

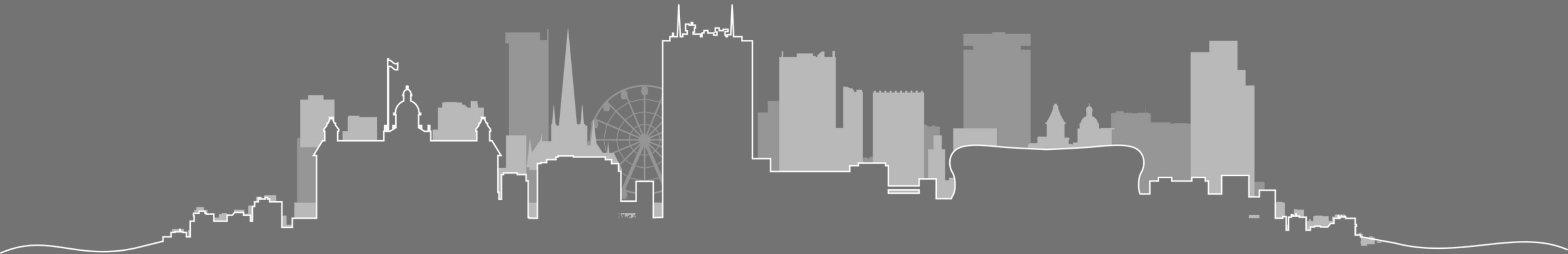


**KING EDWARD VI  
FOUNDATION  
BIRMINGHAM**

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*Educational excellence for our City*

Strategy 2021-26



# *Why a Foundation Strategy?*

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The mission of the King Edward VI Foundation is to make Birmingham the best place to be educated in the UK.

The Foundation recognises that in order to do so it needs to provide a diverse range of schools: independent as well as academies, selective and also comprehensive. It also believes that those schools need to be accessible to all, regardless of ethnic, religious and social background.

As the nature of the pupil community that the Foundation serves has changed, so has the social context within which this mission sits, and as a consequence so too have the resources required to deliver that mission. The Foundation's new strategy sets out the renewed objectives of the Foundation, 'the ends', along with the structures and resources required to meet them, 'the means'.

“ *To make  
Birmingham  
the best  
place to be  
educated in  
the UK* ”

# *Why a Foundation Strategy?*



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The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that we can deliver our values to:

- Raise aspirations, providing opportunities and giving confidence alongside excellent academic standards.
- Widen access and transform lives for all young people, no matter their background.
- Encourage open-mindedness, equality for all, honesty, fairness, understanding and accepting the views of others.
- Create a love of learning, which will foster creativity, imagination and the capacity to communicate.
- Instil a sense of community and the desire to support and work with others.
- Build character and relationships, along with a sense of morality, care and respect for others.
- Ensure successful transition to the world of further study and work through strong academic outcomes.

The Foundation Strategy seeks to put education firmly at the heart of all of the decisions we make: strategic, operational and financial. It is based on the spirit that the Foundation has often been a force for change and moved with the times while retaining its core principles. In order to achieve our bold mission, it sets out how we can work genuinely towards an ethos of 'one organisation' in which collaboration and efficiencies lead to a better education for the children and young people whom the Foundation serves. While there is excellence in all of our schools, we recognise that every school can also improve and that working together and sharing our resources and ideas is the most effective way to of doing that.

# *How have we got here?*



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The Foundation Strategy has emerged out of a three month long Strategic Review process which was launched in January 2021.

Alongside a working group of headteachers, governors, trustees and Foundation Office staff representing a cross section of our schools, there have also been a series of smaller project groups led by headteachers, meetings of Local Governing Body chairs, surveys of key colleagues, one-to-one meetings and many pages of research, analysis, scenarios and proposals.

The strategy outlined here was passed unanimously by the Foundation and Academy Trust Boards in April.

***12 schools***  
***Over 11,000 students***  
***1669 members of staff***  
***142 Governors***

# *How have we got here?*



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The history of the Foundation and its schools goes back several centuries and, while this strategy seeks to set the path for the next few years' development, it is anchored in an understanding of and respect for the rich past of the organisation.

