, counselling and safeguarding. Meetings are structured to allow review and updating of the Mental Health Action Plan, discuss concerns, share good practice and plan for the MHST surgeries and identify and seek additional opportunities for individuals and groups to improve their mental health and wellbeing. An example is the High Ropes course at Wellington College during the last academic year. This drive will continue as we move into 2024 – 27 reviewing foci as priorities develop and change.

We have a growing team of qualified and effective mental health first aiders, such that we're increasingly well-equipped to respond to the low-level needs of students across the school. In addition, our ELSAs and two qualified counsellors all of whom are represented on the Mental Health Team provide further specialised support. In addition, the Zones of Regulation Training in February 2024 means our Year 7 Year Leader, our HLTA, a range of TAs from both SEND areas and our newly appointed Alternative Curriculum and Intervention Coordinator all have the knowledge to embark on and, moving forward, develop the use of this strategy to encourage students to reflect on their behaviours, learn the skills they need to self-regulate thus impacting positively on their, and others, mental health and wellbeing in addition to learning in school. The plan moving forward is to provide opportunities for current trained staff to champion the approach and provide mentoring to future Zones of Regulation trainees the objective being to be able to provide widely across the school with a focus on prevention rather than cure.

Staff:

The Workload Reduction Group continues to meet regularly with the Headmaster and HR Officer and is supplemented by the new (in 2023 – 24) Wellbeing Top Tips Team comprising members of staff from across the school (SLT, Chaplaincy, teaching, cover supervision, teaching assistant and Counsellor). The group launched its philosophy at a Teach Brief and meets termly to discuss newsletter content, consider what is going well and plan future opportunities to meet staff needs and areas of interest. One member of the team is an Adult Mental Health First Aider and the Headmaster is trained to Level 3. The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for mental health and wellbeing completed the DfE Senior Mental Health Lead course in December 2021 and this covers both youth and adult mental health. This is the springboard for widening the team and deepening impact to support colleagues across the school.

We heavily promote the opportunity to hear from key professionals in the field such as the Koinonia Teacher Resilience and Wellbeing session offered by Professor Anna Lise Gordon of St Mary's University, encouraging all staff (not just teachers) to attend and stressing that it is about them as individuals. The individual Directed Time Budgets ensure that staff commitments are within the 1265 hours repaying those whose roles/teaching mean they exceed them. We take a supportive approach to individual staff needs taking Occupational Health advice should the need arise. Our CPD Programme contains a wellbeing element with the opportunity for prayer and reflection and 2 half days of individual wellbeing time. We subscribe to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offering free confidential and impartial advice to staff who choose to use it and promote the NHS Talking Therapies initiative. This approach reflects 'the way we do things around here' and is the springboard for future provision which will be reviewed and adapted as needs dictate.

- **Staff training/impact on mental health and wellbeing**

Our whole school CPD Programme focuses on key priorities with a clear link to our Operational Plan, allows time for department and individual work and incorporates liturgy, reflection and 2 half days of teacher well-being time. The whole school programme is supplemented by the Professional Studies Programme. focusing specifically on PGCE trainees, non-qualified teachers and Early Career Teachers (ECTs), individual/small group mentoring and coaching, our PiXL Membership and externally run courses and conferences. We promote the opportunity to hear from specialists in the field such as Professor Anna Lise Gordon, with such sessions being available live and recorded. Training staff is a key priority and will continue into the future via group, whole school (including retreats), individual sessions, as needed, and embracing opportunities to hear from external professionals in the field.

- **Links with Parents and outside agencies**

We pride ourselves on our two-way communication with parents, carers and outside agencies to inform and support our work with students. Our Visitors Policy sets the tone for expected interactions and serves as a point of reference for visitors (face to face and virtual) and staff alike. Links with parents and carers of SEND students are particularly strong along with our open dialogue with the BfFC SEND department. We hold regular opportunities for SEND parents to visit the school, spend time with the SENDCO and Head of the Autism Resource, receive useful information from outside agencies such as CAMHS and hold bi-annual Tea and Cakes sessions for primary SENDCO's, their team and the BfFC SEND Team. These are key to ensuring understanding of what we offer, the way we work, update on trends that may influence this and to strengthening further the partnership with the professionals and schools involved. This work will continue as we move forward.

The Pastoral Team is experienced and supports the Year Teams in their work meeting with students, contacting home, building relationships with students and parents/carers and conveying information to enable decision-making. The structure and accommodation are under review to better cater for the needs of the school and students moving forward. It is anticipated that both will be in place for September 2024 with an ongoing focus on implementation, embedding and review.

The Safeguarding Team has strong, established links with Children's Social Care in Local Authorities in which our children live (BfFC, West Berkshire, Wokingham and beyond) and works closely with the professionals and families concerned to ensure the best for each child. OfSTED applauded the work of the 'Expert Safeguarding Team' a key feature of which is ongoing close collaboration and regular review. Our practice is excellent and our aim to be sector leading within the Local Authority, the Koinonia Partnership and the Trust of which we will become part.

We link with other schools in the local authority and beyond for Fixed Term Transfers, Off-site Directions and Managed Moves to cater for students requiring respite or a fresh start. In addition, we have direct links with a range of Alternative Provision to cater for the variety of short to long term needs to be educated off-site. As part of this, we contribute to the BfFC Fair Access Panel which meets each month to ensure students not in education are appropriately provided for and consider how schools can collaborate to provide needed opportunities for students struggling in their assigned school. Where students are educated off site, we conduct a site visit to confirm the appropriateness of the setting and, thereafter, regular visits to see the child in the setting including attending virtual sessions for this purpose. Where a child hasn't been seen we have a clear protocol for doorstep checks the findings of which are recorded centrally with appropriate escalation where needed to check the safety of the child. Moving forward this will continue with a constant focus on the needs of the child and the school.

We have established both the Joshua Academy and the Boxing Initiative with a view to inspiring and refocusing students on the importance of education. As part of the identification process, we work with parents to develop their understanding of the purpose of their child's involvement. As situations and needs evolve, we will continue to work in collaboration with providers and monitor the impact on the child both directly and via discussions with teachers, learning walks and monitoring of progress. We will continue to use this information to develop/adjust existing provision and seek additional opportunities for our children to thrive and flourish.

We have subscribed to the TES Provision Map App which is part of the Class Charts package so, in addition to parents being able to view their child's achievements and behaviour log, we are able to easily record the content of discussions and meetings with parents by our staff and outside agencies such that the information can be shared across the range of staff involved thus providing a clear basis for decision-making and future interactions. Once again, this provides a strong basis on which to continue to improve our information sharing internally and externally.

The regular Heads-Up Newsletter, emails and Group Call advise parents and carers of key information supplemented by the Year Group Information Evenings, Parents' Evenings and Open Days/Evenings. A priority is to consider ways in which we can use our ICT system to increase readership.

- **Safeguarding Provision**

Much work was done over the period 2021 – 2023, in collaboration with the Senior Standards Officers at Brighter Futures, to review safeguarding and ensure that our provision (staffing and processes) is of the highest order. The September 2023 Ofsted Inspection not only confirmed that we are effective but acknowledged strengths and commented very favourably on the impact of our 'Expert Team'. Our Safeguard My School Subscription has proven a very worthwhile investment easing the process of referral and record keeping providing detailed updates on individual cases as the basis for the next steps. This subscription and the training required to ensure its effective use will continue to be a priority.

The Single Central Record is regularly reviewed by the Link Safeguarding Governor and DSL and is consistently compliant. We have a highly effective, proactive approach, with the aid of technology, to ensuring that staff are up to date with key course completion (Child Protection in Education and the Prevent Duty being key). We have a system in place whereby staff are alerted to the need to update certification, and this is supported by emails in which the DSL is copied to remind and chase. Governors are required to complete key courses and the DSL gives an annual update on key safeguarding priorities informed by the annual updates to Keeping Children Safe in

Education and updates published throughout the year. Governors have access to our Intranet so can read the posts written by the DSL with up-dates and key priorities. The DSL meets regularly with the Safeguarding Link Governor in addition to the safeguarding and SCR checks. Our good practice is shared across Koinonia schools both directly and via posts on the Blog.

Next Steps:

Notwithstanding all this good and excellent provision, it is a rapidly changing environment. We will continue to remain abreast of new expectations, adjust our practice accordingly and ensure staff are fully trained to be effective. Our subscription to Safeguarding Pro, the DSL's attendance at the Annual Child Protection Conference and dialogue with our OfSTED trained LA colleagues are key to ensuring high quality provision. Already the 'Expert Team', the aim is to become sector-leading.

- **Behaviour Support**

Key Findings:

Extract from The Guardian: 'Disruptive behaviour in English schools worse since Covid, says outgoing Ofsted Head'

- Disruptive behaviour in English schools worse is since Covid, says outgoing Ofsted head
- Behaviour in schools in England has deteriorated since the pandemic, with pupils refusing to comply with rules, talking back to teachers and walking out of class mid-lesson, the head of Ofsted says.
- Suspensions for physical assault, threatening behaviour and verbal abuse have increased, with even primary schoolchildren being defiant and refusing to follow simple classroom instructions, such as to get out their books.

The Behaviour For Learning Policy outlines our philosophy and was up-dated in January 2024. It now references expectations of parents in addition to students and staff Pages 2 – 6).

Our Pastoral and Achievement Coordinators, our Alternative Curriculum and Intervention Co-ordinator, our Mental Health First Aiders, Counsellors, Zones of Regulation trained staff, TAs and ELSA's all support the work of the SLT, year teams and teachers to ensure students have the support and guidance they need to understand the importance of positive behaviour along with strategies to achieve it. The information provided on Class Charts enables all to monitor trends in behaviour (individual, group and year group) and provides the 2 senior leaders with responsibility for behaviour and safeguarding, who meet on a weekly basis, with information to support students of concern. This includes looking at whether a behaviour is indicating a safeguarding

concern and monitoring the behaviour of children on the safeguarding register as changes could raise concerns for further exploration internally and/or with Children's Social Care.

Our decision to purchase the Provision Maps App (part of the Class Charts package) has been transformational. Training is in place for staff inputting and using the information. It provides clearly accessible and interpretable data on student behaviour to inform decision-making by all – principally the Year Leader and Pastoral Team. The data can indicate a need for intervention, a potential safeguarding concern and circumstances in which it may be appropriate to consider alternative pathways to maximise student engagement and attainment. As the information is centralised it provides a platform for greater communication and consistency between the behaviour, safeguarding and SEND leads and their teams. Student Learning Plans (behaviour and Pupil Premium) and SEND Student Passports, produced on Provision Maps, are now easily accessible for all staff through Class Charts and enable the swift identification of factors to inform teaching and learning approaches needed to ensure progress for all the point of reference being the Universal Offer. The Alternative Curriculum and Intervention Co-ordinator is amongst our Zones of Regulation trained staff and uses their resources and bespoke session workbooks covering a range of student needs. She conducts 1:1 and small group sessions to students that have been referred to help address specific behaviours that are of concern. Looking more widely, the Joy Programme covered in section 7 and, currently, being trialled with key BMW students aims to explore behaviours via the use of drama. Our Boxing Initiative and The Joshua Academy continue under constant review of impact with greater interactions between the mentors, Jermaine Webster and Sue Matthews.

As well as broadening the range of Zones of Regulation-trained staff to work intensively with students we are now at a point where we can forge ahead, over 2024 – 27, in establishing a whole school Therapeutic Interventions approach to responding to student behaviours and needs embracing elements of the TTS (Therapeutic Thinking School Model).

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE FUTURE – ANN MCDONNELL AND KARYN STILES

Financial sustainability can be defined as the ability of an organisation to build and maintain a strong and stable financial background.

According to a report produced by the National Audit Office in November 2021 a financially sustainable school system is vital to the learning and development of the country's children. Schools are financially sustainable when they successfully provide a good-quality education to all their pupils within the income that they receive. The report concluded that the financial health of the mainstream school system has held up well despite the funding and cost pressures that schools have faced in recent years, although the data do not yet reflect the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic may have had. Most maintained schools and academy trusts are in surplus, but there are significant pressures on some maintained secondary schools. Ofsted inspection ratings suggest that mainstream schools have generally maintained educational quality, although there are indications that the steps schools are taking in response to financial pressures may adversely affect aspects of their provision.

School Funding Statistics published by gov.uk (January 2024) stated:

The total amount of funding allocated to English schools for 5–16-year-old pupils has grown since 2010-11 as the total pupil population has also grown.

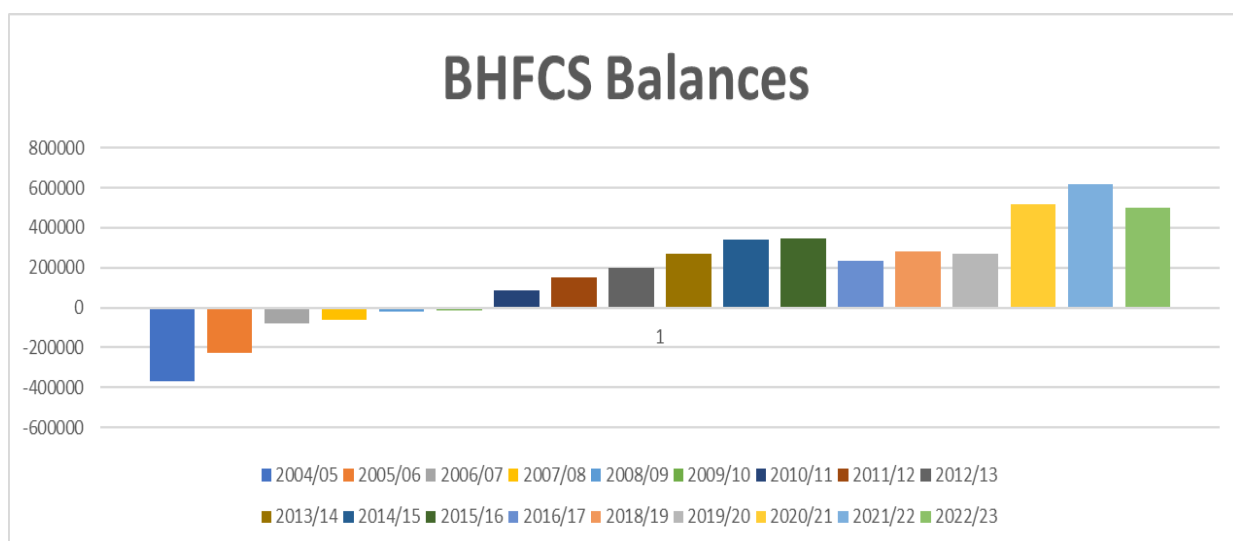
In cash terms, the total funding allocated to schools through the grants covered in this report is £59.5 billion in 2024-25, an increase of 70% compared to the £35.0 billion allocated in 2010-11.

On a per-pupil basis the total funding allocated to schools for 5–16-year-old pupils, in cash terms, in 2024-25 was £7,690, a 49% increase compared to £5,180 allocated per pupil in 2010-11.

When adjusted for inflation, funding per pupil was broadly flat between 2010-11 and 2015-16 at around £7,200 in 2023-24 prices. It then fell by 3.9% over 2016-17 and 2017-18, but subsequently increased by 1.2% over 2018-19 and 2019-20. Since then, funding has increased by 7.9% (after adjusting for inflation) over the course of the following five years, reaching £7,570 in 2024-25 (in 2023-24 prices).

However, the findings of a NAHT survey revealed that just 5% of schools say they will be able to pay their costs in the academic year (23-24) without going into deficit – meaning more than 9 in 10 schools won't be able to balance their budgets without drastic action.

So how does Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School fair in this economic picture?



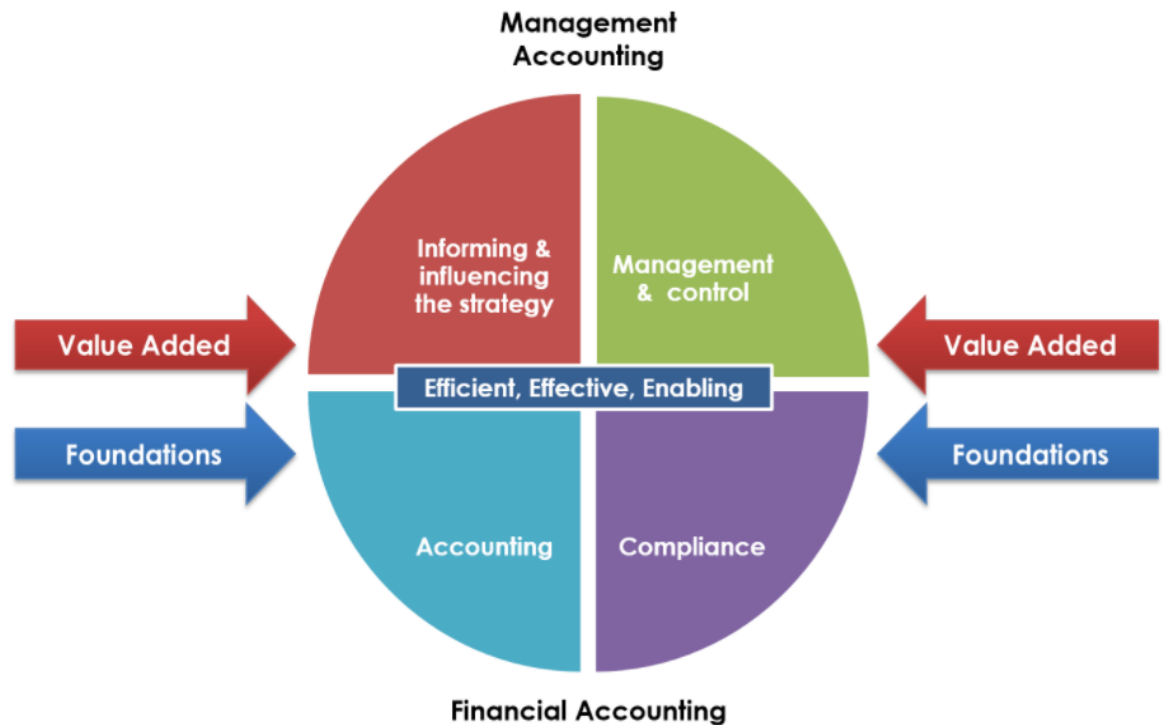
We can see that the school has experienced the lows of a deficit budget followed by a long period of financial stability. A deficit position is an unenviable position to be in and the resulting pain of reducing expenditure to a “bare bones” basis and the addition scrutiny of the Local Authority/ Trust is extremely demoralising and recovery can take many years.

So why do deficits occur? Some of the most common reasons are:

- drop in pupil numbers.
- reduction in funding at local & national level
- staffing changes & unfunded pay awards
- poor financial management

So, what can prevent schools from falling into deficit? The most effective budgets are created through shared ownership. The school’s staff and governors all have a responsibility to consider value for money and best value when using the school budget.

The role of finance is to enable the delivery of educational objectives in an efficient and effective way, these aims drive all aspects of financial planning.



Accounting and compliance are the building blocks of sound financial management; most of the activities are transactional and historical and they must be correct and well controlled because the data generated provides the information used in decision making. If we know our data is correct, then we review our appetite for risk.

Management accounting activities look more to the future and include scenario analysis, so the school has a plan to adapt to a range of different circumstances. We would also look at analysis of trends, information gathering from a variety of sources to bring in additional data to bring more insight to managing financial pressures and future uncertainties.

The key characteristics of financial sustainability include:

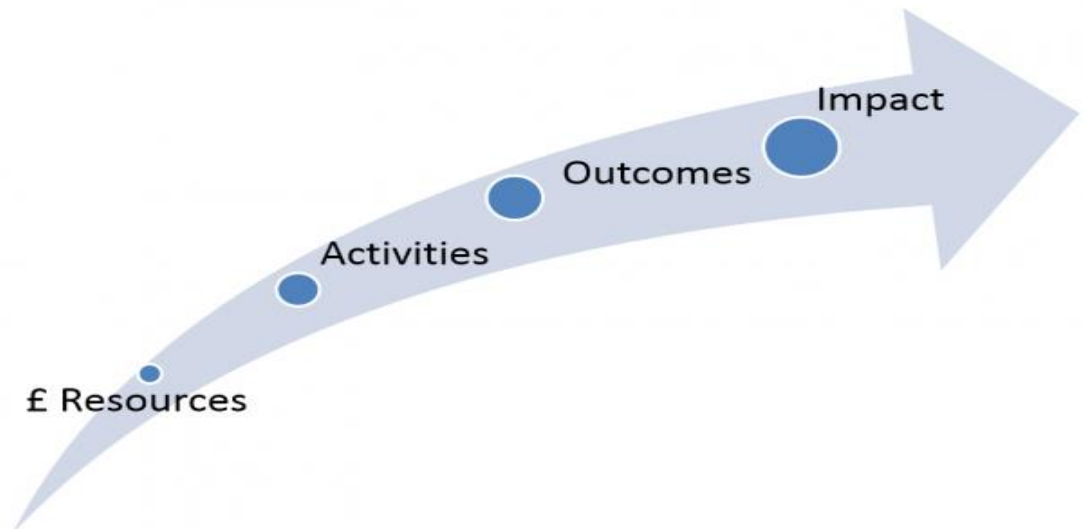
- Education-based financial planning – i.e. the budget is not just a separate bolt-on consideration.
- Strategic financial planning.
- Prioritising the most effective and efficient deployment of staff.
- Limiting spend on back office and procurement.
- Challenge by financially skilled governors.
- Staff managing school budgets have the correct skills to do so.

