

Strategic Development Plan

2024-2030



DUKE of KENT
SCHOOL



Introduction

Duke of Kent School has a rich history. The school was established in 1976 primarily to educate the sons of former and serving RAF personnel and was formed by merging Vanbrugh Castle School with an existing school: Woolpit, on its current site. On this beautiful site, the RAF Benevolent Fund set out to create a new school with an enlightened approach to education. The school had an inclusive ethos from its earliest days and placed emphasis on personal and social skills as well as academic development. In 1978, having become a thriving local school, Duke of Kent School became fully co-educational. The school celebrates its 50th birthday in 2026.

Duke of Kent School has continued to flourish and continually grow in pupil numbers. The school has continued to invest in both the site and teaching and learning facilities to ensure pupils have access to an excellent educational provision. Over the last 6 years, we have constructed a new all-weather pitch, a pre-prep playground, refurbished 2 Science laboratories and Games changing rooms. We have continued to invest heavily in IT providing devices for all pupils as well as exploring new technologies such as Virtual Reality Headsets. The grounds are spectacular and continued care and investment have ensured they are an ideal learning environment as we embark on an innovative outdoor learning curriculum.

Great staff make a great school. Our staff are regularly commended by parents and pupils for their caring, inspirational and innovative approaches to learning. The strong family feel and nurturing ethos permeates throughout the school and we aim to ensure that the whole community is involved in all we do. It is within this context that we are now issuing our new 2024 - 2030 Strategic Development Plan. We surveyed parents, pupils and staff and their feedback and ideas form the basis of this plan. Designed to be flexible, this plan provides a framework to assist in making decisions about the future and will be reviewed annually to ensure priorities are being met. Our plan recognises the need for continual change so that Duke of Kent School can continue to meet the challenges of the evolving landscape in education today.



We will continue to engage in continuous quality improvement; we will build on collaborative partnerships; we will seek to provide stimulating experiences both inside and outside of the classroom to invigorate the learning and life experiences of our pupils.

At the heart of this plan is a single overriding priority: **the wellbeing and success of our pupils**. This is what lies at the heart of our vision.

Our Vision

Within a happy and caring environment, nurture a love of learning, where pupils feel valued and are challenged to achieve their very best.

Our Values & Character

Our core values are inherent in the blueprint of everything we do. They are embedded in our culture and are at the heart of our decision making. We display these values through our character traits.

Our Values	Our Character
Kindness	Considerate of others, empathetic, thoughtful
Effort	Hard working, reflective, curious, open to feedback
Respect	Tolerant, courteous, respecting ourselves & others
Responsibility	Independent, accountable, self-aware
Honesty	Showing integrity & being trustworthy

Our Aims

As a school, we have the following ambitious aims. We aim to:

- Foster a lifelong love of learning
- Build a community in which kindness and respect are central to all we do
- Nurture each pupil to excel both personally and academically and find their individual spark
- Attract, develop and retain the most inspiring educators and staff
- Maintain and develop links with our own parent community and with the wider world at both local and international levels
- Maintain our long-term financial viability and steward our resources responsibly

Our Plan

Our Strategic Development Plan articulates and communicates our vision, aims and strategic pillars for the future. It charts our course for the next 6 years setting out clearly what we are looking to achieve. The plan was devised taking the following into account:

- Parental survey (Nov 23)
- Student Council feedback (Oct 23 & May 24)
- Renovation process feedback from pupils, staff & Governing Body (Sept 23)
- ISI Inspection feedback (Jan 24)
- Qualitative forums with staff, pupils, parents (June 24)

Our Five Strategic Pillars

Our strategic pillars are framed within the following key areas: Our Pupils, Our Staff, Our Learning, Our Community and Our Environment. In each strategic pillar, we set out the context and the key projects to help us to achieve our goals.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1 OUR PUPILS

Context:

Our aim as a school is to foster a lifelong love of learning within a nurturing yet dynamic environment where each pupil is known and celebrated as an individual and given the support they need to excel both personally and academically.

We want our pupils to be curious, engaged and resilient thinkers and learners. We want them to collaborate confidently and be considerate and compassionate individuals. We will help them develop confidence in themselves, recognise the importance of being physically active and emotionally intelligent and give them the skills and knowledge to thrive in a diverse, interconnected world. Our aim is to create well rounded individuals who can thrive in all environments.