**1392:** Gifts of land made to found the Gild of the Holy Cross

**1552:** King Edward's School founded

**1883:** King Edward VI High School and five Grammar Schools founded

**2010:** Sponsorship of King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy

**2017:** Multi-Academy Trust formed, with Handsworth Grammar School joining

**2017-21:** Growth of Multi-Academy Trust to include more comprehensive schools



Since its inception the Foundation has been committed to giving a first class education to the children and youth of Birmingham irrespective of their background. This has been seen not only in the establishment of new and different kinds of schools, as seen above, but also in its commitment in recent years to funding millions of pounds worth of Assisted Places at the two independent schools and adapting admissions policies for the grammar schools to increase significantly the number of disadvantaged pupils attending these schools.

# *What are we trying to achieve?*



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The following strategic objectives emerged from the priorities agreed as part of the Strategic Review.

They are objectives for the whole organisation and can only be achieved by schools and Foundation Office working closely together with shared responsibility.

## **Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): Learning with us**

- SO1.1** Academic Outcomes and Progress
- SO1.2** Access and Impact
- SO1.3** Pathways in Birmingham and Beyond
- SO1.4** Well-being, Character and Learning Skills
- SO1.5** Curriculum and Resources
- SO1.6** Foundation Identity

## **Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Working with us**

- SO2.1** Collaborative Working, Learning and Culture
- SO2.2** Innovation, Research and Performance
- SO2.3** Modern Strategy for People
- SO2.4** Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- SO2.5** Efficient Systems and Data
- SO2.6** Working Environment, Resources and Sustainability

## **Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): Partnering with us**

- SO3.1** Growth and Reputation
- SO3.2** Educational Partners
- SO3.3** Civic and Corporate Partners
- SO3.4** Fund-raising and Support
- SO3.5** Excellence in Governance and Compliance
- SO3.6** Heritage

# *Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): Learning with us*



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## **SO1.1 Academic Outcomes and Progress**

Learners within the Foundation should benefit from an excellent quality of education in all of its schools and gain high quality outcomes. Learners should make excellent progress and leave the Foundation with better educational outcomes compared to other areas of the country.

## **SO1.2 Access and Impact**

A Foundation education should be available to the widest range of learners possible. Disadvantaged learners should receive support to have a meaningful impact on their education. They should benefit from the same opportunities as their peers when they leave the Foundation's schools and achieve similar success.

## **SO1.3 Pathways in Birmingham and Beyond**

Learners should access a range of destinations nationally and internationally in terms of further education, higher education, training and employment. At the same time, learners should contribute to the success of the Birmingham community.

Wherever learners go, they should make the most of their opportunities and be successful. Foundation alumni and alumnae should contribute to civic life in Birmingham through the skills, knowledge and character they have gained in the course of their experience.

# *Strategic Objective 1 (SO1): Learning with us*



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## **SO1.4 Well-being, Character and Learning Skills**

Learners within the Foundation should be well-rounded and resilient individuals thanks to a focus on character education and well-being. They should feel safe and happy attending school and in their everyday lives. They should have an appreciation of culture, compassion, critical thinking skills and a love of learning, being ready to embrace innovation.

## **SO1.5 Curriculum and Resources**

Learners should follow a curriculum which is broad, balanced and diverse for both academic and vocational education and which is supported by excellent resources. At the same time, learners should have the opportunity to access specialist provision in other Foundation schools. They should access and enjoy a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme.

## **SO1.6 Foundation Identity**

At transition points, learners should have the flexibility to move between Foundation institutions where appropriate. They should feel part of one organisation and be proud of being a member of the Foundation.



# *Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Working with us*



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## **SO2.1 Collaborative Working and Learning**

Colleagues within the Foundation should benefit from opportunities for collaborative learning and networking in a modern educational environment. Opportunities should exist for all those who wish to progress and to engage in work with a strong moral purpose.