We have proved to be very successful in weathering a very turbulent history of funding and have seen our reserves grow to a comfortable £500k. However, we must not become complacent in our financial practices; our reserve can be spent only once and if we cannot build a sustainable annual budget where planned expenditure is matched to income then our budget will plunge into a deficit position.

How to remain solvent?

We need to continue to adopt the characteristics as listed before and in the instance of education-based financial planning do it better. Although we refer to resources required in our operational planning the links can be tenuous (recognising they are often estimates) and often not costed. Our financial plans are integrated with staffing, IT and building plans but there is a disconnect with educational development plans i.e. curriculum budgets and other non-curricular allocations. We are in danger of our budget becoming a document based upon “last years plus” and hence we limit the opportunity to re-think priorities and allocations to enable our best educational impact.

Going forward we must, as we have done occasionally before as senior leaders, take time to look at our financial position. It is not an operation which rests solely with the Head Teacher & Business Manager and without input from other leaders to look at the resources required for the activities to deliver outcomes and the measurement of impact of the investment then the budget becomes a bolt-on and not an enabler. For this reason, we now include a financial briefing to the whole SLT on a regular basis.



How do we compare with our neighbouring schools?

As a school we make use of tools to benchmark other schools and examine their costs to ascertain our efficiencies and areas which highlight where tighter controls can be made.

The chart below shows the schools selected for our comparative data and the latest data available relates to 2021/2022.

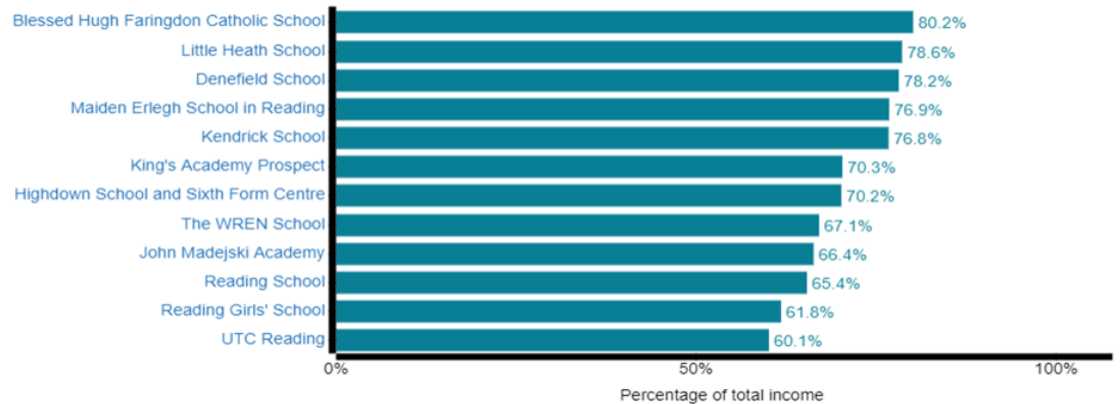
School context data

School name	Local authority	School type	Number of pupils
Little Heath School	West Berkshire	Voluntary aided school	1647
Highdown School and Sixth Form Centre	Reading	Academy converter	1571
Reading School	Reading	Academy converter	1104
King's Academy Prospect	Reading	Academy converter	980
Denefield School	West Berkshire	Academy converter	1120
John Madejski Academy	Reading	Academy sponsor led	778
The WREN School	Reading	Free school	978
Maiden Erlegh School in Reading	Reading	Free school	886
Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School	Reading	Voluntary aided school	949
Kendrick School	Reading	Academy converter	830
Reading Girls' School	Reading	Academy sponsor led	688
UTC Reading	Reading	University technical college	472

Total expenditure (Percentage of total income)



Staff total (Percentage of total income)



When we look at the charts above the immediate area of concern is our staffing % which is the highest of all comparator schools.

Other expenditure areas as shown below shown that we have very limited scope to reduce expenditure significantly to balance the staffing expenditure.

Non-Staffing Expenditure

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Cleaning & Caretaking | Average expenditure |
| • Maintenance & Improvement | Well below average expenditure |
| • Occupation Costs | Below average expenditure |
| • Supplies & Services | Below Average expenditure |

There is a connection between staffing expenditure and financial sustainability; in an ideal world between 70% - 80% of school budget should be spent upon salary costs: our current planned cost is 80.6%.

The contact ratio is also a determination of efficiency. This is a measure of the proportion of the timetable cycle that teachers spend in teaching contact taken as an average across all teaching staff. The Association of School & College Leaders suggests a figure of 0.78; ours currently is 0.68

We will remain financially stable as long as we know and understand our current position; the local and national context and we anticipate and plan for the medium and long term future.

Top tips for economic stability

- Talk and learn from others.
- Open, honest conversation
- Upskill, upskill, upskill (staff and governors) – be the best we can possibly be
- Tap into any bulk purchase opportunity.
- It cannot be all about the budget or all about education; the processes must align.
- External review
- Simple equation to balance budget = increase income or reduce expenditure

Looking to the future

Academisation is back on the agenda and with it challenges and possible opportunities. The context of this think piece is financial sustainability so that will be the focus.

Regarding the school budget will we be any better off?

The Local Authority will determine the school's core budget using a local funding formula. The government uses the national funding formula (NFF) to work out the 'notional' core funding allocation and then the Local Authority will determine the school's core budget using a local funding formula. This is the same system as for maintained schools. But, unlike for maintained schools the LA will submit its local formula to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and in turn the ESFA issues academies allocation statements. The funding allocations are paid directly to the trust by the ESFA. As the MAT receives the money it can decide to pool some or all of it and redistribute it between its schools.

The MAT may "top slice" the individual school budget to pay for central services.

Examples –

St Pauls Catholic College, West Sussex (Bosco Catholic Educational Trust) contributed £209,050 = 3.5% of their GAG (General Annual Grant) to service the costs as detailed below:

- Shared governance services
- Administrative services
- Financial services
- Educational support services

According to the latest published accounts (2021/2022) of the Frassati Catholic Academy Trust schools within the trust contributed a top slice of 3% to service the Academy Trust Central services stated as:

- Administration and governance costs
- Audit and accountancy fees

To put in context 3% of our current school budget share equivalent to the GAG would be £171293

Economies of scale will often be highlighted as a positive benefit of being a member of a MAT. The ability to bulk purchase supplies and services and to share back-office staff may appear to be very attractive but in reality how would that look and what impact would it have upon our school.

If we put in context our existing costs which could be serviced centrally by the MAT:

- | | |
|--|---------|
| • Staff advertising & DBS checks | £21,000 |
| • Service Level Agreement with Diocese & inspection Levy | £7600 |
| • HR Advice | £8255 |
| • Legal | £1800 |
| • Data Protection | £2000 |

- Payroll £6137
- HT Appraisal £550
- Health & Safety Advice £943
- De-delegation for current LA central services £23932

These represent a total of £72000.

One of our largest expenditures are energy costs which are in excess of £100,00 per annum; we use the bulk buying power of the whole of the Reading Borough Estate and with regards to other large ticket items we make use of government purchase frameworks.

There is merit in sharing back-office staff in small schools to reduce costs, but it would become challenging in a Secondary School.

As demonstrated above perhaps there is very little and most probably a large financial disadvantage in terms of revenue funding from the MAT model, there may be opportunity for access to capital funding. Academies can apply for capital funding from the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) in an annual bidding round.

The priority for the Department for Education (DfE) in administering the fund is to address significant condition needs – that is, keeping education providers’ buildings safe and in good working order. This includes funding projects that address health and safety issues, building compliance and buildings in poor condition.

The fund also supports a small number of expansion projects. These are for academies, sixth-form colleges and VA schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted that can demonstrate a need to expand.

Successful CIF bids in our locality 2022/23

LA	School Name	Project Name
Bracknell Forest	Ranelagh School	Phase 2 Flat Roof Areas
Reading	Kendrick School	Urgent Fire Improvement Works
Reading	Reading School	Essential Fire Safety Works Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting
West Berkshire	Denefield School	School Urgent Drainage Infrastructure Works
West Berkshire	Trinity School	Boiler Replacement Scheme
Windsor and Maidenhead	Furze Platt Senior School	Urgent Fire Safety and Statutory Compliance Works
Windsor and Maidenhead	Altwood CofE Secondary School	Legionella and Water Safety
Windsor and Maidenhead	Trevelyan Middle School	Urgent Fire Safety and Electrical Improvements
Wokingham	The Holt School	Fire Alarm Replacement

In 2022/2023 there were 1031 successful bids but only one was for an expansion project – all others were conditions i.e. health & safety, replacement roofs and windows and heating.

Our overriding concern at the school is that we do not have appropriate accommodation to meet our students need. We must be creative in any future bid application to satisfy the criteria but deliver adaptable space.

Accommodation opportunity by offering more SEND provision.

We are all aware of the crisis due to the lack appropriate places and funding to meet the needs of students on a local and national basis.

The number of additionally resourced provisions in Reading have been increased. To make them financially viable for schools to run effectively, the funding model has been altered so that funding is now per place and not per child. This is to ensure that schools get consistency in their level of financial support from Reading and that this funding is in-line with a specialist provision.

The school will benefit from this funding increase, and we will be funded for our Resource Unit at £21k per student as opposed to approx. £14k plus top-up funding to address any need over and above what can be provided by the initial allocation.

Currently this news is a good outcome for the school, but it comes with risk. We are currently experiencing students with far more need than historical admissions and could end up with a cohort who may be unable to access all mainstream provision and that in turn will require additional funding to provide for their need.

As a school we do want to be part of the solution to address this shortfall of provision but unfortunately moral purpose and affordability very rarely align.

Reading Borough Council reports that the High Needs Block budget deficit has increased from £2.119m reported at the start of the financial year due to increased costs arising from additional top-up expenses and increased pupils. Pupil numbers requiring high needs payments have increased by 218 to 1964, a 12% increase since budgets were set at the start of the year.

Table 2: Summary Budget per Block 2023/24

	Current Budget (£m)	Forecast (£m)	In Year Variance (£m)
Schools Block	51.473	50.634	(0.840)
Central Schools Block	1.133	1.140	0.007
Early Years Block	13.277	12.969	(0.308)
High Needs Block	26.339	33.050	6.711
Sub Total – Net Expenditure	92.223	97.794	5.571
DSG Allocation - Income	(92.223)	(92.223)	0.000
Total	0.000	5.571	5.571

To expand our SEND provision (possible Nurture Unit) will incur a financial risk as we are all too aware that funding models in the past have not kept pace with inflation nor with recruitment issues for a service which is heavily dependent upon a large workforce but it is worth exploring the possibility of having an additional funded SEN unit with opportunity to provide more accommodation for the main school but this provision would compromise the schools ability to develop the two remaining hardstanding areas.

In summary

The school is in a sound financial position which in turn affords us choices. What could our surplus provide us?



As a general guide, modular classrooms cost somewhere in the region of £800 – £900 per square metre (sqm) depending on exact specifications, with total costs for a double classroom building ranging between £95,000 and £120,000. This excludes groundworks, crane hire, transport and is purely for the building only.

The additional accommodation is much needed but a strategic plan is required for the purpose of the accommodation.

From previous visioning we recognise that our pinch points are:

- Circulation
- Storage
- Science Lab
- Toilets
- Dining Hall

We do not have sufficient monies to address all of our accommodation shortfall so where do our priorities lie?

Is accommodation our priority or are there other strategies that need investment?

The risk of not having a plan for our surplus is that it is eroded in future years to sustain staffing levels or it is swallowed up by the MAT Trust .

USE IT OR LOSE IT

Reading

[Academies revenue funding allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[View my financial insights \(VMFI\) tool \(education.gov.uk\)](http://education.gov.uk)

[Financial sustainability of schools in England - Committee of Public Accounts \(parliament.uk\)](http://parliament.uk)

[What is happening to school funding and costs in England? | Institute for Fiscal Studies \(ifs.org.uk\)](http://ifs.org.uk)

OPTION FOR THE POOR-CARING FOR THE VULNERABLE – AIMEE DONALDSON AND SUE MATTHEWS

SEND Provision Key Performance Indicators over cycle

- Established high quality, well-targeted impactful provision which is regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that all students thrive.

Introduction

Students may be vulnerable in a variety of ways and for a wide range of reasons. Section 5 outlines the work we do to support students whose circumstances/nature mean there is a safeguarding, mental health and wellbeing or behavioural issue. Here the focus is the curriculum-related and financial support we offer to students to break down barriers to learning.

Universal Offer

The Universal Offer, developed in collaboration with teaching staff across the school and launched in November 2023, outlines the provision in place to meet the full range of learners and their needs – SEND and non-SEND. In the small number of cases where a child's needs may require additional provision and/or access this is outlined on their student profile in addition to some background information and reference to specific Universal Offer expectations that will be of particular benefit to the child. It is recognised that, as a whole staff, we are equipped to employ the full range of expectations and that each staff member is at a different point on his/her journey hence why we have formulated a Best Practice Menu, with input from departments and confirmed by the senior team, identifying particular areas of strength departments demonstrate along with areas for improvement for which networking beyond the department would be beneficial. This will feature in all staff induction and trainee induction sessions moving forward. In addition, opportunities to review will be embraced each year to ensure it remains current and fit

for purpose. AFI must feature in Department Development Plan with clear actions to address them. Subject Leaders are expected to discuss progress against the plan at department meetings, record progress and identify next steps.

SEND

Our SEND Action Plan launched in January 2024 draws on the September 2023 Ofsted target and feedback from the October 2023 SEND Review. It outlines our direction of travel to develop SEND provision at the heart of our school. Our objective is to become recognised as sector leading in SEND by 2027 and be a model of excellence for the MAT, of which we will become part, and beyond.

From September 2024, the Action Plan, will be fully incorporated into the Operational Plan. Current termly reviews of progress will continue as part of this process and inform our next steps looking inwards to ensure we cater, fully, for what is certain to continue to be a changing environment, whilst looking outwards to set our work within a wider framework, develop our consultancy expertise and increasingly plan ahead for our students and their needs.

It is important to note that this is a period of enormous change in terms of the types of students we are welcoming and the range and depth of need. It is certain that we will continue to welcome a growing number of students who are not yet KS3 ready and will need significant, well-targeted and regular literacy and numeracy intervention to boost confidence, progress and attainment in core subjects and across the curriculum. For a number of these students, alternative courses of study will continue into KS4. This bespoke approach is already in place for a small number of students, has been monitored, seen to be successful and provides a good benchmark as we look to extend this provision.

In preparation for September 2024 and beyond, we have purchased the Fresh Start Literacy Programme and are in collaboration with the Maths Department regarding appropriate numeracy provision. We have appointed a further SEND teacher, a further HLTA and look to appoint additional HLTAs in place of some TAs (on the ratio of 1 HLTA in place of 2 TAs), including opportunities for identified graduate HLTAs to train as SEND teachers via the Teacher Apprenticeship Programme. In addition, we are embarking on a review of the Teacher/TA partnership including new ways of working to support these students to cope and progress in mainstream lessons.

In terms of the Action Plan, our work to implement it in full will take us into 2024 – 7 with appropriate review and adjustment along the way. The newly published updated DfE funded SEND Handbook provides additional comprehensive guidance to support our work in this regard.

Through whole staff, group and individual CPD, collaborative work, a review of SEND staffing, ways of working and the school environment we look to ensure that SEND students are embraced in every context and that any perception of SEND provision as a bolt on is eradicated. SEND will then be truly at the heart of our school.

The Joy Programme

This has been successfully trialled over 2023 – 24 with a group of students assigned to our BMW Centre. The objective of the programme is to provide a practical setting in which to develop, extend and apply learning from social skills sessions including understanding of emotions, self and interpersonal skills. All students involved have commented very positively on the impact in their Annual Review contributions. Moving forward the plan is to embed this for BMW assigned students and extend it to embrace the needs of other SEND students assigned to the Learning Support Area. The member of staff delivering the course this year leaves us in July and plans are in place to train the Head of the Autism Resource and SENDCO such that they have a secure knowledge and understanding of the strategies used and can work with their teams to deliver sessions into next year and beyond. External CPD opportunities will be embraced to complement internal training where identified and beneficial.

Literacy Programme

Firstly, let's remind ourselves of the categoric role of literacy in all our lives:

Literacy is essential. Without literacy, it's hard to live the life you want. From your earliest years, literacy skills **help you develop and communicate**. But when you have a tough start in life, it's easy to fall behind. At school, having the literacy skills to read, write, speak and listen are vital for success. (www.literacytrust.org.uk)

Here at Blessed Hugh, the following are key.

1. Achieving the 'base line' for children currently working below KS3 expectations:

In recognition of the growth in the number of students arriving with us who are not KS3 ready, in addition to current work and plans, additional specialist staffing (A SEND Teacher and HLTA) are planned for September 2024 along with an enhanced approach to the regular, focused literacy interventions using Fresh Start in place of current provision to build on the Read, Write, Inc. used in our primary schools. The additional investment is intended to reap rewards in terms of more targeted provision ranging from students still at KS1 level and needing a phonics programme up to students almost at age-related expectations but needing a boost. Our investment in Fresh Start aims to provide for the range of needs. Groupings are devised taking into account CATs and KS2 data, feedback from the previous setting and group culture. Allocation is regularly reviewed to

ensure that all continue to be in the right setting to progress. Given increasing needs, the programme, approach and structure of literacy interventions, will be a matter for constant review as well as considering how best to provide for these students across the wider curriculum as summarised in the SEND section.

2. Ensuring High Levels of Literacy for all

Our whole school programme is led and coordinated by our Literacy Coordinator, in collaboration with the SENDCO, and the responsibility of us all regardless of our roles. As we move forward, the current focus on tutor group reading, the regular PSHE reading sessions, our membership of the online Hampshire School Library Service (offering electronic access to a range of texts and audio reading matter), our Word Of The Week and regular training for staff via the CPD Programme and individually will continue, again, with constant review to ensure relevance and impact reminding staff that all have a role to play, are expected to be proactive and encouraging them to seek support and guidance where the need arises.

We look to continue to ‘close the gap’ using formal testing and information gathering as appropriate to inform our next steps for individuals, groups and the school as a whole. Our approach will remain flexible, evaluative and open to new ideas and approaches to ensure we best serve the children in our school and ensure all our staff are equipped to support and lead this process.

Option for the Poor – Caring for the Vulnerable: Pupil Premium (Aimee Donaldson)

Pupil Premium Provision Key Performance Indicators over cycle

- Established bespoke, well-targeted impactful provision which is regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that all students thrive.

“How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s good and sees one in need and refuses to help?”

John 3: 17-18

For many students, school is their singular source of safety, positive experience and platform for developing a brighter future. It is therefore vital that we fully acknowledge in everything we do that they (and we) have one shot at making a significant and sustained difference to permanently change the trajectory of their lives for the better.

The Pupil Premium (PP) is additional funding given to schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the achievement gap between them and their peers. The funding is available to the following groups of students:

- *Students who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).*
- *Students that have been eligible for FSM in the last six years (FSM Ever 6).*
- *Students who are under special guardianship/CLA*
- *Students from a forces background.*

Whilst the criteria, above, outlines specific groups within schools and is very clear cut, the majority of students in receipt of the Pupil Premium fall into the 'FSM/FSM6' category – which directly points to family and household income. We apply the 'PP' label to those students in school and ask our teachers to ensure they are 'catered for'.

If we think of some of our PP 'Ever 6 students', we don't know the exact specifics around household financials – and why would we?

Could it be that, hypothetically:

- *A): the main breadwinner within a family needed support whilst in between jobs, which meant the child received Free School Meals for 2 – 3 months, and now the caregiver is employed again, the family no longer requires that financial support? They're still PP.*
- *B): the family have suffered a bereavement which has resulted in significant changes to their income, the child is in receipt of Free School Meals and has been now for 7 years? They're still PP.*

Taking this into account, it's increasingly important to drill down into FSM and PP data as two discrete groups, rather than one combined. Fortunately, we already do this on a whole-school level in a variety of different areas: attendance, behaviour, progress – with staff being aware of student needs on every level.

