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Herefordshire Education Strategy 2024 - 2029

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Foreword by Councillor Ivan Powell

Herefordshire is a large and wonderfully diverse and safe rural county with a rich agricultural history and beautiful countryside. The county has a wide range of opportunities for around 24,000 pupils at 101 publicly funded schools.

Our Herefordshire Council's vision is for children and young people to feel included, valued, happy, healthy and safe in their homes and in their community as they grow up.

Our new Education Strategy sets out how we intend to support our children to achieve our vision.

We have high aspirations for all our children and young people. Access to quality learning from early years through to adulthood enables children and young people to thrive in their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development as they grow up to be young adults.

The Education Strategy for 2024 -2029 sets out our ambition for our children and young people and how we intend to fulfil our responsibilities in providing them with everything they need to develop and progress to enable them to do fantastic things with their lives. We are making it our mission to ensure access to, and availability of high-quality educational places in our county.

We are preparing our children and young people to thrive in an ever-changing world by supporting their emotional health and well-being, promoting collaboration and embedding a climate of inclusion across all of our schools and providers.

We are fully invested in our children and young people as they are at the forefront of Herefordshire's development as a county and as such become the next generation that ensures Herefordshire is the place people want to live, work and visit.



Vision

Our Vision is for children and young people in Herefordshire to feel Included, valued, happy, healthy and safe in their homes and in their community as they grow up. We want them to have access to good quality education, housing, sport and leisure facilities that enable them to thrive in their physical, emotional, intellectual and social development as they grow up to be young adults. Children and young people are at the forefront of Herefordshire's development as a county and as such, become the next generation that keeps Herefordshire the place people want to live and work.

Having access to high quality, local and inclusive education provision is key to achieving this vision.

Herefordshire children and young people deserve the best possible education and to leave school or college with the learning and skills that they need to succeed in further education or the workplace. A strong economy relies on a high performing education system to produce the workforce of the future and young people with the right skills, attitude and ambition to meet the needs of our employers or to start a business of their own.

We will actively listen to parents, carers, children and young people and front line practitioners to understand how the priorities impact them and use this to shape this strategy.

Our aspirations are firmly aligned to the policy aims set out in the following documents:

[Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-2028](#)

[Herefordshire Council Delivery Plan 2024 - 2025](#)

[Herefordshire Children and Young People's Plan](#)

[Herefordshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2023-26](#)

[Accessibility Strategy](#)

[Herefordshire Council Carbon Management Plan](#)

[Herefordshire Big Economic Plan 2022 - branded version.pdf](#)

Priorities for 2024 to 2029

The vision and aims of the strategy are set out below and include our strategic intentions to be ambitious, collaborative and inclusive.

The refreshed strategy focuses on five priority areas and its implementation and expected progression will be monitored and assessed against them.

Woven through all five priority areas is ensuring the importance of attendance in education in all key stages is understood and valued by parent/carers, professionals and children and young people.

Our key priorities are:

1. Ensuring access to and availability of high-quality educational places
2. Enabling our children and young people to thrive
3. Promoting collaborative school improvement to raise standards
4. Embedding a culture of inclusion
5. Supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of all children and young people

Access to and availability of high-quality educational places

We believe that all children and young people should be able to access high-quality education in their school regardless of where they live. Key to children and young people achieving well is the widespread availability of good school places across the county and high quality accessible alternative provision places when children and young people need them.

