Excalibur
Academies Trust

Strategy 2026-2030





1. About Excalibur

1.1 Excalibur Academies Trust was founded in 2012 with two schools and has since grown into a multi-academy trust with 20 schools and 10, 000 students in communities stretching the M4 corridor from Reading to Bristol. Our academies span early years, primary, secondary and sixth-form education, enabling us to offer an all-through educational journey from early years to adulthood.

1.2 A defining feature of Excalibur is our hub model, which brings schools together in local clusters to strengthen collaboration, continuity and shared support across different phases of education. This allows us to combine the strength, expertise and shared resources of the Trust with strong local leadership, community connection and the identity and autonomy of individual schools, underpinned by our values of being Ambitious, Empowering and Ethical.

2. The Excalibur Child

2.1 We capture the journey of a child, "the Excalibur Child", through our curriculum offer. This is our North Star, our enduring strategic purpose, which is to offer an excellent education which enables them to lead happy, fulfilled, and successful lives and to contribute positively to our world. An excellent education is innovative, inclusive, and aspirational, enabling all pupils to acquire and develop skills and knowledge across a range of disciplines. This prepares pupils well for their next stage of education so that they achieve highly in academic and technical qualifications. As a result, they can compete in a competitive global employment market whilst exercising agency over their life choice.

3. Strategic Context

3.1 Excalibur has grown significantly in the 14 years since its foundation, and we are now a larger, complex Trust. With a relatively new CEO, substantial Board renewal and important lessons from the Gatehouse Green Learning Trust MAT merger, this is an appropriate point to reflect and confirm our strategic direction and priorities.

3.2 The landscape in which we operate is changing. Purposeful, well-managed growth offers opportunities to strengthen school improvement, share expertise, develop our workforce and build financial resilience. Realising these benefits matters as financial pressures increase and our schools respond to more complex needs around SEND, disadvantage, attendance, wellbeing and inclusion. At the same time, declining birth rates, workforce pressures, curriculum and governmental reforms, alongside rapid developments in AI, are reshaping the education system. This context calls for a considered approach to growth, rooted in our capacity to deliver lasting benefits for children, staff and communities.

3.3 Our next strategy therefore needs to be clear about where we can add greatest value: how we improve outcomes for children, support and develop our people, strengthen collaboration across the Trust, remain financially and organisationally resilient, and make intelligent choices about future growth.





4. Our Vision, Mission and Values

4.1 Vision

We will combine the strength and expertise of the Trust with the identity and autonomy of individual schools to create a high-performing, inclusive and collaborative family of schools. Our all-through educational journey from early years to adulthood will inspire and enable children and staff to thrive, develop and realise their ambitions.

4.2 Mission

Our mission is to create the conditions in which every child is safe, can thrive and succeed. We will invest in our people, share what works, strengthen collaboration and help every school to improve while preserving what makes it distinctive, providing an excellent, inclusive and ambitious education from early years to adulthood.

4.3 Values

Ambitious
We set high expectations, think boldly and continually seek better outcomes for our children, our people and our schools.

Empowering
We trust people, develop talent and create the conditions for children, staff and schools to thrive.

Ethical
We act with integrity, treat everyone with fairness, dignity and respect, take responsibility for our actions, consider the impact of our decisions on people and the environment, and do what is right.

5. Our Strategic Priorities

5.1 Our Children

What we aim to achieve:
Everything we do begins with our children. We will deliver a broad, ambitious and inclusive education that develops knowledge, character and confidence, and reflects the needs of the "Excalibur child" now and into the future.

How we will do this:
Alongside strong academic outcomes, we will prioritise belonging, attendance, wellbeing and preparation for life beyond school, informed by the best research.

Why it matters:
We will ensure that every child, particularly those facing disadvantage or additional barriers, is supported to flourish.

How will we measure success?