Currently, at BHFCS, our PP/Non-PP Cohort is:

Year Group	FSM	PP	NON-PP	TOTAL
7	34	38	149	187
8	42	43	141	184
9	29	39	148	187
10	26	40	144	184
11	28	35	144	179
TOTAL:	160	195	726	921

For Secondary Schools, £1035 is allocated, per student, per academic year. 21% of our School is Pupil Premium: this equates to approximately £220,000 per academic year for Blessed Hugh Faringdon School. The figure is based on the Pupil Premium numbers in October 2023 Census – which will be confirmed in our upcoming budget.

Points to note:

1. Primary schools are allocated £1445, £410 more. However:
2. Figure above does not include the Catch-Up Premium, although our Strategy Document does – how long will be in receipt of this?
3. Schools receive an extra premium of £2,570 (Pupil Premium Plus) for pupils:
 - in local authority care
 - adopted from care (and the parent self-declares)

- were in care in the last year, which ceased by virtue of a special guardianship order (and the guardian self-declares), residence order or Child Arrangement Order.

4. *Service children also receive an allocation of £310, if a parent is serving in the armed forces or is in receipt of a service pension.*

We currently have 2 pupils at BHFCS who are recorded as CLA, 1 Service Child and 3 students who are considered 'PCLA'.

How Effective is the Pupil Premium?

The 'proof is in the pudding', so they say – we simply have to look at a school's headline figures, the national data.

This is a national issue and the gap seems to widen as children get older:

Early Years:

STEP 6 Explore data

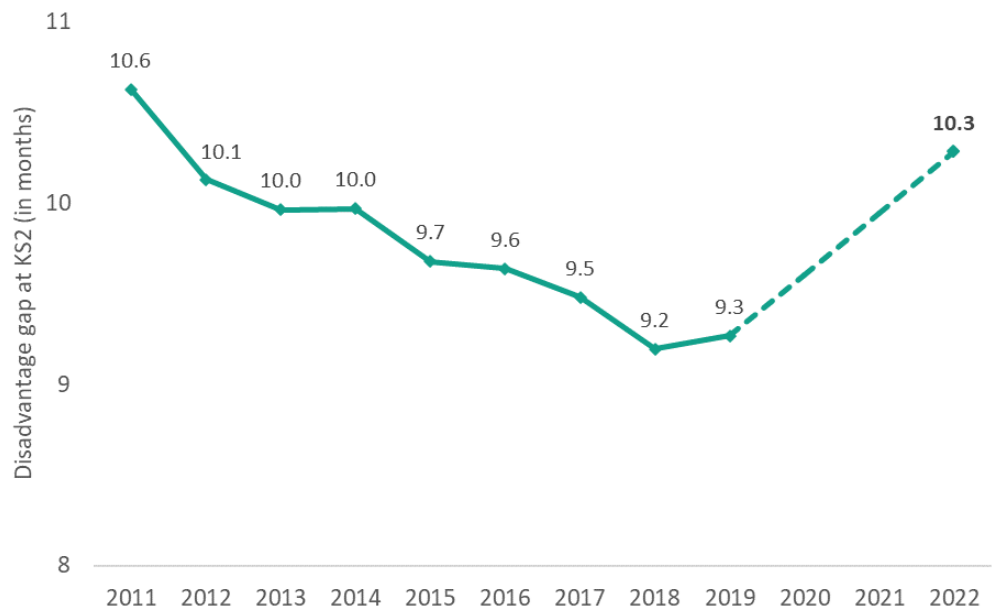
THIS IS THE LATEST DATA

'4 Headline measures by deprivation' for 1 and 10 in England for 2022/23

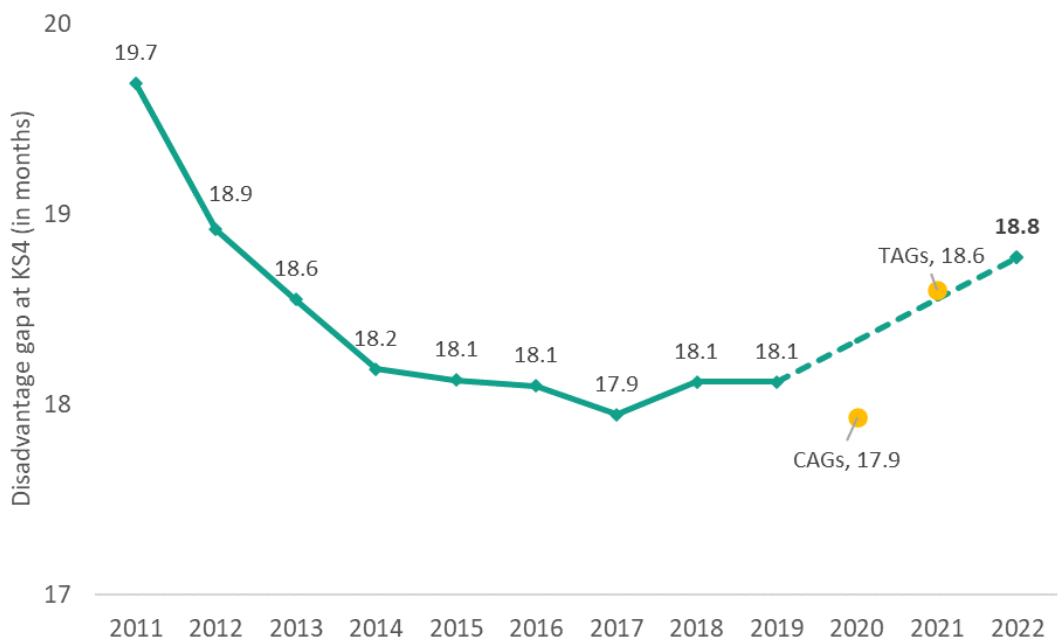
Move and reorder table headers

	2022/23	
	1	10
Percentage of children with a good level of development	58.1%	76.6%
Percentage of children at expected level across all early learning goals	55.9%	75.7%
Percentage of children at expected level in communication and language and literacy areas of learning	59.3%	78.5%

Primary - % achieving 'expected' KS2 Standard:



Secondary – Gap at KS4 in English and Maths:



We know our Pupil Premium students at BHFCs are not making equal progress to their non-Pupil Premium counterparts, and the gap, albeit smaller, still exists - they are making **better** progress. Therefore, the opportunities for our students, Post-16 and onto Post-18, are widened.

Schools should concentrate on better results for pupil premium children, rather than narrowing the gap: improving attainment provides better life chances, despite the gap remaining the same and even widening in some cases? How should the Grant be measured?

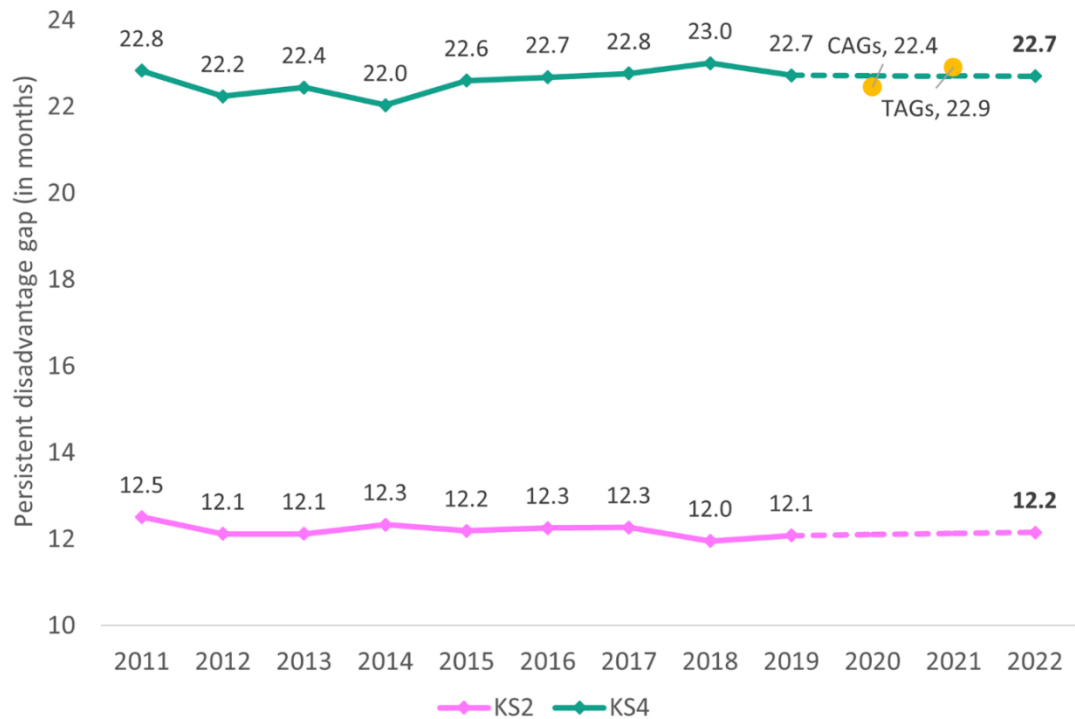
Many critics of the fund have seen the funding as a 'prop' to main school budgets in a time of increasing austerity. In July 2019, the House of Commons Education Select Committee published a report on school and college funding. Evidence submitted 'indicated that, on the whole, the idea of the Pupil Premium enjoyed substantial support', however, there were still operational concerns expressed by witnesses who appeared before the committee.

The report Select Committee said:

- It is clear that the Pupil Premium is being used 'to plug holes in schools budgets rather than being directed at disadvantaged children'.
- Ring-fencing the Pupil Premium or subsuming it under the National Funding Formula 'will not fix the underlying problem that there is simply not enough money in the system'.
- Concerns were raised about the effectiveness of the Pupil Premium even when it was being used as intended. Many schools had used the money for teaching assistants, 'whereas recent evidence suggested these resources could have been deployed differently to better maximise educational outcomes'.
- The accountability system was also identified as an 'area in need of improvement'.
- Because the pupil premium relies on the take-up of free school meals, the report stated this 'means that too many deserving children are not receiving the support to which they are entitled'.

What we don't know and don't have evidence of yet is the Cost-of-Living impact of Brexit, the Ukraine/Russia War and, more recently, the Israel Conflict has had on the outcomes for our children – based on the correlation that household income and child progress are intrinsically linked. Surely if the qualification of Pupil Premium is based on the receipt of FSM at 'some' point in the last 6 years, that means it is linked?

'Persistently Disadvantaged': Whilst there is no official definition of pupils in long-term poverty, we define this group as pupils who are eligible for free school meals for 80 per cent or more of their school lives. This means: **Year 7: 5.6 years or Year 11: 8.8 years.**



Because of this link, do we, as practitioners, unconsciously make assumptions about the ‘Pupil Premium’ child? And if so, what are these assumptions?

Following the BHFCs Senior Leadership Team Residential at Douai Abbey, the mutually understood assumptions are:

- a vocabulary deficit
- Low interaction with children in early years
- Low aspiration
- ‘single’ parent backgrounds
- Lack of Cultural capital
- Poor attendance
- Poor diet/lack of nutrition at home

There is a gap of 30million words between Middle Class families and families on ‘welfare’ (Hilary Clinton Vocabulary Gap Analysis) was reported in 2013, given the trend for the gap widen – how big is the vocabulary gap now, in 2024?

Focusing on the ‘Persistently Disadvantaged’, a consistent mutual benchmark measurement is ‘Free School Meals’ and there is a wealth of research around the correlation between food, poverty and attainment.

The Food Foundation are a project pushing for Free School Meals for all children, regardless of family income.

We’ve seen great progress over the last few years in England

- 2014** Government introduced Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) so every child in the first three years of school has a hot, nutritious meal at lunchtime.¹
- 2015** New School Food Standards are introduced and made mandatory to help ensure school food is nutritious and good quality.²
- 2022** FSM permanently extended to children from families with no recourse to public funds.³

It’s getting more urgent to tackle the rising health and social inequalities in our society

- 2020** The Covid-19 pandemic dramatically exacerbated food insecurity, leaving many families vulnerable to hunger and poor diet.
- 2021 /22** Obesity rates in Year 6 children increased by 2.6 percentage points between 2019–2020 and 2021–2022, peaking even higher during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁴ Over a third of children leave primary school above a healthy weight, and children who live in lower income areas are twice as likely to be affected.⁵
- April 2022** 17% of UK households with children were affected by food insecurity. Over 2.6 million children were living in these households.⁶
- June 2022** 1.9 million (22.5%) pupils were on means-tested Free School Meals⁷ – but 800,000 children below the poverty line still don’t qualify.⁸
- Sept 2022** Levels of food insecurity among households with children rose to 26%. This represents a total of 4 million children.⁹
- Oct 2022** Unprecedentedly high food and fuel bills driving inflation, which will force more families to choose between food and fuel in winter.¹⁰

With evidence that the impact of food insecurity amongst households is rising:

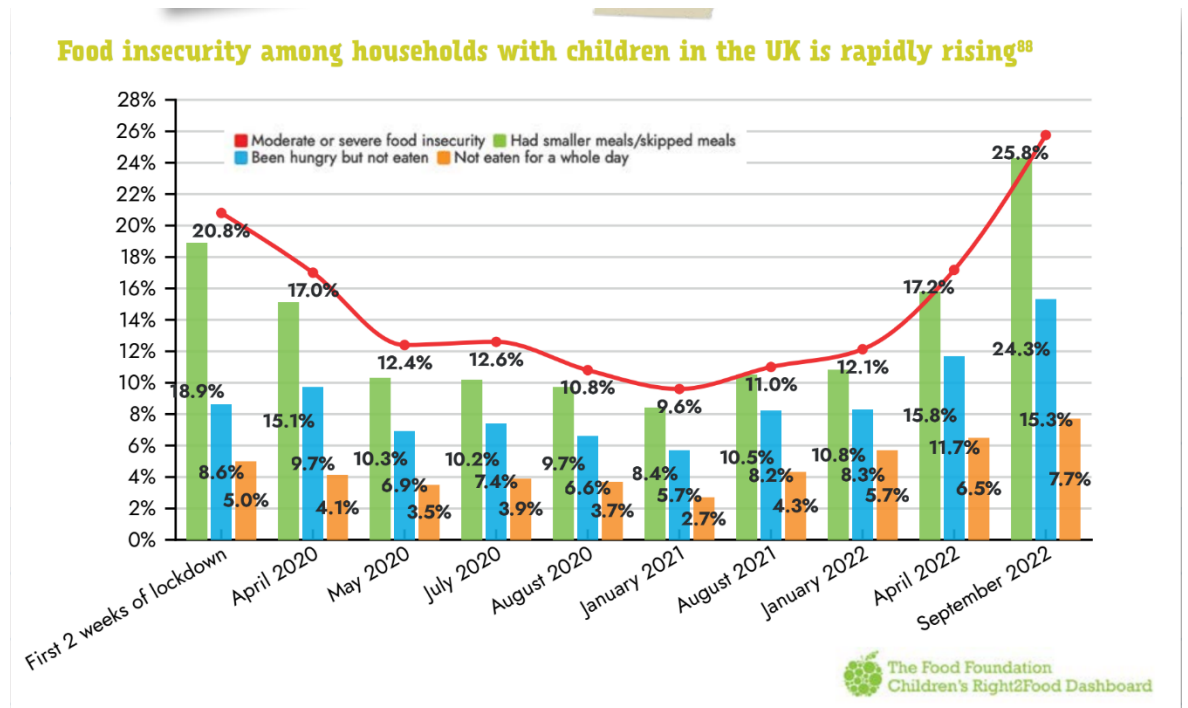


Figure 1: Conceptualising food insecurity



Source: Food Foundation (2017)

And, considering this data is not only pre-Covid but also, this is prior to the 'Cost of Living Crisis', rising costs of food, rising interest rates, cost of petrol – what will the next evidence pack look like? And what can we do?

Previous studies have focused on specific impacts of FSM, such as child nutrition, but a report by urbanhealth.org.uk fills an important gap in the evidence by taking a more extensive and comprehensive approach to the costs and benefits.

Core benefits arise directly from the children who receive FSM, through improvements across two pathways:

- Education and employment:
 - Improved educational attainment in the medium term, leading to improved productivity and employment longer term, contributing to improved lifetime earnings and contributions.
 - Improved ability to learn and reduced absenteeism in the short term – with linked cost savings for schools (such as catch-up programmes).

- Health and nutrition:
 - Reduced financial pressure for families on lower incomes, enabling the purchase of more nutritious food at home.
 - Decreased incidence of obesity and diet-related diseases in childhood

Furthermore, the Food Foundation suggest that there is a link between food, mental health and academic progress:



But in reality, as a school with an already tight budget - we can't feed everyone!

Key Question to consider and reflect on:

- What impact does food and time of day have on our students, their progress and their behaviour?

Whilst we do have a wealth of provision in place, such as:

- *Breakfast Club*
- *Hardship Fund*
- *Barriers to Learning*
- *Pupil Premium Allowance*
- *Y11 Interventions*
- *NTP Maths Tutoring*
- *Peripatetic Music Lessons*
- *Literacy Interventions*
- *'Joy' Programme*
- *Music Intervention Groups*

Attendance is currently a concern for PP and FSM students:

NON-PP: 94.86% (April 24)

PP: 90% (NB: this is the lowest it has been since 2017)

FSM: 89.28% (NB: this is the lowest it has been since 2017)

What we don't know is why.

Why is it so low? We can only make assumptions and we cannot default to the 'Covid Impact'.

Therefore, what else can we do?

- *Greater focus on attendance issues, using new appointment of 'ACE' to target families earlier, providing support in the right way*
- *'ACE' to hold a pivotal role in developing knowledge of families*
- *'Revamp' of PP Strategy is needed to go over 3 years, to include EEF research: How can we strategize changes in personnel here?*
- *How can we look at 3 year, strategic attendance approaches, built into HOY roles?*
- *What impact does low-level disruption have on progress, specifically Pupil Premium/Free School Meals?*
- *What impact does the Pastoral Support Programme have? How can we integrate therapeutic behavioural approaches as 'standard' within 'menu of support'?*

- *What work needs to be done on Parental Engagement across all year groups?*
- *It is clear the work by HJO (Careers) and JWE (Racial Equality) is intrinsic across all discrete groups, how can we target individual PP students to broaden their holistic experience at school?*
- *What improvements can we make to the transition process (at Y7, Y10 and Y12), to best support our Pupil Premium students?*
- *How can we work closely with our feeder Primaries to ensure support is in place for FSM/PP families from the start?*

NO ONE LEFT BEHIND – TOWARDS BEING A LEAD SCHOOL FOR INCLUSIVITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE – JERMAINE WEBSTER

Key Performance Indicators

- Reduce the attainment gap between Boys and Girls by September 2027
- Reduce the attainment gap between SEND and non-SEND by September 2027
- Reduce the attainment gap between PP and non-PP by September 2027
- Reduce the attainment gap between White British and Caribbean Students compared to other ethnic groups by September 2027
- Increase the percentage of boys achieving grades 9-7 by September 2027
- Maintain low level of Permanent exclusions (no more than 2 per year)
- All staff trained on Racial Literacy by September 2025
- All Curriculum designs in KS3 to be diverse and inclusive by September 2026

The Catholic church teaches us that all of humanity is equal, as all of humanity was created in the image of God. No one sex or race is superior to another. This is exemplified in the 'Golden Rule' which states 'Do to others what you want them to do to you.'. This identifies that all people should be treated fairly and with respect regardless of their differences.

Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan which shows us that there should be no inequality on the basis of race or nationality when addressing divisions between Jew and Samaritan and sets the stage for the unity of "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (EPH 4:5).

As a Catholic school, the values taught greatly benefit society and make a significant contribution to the community by encouraging and supporting all students from many different ethnicities, cultural backgrounds and religions to reach their full potential. As Pope John Paul II stated in 1999, the

foundation of Catholic Social Teaching and Education “rests on the threefold cornerstones of dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity”.

Dignity, or Human dignity recognises that ‘all people hold a special value that's tied solely to their humanity. It has nothing to do with their class, race, gender, religion, abilities, nationality, socio-economic status or any other factor other than them being human.’ In Catholic social teaching, the phrase “Human Dignity” is used specifically to support the church’s belief that every human life is sacred. [[What is Human Dignity? Common Definitions.](#) | [Human Rights Careers](#)].

Solidarity is defined as ‘unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.’ For us to be ‘Anti-racist’ we need, first and foremost, to be ‘pro-community’ – to care for ourselves as a group as well as ourselves as individuals. In so doing, standing up to racism and promoting equality is a positive and constructive statement, and sits within the broader mandate to address other forms of discrimination including gender inequality.