We will:

- maintain high-quality education across Herefordshire schools and settings
- ensure all children and young people are educated in schools that are ‘fit for purpose’ in terms of condition, suitability and sufficiency
- ensure that there are sufficient educational places for all, including those with SEND and across all phases
- ensure that there is sufficient alternative provision options to meet children and young people’s needs
- improve access to education to ensure equality of opportunity, promote inclusion, and support children and young people with additional needs to reach their educational potential

We will measure how well we are doing by:

- proportion of schools and settings achieving good or outstanding Ofsted judgements*
- proportion of schools improving their Ofsted ratings*
- proportion of school days lost due to maintenance issues
- proportion of school and early years places meets demand including for SEND children and young people
- proportion of schools that are fully accessible

* Please note. This measure has now become redundant in its current form. During a graded inspection, Ofsted now grade schools for each key judgement: Quality of education, Behaviour and attitudes, Personal development and Leadership and management and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade. As a result there is no current benchmarking standard across England. The Department for Education has confirmed plans to introduce School Report Cards from September 2025 which will seek to provide a complete picture of how schools are performing. We will review this measure when details of the new scorecard are published



Enabling our children and young people to thrive

We believe in the importance of every child and young person having the best start in life so they can thrive. Through excellent teachers and teaching, all children and young people will have access to a range of learning opportunities within a high-quality curriculum.

We will:

- provide the best start for all our children and young people by ensuring there is sufficient high-quality nursery, childcare and wrap around provision
- ensure high parental take up of early years government-funded places for eligible children including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- work with families to support the most vulnerable children into early years provision
- work with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership and partners including Ofsted and the Department for Education to monitor and where appropriate take action to ensure providers keep children and young people safe
- we will promote high standards of education and attendance by working with mainstream, special and alternative education settings
- working with partners, we will support Careers Leads in schools and colleges to strengthen the quality and availability of careers education in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks, to enable young people to make informed decisions
- we will work with the Herefordshire Skills Board and young people to ensure that a wide range of pathways (academic and vocational) are available that will enable young people to progress their learning, give them the skills they need to prosper and secure positive labour market outcomes
- we will work with partners to promote and support regular attendance across all school phases

We will measure how well we are doing by:

- proportion of early years settings that are Ofsted rated as good or outstanding**
- proportion of eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds taking up early years government-funded places, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
- making sure there is sufficient wraparound childcare to meet demand
- evaluating responses to the annual S175 safeguarding audit and undertaking quality assurance activity
- proportion of children and young people who regularly attend school, including keeping under regular review patterns and trends of absence, including persistent absence and severe absence.
- the proportion of children and young people who achieve well against national benchmarks
- the proportion of children and young people remaining in education, employment and training post 16 (EET))
- ensuring that all secondary mainstream and specialist schools and secondary Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) achieve all 8 Gatsby benchmarks by 2025

** Please note. This measure has now become redundant in its current form. During a graded inspection, Ofsted now grade schools for each key judgement: Quality of education, Behaviour and attitudes, Personal development and Leadership and management and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade. As a result there is no current benchmarking standard across England. The Department for Education has confirmed plans to introduce School Report Cards from September 2025 which will seek to provide a complete picture of how schools are performing. We will review this measure when details of the new scorecard are published

Collaborative school improvement to raise standards

We believe that every child and young person should receive excellent teaching. High quality continuous professional development for school staff is key to realising this ambition, along with high standards of curriculum provision, attendance and behaviour. The sharing of best practice, resources and expertise through collaborative working between schools and with the local authority will help to drive up standards.

We will:

- continue to develop the 'school to school' model of school improvement, to develop expertise within the school community to drive up standards
- ensure that local authority-maintained schools who are at risk of falling into an Ofsted 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' category are proactively supported to avoid this outcome*
- monitor the standards of children and young people's performance across all phases
- work in partnership with schools to be aspirational for all children and young people; facilitating networking opportunities and offering training
- embed the work of the attendance and social emotional and mental health (SEMH) inclusion service so that all children and young people of all abilities are encouraged to enjoy education
- provide support for school leaders and governors to ensure national and local priorities are addressed, with a focus on promoting an effective safeguarding culture
- develop the traded services offer to ensure support for schools beyond statutory functions

We will measure how well we are doing by:

- proportion of schools and settings achieving good or outstanding Ofsted judgements***
- proportion of schools improving their Ofsted ratings*
- the proportion of children and young people who achieve well against national benchmarks
- proportion of children and young people including vulnerable groups who regularly attend school
- increase the numbers of schools accessing the traded service support package

