



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL

University of Birmingham School

Ethos & Vision Statement

JULY 2026

University of Birmingham School Statement of School Ethos and Vision

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At University of Birmingham School, we refer to **Pupils** (who are in Years 7-11 and aged 11-16) and **Students** (who are in Years 12/13 and aged 17-18)

University of Birmingham School - Vision and Ethos

Together, we'll flourish
Flourishing citizens | Successful scholars

1 Vision

- 1.1 The University of Birmingham School is an all ability inclusive (comprehensive) School for children who are of compulsory School age (ages 11-16) recruited from four admission 'nodes', and an academically selective Sixth Form open to students from across Birmingham and its surrounding communities.
- 1.2 The School opened in September 2015 with intakes into Years 7 (150 pupils) and 12 (200 students) – and the School now has learners in every year cohort from year 7 to year 13.
- 1.3 The vision of University of Birmingham School is to create a learning community that will transform lives by raising the aspirations of a very diverse student population and therefore maximise students' personal and academic achievement so that they can fulfil their potential and access the widest possible range of opportunities.
- 1.4 University of Birmingham School's unapologetic focus on personal and academic achievement, and ultimately success in achieving entry to higher education, is derived from its link to the University of Birmingham, fostering aspiration – and establishing high standards and expectations in all aspects of its provision and impact.
- 1.5 Aspiration and progression to higher education is a key and a proven route to social mobility and this School will seek to help all its students to raise their aspirations and achievement.
- 1.6 It will do this by offering students a curriculum based on traditional academic subjects and by supporting their development as well-rounded people of strong character, all benefiting from an excellent location, a diverse and comprehensive student body, and access to world-class facilities including through the University.
- 1.7 In addition, its status as the first secondary 'University Training School' and the excellence of its teachers and professional services staff will allow University of Birmingham School to approach the task of raising aspirations and achievement in an exciting and distinctive way.
- 1.8 The Sixth Form is the crucial link between the 11-16 School and higher education; it plays several key roles.
- 1.9 Its presence involves the University Departments, facilitating collaboration between the University and the School, attracting the best staff and supporting the development of School-led and work-based approach to initial and on-going teacher education and training.
- 1.10 It also provides the aspiration for achievement and progression for younger pupils from the outset, as advancement to post-16 challenging education and pathways of purpose will be seen as the norm.
- 1.11 The School is sponsored by the University of Birmingham and managed by the Academy Trust. The Trust and School benefits from the expertise and professional services of the University.

2 Ethos

- 2.1 University of Birmingham School has a comprehensive and co-educational intake in Years 7 to 11, with a Sixth Form open to those meeting the published academic selection criteria. The School is characterised by:
- An overarching framework of Character Education which will build students' confidence, resilience, and personal qualities so that they are able to become self-organised and motivated learners able to make the most of their curriculum opportunities, and;
 - A mostly traditional academic subject-based knowledge-rich curriculum which will use a carefully formulated blend of content and process to help students attain the highest possible outcomes.
- 2.2 This approach is shaped by our belief that maximising a student's potential is not just about giving them knowledge, but about shaping the whole person, including their personal capabilities and character through enrichment activities, a thoughtful and engaged system of pastoral care, and a community including older students, teachers, trainee teachers, and mentors and coaches – including those drawn from the University's own students and staff.
- 2.3 This focus on Character Education and the development of personal qualities or virtues seeks to foster a number of core attributes which can be explained to pupils and students with ease and clarity – including supporting them to be or become capable (academically and as a citizen), confident, and caring.
- 2.4 Through Character Education and its wider inclusive ethos and actions, the School fulfils the requirements of the funding agreement to promote 'British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs'.
- 2.5 The School has a diverse and geographically dispersed student body, reaching across both disadvantaged and more affluent regions of Birmingham.
- 2.6 Considerable attention has been given to how to recruit students who will benefit from this environment, how to support students through transitions (especially the transition from primary School), how to bring these students together into a single learning community and how to ensure each student reaches their maximum potential and goes on to succeed in their chosen pathway through life.
- 2.7 The School is also a University Training School, which means it will have a higher-than-normal teacher-to-student ratio when the presence of trainee teachers is included.
- 2.8 Following the model of teaching hospitals, the presence of trainee teachers working closely alongside experienced, highly qualified and outstanding practitioners will increase further the resources to support students, whilst contributing also to the wider School and education system.
- 2.9 The presence of School based trainees who will bring enthusiasm, innovation, and a stimulus for continual improvement is a key aspect of our status as a secondary University Training School.

3 Strategic intents 2030, and realisation

- 3.1 Governors hold the Principal, and through them the leaders and staff of the School, to account for the realisation of the vision set for the School. Governors will provide support and challenge to this aim through effective governance, having regard for the Memorandum and Articles of the School, and the School's funding agreement held with the DfE (formerly and at the School's foundation, the ESFA).
- 3.2 The Principal is responsible for establishing an annual School Improvement Plan which draws on the human, physical, and financial resources available to the School, to deliver in practice the strategic intents which align with the vision and ethos of the School.
- 3.3 The impact derived through the School Improvement Plan, alongside clear expectations of stakeholders (including staff, pupils and students, and parents and carers), and robust operational systems and processes, will serve to enact the vision for the School, including excellent standards.
- 3.4 University of Birmingham School commenced from September 2025 its third five-year cycle. The School and its stakeholders therefore move progressively and purposefully from a founding phase of establish and embed (2015-20), to a phase of embed and enhance (2020-25) – and onward to excellence for all (2025-30).
- 3.5 In defining the School's ambitions and its strategic intents 2030, University of Birmingham School will in terms of its on-going development from good to exceptional:
 - Gain recognition of **strong and exemplary standards in relation to inspection and Ofsted**, at its earliest opportunity;
 - Retain and refine the distinctive aims of Trustees and stakeholders at the outset of the School – to be a **diverse and inclusive learning community** with central focuses on **individual academic excellence and aspiration, character education, and wider enrichment and personal development**;
 - Define fully and pioneer compelling and evidenced benefits from our **University Training School** status – with research and evidence informed practice at its heart, and **wider University partnerships**;
 - Contribute further and fully as a part of the University of Birmingham family – in being an institution with **ambitious civic aims and impact**;
 - Chart **purposeful and timely growth** so that the School and the Academy Trust positively impact education in Birmingham and the wider School system.