The principle of subsidiarity, which was developed as part of Catholic Social Teaching, states: What individuals can accomplish by their own initiative and efforts should not be taken from them by a higher authority. [YOUCAT 323]. This is very important in the Catholic school: legislating what people should say, and feel will never work; it must come from their education, formation as people and schooling in virtues – developing characteristics of care and respect which are second nature to them, not bolted on. The importance of early role models, the opportunity to find their voice early on and a well-constructed curriculum are significant.

It is clearly laid down that the paramount task assigned to government officials is that of recognizing, respecting, reconciling, protecting and promoting the rights and duties of citizens. [Pope Saint John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 77]. This supports the notion, that as a school, we must promote and encourage community, dignity and our common humanity, and therefore, tackle racist sentiment, to allow all students of any ethnic group to accomplish their goals without being held back by any forms of discrimination and/or prejudice.

Pope John Paul II also maintained a four-fold personal responsibility for social evils:

... the very personal sins of those who cause or support evil or who exploit it; of those who are in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils but who fail to do so out of laziness, fear or the conspiracy of silence, through secret complicity or indifference; of those who take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world and also of those who sidestep the effort and sacrifice required, producing specious reasons of a higher order. [Pope John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance* (United States Catholic Conference, 1984), p. 55].

In other words, actively promoting dignity and inclusivity in our schools – as in wider society – can never be ‘someone else’s job’ or ‘down to Government’. And, whilst we need to eradicate racism and social injustice, it is important that we do not lose, but that we embrace and respect the cultural identity and traditions that exist in a multi-cultural Britain.

Catholic schools are welcoming places to pupils and members of staff from all faiths and none. More than a quarter of a million pupils and almost half of teachers in Catholic schools are not of the Catholic Faith.

As part of the Church’s historic agreement with the Government, Catholic schools are allowed to prioritise Catholics in their admissions codes and also reserve specific teaching roles for practising Catholics. Equality (catholiceducation.org.uk)

In Blessed Hugh Faringdon we have 515 male and 505 female students (January 2024. Of which 431 are Catholic.

Catholic	431	As you can see from the data, the school is not just rich in diversity through ethnicity, but also in religion. As a school we do teach about and accept other faiths, but our teaching and our school ethos are of the Catholic Faith. With regards to sexual orientation and sexuality, we recognise and accept that a number of our school community self-identify as being LGBTQ. As part of the Religious Studies Program, alternative faiths are taught so that students have and understanding of other beliefs. As well as in Religious Studies lessons, students also learn about other beliefs regarding religion, relationships and same sex couples/marriages. PSHE sessions are delivered according to the three themes and content specified by the DfE, of which a full learning journey has been created to meet these requirements and give students an enriching and informative curriculum. As a school we also use ten: ten which is a fully resourced scheme of work in Relationships, Sex and
Christian - Other	413	
Buddhist	3	
Hindu	29	
Muslim	53	
Sikh	4	
Other	13	
None	72	
Refused	4	

Health Education (RSHE) for secondary schools in England. [Discrimination: your rights: Types of discrimination \('protected characteristics'\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The term ‘NO ONE LEFT BEHIND’ means that everyone in our school community has the same opportunities to be successful regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, SEND status or socio-economic background. As a school, we are committed to support those all students equally and where necessary go above and beyond to ensure equity.

At Blessed Hugh Faringdon we pride ourselves on having a strong pastoral team and wider support for our students which includes Heads of Years, Tutors, Achievement and Behaviour Co-

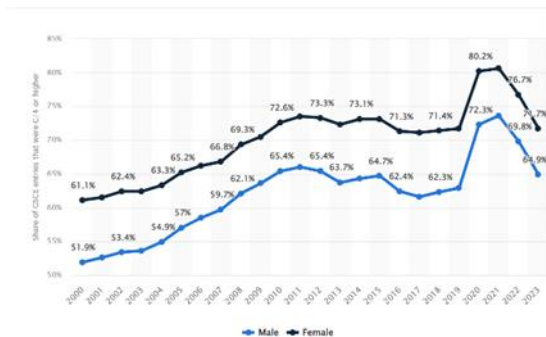
coordinators for KS3 and KS4, an Alternative Curriculum and Intervention Co-ordinator, School Counsellors, Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputies), Blessed Mary Ward Centre and Learning Support. We also have teaching staff who have interests in specific fields that support our students in achieving their potential.

Gender

Data show that historically girls nationally have outperformed boys. Nationally in 2023, 71.7% of female students and 64.9% of male students achieved a grade 4 or higher at GCSE.

Proportion of GCSE entries awarded a C/4 or higher in the United Kingdom between 2000 and 2023, by gender

GCSE pass rate in UK by gender 2023 | Statista



While boys are under achieving academically the number of girls having to deal with sexual harassment and/or prejudice has also sparked calls for misogyny to be added the list of hate crimes and for the government to do more to protect females in society [[misogyny: why is it not a hate crime? - BBC news](#)]. According to a recent poll, 70% of female teachers have faced misogyny in UK schools. [[70% of female teachers have faced](#)

[misogyny in UK schools, poll shows | education the guardian](#)]. There is much we can do as educators to empower and protect women and their rights as humans whilst also educating males on how they should behave and respect women as equals.

	9-4 inc M & E	9-5 inc M & E
Male	60.27	35.62
Female	61.25	50

In BHF, there isn't much of a gap with regards to a standard pass between girls and boys but there is a substantial gap when looking at the percentage of boys and girls achieving a strong pass and above.

With regards to improving boys' attainment in school, Linda Stade has written that there are 4 powerful ways to help boys with learning at school, these are; 1. teaching boys by rewarding

effort, 2. teaching boys by using technology, 3. focus on relationships to teach boys and 4. teaching boys by using real-life learning

Teaching Boys: 4 Powerful Ways to Help Boys with Learning At School (lindastade.com)]

According to teachthought.com, the best ways to engage boys in the classroom are; 1. Design lessons that end in a product, 2. Structure lessons as competitive games, 3. Require motor activities, 4. Allow boys to address unsolved problems, 5. Combine teamwork and competition, 6. Focus on independent discovery and self-reflection.

When attempting to close the gender gap we have developed an achievement and rewards system that has a purpose and encourages boys to try harder because there is a tangible reward for achieving in the classroom, from certificates, phone calls home to queue jumps and rewards trips. The use of class charts has enabled instant feedback and a visual display of their progress in lessons.

The Boxing intervention programme was set up to allow boys to have their voice and be listened to in an environment they felt comfortable in. The aim of these sessions is to address issues in and out of school and to help them see the importance of education, support them in responding appropriately to authority and teaching them discipline and respect for others as well as themselves.

We have a member of staff that is responsible for leading on the 'Improving Outcomes for Girls in School', Mrs Hopkins. The aim of this is to improve academic and personal outcomes for girls in the school, promote gender equality in the school in line with the Catholic Social Teachings, enhance leadership skills among girls through debate, Model United Nations (MUN), and confidence-building in speech writing and to increase opportunities for off-site experiences to broaden aspirations and educational horizons. We have also developed PSHE lessons that address the poor treatment of women in our society, and we are actively promoting anti-misogyny as a school by educating young people of the issues and the impact on others.

Ethnicity

As a school we are extremely diverse and do not fit the national or local area statistics for different ethnic groups. This is something we must celebrate and promote as well as raising the awareness of different cultures through assemblies, lessons and cultural days and activities.

Students in BHF

Number of pupils on roll by ethnic group	Number	Percentage
138. White British	241	23.58
139. White Irish	4	0.39
140. White Other	214	20.94
141. Traveller of Irish/Gypsy/Roma heritage	0	0.00
142. Mixed/dual background	119	11.64
143. Asian/Asian British	175	17.12
144. Black/Black British	242	23.68
145. Chinese	8	0.78
146. Other ethnic group	9	0.88
147. Refused	8	0.78
148. Not known	2	0.20

National statistics

Ethnicity	Reading 2021	England 2021
White British	53.5	73.5
Other White	13.7	7.5
Mixed	5.1	3
Indian	6.2	3.3
Pakistani	4.8	2.8
Other Asian	6.7	3.5
Black Caribbean	1.9	1.1
Black African	4.4	2.6
Black other	4.5	2.9
Chinese	1.5	0.8
Other ethnic group	2.8	2.2

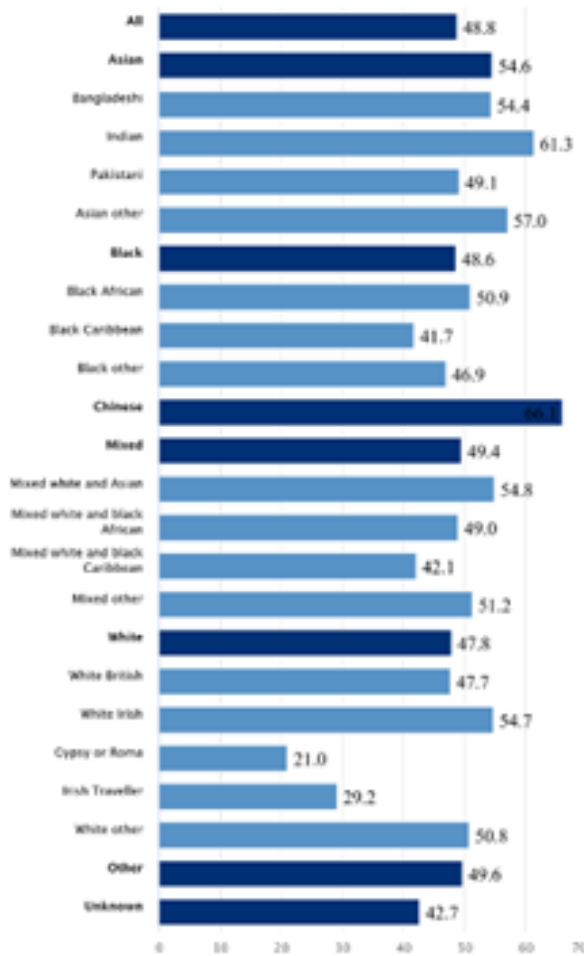
Average Attainment 8 score (out of 90.0), by ethnicity

[GCSE results \(Attainment 8\) - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/ethnicity-facts-and-figures/ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk)

Data for the 2021 to 2022 school year shows that the average Attainment 8 score for all pupils in England was 48.8 out of 90.0. Pupils from the Chinese ethnic group had the highest average score out of all ethnic groups (66.1), followed by pupils from the Indian ethnic group (61.3). White Gypsy or Roma pupils had had the lowest average score (21.0) followed by Irish traveller pupils (29.2) and black Caribbean pupils (41.7)

Whilst the percentage of Caribbean pupils at BHF is relatively low in comparison to other ethnic groups. This is a historic trend that needs addressing as, with the exception of roman gypsy and Irish travellers, Caribbean students also have the highest suspension rates in the UK. It is also worth noting that students from Caribbean backgrounds are more likely to be suspended or permanently excluded. The most common reason being for persistent disruptive behaviour (34.53%). From this percentage, white British students had the highest percentage of 36.90%. The second highest reason is for Physical assault with students from Asian, Black and Chinese having the highest number with 32.5% each.

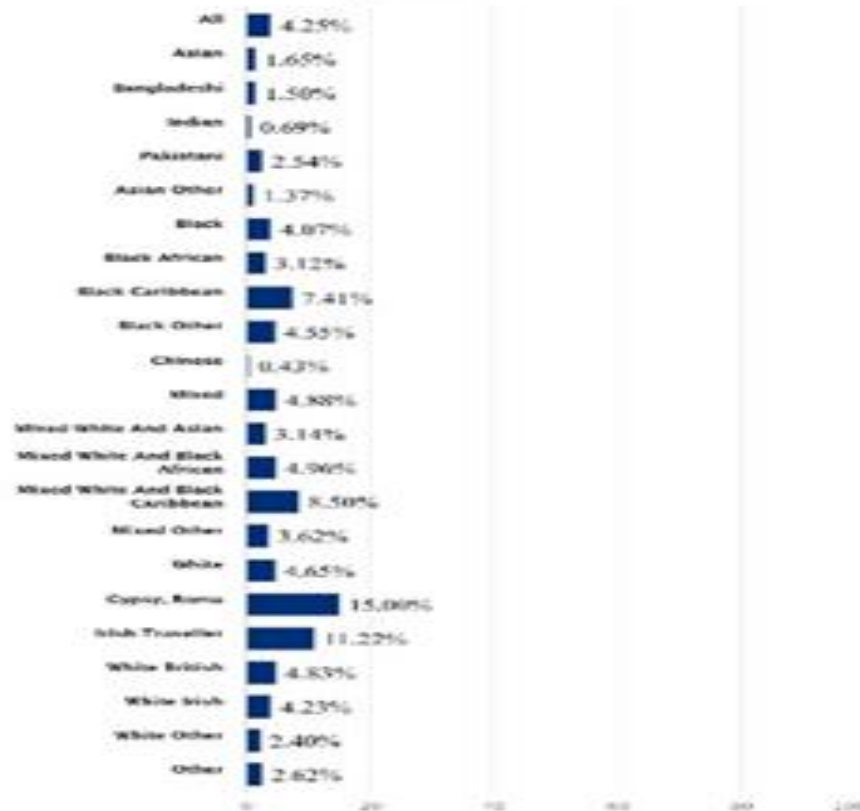
Title: Average Attainment 8 score (out of 90.0), by ethnicity. Location: England. Time period: 2021 to 2022 school year. Source: Key stage 4 performance, academic year 2021 to 2022. Ethnicity Facts and Figures GOV.UK



At the time of writing, 19% (6 students – 7 suspensions) of the fixed term suspensions at BHF were students from Mixed White Black Caribbean Backgrounds which is higher than the national average of 13.62%. 32% of the fixed term suspensions were White British students (9 students – 12 suspensions). However, looking at the data, it is not reliable as some students are not identified as being a specific ethnicity and this is a small sample size.

With regards to BHF, you can see that the biggest underachievers are our White British students followed by our Black African students. There is significant gap between White British students in both a standard pass and a high pass compared to the school average and significant gap for Black African students achieving the higher grades.

Permanent exclusions and suspensions rate by ethnicity, London, England, time period: 2020 to 2021 school year. Source: Permanent exclusions and suspensions in England (EPR) 2021 Facts and Figures (DfE) 2021



What have we done?

	9-4 inc M & E	Compared to School	9-5 inc M & E	Compared to School
School	60.78		43.14	
White British	45.71	-15.07	25.71	-17.43
Other White	70.59	9.81	52.94	9.8
Black African	56	-4.78	32	-11.14
Indian	76.92	16.14	61.54	18.4
Other Asian	62.5	1.72	62.5	19.36
Other Black	78.57	17.79	57.14	14

Over the past two years we have tried to raise awareness and educate our students and staff about different cultures through a variety of ways. We have had had cultural days and catwalks where students can wear their national dresses to showcase their culture, assemblies in different countries

represented in our school community, delivered by staff and students, food sold in the canteen from a variety of cultures around the world and most recently a mural with all the flags of the world outside the art department.

Subjects have also started to develop their key stage 3 curriculum to be more reflective of our community and the library has a specific section with books from black authors. While months such as black history month are celebrated, as a school we want to include black and Asian history

into everyday life so that all students feel valued and that we all are able to learn about other cultures and their history.

We also have several framed posters around the school which show historical timelines, but most importantly people from ethnic minorities (or world majorities) who have been successful in specific fields. The reason for this is to inspire our students to aim high and achieve their potential regardless of their colour or ethnic background.

Average Attainment 8 score (out of 90.0), by ethnicity and gender

Ethnicity	Boys		Girls		
	score	pupils	score	pupils	
All	46.3	300,517	51.4	287,143	-5.1
Asian	52.2	34,426	57.2	32,402	-5
Bangladeshi	52.2	5,392	56.6	5,298	-4.4
Indian	59.1	9,411	63.6	8,810	-4.5
Pakistani	46.4	13,619	51.9	13,020	-5.5
any other Asian background	54.3	6,004	60	5,274	-5.7
Black	44.9	18,080	52.4	17,990	-7.5
Black African	47.3	12,211	54.5	12,288	-7.2
Black Caribbean	37.9	3,540	45.6	3,523	-7.7
Any other black background	42.7	2,329	51.4	2,179	-8.7
Mixed	46.8	17,315	52.1	16,753	-5.3
White and Asian	52.3	4,275	57.5	3,886	-5.2
White and black African	46.2	2,339	51.8	2,290	-5.6
White and black Caribbean	39	4,351	45.1	4,544	-6.1
Mixed other	48.6	6,350	53.9	6,033	-5.3
White	45.5	217,373	50.3	207,897	-4.8
White British	45.3	198,336	50.2	189,718	-4.9
Gypsy or Roma	18.3	704	23.6	728	-5.3
White Irish	51.8	845	57.8	766	-6
Irish traveller	24.3	84	33.2	103	-8.9
White other	48.4	17,404	53.2	16,582	-4.8
Chinese	63.5	1,239	68.9	1,196	-5.4
Other	46.8	6,360	52.9	5,616	-6.1
Unknown	40.5	5,724	45.1	5,289	-4.6

Following a student survey and conversations with students, students from our black community felt that they were not valued by staff and lacked motivation to succeed. They felt that they had to fit into a specific stereotype that is portrayed by the media. To tackle this, we have firstly changed the achievement and behaviour process using Classcharts to allow student to gain more positive points so that they can get instant praise and feedback. We also introduced the Joshua academy programme which originally was to support and reengage black females in education and to raise aspirations whilst also tackling specific behaviours. The girls felt valued in this programme and there was visible improvement to the

behaviour and attitudes to learning of most that attended. We also engaged in a boxing mentoring programme for black boys from KS4, which included academic mentoring to again, inspire and re-engage the boys from black backgrounds into learning whilst also developing other values such as respect and self-discipline.

At BHF we have also formed links with Reading University, which has included taking our students to Black History and South Asian History workshops led by the University lecturers and research teams.

If we then look at Gender and Ethnicity, you'll see that nationally in 2021 to 2022, the average Attainment 8 score was 51.4 for girls, and 46.3 for boys and in every ethnic group, girls had a higher average score than boys. You will also see from the data that the biggest gender gaps with the exception of Irish travellers are between the black girls and boys. This is an area that needs further research to identify why. [GCSE results \(Attainment 8\) - GOV.UK Ethnicity facts and figures \(ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gcse-results-attainment-8-ethnicity-facts-and-figures)

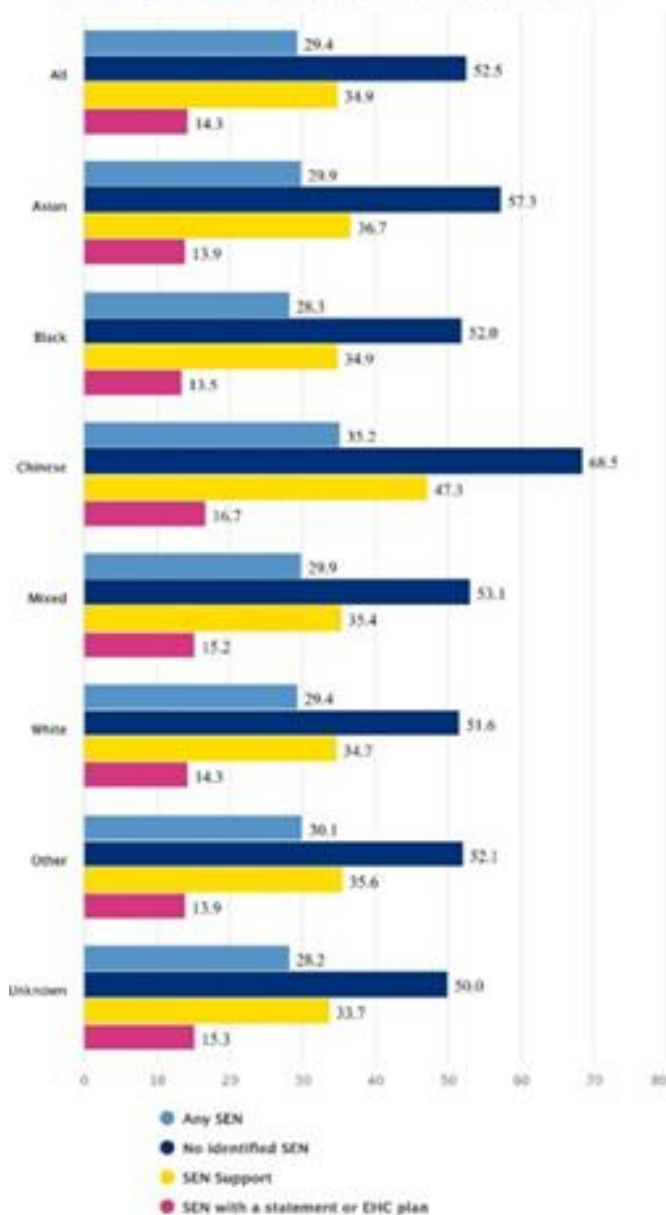
Ethnicity and SEND

In Blessed Hugh Faringdon we have two separate faculties to support students with additional needs. There is a specialist Autism unit called the Blessed Mary Ward and our Learning support area who work closely with and support students with Special Educational Needs both in and out of lesson.