- Pupil outcomes across all phases continue to improve and exceed national benchmarks.
- Attainment and progress gaps for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND reduce over time.
- Attendance improves and persistent absence reduces across the Trust, particularly amongst vulnerable groups.
- Children access a rich range of academic, technical, cultural, sporting and leadership opportunities.
- Children report high levels of belonging, engagement and readiness for their next stage of education, employment or training.



5.2 Our People

What we aim to achieve:
Our people are our greatest strength. We will continue to attract, develop and retain talented staff.

How we will do this:
By investing in leadership, professional development and wellbeing. We will grow our own leaders, strengthen succession planning and foster a culture of trust, collaboration and continuous improvement.

Why it matters:
We will strengthen our capacity to lead change effectively, ensuring innovation benefits children, staff and communities and that Excalibur remains an employer of choice across the region.

How will we measure success?
We will know we are succeeding when:

- Staff retention remains above national averages.
- Staff report high levels of engagement, wellbeing and confidence in leadership.
- Leadership succession plans are in place across the Trust.
- An increasing proportion of leadership vacancies are filled internally.
- Professional development is recognised as a strength by staff and leaders.

5.3 Our Communities

What we aim to achieve:
Schools are at the heart of the communities we serve. We will strengthen our community relationships to improve outcomes for our children and families.

How we will do this:
We will strengthen our relationships with families as our key partners and [improve the way we collaborate] with local authorities, our dioceses, employers, health services and community organisations to improve outcomes for our children and families.

Why it matters:
As government policy, such as the Schools White Paper increasingly emphasises local collaboration and joined-up support for children and families, we will play an active role in strengthening the communities we serve, helping to remove barriers to success and creating opportunities for children and young people to thrive.

How will we measure success?

- Parents and carers have confidence in their school so that annual surveys show improvement from an agreed baseline in satisfaction, communication and confidence that concerns are addressed.
- Community engagement reaches more families with increased participation in agreed activities, such as open evenings or events.
- Schools are valued local partners, so that feedback from community partners demonstrates confidence in the school's contribution examples of effective joint working are developed.
- Partnerships make a demonstrable difference for children meaning that each significant partnership can be reviewed and evidence its contribution to opportunities, wellbeing or educational outcomes.





5.4 Our Connections

What we aim to achieve:
We will maximise the benefits of being a family of schools whilst preserving the individuality of each community we serve.

How we will do this:
Through collaboration, shared expertise and effective support services, we will ensure that schools benefit from collective strength and that resources are used effectively for children.

Why it matters:
We will continue to strengthen our systems, data and shared services so that leaders can focus on educational excellence and schools can thrive.

How will we measure success?
- School leaders and staff clearly identify the benefits of belonging to Excalibur.
- Collaboration leads to measurable improvements in outcomes and practice.
- Trust-wide systems provide reliable and insightful information for decision-making.
- Shared services deliver efficiency, resilience and value for money.
- Schools retain their distinctive identity whilst contributing to collective success.

5.5 Our Future – Sustainability, innovation and stewardship

What we aim to achieve:
We will ensure that Excalibur remains ready for the future, resilient, being both environmentally and financially sustainable.

How we will do this:
- We will remain ambitious for the future, including growth within our existing hubs, whilst staying true to our values.
- We will respond proactively to changing demographics, workforce challenges and educational needs.
- We will embrace innovation where it improves outcomes, strengthens efficiency or enhances organisational resilience.
- We will be agile in our use of resources, using them responsibly and ensuring that every decision is guided by educational benefit and long-term impact.

Why it matters:
To fulfil our mission, we need to be culturally and financially secure, whilst having the institutional agility to respond to future challenges.

How will we measure success?
- Excalibur remains financially sustainable and resilient.
- Innovation leads to measurable improvements in educational quality or organisational effectiveness.
- Our estate and resources are used effectively and sustainably.
- Excalibur delivers growth that develops our current hub model, is sustainable and adds to the impact of the Trust for our communities.



