

Strategic Vision and Aims

2017 – 2022

**Our Strategic Priorities**

Our strategic priorities have been formed following consultation with staff, parents, carers and governors. They reflect the school's mantra of **Motivate - Build - Learn - Succeed**

1. **A whole school approach to develop physical and emotional wellbeing and positive mental health.**

**MOTIVATE**

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| **Work towards accreditation of a successful whole school approach towards mental well-being and physical health.** | To combat the issues surrounding childhood and adolescent mental health, use the National Children’s Bureau self-assessment and improvement tool for school leaders to support us in implementing a whole school approach for emotional well-being and mental health.Ensure pupils are supported from the earliest stages of their education to develop a good attitude to physical health and the knowledge to live healthy lifestyle, including diet.Seek the best possible accreditation routes to ensure systems in place are robust and sustained. |

1. **Broaden our pupils’ interest and exposure to arts and culture.**

**BUILD**

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| **Provide pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum offer, enriched with excellent quality arts and cultural education.** **Achieve Artsmark GOLD status before Summer 2019.** | Artsmark gives every child the opportunity to create, compose, and perform, gain knowledge and understanding, and to visit experience and participate in extraordinary work.* Artsmark schools gain access to exceptional resources as well as networks of the country’s most treasured cultural organisations, helping them develop and strengthen their arts provision
* enrich, develop and strengthen your school’s arts and culture provision
* bring arts and culture to life in your school
* provides evidence of how a school is meeting its spiritual, moral, social and cultural requirements for Ofsted
* to celebrate your school’s strengths and help achieve ambitions for the future
* enrich your curriculum with the arts
* incorporating art and culture into every student’s life and learning, knowledge and understanding

**Benefits to students:** build the confidence; resilience and drive that will help children grow into happy, articulate, successful young people arts and culture unlock potential helping children and young people develop character and talent, knowledge and understanding introduce the joys of creating, performing and composing |

1. **Support our pupils to achieve across the curriculum, preparing them for the next stage in their education.**

**LEARN**

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| **At least 80% of pupils leave our school attaining the Expected Standard in Core and Foundation subjects.** | * Despite a higher than average proportion of pupils starting school below typical level of development, we commit to support their progress in order to bring them in line with a national rate of performance by Year 2. We aim to continue building on that to ensure at least 80% of pupils leave us achieving the Expected Standard ready for learning in middle school. This is not only important in Reading, Writing and Maths, but also in subject areas across the curriculum, including science, PE, music, art and ICT.
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**SUCCEED!**

**We believe that the well-being and professional development of staff and volunteers is a core factor in achieving our vision.**

**Statement and Aims**

The Mary Bassett Lower School will provide an outstanding education to every child to inspire them to reach their full potential. We will nurture a love of learning in a safe, happy, stimulating and inclusive environment. Our children will grow to succeed as confident, healthy and responsible members of the community who can adapt and communicate effectively.

How we achieve this vision:

* We model and establish high standards of conduct, respect, responsibility and independence by following ‘The Mary Bassett Way’.
* We value the core role of nurture in supporting children to develop into successful learners and confident members of the community with a positive attitude to work.
* Excellent teaching in stimulating learning environments inspires the natural curiosity of all children to make learning an exciting adventure.
* The whole school community invests in helping children understand how they become successful learners that are willing to take risks in a safe, supportive environment.
* We value the full range of knowledge and skills demonstrated across the curriculum and support every child to be confident in identifying their own abilities.
* We inspire all children to have aspiration and ambition for their futures and encourage the skills and adaptability needed to prepare them for a rapidly changing technological world.
* We engage children in the learning process and aim for all children to make good progress from their starting points in order that they achieve their full potential.
* We are a welcoming school and we aim to provide high standards of communication to successfully engage parents and carers in the education of their children.
* We provide children with Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education to support children's confidence in their identity and an understanding of their place in the world, including the promotion of British Values.
* We are committed to promoting the welfare of all children and the highest standards of safeguarding. We provide children with understanding of how to keep themselves healthy; emotionally, mentally and physically.

**The context**

**What are the challenges we face?**

Education in our country in recent history has been subjected to significant change, both nationally and locally. We are also facing what some studies suggest is an epidemic of poor mental health amongst young people and adults alike. A central government priority to measure a school’s success by disproportionality focusing on pupil performance in English and Maths is a concern. A key symptom of this approach to judgment means school leaders are under pressure to limit resources in other key areas, such as broader educational experiences and securing social and emotional progress. There is also increasing pressure to pressurise early learners to read and write when sometimes, for individuals, the priority should be establishing confident and resilient early learners.

It is important we understand these challenges so we can make creative decisions to avoid them limiting the ‘whole child’ development of pupils in our care. Striking the right balance between satisfying the inspection system *and* doing the right thing for children’s long term development is challenging. But with ever changing governments and short term DfE priorities we feel as educators that we should not compromise on what we know to be the right thing for children. Initiatives, inspection regimes and curriculum content will come and go, but the pupils in our school get one chance at their Primary education. We want to make their experience relevant and empowering.