## **SO2.2 Innovation, Research and Performance**

Colleagues within the Foundation should have the opportunity and encouragement to think innovatively in their working lives. Appraisal of performance should lead to professional learning opportunities.

## **SO2.3 Modern Strategy for People**

The Foundation should be an exceptional place to work, supported by a range of interconnected people strategies designed to attract, develop and retain talented and committed staff. Its HR function should be a credible provider of transactional, advisory and strategic service and a key contributor to the organisation's success. Colleagues should be attracted to join the Foundation because they see working in the UK's second city as a positive prospect and because the Foundation itself is a pre-eminent organisation for educational excellence.

# *Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Working with us*



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## **SO2.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Colleagues within the Foundation should demonstrably understand, clearly represent and actively promote the diversity of the people of Birmingham with a strong employer commitment to equal opportunity for all. The Foundation should promote equality, inclusion and the understanding of diversity among themselves and learners.

## **SO2.5 Efficient Systems and Data Analytics**

Colleagues within the Foundation at all levels (including leadership, teaching, school-based support and central staff), should have at their disposal highly effective, modern, secure and integrated digital systems for managing their work and communicating with each other. Digital systems should be selected and implemented to deliver maximum impact for all colleagues and learners, aggregate and make data accessible to inform central and local decisions, as well as modernise and standardise support services.

## **SO2.6 Work Environment, Resources and Sustainability**

Colleagues should benefit from estates and procurement strategies which allow them to work in comfortable and inspiring environments supporting collaboration with the best possible resources at hand. The Foundation should have an exemplary sustainability strategy.

# *Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): Partnering with us*



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## **SO3.1 Growth and Reputation**

The Foundation, and its Academy Trust, should be an attractive proposition for schools looking to join a MAT because of its excellent reputation as a unique group of schools. The Foundation's voice and expertise should be sought in the development of educational and other policy and strategy nationally.

## **SO3.2 Educational Partners**

The Foundation should partner with the primary, other secondary, alternative provision, further education and higher education sectors and be seen as a national and international, outward-focused model for education. The Foundation should be a hub for collaboration, networking and the sharing of best practice.

## **SO3.3 Civic and Corporate Partners**

The Foundation should engage locally and beyond on a civic and corporate level, offering specialist advice, resources and governance. Organisations should see the Foundation as a willing and beneficial partner, appreciating the quality and extent of its offer. Partners should speak of admiration for and a love of Birmingham and its heritage.

# *Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): Partnering with us*



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## **SO3.4 Fund-raising and Support**

The Foundation should benefit from strong links with alumni, parents and relatives of alumni, corporate donors and a range of other partners. Donations provided by individuals, families, corporations or other organisations should have hypothecated uses for key strategic projects such as assisted places, capital builds, heritage work and co-curricular and enrichment programmes. The Foundation should benefit from pro-bono offers of support for these projects from its extensive wider community.

## **SO3.5 Excellence in Governance and Compliance**

Governor and Trustee opportunities at the Foundation should be sought after, and the successful candidates should contribute to the success of the organisation. The views of Governors and Trustees, and the Foundation's model of governance, should be seen as examples by others. The Foundation's compliance work should be exemplary.

## **SO3.6 Heritage**

The Foundation's historical richness and impact on the life of Birmingham, manifested in its Archive, should be a heritage resource for the City as a living and growing historical artefact, further raising the Foundation's profile and generating interest in the organisation.

# KPIs



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Each Strategic Objective will have a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Given where the Foundation is in its development, the KPIs will differ in format. Some, such as those to do with educational standards, will easily have a clear target attached. Others will need their targets to be defined, as there is currently no benchmark.

During the course of the period of this strategy, these KPIs will be benchmarked and established in an iterative process by the Foundation, as will the nature of their reporting.

Each Strategic Objective will have a lead from the Foundation Office responsible for the delivery of the KPIs, along with a school-based partner where possible. Local Governing Bodies, or School Governing Bodies as they will soon become known, will still be responsible for setting and monitoring school performance, but should incorporate the relevant Foundation KPIs into this process where appropriate.