*** Please note. This measure has now become redundant in its current form. During a graded inspection, Ofsted now grade schools for each key judgement: Quality of education, Behaviour and attitudes, Personal development and Leadership and management and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade. As a result there is no current benchmarking standard across England. The Department for Education has confirmed plans to introduce School Report Cards from September 2025 which will seek to provide a complete picture of how schools are performing. We will review this measure when details of the new scorecard are published

Embedding a culture of inclusion

No child or young person should be left behind, a collaborative education system will ensure the sharing of best practice, resources and expertise to enable all children and young people who need additional support to succeed.

We will:

- share best practice and ensure the effective sharing of information between key partners so that every child or young person's need, or situation is accounted for and supported
- deploy the social inclusion and attendance and engagement teams to assist schools to operate inclusively
- proactively support children and young people at risk of permanent exclusion or suspension
- making sure there is suitable and sufficient alternative or targeted provision to meet individual need so no child or young person is left behind
- work with parents and carers to fulfil their roles and responsibilities to support their children and young people in education
-

- strengthen the role of the social, emotional and mental health inclusion service to support children and young people who are reintegrating to mainstream after exclusion or intervention
- work with schools and to ensure they are at the heart of their communities, and assist families to access tailored child-centred early help through the Local Offer and other programmes (holiday activity fund) to support children and young people's engagement and attendance in learning environments and education

We will measure how well we are doing by:

- rate of permanent exclusions at both primary and secondary level
- proportion of children and young people, including vulnerable groups who regularly attend school
- alternative provision is appropriate and meets the needs of the pupil accessing it
- proportion of children and young people reintegrating back into mainstream education following a permanent exclusion

Supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of all children and young people

Children and young people who feel they belong will thrive; a calm, orderly, safe and supportive school encourages positive wellbeing. We value effective school leadership that supports and champions efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing.

We will:

- ensure early identification and proactive intervention including access to current guidance, advice and national initiatives for school leaders, such as emotionally based school avoidance training
- apply robust processes for children and young people missing in education or unable to access education due to a health issue
- ensure appropriate advice, guidance and assistance to support the wellbeing of teachers and childcare professionals in Herefordshire
- deliver key initiatives such as the Holiday activity fund (HAF) and promote other health-based activities to vulnerable groups of pupils to support emotional health and wellbeing
- work in partnership with wider stakeholders, specifically ICB health partners and Public Health to promote children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing at home and at school – reviewing the development

and delivery of the ICB Mental Health in School programme in Herefordshire

- ensure that schools are able to identify their early help offer and the impact of this when supporting children and young people and their families through S11 audit process (safeguarding partnership)

We will measure how well we are doing by the:

- proportion of schools and providers engaging with training and national initiatives
- children and young people who are severely absent from school are monitored and appropriate interventions sought
- proportion of children absent from education due to Mental Health
- proportion of children and young people who get the right support at the right time and stay in education

Annexe A – Education providers in Herefordshire

Schools as of Summer 2024

Number of schools and academies:	99
LA maintained primary schools	52
Primaries (academies)	25
Primaries (free)	1
LA maintained secondary schools	5
Secondary schools (academies)	9
All through schools (academy)	1
LA maintained special schools	2
Special school (academies)	2
LA maintained PRU	1
Special Free	1
Independent Schools	5
Independent special schools	6

Post 16 providers:

- Hereford Sixth form College
- Herefordshire, Ludlow , North Shropshire college
- Hereford college of Arts
- Hoople Ltd
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Group Training Association
- Riverside Training

Specialist provision

- Royal National College for the Blind
- National star college
- The Beacon College
- School sixth forms 2

Early Years:

- PVI: 59
- Independent school nurseries: 3
- Maintained nursery classes: 13
- Governor run: 19
- Academy nursery classes: 17
- Childminders: 57 of which 4 Suffolk Childminding Agency, 3 Tiney Agency
- Total settings: 168



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