	Total	EHC plans	%	No SEN	%	SEN Support	%
Asian - Bangladeshi	151,644	6,886	4.54	129,229	85.22	15,529	10.24
Asian - Chinese	58,731	1,223	2.08	54,617	93.00	2,891	4.92
Asian - Indian	311,012	7,531	2.42	283,970	91.31	19,511	6.27
Asian - Pakistani	383,457	14,989	3.91	325,699	84.94	42,769	11.15
Asian - any other Asian background	179,066	6,672	3.73	158,135	88.31	14,259	7.96
Black - Any other Black background	65,855	3,711	5.64	53,797	81.69	8,347	12.67
Black - Black African	362,477	16,443	4.54	308,417	85.09	37,617	10.38
Black - Black Caribbean	80,353	4,694	5.84	62,374	77.62	13,285	16.53
Mixed - Any other mixed background	225,855	9,759	4.32	190,182	84.21	25,914	11.47
Mixed - White and Asian	139,682	4,698	3.36	120,904	86.56	14,080	10.08
Mixed - White and Black African	78,375	3,529	4.50	65,000	82.93	9,846	12.56

Nationally the headline figures and facts for 2022/23 are that 389,171 students in England have EHCP's which equates to 4.3% (risen from 4% 2021/22) and 1,183,384 students have SEN support without EHCP which is equal to 13% of students, which again has risen from 12.6% in 2021/22. From this data, 72.4% of pupils with an EHC plan are boys, and 62.8% of pupils with SEN support are boys. It is also worth noting that 41.1% of pupils with an EHC plan and 37.5% of pupils with SEN support are eligible for free school meals in 2023. This compares to 23.8% of all pupils in schools.

Title: Average Attainment 8 score (out of 90.0), by ethnicity and special educational needs (SEN). Location: England. Time period: 2021 to 2022 school year. Source: Key stage 4 performance, academic year 2021 to 2022 [Ethnicity Facts and Figures GOV.UK]



'FSM, Ethnicity and Language, by type of SEN provision and type of need - 2016 to 2023' for EHC plans, No SEN and SEN Support in England for 2022/23

From the national data above, it is also worth noting that students from black backgrounds have the highest number of EHC plans compared to other ethnic groups which does highlight the need to look at how we are teaching our students at BHF considering we have such a diverse community.

Average Attainment 8 score (out of 90.0), by ethnicity and special educational needs (SEN)

National data shows that students from black backgrounds with any SEND or EHCP's achieve less the other ethnic groups.

TEACHING WITH CHARACTER : TOWARDS INTELLECTUAL AND EMOTIONAL FLOURISHING – AIMEE DONALDSON

‘I have come that they may have life and have it to the full’ (John, 10:10)

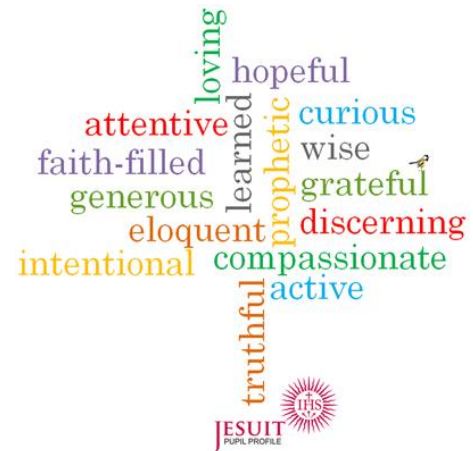
“An excellent Catholic Teacher lives a life of spiritual unity and harmony in relationship with others while honouring each person as distinct and unique” (Catholic Diocese of Leeds)

Teaching is a vocation, not ‘just a job’.

Teachers are passionate people who have a strong desire to help people; whether this is through knowledge acquisition, skill development or character building – teachers have a mutual goal to ensure their students are successful. Quite often, this is restricted within the parameters of ‘results’ and, specifically at Secondary level, the ‘progress’ their pupils have made and whether they’ve met or exceeded their target. As a result, ‘honouring each person s distinct and unique’ is lost in the number. Catholic Schools are distinct and unique in that we see beyond the number and at character.

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School focuses on developing ‘Qualities for Living’ in our students, through everything we do; including modelling and expecting these through classroom practice.

Despite good intentions of wanting to demonstrate, model and teach these qualities, they can be lost in “teaching to the test”, with a teacher sometimes losing the beauty of their subject,



focusing simply in ensuring their students are getting the highest mark on a question or essay. This is encapsulated in this poem, that, personally, resonated in my own delivery of the English Literature GCSE Curriculum:

“Introduction to Poetry” – Billy Collins

*I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a colour slide*

or press an ear against its hive.

*I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,*

*or walk inside the poem’s room
and feel the walls for a light switch.*

*I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author’s name on the shore.*

*But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.*

*They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.*

Where passion for subject is lost in a GCSE or A Level Exam, character development, by default, is lost too.

Catholic character education is a comprehensive approach to character building in Catholic schools. It promotes a shared vision of life based on Christ centred virtues that seeks the flourishing of pupils, young people and all members of the school community. The approach includes the following elements:

- The teacher as caregiver, model, and mentor
- Helping students develop a personal prayer life
- A caring classroom community
- Moral discipline

- Participatory decision making

The focus is the teacher being mentor, role model, caregiver. What does it mean to our students? The values that our students appreciate in their teachers, from a recent survey (BHFCS March 2024) are:



We know the best teachers have created positive learning environments, have appropriate, positive relationships and have fostered a love of learning in their pupils. The ‘essentials’ are simple - high expectations in everything:

- *Pride in their learning*
- *No excuses for poor, disruptive behaviour*
- *A desire to constantly improve*

The Sutton Trust Paper from 2014 “What Makes Great Teaching?” suggest that a lot of the typical practices in the classroom have little impact on progress. The key findings are broken down into three key areas that impact on student attainment: strongest evidence good evidence and unsupported evidence. They are:

The two factors with the strongest evidence of improving pupil attainment are:

- teachers’ content knowledge, including their ability to understand how students think about a subject and identify common misconceptions
- quality of instruction, which includes using strategies like effective questioning and the use of assessment

Specific practices which have good evidence of improving attainment include:

- challenging students to identify the reason why an activity is taking place in the lesson.

- asking a large number of questions and checking the responses of all students
- spacing-out study or practice on a given topic, with gaps in between for forgetting.
- making students take tests or generate answers, even before they have been taught the material.

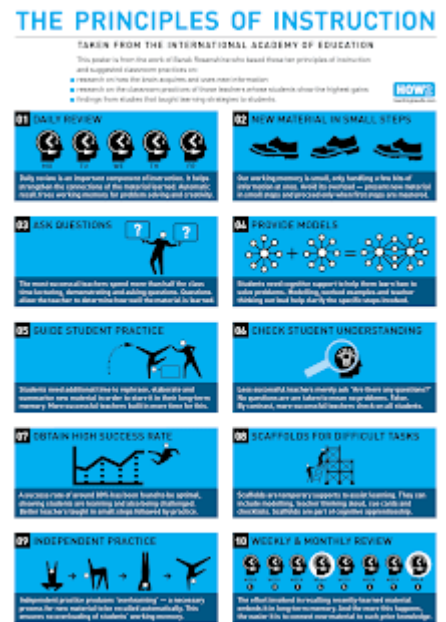
Common practices which are not supported by evidence include:

- using praise lavishly
- allowing learners to discover key ideas by themselves.
- grouping students by ability
- presenting information to students based on their “preferred learning style”

Fortunately, the final two bullet points from this list are not typically present at BHFCs, however, we need to consider the impact of the remaining practices in the final list, above.

As a school, we adopt ‘Rosenshine’s Principles of Instruction’ using a number of the procedures as the key essentials within our lesson plan. This is often considered the ‘bread and butter’ of teaching and learning, the starting point for lesson planning; planning for the individual lesson and medium-term plans also – developing schema throughout the curriculum with each topic, throughout each key stage.

As a school, we invested in a regional-led Tom Sherrington Project, where the ‘Walkthru’ strategies are used in conjunction with Coaching. As a school, the focus was ‘Checking for Understanding’, and, in Sherrington’s blog, ‘All, not Some’ – the two concepts align along with recent feedback from the SEND Review (Oct 23) that we need to ensure every single student in our classroom understanding what we are teaching and that they are ‘flourishing’.



Reflecting, however, on the current ‘state of play’ in Teaching & Learning at BHFCs, we have to be honest:

- *do our staff understand why we have such a heavy focus on Checking for Understanding? Is this something we need to revise?*
- *Or do they see this as a prescriptive directive from SLT?*
- *Do our teaching staff effectively use Cold Calling?*
- *Do our staff understand why this is an effective strategy?*

We use Cold Calling to ensure all students are included in the thinking and feedback process.

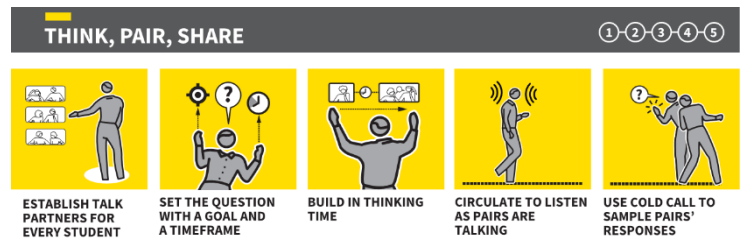


Asking for hands up and volunteers restricts feedback to a small number of students in the classroom. Doug Lemoi (Teach Like A Champion) said cold calling is designed to promote active

thinking during whole-class questioning, giving students thinking time before the teacher then strategically selects students to answer.

The problem with this is that some students find this strategy daunting, not because they don't know the answer or that they're not listening but because of the fear responding in front of the class creates: fear of failure and anxiety around being the centre of attention.

A strategy we are focusing on currently is 'Think, Pair, Share'. Recommended from the SEND Review (October 23), this strategy enables teachers to check for understanding whilst circulating. Creating 'Talking Partners' provides every student with a platform to discuss their understanding and responses in a safe place before feeding back to the rest of the class.



This strategy can then be extended into other Walkthrus and teaching tools: use of mini white boards; I do, we do, you do; probing questions; class discussion. The danger, here, is that we are inadvertently restricting our staff to three core Walkthrus and they are therefore not able to exercise the 'Qualities for Living' we are wanting to develop in our own students.

Going forward into the next three years and beyond, we need to foster a desire for teachers to grow, to develop, they have to have the want to improve themselves – to be better to do better. To 'model' the Qualities for Living.

Coaching is a global process for developing personnel through the appraisal process and Kraft et al (2014) say coaching is an effective method to develop teachers as an alternative to



development in school. It is a low-stakes method of encouraging reflection and improvement, with high-stakes impact. The coaching process is

currently in place at BHFCS, though feedback on this is varied. Comments from staff (Survey March 24) are that there isn't enough time for this to be impactful as the time allocated means less departmental time. Anecdotally, we know some department leads are not engaging with the coaching process and in some cases, the practice is not effective.

To enable our students to flourish in character, we, as staff, need to look at the 'Qualities for Living' and how we, as teachers, not only model these but adopt them into our own mindset, development and character. We have to foster the desire to improve within our staff.

What do we do already?

- *Teachbrief: fortnightly slots during briefing – the purpose is short, sharp strategies*
- *Dept CPD: focusing on subject specific development, led by Subject Leads*
- *T&L INSET Time: dedicated time to whole school foci led by SLT and other excellent practitioners*
- *#TEACHFEST – an opportunity to share excellent practice within depts and network*

Focusing on the Qualities for Living, over the next three years and beyond, how can we build on this?

Teaching & Learning must be a priority and we need to ask ourselves: “are our staff flourishing in the classroom?”, how can we create an ‘Ethic of Excellence’?

Our plans as a Senior Team must be open to critique – critique from our teaching staff.



Things to consider:

- *Do we need to reflect on the time used in INSET and focus on getting the best from our staff?*
- *What is our use of INSET – training, information sharing or development?*
- *Is there ever a happy medium of both?*

- *Do we give the opportunity for our staff to feedback after INSET time? What do we do with this information?*
- *Do we have a culture of self-reflection? Do we have a culture of excellence?*

Moving forward – recreating a ‘buzz’ around staff development, creating a ‘curious and wise’ team who are ‘discerning, hopeful and active’?

Therefore, things to facilitate this are:

- *Revival of T&L Working Party including rebranding, evaluated purpose – what do hope to achieve from this, who should this involve?*
- *Revival of CPD Library (utilise school library – staff modelling education and development)*
- *Peer Observation Programme – set up and run centrally, expectation is that it’s the norm*
- *‘Universal’ sharing of Good Practice – all staff training on how to observe, including recordings of lessons, WAGOLL etc, observing without judgement, what does learning look like in your subject?*
- *Revival of T&L SharePoint Page – T&L Team contributing and sharing news - create a buzz*
- *Coaching Programme – robust 3 Year Plan, developed with teachers*
- *T&L CPD Programme Foci outlined for 3 Years*
- *TeachBrief Programme continued, planned at least half term in advance*
- *Expanding Walkthrus and allow more autonomy for staff to focus on development*
- *Look at Appraisal Target #3, currently “CPD” and offer further guidance with Teachers in charge of their own CPD (in line with the anticipated changes to Appraisal for September 2024)*
- *Annual Induction Day to incorporate T&L self-audit*
- *T&L ‘Welcome Pack’ for all new staff, including CPD book and Walkthru log in*

Further reading:

[Restoring the Catholic in Catholic Schools \(catholiceducation.org\)](https://www.catholiceducation.org/)

[If We Want Better Schools, We Need to Be a Serious People \(catholiceducation.org\)](https://www.catholiceducation.org/)

[Developing character skills in schools: qualitative case studies \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/developing-character-skills-in-schools-qualitative-case-studies.pdf)

[Building Catholic Character: 5 Things Parents Can Do \(catholiceducation.org\)](https://www.catholiceducation.org/)

LEADERSHIP, SERVICE AND ROLE MODELS: DEVELOPING THE SIXTH FORM – HELEN JORDAN

The Sixth Form

Curriculum

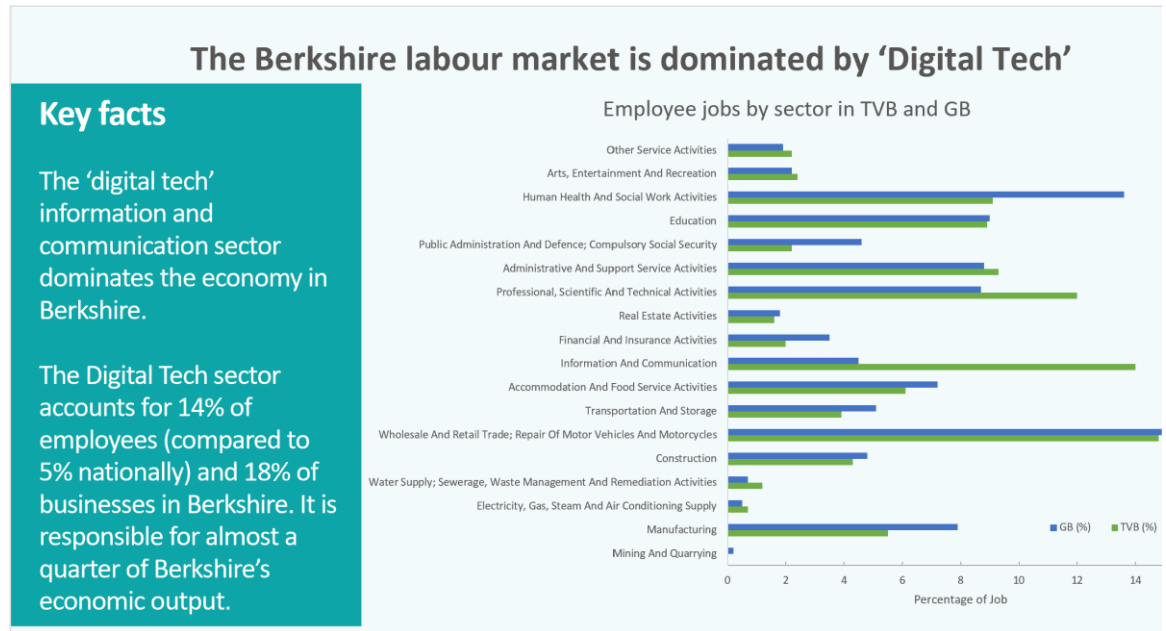
The strengths of our broad and balanced Level 3 curriculum offer are the flexibility to combine A Level and BTEC qualifications, provision for Level 2 re-sits, stretch and challenge through the Extended Project Qualification and further enrichment through the recent addition of Core Maths. BTEC Health and Social Care in particular provides an essential pathway for students pursuing careers in healthcare, of whom we have many. Extending our provision to include the triple qualification has been a positive development and a priority for the next three years is securing that pathway for students when the current BTEC is defunded in 2025. Pearson have submitted BTEC Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) for approval and the outcomes of this funding decision will be published in July 2024^[1].

Another curriculum priority is the successful introduction of A Level Computer Science. The subject has been a popular request from Year 11 applicants, has been well established in KS3 and at GCSE, and it also provides a pathway for our students into a range of current and emerging careers, both locally and internationally (see graph overleaf). In the medium to longer-term, the BTEC National AAQ in Computing (first teaching in September 2025) could provide an additional pathway, broadening inclusion for 6th Form students interested in this field.

A BTEC Level 3 in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship is to be offered for September 2024, following the introduction of the BTEC Enterprise at KS4 in 2022. This will broaden the range of opportunities for students interested in this popular and essential field.

Finally, the social sciences have proved consistently popular both at KS5 and in our students' Higher Education choices. There has been growth in the department with the addition of A Level

Politics in 2019, and the addition of A Level Economics would further strengthen the profile of students pursuing higher education and/or careers in this sector.



Labour Market information from Berkshire opportunities^[2]

Recruitment

A strong curriculum offer is essential to recruitment and, with increased numbers comes greater flexibility of subject combinations which in turn, can boost recruitment. It goes without saying that raised standards and improved outcomes are also key elements in attracting Year 11 students to our Level 3 programmes. The many benefits of BHF 6th Form – class sizes, quality teaching, careers advice and opportunities as well as new initiatives such as the sports development programme and iPad provision – are communicated to KS4 students and parents through our transition programme events and social media and this must be both strengthened and expanded until the expectation of a 7-year education at BHF becomes the norm. 6th Form student leaders and subject leaders play a growing part in this.

Raising Standards

Developing and embedding independent study skills throughout the two years of 6th Form remains a priority for raising standards in the Sixth Form. The Year 12 VESPA programme needs to be enhanced by renewed focus on Directed Study Periods and self-assessment. Our current

use of the Horsforth Quadrant to target intervention can be improved by greater co-ordination with 6th Form teachers and the addition of subject-specific 'Feed Forward' reports as a matter of course following major assessments.

New Technology

Developments in technology provide challenges and opportunities for students and teachers. In the 6th Form at BHF, students are provided with ipads to use as textbooks (a growing number of course providers publishing textbooks online) and/or notepads. The overwhelming majority of external assessment is still paper-based so there remains a need to teach students how to write by hand, planning and structuring answers in timed conditions. However, the use of AI in education is undoubtedly growing and we have a responsibility to lead students in its use for good - in particular, how to use chat bots such as Chat GPT in an appropriate way in an academic setting. Dr Vaughan Connolly and Dr Steve Watson, researchers from the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge, have offered some useful perspective on the possibilities of ChatGPT which can be applied in our developing school and 6th Form approach^[3]

Equality and Equity

'Inclusion' was highlighted by Ofsted in their October 2023 report as a real strength of the school. A culture of awareness and openness around discussion of equality exists in both the main school and the 6th form, underpinned by structures such as the weekly discussions in tutor time around equality issues in the news. It is important that, as well as examples of inequality, students learn about tackling it and are exposed to numerous examples of inequalities being challenged and barriers overcome; the underlying principle being 'if you can see it, you can be it'. Professor Dianne Reay from the University of Cambridge has argued that, based on her extensive research, 'we are still educating different social classes for different functions in society'^[4]. 6th forms in particular are well-placed to be part of the change in this regard. Every year, our students benefit from Sutton Trust and Reading Scholars programmes, the Eton College Summer School and mentors from Zero Gravity^[5]. There is scope for still more – for example the 'Speakers for Schools' Programme.