What we aim to do:

- I.1** Build a prep school playground/Trim Trail to provide opportunities for pupils to engage in imaginative play, build core strength and explore risk taking in a safe environment
- I.2** Review the shape of the school day to ensure we are maximising learning opportunities
- I.3** Implement a strategy to encourage girls to join our school thereby balancing up the boy:girl ratio and develop initiatives to support their wellbeing, relationships and academic success
- I.4** Reset and expect a high standard of personal appearance and behaviour for all students preparing them for life in the workplace
- I.5** Take a united approach with regards to Smartphones and implement initiatives to ensure pupils stay safe online and maintain a positive sense of self

1.6 Continue to ensure a vibrant programme of enrichment activities such as debating and public speaking as well as, amongst others, mountain biking, roller blading and Duke of Edinburgh award

1.7 Explore opportunities for external providers to provide specialist opportunities for example karate, Pilates, kickboxing and self-defence

1.8 Foster a love of being active through a review of the current Sports provision and opportunity, so as to continue to provide an engaging, varied and uplifting sporting programme

1.9 Consider the Endeavour award or similar independent learning initiatives for pupils in Years 7 & 8

1.10 Review locker and peg provision and location as well as use of school bags during the school day

1.11 Work with our catering provider to ensure the quality and quantity of food on offer throughout the day is consistently excellent

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2 OUR STAFF

Context:

We recognise that our most valuable resource is our staff. As a school, we are committed to supporting our staff to realize their professional ambitions and objectives and to continue to develop excellence in all of our activities. We are also committed to ensuring that staff wellbeing is given the high priority it deserves.

We will continue to invest in professional development and training opportunities as we ensure a high-quality workforce. We will develop our own expertise through the introduction of innovative professional learning communities and shared learning through learning walks.

We are committed to providing the highest quality learning environment by improving the pupil experience through monitoring, reviewing and consistently improving the teaching provision.

What we aim to do:

ALL STAFF

2.1 Develop a comprehensive induction programme and booklet for new staff as well as a buddy system to ensure they feel supported and quickly find their feet in the new school environment

2.2 Continue to implement regular staff wellbeing initiatives to ensure a rewarding and supportive environment

2.3 Attract new and diverse staff including those considering a career change into the education sector or teachers new to independent schools

2.4 Establish mechanisms to regularly review and respond to staff feedback

TEACHING STAFF

- 2.5** Promote a culture of sharing best practice, including an open-door policy, to develop consistency in teaching and learning
- 2.6** Implement professional school-based learning communities to encourage personal growth
- 2.7** Continue to review the appraisal system to encourage sustained professional learning and growth
- 2.8** Review the objectives of Sharing Best Practice sessions to ensure clear links with professional improvement and sharing our ideas and resources
- 2.9** With support from the Education Committee, encourage action research projects which lead to improved educational outcomes
- 2.10** Utilise staff skills and passions across the school to their best effect

OPERATIONAL & SUPPORT STAFF

- 2.11** Establish a professional development programme which encourages personal growth in the workplace
- 2.12** Continue to review the annual appraisal system, giving staff the opportunity to reflect on the year, agree expectations and encourage feedback
- 2.13** Establish an effective two-way communications channel for operational and support staff to ensure strategic planning and sufficient resourcing are in place to maximise pupil outcomes

STRATEGIC PILLAR 3 OUR LEARNING

Context:

Duke of Kent School was recognised in the recent ISI report (January 2024) for its excellent educational provision. We are in the process of implementing a number of initiatives based on the recent curriculum review which include the introduction of Business Studies GCSE and the implementation of the Surrey Wildlife Trust's "Wilder Schools" Outdoor Curriculum. We need to continue to investigate the range and level of subjects we offer; whether the current timetable provides the optimal platform for this offering, how we educate the whole person and an evaluation of how we assess, grade and report on our pupils. Our aim is to develop a bold and modern curriculum which allows all pupils to flourish in an environment of academic excellence and enrichment. We are also keen to further develop our co-curricular offering to continue to provide a broad range of opportunities for all, so that each pupil recognises their own potential and finds an outlet for their talent and individuality.

