



School Development Plan 2022-25

Strategic Overview

1. Introduction

This plan takes the school forward for the next three years: it is crucial for the school as we ride through some of the most significant challenges to schools nationally and to this school in particular in many years. All of the challenges are within the overarching context of a post-pandemic world where the disadvantage gap has widened, mental health needs have rapidly accelerated and financial restraints have led to significant budget pressures. However, with the multitude of challenges come opportunities.

2. The Challenges

2.1 Challenge 1

Schools White Paper-Opportunities for All

The white paper sets out a new overarching ambition to increase the national GCSE average grade in both English language and in maths from 4.5 in 2019, to 5 by 2030. The paper then outlines key areas which are crucial in achieving this ambition. These areas align with the key challenges that we, and schools nationally are currently facing. There is a significant focus on an ongoing commitment to utilise tutoring and to develop evidence based literacy and numeracy interventions to ensure more children achieve the baseline measure of GCSE grade 5.

Opportunity: to rethink data, tracking and assessment; to focus more sharply on progress and attainment of the most disadvantaged students through evidence-based interventions.

2.2 Challenge 2

SEND Green Paper: A Review of SEND provision and direction

The Government SEND review fits within the Government ambition of opportunities for all children and identifies issues with access to the right support for children with an emphasis on improved mainstream provision and a national SEND and alternative provision system.

Opportunity: to review our systems and provision to support students with SEND including SEMH and utilise expertise within the Trust to ensure that we are providing early intervention and accessing any relevant external support

2.3 Challenge 3

Recruitment and Retention of staff

A survey carried out in April highlighted that seven out of 10 teachers in England have considered resigning in the past year due in part to pay and the cost of living crisis. A further survey highlighted that 44% of respondents intended to leave the profession within 5 years, citing level of trust in teachers from the public and government. Recruitment into teaching was a challenge before the pandemic but has been accelerated with the impact on morale of the demands of the past three years.

The White Paper outlines considerable steps to address teacher recruitment, recognising a current crisis in teacher recruitment and retention nationally. Steps set out in the paper include:

- scholarship to attract the language graduates
- a new ITT course to support more engineers to teach physics.
- A new digital service to recognise teaching qualifications “from all over the world”
- 500,000 teacher training and development opportunities by 2024
- To raise teacher starting salaries to £30k by 2023
- £3k retention payments for maths and science teachers in disadvantaged areas
- relocation premium to help teachers from around the world with visas and other expenses and bursaries for international trainees

Opportunity: to focus on cohesion of staff, staff well-being and school identity to ensure that staff feel empowered and engaged with change

2.4 Challenge 4

Mental Health and Emotional Well Being

Research undertaken by the Nuffield Trust has highlighted that the surge in demand for mental health care in children has been unprecedented, with sharper increases than for adults. For instance, the number of children waiting for eating disorder treatment has quadrupled. Further, vulnerable children, such as those with special educational needs and/ or disabilities, have been particularly affected.

In 2021, one in six children in England had a probable mental health disorder, up from one in nine in 2017, which at this time represented crisis levels in terms of services meeting need and thresholds for intervention being pushed to a high level. Early evidence suggests that pandemic restrictions including school closures may have aggravated known triggers for poor mental health, through reduced social interaction and academic stress.

The Government want all schools to have a designated mental health lead in schools by 2025, taking a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools in order to **lead to improved student emotional health and wellbeing which can help readiness to learn**. The mental health lead is able to access a national programme of high quality training. We have had a member of staff in post to take this role since October 2021.

Opportunity: to strengthen the curriculum to support young people in managing stress and pursuing positive mental health; to strengthen school culture to deliberately build structures and systems that create community and connectedness with school; to develop opportunities to enrich education and increase participation

2.5 Challenge 5

Reorganisation of three tier system

As a consequence of decreasing numbers (and projected numbers following trends) coming into the middle schools and following into the upper school system, the decision was taken by the central trust to align with the Suffolk two tier system. The three tier system is strongly supported by a number of families who are very disappointed that their children will no longer be able to follow this education system. The agreement was made that in order to retain elements of the three tier system that the re-organised school will work under a split site for the foreseeable future.

The challenges include ensuring a smooth transition for children currently in the middle schools; building a staffing structure for September 2023 and ensuring a cohesion of staffing, curriculum and strong transition across the two sites.

Opportunity: to develop a strong school identity through a collaboration with stakeholders; to develop a new Key Stage 3 curriculum, assessment system and pastoral systems that bring the two sites together and allow staff to have high levels of collaboration.

2.6 Challenge 6

Sixth Form Recruitment

As a result of a sixth form college opening within close proximity of County Upper for first intake in September 2019, the school sixth form has faced a significant recruitment challenges and has faced a falling role with class sizes reaching an unsustainable numbers: the financial pressure this has put in the school is significant.

The White Paper sets out the intention to establish new “academically focused” 16-19 free schools in educational investment areas (which includes Suffolk).

Opportunity: to redefine the identity of the sixth form and to ensure that we offer an inspiring alternative to students.

3. ‘Good’ to ‘Outstanding’: what the school needs to do to improve further

Under current regulations, if a school judged good or outstanding at its previous inspection subsequently undergoes significant change, for example through merging with another school or by adding a new phase or key stage, its next inspection will normally be a section 5 inspection. This assumes that the good or outstanding school remains open and incorporates another school that closes. In these cases, the good or outstanding school retains its URN, and so is not legally a new school. The section 5 inspection will normally take place within 3 years of the change. A section 5 inspection is a full inspection with graded judgements.

The Ofsted inspection of March 2022 outlined some key areas that must be focussed upon. These areas of focus will not in themselves support an ‘outstanding’ judgement but are important constituent elements.

- To ensure that behaviour systems and expectations are applied consistently by all staff
- To impact significantly on the persistent absence from school particularly of vulnerable children
- To rebuild relationships with parents through engagement with the work of the school

The School Development Plan has been designed to identify the next steps for County Upper that respond to the challenges and opportunities that are ahead of us and that stakeholders view as essential next steps in the development of our school as a place of exceptionality. The priorities and objectives have been identified through consultation with the student council, parent focus groups, staff and the leadership team.

4. Strategic Themes

Theme 1: Developing Pedagogical Excellence

Priority	Objectives (summarised)
Raising Attainment and progress for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oracy ▪ Literacy ▪ Homework ▪ Marking and assessment ▪ Progress of High prior attaining students ▪ Progress of disadvantaged students ▪ Progress of SEND students
A strong curriculum adaptation to meet the needs of all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sixth Form Curriculum ▪ Key Stage 3 curriculum ▪ Key Stage 4 non-core offer
Developing pedagogical intelligence to support exceptional progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff development ▪ Quality assurance processes ▪ Use of progress and attainment data

Theme 2: Developing Opportunities for All

Priority	Objectives (summarised)
Raising Aspirations for all: broadening horizons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ subject accreditations and recognition ▪ careers ▪ super curricular ▪ student leadership ▪ tracking participation ▪ extra curricular

Theme 3: Developing a Strong School Culture

Priority	Objectives (summarised)
A strong connectedness to school that underpins success for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ communication with students ▪ respect for all/ diversity ▪ interform competition ▪ new school identity ▪ recognition and success ▪ attendance ▪ sixth form identity
Underpin strong school culture through strong relationships with and between stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ parents ▪ governors ▪ staff ▪ local community
To develop powerful partnerships with schools locally, nationally and internationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International links ▪ Primary transition ▪ Sharing best practice