These programmes must be allied with robust strategies around attendance to maintain and improve our above-average attendance rate; focused and relevant financial education and continued outreach to parents to engage them in school priorities as well as IAG for careers and HE.

Super-Curricular and Partnerships

In addition to our established partnerships with Wellington College (ISSP programme) and Eton College, we now work with Leighton Park School on a number of projects to raise the aspirations and widen the horizons of our students. The Model United Nations club and debating are a crucial part of this and we will be adding competition in Rotary as well as Catenian Public Speaking competitions to our annual enrichment offer. In school, a newly-established, student-led MedSoc has been formed to support those interested in applying for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science and a Social Sciences Society in which students are contributing articles for a termly publication of independent academic essays.

Destinations & careers

A fundamental goal of the 6th Form is to have zero NEET students and an increasing number of UCAS offers from the most competitive or Russell Group universities. Strategies to achieve this are referenced in the 'Equality and Equity' and 'Raising Standards' sections. In addition, the HoSf and Sixth Form Manager will arrange their own CPD to respond effectively to the changes in the UCAS application process in 2024 and 2025.

^[1] [BTEC Nationals from 2025 | Pearson qualifications](#)

^[2] [Labour Market Information | Berkshire Opportunities](#)

^[3] [ChatGPT: opportunities and challenges for education \(cam.ac.uk\)](#)

^[4] ['Working-class children get less of everything in education - including respect' | Schools | The Guardian](#)

^[5] [School students | Zero Gravity is a free digital platform that gives state school students the tools to get into Oxbridge & Russell Group universities.](#)

Student Leadership

Rooted in Service

Student leadership at BHF is rooted in service and is one of the five core outcomes for our students which constitutes the BHF Way. This is predicated on our Christian foundation, and the embracing both of Catholic Social Teaching and character education. Leaders' understand that their work is for the benefit of others in the school community and that they have both the privilege and the responsibility to represent their needs, work with them and for them. The peer mentor programme in particular has been significant in cultivating this servant leadership; maintaining its quality and deserved prestige is a priority.

Meaningful and Effective

Both the junior (Year 11) and senior (Year 13) student leadership teams are structured to reflect the school's SLT. Meetings however, are still informal and more accountability measures need to be put in place to bring them to the level of School Council – calendared, minutes taken and with feedback to relevant parties as a set agenda item. The profile of the leadership teams has grown, with increased participation in and organisation of whole-school events, but there is scope for both teams to be more visible and work more closely with younger students.

At the heart of a lively faith

Student leaders, specifically members of the CIA team, are playing an increasing role not just taking part in but leading liturgies and writing prayer services. Older students are being recruited to serve as eucharistic ministers. The continued development of this chaplaincy is a priority.

Inclusive.

'Student Leadership' should also include the various levels at which students can develop their leadership skills, as well as the leadership positions themselves. There is a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities at BHF and we are proud of the participation levels across discreet groups. This participation is now recorded and can be analysed through SIMS Online so staff leaders of student groups need to habitually review this and take action to make sure that there are no barriers to leadership. In addition, following the work being done this year to raise aspirations and expectations of female students in the REIGNITE programme, a female leadership programme 'The Female Lead' would benefit our KS4 students.

Connected to our Curriculum

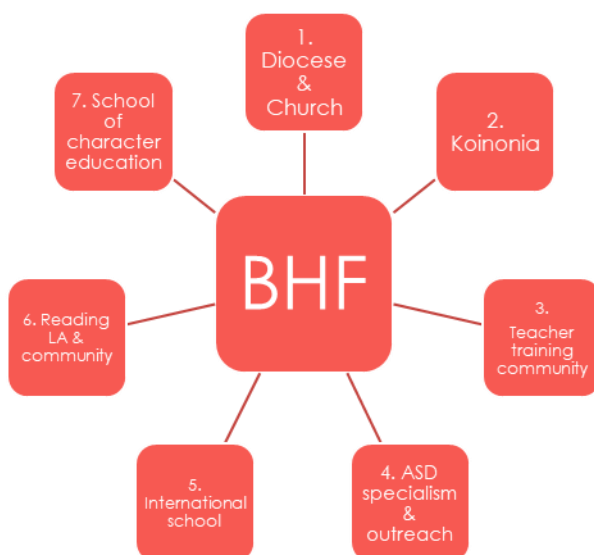
Although the Student Voice programme is not a leadership initiative *per se*, it is a significant way in which students contribute to the running of the school and should be acknowledged here. The expansive calendar – stretching across all subjects, year groups and including representation of all discreet groups – is in its second year and third cycle. It now needs to be embedded in the quality assurance of every subject leader and increasingly transparent in feedback to students (for example, bi-annual ‘You Said, We Did’ reports).

Reaching to the wider community.

In addition to the School Council, our students are encouraged to participate in and run for positions in local and national youth government through the ‘Make Your Mark’ campaign. Increased participation across year groups in Reading Youth Council as well as successful applications to the National Youth Council and Youth Parliament are goals for the coming years.

BLESSED HUGH PLUS: CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMON GOOD – SIMON UTTLEY

Blessed Hugh, in recent years, has contributed to the common good in a variety of ways. This has reflected its Catholic identity – outward looking and generous – as well as the increasing expertise in the school, combined with a steadier, more consistent set of academic outputs which have allowed for proactive, imaginative thinking. Going forward, the following diagram is not exhaustive but offers a starting point to understand the school’s continued aspirations to look beyond, not for abstract prestige, but to inculcate ‘bigger thinking’ in the minds of staff and students alike.



1. *Diocese and Church*

Diocese

At the time of writing, we are expecting that Blessed Hugh will be mandated to join a large Diocesan multi academy Trust, based on an overarching two-Trust model, by 2027. This is because the Diocese have decided this is the best policy and are following the Catholic Education Service and example of other Dioceses. The vast majority of schools will be primary schools.

Blessed Hugh will be able to offer expertise across a range of areas. The following is not exhaustive:

- Professional development
- Character education
- Catholic social teaching
- Curriculum development
- Supporting children with an ASD
- Leadership development (The Headteacher is already a Diocesan New Headteacher coach).
- Insights from the *Koinonia* programme

Church

Blessed Hugh already contributes to the Church in a variety of ways, which will be strengthened going forward:

-Headteacher a Licensed Catholic Schools' Inspector (multi-diocese).

-Scholarship: HT is Visiting professor in Catholic Education at St Mary's university, Twickenham, and Course Leader and Full professor at the University of Notre Dame (USA) London Gateway.

-Two members of staff are involved in parish catechetics.

-We have welcomed a number of young priests /those in formation and provided a helpful environment for them to deepen their pastoral awareness.

- Going forward, the school will exemplify outstanding practice within the framework for Catholic schools' inspection.
- Members of staff will contribute to scholarship and practical writing.
- The school will be an exemplary example of a character-rich school

2. *Koinonia*

At the time of the inception of Corporate Strategy 2024-7, Koinonia will be beginning the third of the three years it has been formally designated to run. It will also, potentially, be feeding into the multi-academy Trust agenda. Some objectives have been met:

-Closer collaboration

-Hard partnership with St Mary's University

-Retreat for school leaders

-Signature keynote events

-Professional development blog

-Important action research

-Some involvement by other colleagues

-Use of group to provide data for St Mary's researchers

However there are elements not yet exploited fully:

- Full collaborative research projects
- Involvement from all schools

3. *Teacher training community*

This is already very developed in the school and our aim is to continue this. A specific aim is to work more closely with Teaching schools with a view to being part of a Reading offer to strengthen teaching in the town. This will involve careful planning and is covered in section 6 (L.A.)

4. *ASD specialism and outreach*

The school-based provision is excellent and the senior staff in the unit are now being recognised for their district-level expertise. The challenge may be in the form of having to take students who do not meet our normal criteria (able to substantively engage in mainstream lessons) and take students who will place much larger demands on the unit.

Going forward we would wish to:

- Advertise and deliver a suite of paid and free ASD-related programmes for the benefit of local (and less local) educators
- Contribute to ongoing research and scholarship in the area

5. *International school*

The school, is a registered International School, audited for its commitment to an ongoing, deep and impactful relationship with, presently, two schools, St John Bosco, Slovakia and Francois Mitterrand, Bordeaux. We are currently working on a partnership with a Peruvian school (again, under the patronage of St John Bosco) as part of strengthening Spanish in the school. The Slovak partnership has yielded excellent results, though more are needed. The French partnership has proven difficult to fully get off the ground. In terms of what has been achieved with the Slovak link:

- Slovak staff and students visiting BHF regularly
- BHF staff visiting Slovakia regularly
- Supporting our signature Slovak Educational Leadership Conference
- Facilitating an affordable ski trip for BHF students

-Attracting the praise of both the UK ambassador to Slovakia, and the Slovak ambassador to the UK.

Going forward we need to:

- Ensure the French partnership is fit for purpose and, if so, invest in it and, if not, replace it
- Ensure BHF students have the opportunity to visit Slovakia
- Develop the Peruvian partnership
- Ensure internationalism is firmly embedded in the life of the school
- Invite ambassadors to address students on affairs of the day

6. Reading LA and the community

Reading LA

The relationship with BHF and the LA is excellent, BHF being seen as a leading school in terms of (i) outturns (ii) inclusivity (iii) systems' leadership (iv) principles-based education. The Headteacher is Vice Chair of the Education Partnership Board in addition to the Reading Secondary school, and college leaders' group. He is also ASCL representative for Reading schools' senior staff and is taking a leading role in designing a package of support for Headteachers, commensurate with the challenge they face. Going forward, we intend to:

- Explore a greater role in the systems' leadership of Reading as an educational community.
- Ever-closer working with the Director of Education
- Contribute to finding solutions for the need for increased alternative provision and special educational needs' provision.
- Use the experience of Koinonia to explore a close relationship with the university

BHF will be 'the hub' for local leader growth and consistency of education practice at secondary level

In the coming years, in line with Reading's vision, BHF will become a beacon for:

'inclusive practice from which others can learn'

- the outcomes of children in underperforming groups are above national benchmarks

- research informed pedagogy (instructional, graduated and therapeutic), approaches are well embedded in the school because leaders collaborate, support and complement each other's work, to ensure the highest quality
- inclusive cultures support children, staff, and parents/cares to enjoy positive lived experiences at school and work. Attendance rates for these groups are well above national averages because of the support and systems in place
- school leaders at all levels in the school, work with other secondary mainstream settings, to support practitioners to implement instructional coaching and other locally agreed training approaches
- school leaders organise, participate in and report on peer reviews across local schools
- the school helps with significantly complex cohorts in other schools who provide for fewer vulnerable children and young people
- the school's specialist provision is sector-leading

'supporting wellbeing and a culture where executive support is an expectation and entitlement for all'.

- staff and leader wellbeing are significantly improved year on year because effective, well considered systems are in place
- school policy leads support and celebrates staff
- middle leaders and senior leaders are part of a formal peer buddy system to guide leaders in other schools through sharing BHF innovative leadership development programme
- student voice work shapes BHF education strategy, policy, staffing and resourcing. This work can be shared and implemented other schools
- the school has an effective recruitment and retention strategy in place for governance, leaders and staff, worthy of sharing with others

The Community

The school already provides letting opportunities for the community, which provides low-cost access to activities for local families. In addition, the school works closely with other schools, e.g. senior staff serving as Governors in local schools as a contribution to the common good. Going forward, the school is committed to:

- Ever-greater collaborative working to support teaching and learning, pastoral care, curriculum development, character education or advice and guidance
- Continued innovative work with the independent sector (Leighton Park), particularly around raising aspirations and ensuring BHF students do not feel precluded from entering certain professions e.g. through lack of family connections

STUDENT INPUT – HELEN JORDAN

These responses were compiled from a series of discussions held during and between extraordinary School Council meetings in April and May 2024. The structure and focus points of the Corporate Strategy were introduced to the Council by Dr Uttley in the meeting on 21st March. After the initial discussion, students were sent a copy of the strategy outline document and met weekly during Wednesday lunchtimes to reflect on it and produce their notes which were submitted to Ms Jordan to be written up below.

Vision: Thinking of all the things that make up us as a school, how would you like Blessed Hugh Faringdon School to be in September 2027?

The growth of the school was a theme running through this discussion, as the Council understand the benefits of a large, popular school and want to ensure the needs of the growing population are met. They envisage additional building to increase the number of classrooms and more support staff, namely teaching assistants, as well as teachers for new classes. Along with this comes the possibility of an increased range of curricular and extra-curricular possibilities. With a focus on the practical, the Council acknowledged the pressure on school resources and space by increasing numbers on roll. Ensuring a safe environment is a priority; target areas being canteen queues - looking into faster methods of payment and distribution - and management of the toilets. This must be supported by robust anti-bullying strategies for a bigger but still safer community.

Curriculum: what would you like the curriculum to look like in 2027?

Although there was some discussion about the introduction of new subjects – such as widening the range of languages on offer in MFL and introducing parkour in PE– much of the discussion focused the ways current subjects can be developed and included creative classroom activities and initiatives. Business and Food Tech can be enhanced by incorporating more competition based on popular formats such as Dragons’ Den and the Bake Off. Subject-specific trips are also important so students have the opportunity to go on a pilgrimage in RE, to a gallery in Art, as a matter of course. The vision outlined by the Council was of a curriculum enlivened by creativity in such a way as to bring student together and enrich class relationships as well as subject enjoyment.

Contributing to the Common Good: how would you like Blessed Hugh to be contributing to the local community in September 2027?

The desire to organize more charity events and increase fundraising was expressed in most of the council sub-groups; they students are keenly aware of those in need and of their own privilege and ability to effect change. Local areas for focus are both social – what practical help and strategies can be found to assist the homeless in Reading – and environmental – they would like to be part of a tree-planting programme as well as help to keep Prospect Park clean.

Pastoral Care: how else could the school provide help and support for students?

The Council would like an increased role and visibility of the School Nurse, but otherwise see a growing role for students in peer pastoral care. This could be through lunchtime sessions, more student leaders in tutor groups and mental health ambassadors in the young years as well as the older. Communication through assemblies is an important part of this strategy, as well as student leaders being able to work with tutors specifically on pastoral needs.

International Status: Blessed Hugh is an international school with two partner schools, one in Slovakia and one in France. How else could Blessed Hugh be more internationally minded?

Students highlight celebrations of diverse cultures as a strength of our school community and one which is it very important to cultivate. BHF students should continue to be proud of their origins, feel represented and be able to take part in culture activities and enjoy them. The student-led 'Culture Day' has proved hugely popular and the Council are keen to continue this as a tradition and expand to a culture festival, incorporating more social elements such as food and music. There is a suggestion that parents could be involved in elements of this if it continues after school hours. Students are mindful of inclusion factors and ensuring activities can be enjoyed by those who do not want a 'spotlight' role (eg. wearing national dress on the catwalk). They would also like genuine learning to take place, through student-led presentations in tutor time.

Student Leadership: many students are involved in one form of leadership or another – how else could the school develop its leaders?

Students would like to take greater control of the leadership agenda by having a budget they would manage (under staff supervision) for a yearbook, prom etc. Funds could be raised by students to contribute to this year on year through student-led events. Formalising and making leadership meetings more regular to help to achieve this. They also see an increased role in the faith-life of the school and would like to play a more regular part in school masses and assemblies.

Co-Curricular Offer: the other things we get to do in addition to being in lessons eg. trips, guest speakers, clubs etc By 2027, what other things would you like to see?

The council suggested that in-school activities could be enhanced by inter-house competitions, both sports tournaments and arts and creative competitions. This is another way in which

relationships across year groups can be strengthened, increasing our sense of community and contributing to the sense of safety against bullying. Guest speakers who focus on exam techniques and study skills are particularly valued.

Governors and school leaders are considering how artificial intelligence will change Blessed Hugh by September 2027. What do you think?

The council pointed out some ways in which AI technology can benefit students, for example as a revision aid by making summaries of information or by picking out mistakes in work. They also discussed the potential for using it as an organisational tool – AI can organise revision schedules and GCSE students in particular described this as a ‘life-saver’. They did acknowledge the significant risk to exam and assessment integrity, describing the high realistic standard of AI-produced creative work, mentioning Art in particular as a subject which could be affected here. By 2027, the School needs to have robust practices around AI checks, including up-to-date computer programmes to routinely check formal assessments. However, it should also be pro-actively teaching students in lessons and in tutor periods/PSHE how to effectively and ethically use this technology in subject-specific ways and for general study skills. This should be added to the PSHE and the Computer Science curriculum for all students.

WIDER STAKEHOLDER INPUT – AIMEE DONALDSON

Surveys are currently issued to our key stakeholders on a termly basis, this is now calendarized and forms part of stakeholder feedback routine. The surveys were revised to include more quantitative, meaningful data to inform our strategic thinking and issued to three of our key stakeholders of the school: students, parents and staff.

Surveys are key to developing our school and can provide leaders with honest feedback whilst really empowering stakeholders in addition to showing that leaders value their thoughts and opinions (LinkedIn, 2024).

The approach to analysis is a broad one. The initial surveys issued in 2023 focused on the four areas of the Ofsted framework: Quality of Education, Behaviour & Attitudes, Personal Development and Leadership and Management. In addition, a number of questions fall into the 'Safeguarding' category, which is area of focus number 5 – in an inspection, this is a standalone inspection category. Whilst this survey has been developed in line with the Corporate Strategy themes, the structure of the survey is based around these areas and stakeholder feedback is analysed in this way.

RESPONSES

When reviewing the scope of respondents across the three key stakeholder groups, there is clear distribution across discrete groups. This includes staff roles in the school, age range of students and gender of students. A common theme in Parent and Student surveys is a dominance of responses in the 'White' ethnicity category and not necessarily reflective of our school community. What can be done to combat this, how can we increase engagement in collecting responses from a great range of ethnicities in order to reflect our community? It could be that this survey was simply too long, however, we, as an SLT Team adapted the survey to capture specific areas related to our overarching themes.

Going forward, creating shorter and sharper focused surveys could explore this theory.

1. QUALITY OF EDUCATION

This Ofsted focus is centred around three key concepts: Intent; Implementation; Impact. Whilst these three concepts can be applied to everything done in schools, this Ofsted focus centres around the classroom and everything that 'goes with it': curriculum; assessment; teaching and learning.

On the whole, staff are proud to work at this school, staff believe students are safe and staff know they what we are trying to achieve as a school. Staff are also mostly in agreement that they are confident that our Catholic Identity and Ethos is evident in everything we are doing as a school and that the school makes appropriate provision for their professional development. Staff agree that the school is well managed and led, the school deals with any cases of bullying effectively and that the school meets the differing needs of individual pupils.

This is a strong reflection of how much work we have done, as a school, with the processes and the direction we have been aiming for.

Both Parents and Students feel like the subjects on offer and the curriculum as a whole is good and engages pupils in learning. This reflects the extensive work that has gone into developing Curriculum Plans and Learning Journeys across each Key Stage, this was also reflected in our Ofsted Inspection (Sept 23).

When asked about developing the curriculum further, bearing in mind that the purpose of this survey is to strategically plan for the next three years, the overwhelming response around Modern Foreign Languages included expanding our current Spanish offer as well as introducing other languages – including German and Polish. Furthermore 'Computer Science' was a popular suggestion from parents. Interestingly, our students have raised more practical studies: including

Photography; Beauty and Dance, as well as more modern academics such as Law and Politics at KS3 and KS4.

This really highlights the vast range of interests of our students – though it's important to acknowledge that this range of subjects is simply not feasible at present at BHFCS, the expansion and development of the MFL department is already underway, with a progression plan for Spanish already outlined and underway. What we can do as a school, is explore the Law and Politics pathway through PSHE and this naturally leads us to review our current PSHE offer to ensure this is captured and is age appropriate.

Both parents and pupils felt that teachers inspire students to learn. Teachers as role models are integral to encouraging students to be ambitious, to improve and to challenge themselves (ECT Framework). Everyone remembers their favourite teacher (The Guardian, 2016) and, being mindful of the need to support the most vulnerable in society, our teaching staff potentially are the only positive role model for our most vulnerable students. It is absolutely key that we, as teachers, remember this when interacting with our students (Education Gateshead, 2019)

Parents were specifically asked to elaborate on what information would help in supporting their child. Already on our website there is a plethora of information including term-by-term information on what students will study – this is a reflection on the vast amount of work committed to this area of school life over the last few years. However, parents are communicating that they want more – which leads to the question: how do we bridge this gap of what we do and what the parents know? What can we do to communicate this better?

Other suggestions of how to develop this area included more feedback about their child and contact time with staff – with the school growing and developing in size, we already have populated our 'Directed Time' budget with a increased time for Parents Evenings (STPC, 2017). In what other capacities can we expand on this? Is there anything we can stop doing to allow us to do something else?