## *What will change in practice?*

The most significant changes will be in terms of the collaborative resources and structures available to improve the quality of education that we provide.

Fundamentally, more resources will be made available for cross-Foundation work in developing education across all of our schools. This will include:

- Opportunity for teachers and leaders to support and learn from other schools within the Foundation through a Foundation Leader of Education programme
- More collaboration between departments and subject areas across schools through enhanced subject networks with dedicated leads
- Coherent Foundation-wide approaches to coaching, mentoring and career development
- An increased focus on Foundation-wide educational strategy and the systems to deliver it
- A move towards a more unified digital approach in order to be able to better share educational resources and best practice
- Stronger collaboration between the Foundation's sixth forms to maintain and widen the post-16 offer for learners
- Peer reviews for departments and leaders





## *What will change in practice?*

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In addition, the Foundation will grow in terms of the number of our schools to have a rough balance between the number of selective (independent and grammar) schools and comprehensive schools.

In order to achieve the strategic objectives and increase collaborative resource, the following changes will be made to Foundation Office staffing.

**2020/21:** Associate Director of Digital Transformation to lead the digital unification strategy

**2021/22 and 2022/23:** Growth positions in Finance, HR, Estates and Governance to incorporate newly joining schools.

The costs of these roles will be funded by the contributions to central services made by the new schools.

**2021/22:** Director of Education to lead educational strategy and support headteachers in improving school performance

**2022/23:** (Associate) Director of External Relations to lead fund-raising strategy, focus on partnerships and heritage.

**2023/24:** Director of IT to lead the next phase of transformation (to be reviewed prior to appointment process to gauge requirement)

All other departments will operate under the same staffing budgets, subject to cost of living increases.

There are detailed individual strategies for school improvement, HR and other areas that will feed into developments over the coming years.



## *How do we achieve it financially?*

In order to achieve the Foundation Strategy, and to increase collaborative resource, it has been necessary to review where our resources come from and how they are allocated.

Historically, all of our schools, both independent and academies, have enjoyed a significant subsidy from the Foundation's Endowment. This has allowed headteachers and their governing bodies to exercise considerable autonomy over their budgets, which is to be encouraged and continued. Regrettably in recent times there has been consistent overspending of the Endowment to the extent that some years ago its value had declined significantly.

Through excellent financial stewardship from Foundation governors, and a great degree of economic good fortune, that decline has been reversed, but it is essential to ensure that the amount taken out of the Endowment each year to subsidise schools is more controlled in the future. At the same time, as discussed before, there are essential developments that need to take place in terms of introducing collaborative educational resources, while also maintaining existing funding that is integral to the mission of the Foundation, notably the Assisted Places scheme.







# *How do we achieve it financially?*

The financial strategy underpinning the coming years therefore needs to:

- Provide more resource for essential school improvement and development activity
- Maintain existing commitments to access and excellence, such as Assisted Places
- Continue to allow headteachers to retain significant control over the vast majority of their school budgets
- Reduce the annual subsidy 'drawdown' from the Endowment to a target of 3.5% of its total value within six years

In order to achieve this, the following will take place:

- Increased resource for school improvement through a specific fund and role
- Increased contributions from our academies, and new contributions from our independent schools, to the central services used by them, while maintaining average contribution levels still in the bottom decile nationally when compared to other Academy Trusts
- Review current school and Foundation Office budgets to ensure value for money and economy of scale



# Conclusion

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As stated at the outset of this paper, the Foundation has given itself a bold and ambitious mission. This has brought about a great widening of its reach and a significant change in the constitution of its pupil body in order to support social change and mobility. At the same time, it has chosen to take on the legal obligations of an academy trust, with all of the responsibilities that that legal entity brings.

The purpose of this strategy is to establish how the Foundation will achieve that mission by setting out strategic priorities for the coming years, by allocating resources to achieve these priorities, and by proposing a sustainable financial settlement.

The Foundation Strategy allows it to begin in earnest the task of making Birmingham the best place to be educated in the UK.

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# KING EDWARD VI FOUNDATION BIRMINGHAM

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