What we aim to do:

- 3.1** Review the senior school curriculum and consider Level 2 qualifications (GCSE/BTEC/HPQ) to best meet the needs and skills of our pupils. Additionally, evaluate subject offerings and creative pathways to foster a love of learning and prepare pupils for the next stage of their educational journey
- 3.2** Engage with the current research on the future education/workplace/society that our pupils will be entering into and review our taught curriculum and other programmes to ensure they meet their needs within an ever-changing world
- 3.3** Make effective use of "student voice and feedback" to guide and inform teaching & learning

3.4 Review the provision of languages to ensure we are meeting our learners' needs yet still providing them with the cultural awareness and language skills necessary to operate in the global environment

3.5 Develop greater cross-curricular links between departments to facilitate broader learning

3.6 As well as reporting on attitude, review how we feedback on attainment to pupils and parents

3.7 Explore the uses and benefits of AI to ensure that we are maximising opportunities in the way in which our pupils learn and our teachers teach

3.8 Continue to refine the curriculum trips and educational visits we offer to ensure we are maximising learning opportunities for growth in personal development

3.9 In light of an ever-changing educational need landscape, continue to review the SEND provision to ensure our students are supported throughout their educational journey

STRATEGIC PILLAR 4 OUR COMMUNITY

Context:

Our community plays a core role in Duke of Kent School's fabric. We absolutely believe that the partnership we have with our parents, our alumni and local community are essential in our current and future success. Parent feedback is pivotal in ensuring that we continue to provide the best possible teaching & learning provision for the pupils.

We also believe our role within the community is fundamental to raising aspirations. We contribute to our local community through our comprehensive community engagement programme and want to continue to forge even greater links with local schools. As Duke of Kent School reaches its 50th birthday in 2026, we are excited to reach out to our Alumni to invite them to celebrate our success and share their stories with us.

What we aim to do:

- 4.1** As a present and past community, celebrate the school's 50th birthday in 2026
- 4.2** Review and develop communication channels with parents and alumni to ensure continued effectiveness and launch the parent app to facilitate good communication
- 4.3** Review marketing and pupil recruitment strategies to ensure our distinctive qualities and unique offerings are well and widely known
- 4.4** Continue to develop partnerships with local schools and increase the numbers of events hosted at Duke of Kent School to raise the profile of the school in the community
- 4.5** Promote and facilitate community use of our facilities
- 4.6** Review provision, communication and routes of our minibus service to ensure an excellent service which meets the needs of all stakeholders



- 4.7** Strengthen the alumni programme to maintain links with departing students and families
- 4.8** Establish mechanisms to regularly review and respond to parent and community feedback
- 4.9** Continue to support our parent association, PADoK, in their work to build a strong sense of community among parents, teachers and pupils
- 4.10** Lead on the delivery of outreach opportunities, such as Lesson in a box, to support the teaching in local schools
- 4.11** Continue a strong focus of charitable initiatives and annually support a charity chosen by our community

STRATEGIC PILLAR 5 OUR ENVIRONMENT

Context:

We are wholeheartedly committed to our sustainable future and becoming more environmentally aware. With our Sustainability and Outdoor Learning Coordinators now in post, we are developing a plan in consultation with our enthusiastic Sustainability Committee.

The pupils are reviewing food and paper waste, looking to plant flower pollinators and to install bee hives on our site to name but a few initiatives.

Our environment also encompasses the wonderful buildings and fabulous grounds we have the great fortune to use. It is essential that we continue to develop the fabric of our buildings in a sympathetic manner to preserve the historical nature of the site and to tend the grounds to ensure that the school is well maintained and presented in an excellent condition both for the school community and for those wishing to hire facilities.

What we aim to do:

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

5.1 Review our fee structure and cost base annually to ensure value for money in a competitive marketplace, balanced with providing the best educational opportunities and experiences for the pupils

5.2 Develop a lettings plan to maximise usage of the site to generate an alternative income stream

5.3 Investigate alternative energy sources, including solar, to reduce our carbon footprint and manage our costs

5.4 Install a new heating and hot water system for the Teaching Block to ensure an optimal environment for teaching and learning

5.5 Become a more sustainable school and achieve the Eco Schools Green Flag accreditation
<https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/what-is-eco-schools/>

5.6 With the pupils, establish an apiary at school to produce our own honey and become a “bee friendly” school

SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

5.7 Construct a new eco-building to include a performance space, food technology facility and a dance studio

5.8 Create further outdoor learning areas to facilitate greater use of outdoor spaces as a teaching resource

5.9 Construct a pedestrian path across the top bank linking the top car park with the pedestrian crossing

5.10 Review the scope for additional parking and methods of managing traffic in the top car park

5.11 In the Teaching Block, restructure the Seminar room to make it into a multi-functional space which can be used for non-water/gas-based Science experiments

5.12 Create a dedicated photography studio

5.13 Construct an outdoor performance space on the school's South Bank to provide a versatile area for teaching, performances and assemblies, enhancing student engagement.

5.14 Construct a tea shed with services near the astro to provide refreshments during events



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SCHOOL

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