Furthermore, the request for more feedback must ensure that the data is meaningful and not more bureaucratic tasks for teachers to complete, equally adding to further workload (FFT, 2019). Would a greater focus on rolling out Class Charts to ensure more parents are accessing daily information bridge this gap? Would more parent information evenings focusing on specific strategies/processes in school support this desire for more interaction from school staff?

In comparison, this is juxtaposed with the Staff Survey perspective, where some staff feel workload his high, combined with the rising expectations from some parents – is there a utopia for parental contact from schools?

2. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Of course, school doesn't just exist in the format of classroom lessons, schools provide a wide range of opportunities in the context of extra-curricular activities (University of Aberdeen, 2020). Extra-curricular activities are essential in develop students' skills but also developing their character. At BHFCS, our current offer includes (but is not limited to):

- Sports – this is a seasonal offer and the sports on offer cover a broad spectrum, though some run all year such as table tennis club
- Performing Arts – this includes all opportunities for music and drama
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Homework Club (across a number of departments)
- STEM Club

Stakeholders were asked what else we could offer. A large number of responses were 'I don't know', 'unsure' and 'the current offer is good' – which to some degree is reassuring that students appreciate what is already provided. In responses, realistic suggestions arose such as:

- More leadership and life-skill based (First Aid At Work, cooking and etc..)
- Dance
- more opportunities for employer/university acknowledgeable work experience
- Coding: Blender, After effects, HTML, CSS, Java script
- Tennis
- more clubs for revision and homework
- a club where you colour in those mindfulness pages like we do in tutor etc (not on Thursdays please if this ever happens)
- Drama club
- Street dance club
- Environmental awareness.
- More social based events.
- well-being classes - helping children understand mental health and what sources of support they may have if and when needed.
- Clubs for less sporty children, clubs by invite for children who are more nervous and find it hard to make friends
- Gymnastics
- More fine arts (Painting, Music, etc.) as after school
- I think a gym would be amazing, then use of it can also be offered to staff as a well-being benefit. If we can't afford to buy equipment outright, we can always have a rotation of external companies that can come in and offer opportunities? (Film-making, photography, music production etc)
- Maybe introduce Cadets/CCF as an alternative to D of E

- More student run clubs - encourage the older year groups to run events for the younger ones.

Whereas some other not so realistic suggestions were put forward, such as:

- ice skating
- make it so that the after-school activities are engaging and rewarding- you have to convince us that they are worth sacrificing our free time for after all

However, staff felt a barrier to this was time and workload. This has been referenced in further detail in 'Leadership and Management' but the sentiment behind offering more to students is clear: "This is a tough one as teachers and staff feel very overburdened in the main and I am sure are reluctant to take on more things outside school hours, but the truth is that these are the things that make a huge difference in terms of pupils feeling part of things and in terms of relationships."

Other highlights of this element to the survey include a comprehensive careers programme, the teaching of Catholic ethos and the respect for all cultures, religion and faith – all of which reflect the hard work and development focus from the last Corporate Strategy, including the change in leadership of the school and greater focus on Catholicity and the distinctiveness of teaching in a Catholic School.

3. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Generally, comments around communication from parents was positive. When asked how we can improve communication, comments on the whole said parents were satisfied with the frequency and nature of communications. However, suggestions varied from termly reports to wanting more interaction with teaching staff and a more personal touch.

However, this increased expectation of communication and interaction comes at a price: time. The biggest barrier to moving forward and developing strategies, from CPD to Extra-Curricular Offers, is finding more time to offer opportunities to our students.

Continuing liaison with the BHFCs Workload Reduction Group, the senior team will continue to look for ways to reduce workload to enable time capacity.

Workload is a national issue for schools in the UK – the 'Workload Task Force' group (Gov.uk, 2024) is due to publish a final list of recommendations for schools in improving this. This was due for publication in Spring 2024 following some initial recommendations in January 2024.

Whilst Teaching and Learning technically falls under 'Quality for Education', school staff were asked to focus on their training experiences in this area through 'CPD' – Continuing Professional Development. Teaching & Learning and CPD are of some concern to staff. The response to improving Teaching and Learning through CPD was mixed with no real majority of opinion.

We have a number of staff doing NPQ courses which is reflected although whilst this is mostly positive, some work needs to be done to ensure that a bespoke approach is in place where opportunities are given to develop in whole school development and individual training – including both teaching skills and subject specific training (The National College, 2024). Whilst staff felt that the school has a supportive culture that allows them to flourish, their experience of receiving feedback was very mixed.

Staff were asked to explore solutions to overcoming this. Feedback on how both Teaching & Learning CPD and receiving Supportive Feedback can be developed includes:

- All staff trained in observation and more examples of good practice demonstrated
- Subject directed time that's planned and co-ordinated with their line manager
- Have relevant sessions that are realistic and not just a tick box exercise, needs to be relatable to our school and pupils
- we need more time to introduce areas of focus and to ensure consistency, but i don't think that is an option! INSETS are far too rushed, and it does not feel anything gets the time it deserves, so I then don't think staff give things as much attention as they should
- LW's to ensure the Tom Sherrington project is being followed
- there could be subject specific training from outside agencies
- collaborations with other schools
- Lunchtime CPD drop in sessions - if staff attend they get a rewards card and for every 5 CPD they attend they get a free lunch or something similar.
- Peer observation programme that focuses on both T&L and Behaviour Management
- Give more department time - HODs to organise what's needed in their department.
- More tailored trainings, specific foci, coupled with learning walks this week we are looking at X and Y), more feedback (especially low stakes - e.g. general comments in briefing on what the school is doing well or needs to develop)
- share research/books/articles that are useful.
- Improve the use of IT for teaching and planning – including teaching staff leading training
- Keep the focus on mini observations of good practice to improve and develop.
- Continue use of walkthrough website. Really liked the self-development tool we were shown in the last inset.

- In terms of improving behaviour, we need to find a way of embedding "what good behaviour looks like" within our school culture. Whether is be visiting speakers in assemblies, more community service around the school or adopting a 'Japanese Model' where students have an active part in the running of the school and take a level of responsibility.
- Specific PSHE on what behaviour is acceptable. e.g. what does respect really mean (not 'everyone has to be nice to me while I do what I want!'), respect for positions of authority, basic manners (inc. actions, words and expressions), social skills, not barging past people
- Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) Programmes: Implement school-wide PBS programmes that focus on teaching and reinforcing positive behaviours rather than solely on punishment for negative behaviours. This includes clearly defined expectations, consistent reinforcement of positive behaviours, and teaching social-emotional skills.
- Parent and Community Involvement - Engage parents and the broader community in promoting positive behaviour and supporting students' social-emotional development. This can include parent education workshops, community partnerships for mentoring or after-school programmes, and communication channels for parents to collaborate with the school.

Students, however, felt:

- rewards to be harder to get but pleasing when getting it
- more rewards, fairness, things to be dealt with properly, let students express their opinion
- let kids talk about their opinion
- Teachers need to place less value in sanction systems that don't bother uncooperative students, rather should focus on mitigating disorder in class by exerting their own confidence and authority through social means of creating a sense of peer pressure, from the majority of cooperative students, on the misbehaving individuals to silence their disruptive behaviour/make them realise it's not welcome among the rest of their class
- make sanctions stricter
- Phones should be allowed at break and lunch as that is our free time and we may need it for revision, adding money to our accounts, calling our parents for serious reasons, etc.
- better toilet monitoring during break/lunch
- teaching staff to give a more fair distribution of sanctions
- More trips
- People should get rewarded more for house points.
- Something to improve the reward system is when the achievement point certificates are being handed out, they could be handed in, in class
- Make sanctions more severe
- more consistent

- be fair
- make it fair for everyone
- A lot of teachers don't give house points anymore so maybe they could start doing that more.
- More harsh punishments, C4s are not effective
- make lots of little rewards for students who may be finding it harder to learn but at the same time not reducing any rewards for those who have earned it
- discuss the situation with other staff to make the sanctions fair.
- give out more rewards and house points
- give more rewards and less sanctions, more house points
- Give more rewards and house points.
- give me sweets as a reward
- Use it more often
- investigate then sanction
- give out more praise points
- Give more reward to more harder working students.
- actually give house points, a lot of teachers are bias towards teachers pets or talkative girls.
- Praise/reward people who are doing the right thing
- let us hear our sides on the story, because we self-defend ourselves and we get in trouble for doing so
- make it better and free trips
- listen to students statement
- make it that all teachers follow the same rules as some give out c3 ,c4 for the most absurd things to students.

What is explicably clear, students want more recognition when things go well, they'd like more House Points being issued and they'd like rewards to be more frequent – including rewards trips and events. They've also suggested school buys the rewards and pays for their trips – which we know is not financially viable but it does show what is meaningful to students in the context of behaviour. What can we do, as leaders, to ensure rewards, appreciation and acknowledgment is given to those who earn and deserve it?

Students and parents were also asked about behaviours they value in terms of success in life.



Many, many words were repeated. The clear 'front runner' was 'respect'. This crosses over with the expectations from students in their teachers. It does then prompt a reflection:

- do we all truly understand what is meant by respect? There are 5 different definitions in the Oxford Dictionary relating to this!
- Does it rely on context and situations in what it means to different people?
- How do we instil 'respect' into everyday practice and expectations of students?
- How can they understand that this involves respecting one another, as well as school staff?

In terms of bullying, both staff and parents felt the school deals effectively with bullying. Whereas students vehemently disagree. Why is this?

Focusing on a number of factors:

- Do students understand what 'bullying' is as opposed to unkind behaviour? 'Stopbullying.gov' (US website) outlines a range of 'factors' that constitute bullying – factors which are experienced overtime and not one-off events.
- Are the bullies aware of their behaviour and what it communicates, how it impacts?
- Do students tell us that it's sorted, when, in fact, it isn't? Is this because it's easier to appease their bully? To stop attention being drawn to the behaviours? Is this out of fear? (Psychology Today, 2020)
- Are we targeting interventions at the right students?
- Are we aware of existing bullying instances and are students using the survey is a way of trying to communicate this to us?

We already have taken action on how to combat bullying in school, we need to closely measure the impact and ensure every child is heard. Feedback on this from the survey from our students has been shared with the team on the anti-bullying task force.

5. SAFEGUARDING

All questions that fall under safeguarding have a majority 'agree' or 'strong agree' response. This is a direct reflection of the time, training and focus the school has had in ensuring the Safeguarding provision is effective in the school. Pupils know where to find help and who to ask.

The focus here is to continue to ensure students and staff understand the processes and training is up to date.

ALIGNMENT AND LEADERSHIP OF THE READING LEARNING COMMUNITY- SIMON UTTLEY

Blessed Hugh is committed to the common good and well-being of Reading young people and families. This is because Catholic schools constitute a unity of vision and purpose – that of teaching and enriching the lives of all in their wider community. Far from being segregated, exclusionary settings, Catholic schools tilt outwards with a common goal of making the community, region and country a better place for everyone. In so doing the school evangelises, demonstrating an attractive, welcoming and exciting Church. In terms of CST, the Catholic school should be a place of solidarity, characterised by love, dignity and moral purpose. In addition, and here we think of Blessed Hugh:

i. The sharing of facilities, resources and expertise. The school proactively interacts with the family of Catholic schools and schools from other sectors.

Our school is well used by the community. It is an intrinsic feature of the local landscape, reflected in our recent tree growing partnership with local residents. We also provide an emergency destination for two schools should they encounter an emergency.

In terms of expertise, we have expertise in Catholic education, autism and special needs, ethical leadership, aligning scholarship with practice and mental health and well-being. We have two international school partners, which will be three in the next six months. Finally, we have Koinonia as a unique programme of collaboration, now open to non-Catholic schools which share our ethos.

ii. Alignment with the Reading Education Partnership Board Vision

Aided by the Headteacher's role as Vice Chair of the Reading Education Partnership. Blessed Hugh is committed to working in sync with the Authority in the coming three years. Here below we identify the Partnership vision statement and cross-refer to Blessed Hugh.

(A) by 2026, the Reading Partnership, including Elected Members, want all Reading schools and settings to:

- *be places that systematically support the wellbeing of leaders because there is a well-planned and resourced wellbeing offer in place and a culture where executive support is an expectation and entitlement for all Heads. This will mean....*
- *headteacher wellbeing is significantly improved from 2023 baseline measures – Blessed Hugh*

Governors are already proactive in supporting the Headteacher

- *Local policy leads support and celebrate schools and school leaders.*

Blessed Hugh continues to advocate strongly for a tight community of schools, notwithstanding the impact of Academisation, to allow for mutual support, better understanding of what other settings do and to prevent the alienation of school leaders and others.

- *Local business partnerships contribute to the local wellbeing strategy*

Blessed Hugh have already engaged with this, for example using the PWC staff employer mentor scheme for Sixth Form students.

In addition, we embrace the following two:

- *Governing bodies can commission executive support from a range of high quality and affordable local providers*
- *Roles, responsibilities and expected behaviours are well communicated and understood across local partnerships and where conflicts arise restorative, and trauma informed practices underpin problem solving*

Finally, an objective Blessed Hugh supports all the time through the use of National Professional Qualifications, aspiration to senior leadership.

- *Middle leaders aspire to headship and senior leadership*

Blessed Hugh strongly endorse the following elements of the Reading Partnership

(B) be experts in inclusive practice across all educational settings, so that children and young people will receive high quality provision, adapted to meet their needs, regardless of the school they attend. This will mean.....

- *the outcomes of children in underperforming groups are above national benchmarks and variation between schools is reduced.*

This is a major and ongoing focus for BHF

- *Inclusive cultures support children, staff, and parents/carers to enjoy positive lived experiences at school and work. This in turn will support vulnerable children to attend school well*

This is strong but can be strengthened further at BHF

- *research informed pedagogy and graduated approaches are well embedded in all settings because leaders collaborate and support each other to implement high quality locally agreed approaches*
- *specialist advisors and providers work with mainstream settings, using locally agreed approaches to support practitioners to implement approaches from training*

The Headteacher is working with the University of Reading to explore a comparable relationship with Reading schools to that enjoyed by Koinonia schools with St Mary's University.

- *Schools and settings with significantly complex cohorts will be supported by other schools and settings who provide for fewer vulnerable children and young people*

Blessed Hugh's expertise in autism is already being placed at the service of other schools. This is set to continue.

- *There is a range of high-quality local alternative and specialist provision that meets the needs of children with complex needs both in and out of mainstream*

There currently is not enough across Reading, though the BMW centre provides excellent practice in autism support for the common good. As part of the Education partnership, as well as the school, we will continue to lobby for increased provision.

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- *Parents and carers of children with vulnerabilities have confidence in the local system to provide an equitable educational experience for their children and young people*

BHF prides itself on the relationship with parents and carers and seeks to promote this across the town.

- *The voice and characteristics of our children will shape education strategy, policy, staffing and resourcing so that the system reflects the diversity in the communities we serve and so that all stakeholders feel safe, welcome, understood, and able to thrive in education.*

This is not yet hardwired into the system across the town, though there are examples of good practice. BHF is committed to diversity training, and this will be an early feature of the new Corporate Strategy.

(C) be active participants in strong and effective school-to school partnerships and benefit from well-co-ordinated, research informed, school improvement opportunities. This will mean.....

- *Outcomes in all key stages and across all indicators improve and are in the top 20% of national performance*
- *Opportunities for subject and pedagogical knowledge development and professional collaboration are clearly mapped and schools engage well with this provision*
- *opportunities for leadership development and collaboration are well mapped, available to staff at all levels and schools engage well with this provision*
- *collaborative working increases leadership capacity, confidence, and wellbeing through economies of scale and collective use of resources*

BHF fully embraces all these aspirations, and they are reflected throughout this Strategy.

- *An effective recruitment and retention strategy is in place*
- *Partnerships between schools, settings and regional school improvement providers support structural resilience, recruitment, and retention for all*
- *Mechanisms to support young and local people into careers in education are established and effective*

Through the Partnership and within Reading Secondary Headteachers, Blessed Hugh warmly endorses the new approach to recruitment which will evolve in the 2024-5 academic year.

- *Opportunities for Reading leaders to engage with educational research and development are in place and engagement is high*
- *Partnerships with the business and voluntary community are effective and bring additional resource and capacity to schools*
- *National leaders in education are engaged with Reading schools and settings.*

BHF warmly endorses these elements of the vision. Again, the Head will be directly involved with the University and partnership working. The current close relationship with Catholic primary schools, Reading secondary schools and with the independent sector (Leighton Park) are very rich, authentic and mutually beneficial.

15.0 STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Please note the following are broad strategic aims rather than a detailed operational plan for implementation. This document must be read in conjunction with the School's annual Operational Plan.

Element 3 Keeping us honest: authenticity in Catholic education – Simon Uttley

Outline	Owned by	Time frame	Outline resource requirement
3.1 Institute annual review of <i>Mission Integrity</i> by the GB to ensure our commitment to the poor, the marginalised, to families in difficulty, to affordable excursions/activities	Chairs of Gov & HT	Once per year	Time allocated
3.2 Proactively support careers in teaching, including in Catholic education, across the Reading community	HT/Louise Amieiro	Once over cycle	£400; time. Possible collaboration with Leighton Park around teaching as a career.

3.2 (a) through Education Partnership and Reading University, secure throughput of teachers from overseas, including equipping them with appropriate formation.			Time
3.3 Continued review of on-boarding materials to ensure the impact of working in a Catholic environment is fully appreciated	HT/Louise Amieiro/Karyn Stiles	Ongoing	Time
3.4 Continue to review retention of staff to reduce attrition.	HT/Louise Amieiro/Karyn Stiles	Ongoing	Time
3.5 Explore supporting clergy/social worker/allied professionals' development through offering volunteering opportunities in the school to ensure greater inter-disciplinary understanding	Sue Matthews	By Christmas 2024	Time
3.6 Host a forum to explore current work on youth ministry in the pastoral area	HT/Chaplain	By Christmas 2024	Time; £400
3.7 Explore ways of galvanising works currently undertaken across the pastoral area e.g. funded dedicated website?	HT/Chaplain	By Christmas 2024	Time

3.8 Through Koinonia, explore and disseminate best practice in working with local parishes	HT	By Christmas 2024	Time
3.9 Secure full Romero award	Chaplain	Over cycle	Time; £300
3.10 Secure full Character Education award	HT	Over cycle	Time; £300
3.11 Launch the John Paul II award	Chaplain	Over cycle	Time; £300
3.12 Arrange school mission for academic year 2024-5	Chaplain; HT	By summer 2025	Time; c.£3000
3.13 Students' leadership of prayer and liturgy is the norm	Chaplain; HT; Heads of Year	By Christmas 2024	Time
3.14 Behaviour is exemplary across the school, not only in lessons. This means behaviour on corridors is safe and courteous.	SLT	By Christmas 2025	Time
3.15 Chaplaincy is sector-leading and a resource across the MAT/Koinonia	Chaplain; Sue Matthews; HT	Over cycle	Time
3.16 Character education is the signature difference in how we teach	SLT; Heads of Department	Over cycle	Time; training
3.17 Catholic social teaching is fully embedded and understood by all	SLT; Heads of Department; chaplain	By Christmas 2024	Time; training

3.18 Art, music and drama coherently, frequently and impactfully contribute to the Catholic life of the school	SLT; relevant Heads of Department	Over cycle	<p>Time; construct an annual BHF Arts plan to give equal weight across the three disciplines.</p> <p>Set up a Student Arts' Council</p> <p>Link with Leighton Park as critical friend</p>
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Element 4 A character-rich curriculum for a flourishing life – Ben Winsor			
Outline	Owned by	Time frame	Outline resource requirements
4.1 Strengthen and develop student and staff character education, virtues and qualities for living within the school community, embedding a full understanding.	DHT, Chaplain, YLs, SLs	July 2025	Time, resources , training
4.2 Develop staff understanding of character education, virtues and qualities for living, through CPD sessions and	HT,DHT, AHTs, Chaplain	December 2024	CPD time, training and resources –

workshops – staff modelling character, virtues and qualities for living.			some external support.
4.3 Audit opportunities for personal prayer, collective worship, conversational prayer and produce an action plan to improve.	DHT, Chaplain	October 2024	Time
4.4 Develop understanding of moral discipline – incorporated into all behaviour policies and protocols.	AHT (behaviour and attitudes), DHT	July 2025	Time
4.5 Improve restorative practices, following sanctions, through use of moral dialogue. (Links with SM's/JW's section 5 objective)	AHT (behaviour and attitudes), Pastoral Support Coordinators, Alternative Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator, AHTs	July 2025	Time, training and resources
4.6 Develop therapeutic approaches to resolutions, based on moral discipline and moral values.	AHT (behaviour and attitudes), Pastoral Support Coordinators, Alternative Curriculum & Intervention Coordinator, AHTs	July 2025	Time, training and resources
4.7 Strengthen our provision of anti-bullying education and response to bullying.	AHT (behaviour and attitudes), YLs	July 2025	Time, training and resources