**School funding** has been impacted by increasing costs with no Government commitment to increase budgets to help reduce the impact of these costs. We have also been disadvantaged locally by the inequality of a sporadic funding model. Although there are plans for the funding allocations to be reconsidered, the graph to the left highlights the real impact of funding over time in our local authority.

The impact of funding on Local Authorities also means limiting resources for Children’s Services, at a time when local population is growing and the social, emotional and mental health needs are growing.

source: www.schoolcuts.org.uk

**The extent of mental health problems**

* **One in four** people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year.
* Mental health problems are one of the main causes of the burden of disease worldwide. In the UK, they are responsible for the **largest burden of disease** - 28% of the burden, compared to 16% each for cancer and heart disease.
* **20%** of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any given year.1
* **50%** of mental health problems are established by age 14 and **75%** by age 24.2
* **10%** of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem3, yet **70%** of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.4

#### The cost of mental health problems

* Mental health services in the UK are overstretched, have long waiting times and, in some regions, lack specialist services. Despite this, public spending is focused almost entirely on coping with crisis, with only a significant investment in prevention. Mental health research receives **only 5.5%** (£115 million) of total UK health research spending.
* Mental health problems constitute the **largest single source of world economic burden**, with an estimated global cost of **£1.6 trillion** - greater than cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer and diabetes on their own.
* In the UK, the estimated costs of mental health problems are **£70-100 billion** each year and account for **4.5% of GDP**.

#### Physical health and mental health

* There are strong links between physical and mental health problems. Research has found that **30%** of people with a long-term physical health problem also have a mental health problem and **46%** of people with a mental health problem also had a long-term physical health problem.

1WHO (2003). Caring for children and adolescents with mental disorders: Setting WHO directions. [online] Geneva: World Health Organization. Available at: <http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/785.pdf> [Accessed 14 Sep. 2015].

2Kessler RC, Berglund P, Demler O, Jin R, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. (2005). Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62 (6) pp. 593-602. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593.

3Green,H., Mcginnity, A., Meltzer, Ford, T., Goodman,R. 2005 Mental Health of Children and Young People in Great Britain: 2004. Office for National Statistics.

4Children’s Society (2008) The Good Childhood Inquiry: health research evidence. London: Children’s Society.

**A name to be proud of**

In 1948 Mary Anna Bassett died aged 95 and her obituary said of her: "Miss Bassett started the Leighton buzzard handicraft Class for Cripples in 1890. (Riverside Building on Bridge Street) Her idea that cripples would find happiness in making beautiful things and could be taught to do so, in spite of their disabilities, is now a commonplace. Those who first started the idea must not be forgotten”.

Ahead of her time, Mary Bassett was a forerunner in the principle of educational equality. It doesn’t take a lot of imagination to consider that many of the disabled individuals in 1890 were subjected to marginalisation in society. Mary Bassett was keen to ensure all members of her local community had access to educational opportunities that encouraged effort, work and achievement as a precursor to ‘happiness’.

Hanging in our school hall is a lasting tribute to this principle. It is a copper work plaque dedicated to her father following his death. This beautiful piece was made by the disabled students in the riverside school and features the words “Whatsoever thy try and find to do, do it with thy might“.

At The Mary Bassett Lower School we are proud of the work we do to instil the values of equality and effort amongst our children – we feel this establishes confidence in them relating to others and the innate satisfaction of completing a job well done. Traditional values with a modern purpose!

**Why would I want to send my child to a school like this?**

Responses to our December 2016 survey indicated:

**98.3%** of parents and carers who responded agree their child is **happy** and **safe** at school.

**100%** of respondents agreed that their child is **well looked after** and **makes good progress** at the school.

**91.4%** of those responding agreed that the school is **well led and managed**.

**86.8%** of those responding with an opinion agreed that the school **deals effectively with bullying**.

**96%** of parents and carers with an opinion agreed that the school supports its pupils to **behave positively.**

**96.6%** indicated that they **would recommend the school** to another parent or carer. Two responses indicated they didn’t know.

**Hopes and aspirations of our parents and carers**

In December 2016 the governing body distributed a Strategic Vision Survey. Parents and carers were asked to identify their top three priorities from a list of statements that described possible outcomes of a well-rounded education.

25% of surveys were returned and identified the statements below as the 5 most highly prioritised:

1. A positive work ethic/attitude to work.
2. Confidence in their own abilities and talents.
3. Good interpersonal skills.
4. Confidence when expressing own views and opinions.
5. Good self/body image and positive mental health.

**Central Bedfordshire Partnership Vision for Education 2015 - 2019**

We want every child in Central Bedfordshire to enjoy their childhood and have the best possible start in life. We want every child to do well in education, make friends and build strong relationships with their family. As young adults, we want every young person to have the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success, so that they are prepared to take their full place in society as a healthy, happy, contributing and confident citizen.

**Local School Structures**

Almost every other learning community in our authority has now transitioned into a Primary/Secondary phase model. We also note the national trend towards schools academising and forming Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). With the likelihood of two Upper School led pyramid structured MATs being formed in the town, we will have to consider how The Mary Bassett Lower School best prepares for the future; protecting the current and prospective needs of pupils attracted to our school. During this journey the Governing Body makes a commitment to seek out all possibilities and opportunities and to determine our direction considering the core priorities in our strategic vision.