4.8 Improve participatory decision making through policy writing and decision making. Staff, students, parents and governors working collegiately.	HT, DHT, AHTs – all policy owners staff	September 2025	Time, policies, training
4.9 Strengthen student voice and feedback, sharing clear, visible responses with stakeholders.	AHT (student voice), DHT, all Senior and Middle leaders	September 2025	Time, policies, training
4.10 Review the curriculum content and planning across all departments and key stages and devise an action plan to incorporate opportunities to embed character formation and moral values.	DHT, Chaplain, SLs, AHTs	December 2024	Time, visits and collaboration with outstanding Catholic Schools
4.11 Increase student participation and service beyond the classroom through charity and outreach work; work within the local, national and global community; and work within the diocese.	DHT, Chaplain	July 2025	Time, links with local, national and global organisations.
4.12 Review curriculum provision for KS3-5. Increase alternative curriculum opportunities and provision for low ability and SEND students, for example, Pathway 3 in KS4.	DHT, SENDCO, AHTs, SLs	September 2025	Time, funding for new courses

Element 5 Character for learning and success Jermaine Webster and Sue Matthews

Outline	Owned by	Time frame	Outline resource requirements
5.1: Mental Health Provision, at Blessed Hugh, will be all-encompassing and sector leading across the Local Authority, Koinonia, The MAT and beyond.	Sue Matthews	Over cycle	Time
5.2: We will continue to contribute locally, regionally and nationally to the development of Mental Health Provision for students and staff.	Sue Matthews	Over cycle	Time
5.3: Safeguarding Provision will remain effective and be a beacon of excellence across the LA, Koinonia, the MAT and beyond.	Sue Mathews	Over cycle	Time to review, train and disseminate
5.4: Develop the use of external agencies to support behaviour to have a greater impact on attainment and attitude to learning	Jermaine Webster	Annually	Time to review, plan and re-create
5.5: Develop the use of ACI support	Jermaine Webster	Annually	Time to review, plan and write programmes with ACIC. Further training for ACI

5.6: Create an effective pastoral and behaviour support area	Jermaine Webster	Annually	Movement of rooms to have two separate space, staff training, time to plan and implement.
5.7: Broaden and deepen the use of therapeutic interventions across staff (Therapeutic Thinking Skills focus)	Jermaine Webster/Sue Matthews	Termly	Insets, CPD, teach briefs, money for external training
5.8: Increase awareness of anti-bullying at staff and student level, through CPD opportunities, assemblies, tutor time and whole school events.	Jermaine Webster/Sue Matthews/YLs	Termly	Insets, CPD, teach briefs, assembly and tutor time allocations, time to plan

Element 6 Financial sustainability and the future – Ann McDonnell and Karyn Stiles

Outline	Owned by	Time frame	Outline resource requirements
6.1 Improved links between budget and operational plan	AM/KS/HT	Ongoing over 3 years	Time and training

6.2 Clear strategic plan for use of surplus funding	AM/KS	Plan in place by September 2024 with view to reduce surplus by September 2026	Time and training
6.3 Refine systems to ensure timely review of contractors service agreements	AM/KS	In place by April 2025	Time and training
6.4 Baring down on increased teaching percentages to align with median benchmarks	AM/KS/HT	Ongoing over 3 years	Time and training
6.5 short-term onboarding of new Head of Operations to ensure continuity	AM/KS/HT	April 2025	Time, training, ongoing ad hoc involvement of current SBM/HT

Element 7 Option for the poor – caring for the vulnerable – Sue Matthews and Aimee Donaldson

Outline			Owned by	Time frame	Outline resource requirements
7.1: The SEND Action Plan will	Sue Matthews,	Incorporate the plan into the Operational	Time, funding		

<p>be fully implemented according to the timescales indicated and regular review will ensure it remains ahead of the curve and fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Michelle Edwards, Lisa Boorman</p>	<p>Plan for September 2025 with remaining actions.</p> <p>Plan completion: Over cycle</p>			
<p>7.2: Literacy provision will become embedded at whole school level with clear evidence of impact to raise attainment.</p>	<p>Sue Matthews, Parminder Grewal</p>	<p>Fresh Start Fully implemented over 2024 – 25.</p> <p>Nurture group provision clear and developed over 2024 – 25 ready for full implementation in September 2025</p>	<p>Time, funding for physical (space and materials) and human resourcing.</p>		
<p>7.3: The BMW Centre will continue to provide high quality support embracing the impact of the rapidly changing context and environment locally and nationally.</p>		<p>Sue Matthews, Lisa Boorman</p>	<p>Over cycle</p>	<p>Time, training, funding</p>	

7.4: SEND staffing will be reviewed and developed to reflect the changing cohort literacy needs	Sue Matthews, Lisa Boorman, Michelle Edwards	Initially for September 2024 and reviewed/adjusted thereafter	Funding and time to recruit and train.
7.5: Develop and embed the Joy Programme	Sue Matthews, Lisa Boorman, Michelle Edwards	Over Cycle	Time, potential funding
7.6: Improve FSM/PP Attendance to bring above with national average	AHT/ACI	Over cycle	Time Budget
7.7: Utilise Provision Maps for all PP students, every PP child to have a Learning Plan	AHT/HOYs	Over Cycle	Time Provision Maps
7.8: Develop therapeutic menu (see section 5 TTS objective) for students going onto PSP report and used as standard in PSP Stage Meetings and moving forward as a preventative tool.	AHT	Over Cycle	Time Budget Appropriate personnel
7.9: Re-establish work on parental engagement to ensure events are timely, regular and well-attended	DT/AHT	Over Cycle	Time

			Resources to host appropriate events
Element 8 No one left behind: towards being a lead school for inclusivity and social justice - Jermaine Webster			
Outline	Owned by	Time frame	Outline resource requirements
8.1 Create a boys' working party to identify their barriers in learning. 8.2 Meet with boys who are underachieving and / or disengaged to identify barriers, which will inform staff planning.	JW	December 2024	Regular time allocated to meet with students and plan strategies
8.3 Recruit a team of staff to lead on closing the gender gap. 8.4 Identify staff (Potential UPR Focus) who would be interested in 'closing the gap'.	JW	December 2024	Regular time allocated to meet with staff and plan strategies

<p>8.5 Create learning plans and resources.</p> <p>8.6 Deliver 1:1 / small group intervention sessions.</p>			
<p>8.7 Focussed intervention on the lowest achieving boys.</p> <p>Identification of boys from White British and Black backgrounds who are underachieving</p> <p>Identify staff to mentor</p> <p>Set up subject interventions for these students</p>	<p>JW</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>Regular time allocated to meet with staff and plan strategies</p>
<p>8.8 Review the curriculum design – is it fit for some of our students?</p> <p>8.9 Develop further interventions to raise attainment in boys who are underachieving</p>	<p>JW & BW</p>	<p>July 2025</p>	<p>Time to reflect and evaluate our curriculum</p> <p>Identify alternatives and visit / contact other schools that offer alternative curriculums</p>

8.10 Developing T&L strategies to support boys in the classroom.	JC, HJ, AD	July 2025	Time to research and plan
8.11 Establishing Leadership Development Opportunities for girls	SH	July 2025	
8.12 Designate responsibilities within the team, including Helen Jordan's role. 8.13 Plan and schedule sessions for leadership skill development, debate, and MUN simulations. 8.14 Collaborate with the English department to organize workshops on speech writing and confidence-building.	SH	July 2025	
8.15 Organising Off-Site Trips for girls 8.16 Identify potential destinations and educational opportunities for off-site trips. Plan logistics, obtain necessary permissions, and allocate budgetary resources. Inform and involve students in the selection process for off-site experiences.	SH	July 2025	

<p>8.17 Complete PSHE on gender equality and Andrew Tate in the school</p> <p>8.18 (delivered by SU/CF/SM) In line with Cura Personalis "care for the whole person,". Engage with the Congregation for Catholic Education to integrate values-based education, including the Jesuit virtues, into leadership skill development sessions. Collaborate on designing programs that intertwine leadership skills with moral and ethical principles, including respect for all genders and the fight against misogyny.</p>	<p>JW & SH</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>Time for planning</p> <p>Timetabling into PSHE learning journey</p>
<p>8.19 Early career support/identification</p> <p>Use PSHE and tutor time to develop a greater understanding of careers at an earlier age.</p>	<p>JW/ RG / HOYS</p>	<p>December 2024</p>	<p>Time for planning</p> <p>Timetabling into PSHE learning journey</p>

Element 9 Teaching with character: towards intellectual and emotional flourishing – Aimee Donaldson

Outline	Owned by	Timeframe	Outline resource requirements
9.1: Achieve Leading Edge Transforming Accreditation over the full range of Teaching and Learning strands	AHTs	Variety of Teaching Approaches July 2024. Remaining strands over cycle	Time. Opportunities to visit other settings.
9.2: Establish focus for three year T&L plan	AHTs	Sept 2024 onwards	Time to plan
9.3: Outline clear, annual T&L plan that feeds into whole school CPD plan	AHTs	July 24, July 25, July 26	Time CPD Plan
9.4: Relaunch coaching as method of departmental CPD with clear links to character in staff	AHTs	Sept 24	Time CPD Plan

9.5: Establish 3-year coaching programme, with dedicated time within Directed Time Budget and a clear focus of progression	AHTs	July 24, July 25, July 26	Time Directed time budget
9.6: Teaching & Learning Working Party termly meets as standard	AHTs	July 24, July 25, July 26	Time
9.7: CPD Library linked to School Library, developed with modern education literature relevant to school setting	AHTs	Over Cycle	Budget
9.8: Teachbrief slot to continue, outlined ahead of each term, as routine, in line with school priorities	AHTs	Each term from Sept 24 – July 27	Time
9.9: CPD on Behaviour during briefings slots to begin as routine, focus outlined ahead of each term, in line with school priorities	AHTs	Each term from Sept 24 – July 27	Time
9.10: Peer Observation programme set up, established, facilitated, monitored and reviewed - annually	AHTs	Over Cycle	Time IT system to request observation Cover in place where necessary

9.11: Use of Walkthrus to develop teacher CPD and 'Excellence in T&L as the norm'	AHTs	Over Cycle	Time Walkthru Subscription CPD Plan
9.12: Training of Appraisal Staff on undertaking observations – 'WAGOLL'	AHTs	July 25	Time CPD Plan
9.13: Training of Appraised Staff on undertaking observations – 'WAGOLL'	AHTs	Dec 26	Time CPD Plan
Element 10 Leadership, service and role models – the Sixth Form - Helen Jordan			
Outline	Owned by	Timeframe	Outline resource requirements
10.1 Introduction of alternative vocational qualifications to meet the need of BTEC students	HJO	September 25	Training for RG, MD (external providers) budget allocation, time.

10.2 Develop curriculum offer to meet changing needs of all applicants	HJO	Annual process – reviewed in September 24, 25, 26	Training for relevant staff members as required. Departmental resources.
10.3 Build the 6 th Form Study Skills Programme to all-year-round routines	HJO	Introduce September 24, review and embed Sept – July 45-25	Study resources from relevant organisations eg. Membership of Net Sixth Form
10.4 Upskill staff on understanding and use of AI for positive use in education	HJO	September 25	Online course for HJO, INSET time to cascade to teaching staff
10.5 Build relationships and partnerships with social mobility organisations in education and careers	HJO	September 25	Resources are free to access
10.6 Create and develop careers and aspiration clubs and societies within and across 6 th Form(s)	HJO	September 26	Free resources, time and travel (fuel costs) required for some events

Key Performance Indicators			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Vocational/Applied qualification maintains or increases levels of progression to credible HE pathways (compared to current BTEC HSC) • All staff are confident with and all students have a clear understanding of appropriate and effective use of AI in 6th Form teaching and learning. • Student membership of careers and aspirations clubs increases year-on-year 2024-7. 			
Element 11 Blessed Hugh Plus: contributing to the common good – Simon Uttley			
Outline	Owned by	Timeframe	Outline resource requirements
<p>11.1 As a precursor to academisation, position the school to offer commercial standard, quality assured expertise in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -professional development -Catholic life and mission -Catholic schools’ inspections 	<p>SLT HT/Chaplain</p>	<p>Christmas 2024</p>	<p>-use existing channels such as Leading Edge, RSCL. Koinonia</p>

-support for those with an ASD diagnosis -safeguarding -Character education -leadership development	HT Lisa Boorman/ Sue Matthews/ Michele Edwards HT/BW		Design course / leaflets/marketing £2000
11.2 Koinonia will engage in at least one substantial multi-school research exercise	HT/Sue Matthews	Christmas 2024	Time
11.3 Ensure the French partnership is fit for purpose and/or replace	HT/Elise Hargreaves	Christmas 2024	Time
11.4 Ensure BHF students have the opportunity to visit Slovakia, and this is repeated	HT/Sue Matthews	Summer 2025	Time
11.5 Consider one other partnership, in the light of offering Spanish	HT/Elise Hargreaves	Summer 2025	Time
11.6 Ensure internationalism is embedded in the school and across the school year	HT/Elise Hargreaves	Christmas 2024	Time Existing capitation

11.7 Seek to expand the school capacity	HT/Ann McDonnell	Ongoing	In collaboration with LA
11.8 Explore two signature events per year, around character education or principled education, in collaboration with Leighton Park school	HT/Leighton Park senior staff	Over three years	Time
11.9 More active involvement ecumenically across Reading, including hosting events, contributing to debate and sharing news	HT/Chaplain	Over three years	Time
11.10 Develop writing talent for BHF staff and students to secure publication, under the banner 'BHF Research' so as to ensure wider impact	HT	Over three years	Time
11.11 Secure one to two Ofsted inspector posts for staff to benefit the school community and to contribute to the common good	HT	Over three years	Time
11.12 Secure a second Catholic schools' inspectorate inspector post to benefit the school community and to contribute to the common good.	HT/Louise Amieiro	Over three years	Time
11.13 Secure all designations as transforming for Leading Edge accreditation over the course of the next cycle and re-accreditation for those in excess of 3 years old (in line with Leading Edge guidance)	Head/Sue Matthews	Over three years	Time Annual subscription ¹⁴

Element 14. Alignment with the Reading vision – Simon Uttley

Outline	Owned by	Timeframe	Outline resource requirements
14.1 Take an ever-greater role in systems' leadership of the town's educational mission	SU/Governor [LT]	Next three years	Continue to secure funding and ensure BHF leadership capacity backfilled where necessary
14.2 Offer a distinct but inclusive voice around (a) character education (b) ethical leadership	SU	Next three years	Time
14.3 embed Slovak educational conference into Reading's story -secure ongoing funding -broaden remit			
14.4 secure University of Reading as a strategic partner with Reading to support whole-Reading initiatives, in particular:	SU	Next three years	Time; financial support from LA for BHF

(a) challenging underperformance			
(b) decolonising the curriculum			
(c) supporting teacher recruitment			
(d) developing researcher-practitioner capability			

16.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

I would like to thank the many people involved in this five month process of discerning the next 3 years for Blessed Hugh Faringdon.

Of course it remains difficult to speculate on the many external changes that are likely to interact with this document, especially in the light of a new impending Government. At the same time, this process has brought to the fore the importance of the principles that underly the vision for the school; the importance of mission integrity, the development of character, not just academic outcomes, the role of Catholic Social Teaching and the school's commitment to be outward facing, generous and commitment of the common good.

As an ecclesial community, and a place of prayer and worship, we dedicate our work to Christ and for the intercession of Blessed Hugh Faringdon and of our Lady, Seat of Wisdom. Amen.

Dr Simon Uttley

Headmaster

Thursday 4th July 2024

Feast of St Elizabeth of Portugal

17.0 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - SUMMARY

Character for Learning and Success

Safeguarding: High quality proactive processes and provision which are a model of excellence within the local authority and a benchmark for the Mother Theresa MAT in preparation for September 2027

Mental Health and Wellbeing: Each and every member of staff and child, in our school, feels secure in the knowledge that their wellbeing matters and that, where the need arises, they will be appropriately supported to feel safe and thrive.

Therapeutic Interventions: A regularly reviewed therapeutic interventions menu in collaboration with internal and external professionals to the benefit of all students at the time they need it.

Improve the internal and external provision of alternative curriculum and behavioural support to reduce suspensions and PEX's

'Option for the Poor': Supporting the Vulnerable

SEND Provision: Established high quality, well-targeted impactful provision which is regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that all students thrive.

Pupil Premium Provision: Established bespoke, well-targeted impactful provision which is regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure that all students thrive.

Standards

<i>Measure</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2025</i>	<i>2026</i>	<i>2027</i>
<i>E&M Threshold</i>				
<i>E&M Threshold Standard pass in line with latest national figure and better by 2027</i>				
<i>E&M Threshold Strong pass in line with latest national figure and better by 2027</i>				
<i>Progress 8</i>				
<i>Progress 8 Score no lower than the Average range but better than Average range by 2027</i>				
<i>Attainment 8 in line with latest national figure or better</i>				
<i>Baccalaureate</i>				
<i>% of entries in line with latest national figure or better</i>				
<i>Entrants Achieving the Baccalaureate Standard in line with latest national figure or better</i>				
<i>Entrants Achieving the Baccalaureate Strong in line with latest national figure or better</i>				
<i>Reduce in subject Variation</i>				
<i>No. of subjects with negative residuals reduces year on year</i>				
<i>Discreet groups</i>				
<i>Improve performance of high attainers</i>				

<i>Improve the performance of White British and PP students</i>				
<i>Close the gap between SEN Students and no Students</i>				
<i>Report successful KS4 results and post 16 placements for BMW students in correlation to ability of child</i>				
Attendance				
<i>Improve Overall attendance in line with latest national figure or better</i>				
<i>Reduce Persistent Absentees Year on Year</i>				
Sixth Form				
<i>Significantly increase on numbers year on year</i>				
<i>Consistent positive VA year on year</i>				
<i>Consistent achievement of B- average grade</i>				
Suspensions and Exclusions				
<i>Reductions of suspensions year on year</i>				
<i>Continue low numbers of permanent exclusions year on year</i>				

Teaching with Character

<i>All staff involved in coaching programme and reporting positive feedback about the process</i>
<i>Checking for Understanding is fully embedded across the school</i>
<i>Think Pair Share is effective in enabling Talking Partners and students report their engagement with the strategy</i>
<i>Staff report their Teaching and Learning CPD offer is effective and developing classroom practice</i>

No one left behind: towards being a lead school for inclusivity and social justice

<i>Reduce the attainment gap between Boys and Girls by September 2027</i>
<i>Reduce the attainment gap between PP and non-PP by September 2027</i>
<i>Reduce the attainment gap between SEND and non-SEND by September 2027</i>
<i>Reduce the attainment gap between White British and Caribbean Students compared to other ethnic groups by September 2027</i>
<i>Increase the percentage of boys achieving grades 9-7 by September 2027</i>
<i>Maintain low level of Permanent exclusions (no more than 2 per year)</i>
<i>All staff trained on Racial Literacy by September 2025</i>
<i>All Curriculum designs in KS3 to be diverse and inclusive by September 2026</i>

Leadership, Service and Role Models

<i>New Vocational/Applied qualification maintains or increases levels of progression to credible HE pathways (compared to current BTEC HSC)</i>
<i>All staff are confident with and all students have a clear understanding of appropriate and effective use of AI in 6th Form teaching and learning.</i>
<i>Student membership of careers and aspirations clubs increases year-on-year 2024-7.</i>

A Character – Rich Curriculum for a Flourishing Life

Character formation: <i>all staff to be trained to ensure extensive knowledge of character education at Blessed Hugh Faringdon School to embed and model virtues and qualities of living within the school community.</i>
Character education: <i>the curriculum, across all subject disciplines, encompasses and identifies explicit opportunities to develop character education. This is evident in both curriculum planning documentation and in practice.</i>

<i>Prayer: an increase in the provision of, and opportunities for students and staff to participate and lead prayer.</i>
<i>Moral discipline: fully understood by all stakeholders and evident through our behaviour policy and procedures – for both staff and students. consequences and sanctions fully encompass moral dialogue and understanding – improving restorative and therapeutic practices.</i>
<i>Participatory decision making: all stakeholders work collegiately to develop school policies and documentation.</i>
<i>Participation beyond the classroom: an increase in student participation and service beyond the classroom through charity and outreach work; diocese, local, national, and global community.</i>
<i>Curriculum provision for low ability and SEND: suitable curriculum in place for these students.</i>