



Sheepscombe Primary School - Strategic Priorities 2025 – 2029

In the Summer of 2025, Sheepscombe School is in a very strong position, with confident leadership and an experienced and dedicated team of staff. Every teacher plays a strategic lead in some area; teaching assistants work seamlessly to ensure every child has the support they need. Our children are happy and engaged, with a healthy appetite to learn.

We have developed, collaboratively, a new and innovative curriculum, unique to Sheepscombe; the high expectations we have for children was recognised by OFSTED inspectors in December 2024. We aspire to offer extra support to children who need it. Teaching and learning is at the heart of everything we do. This is done in a creative way, with teamwork that encourages innovation and development; we also continue to offer a vast array of enrichment activities, as exemplified by the Sheepscombe Award, to encourage experiential learning and enthusiasm. While we offer a holistic curriculum, this is not at the expense of academic ambition and attainment. Excellence of all kinds is celebrated and individuality is appreciated.

Our motto, vision and ethos need no revision; our direction of travel remains constant. Our ambition for the next five years is to enhance our organizational capacity to sustain what we offer. We propose additional priorities: to develop our partnership with parents to engage them further in their children's learning; to develop the school organization to sustain the unique offer of our small school into the future, and to maintain excellent relationships with the village community.

Children moving through the school during the current period experienced the Covid lockdown as infants with expected impact on mental well-being; we will build on our current therapeutic offer to support children and families.

Our motto: *to create 'an inspirational setting, where all children flourish'.*

Our Vision: a school where children actively engage with the local and wider communities and develop the confidence and skills to have an impact on the world around them in years to come.

The decades ahead will be challenging (e.g. climate change, speed of change, the continuing digital revolution). Our role as a school is to set children on a path with the capacity to understand, to question, to manage and work with, and to influence what happens in the future. We want our children to work for the benefit of society, to have a voice that is heard and to be resilient. The school must itself also be resilient and sustainable as an organization.

Ethos: Every activity involving the whole school community is strengthened by being caring and thoughtful.

- We care for each other, for ourselves and for local and global communities
- We are mindful, thoughtful and reflective in everything we do.

Strategic Priorities

- to establish Sheepscombe School's method in building knowledge and in fostering key skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving and resilience, as well as creativity and innovation, to enable all children to make a positive impact on the local and wider environment

- to build confidence in pupils in communicating with and for others in ways that support the mental and physical well-being of the whole school community
- to develop further our partnership with parents, to share learning and experience, to cooperate in the delivery of inclusive education, for the benefit of individual pupils and for the whole school
- to ensure organizational stability and sustainability through staff development, financial and physical site planning
- to maintain excellent and functioning relationships with the village community

The paragraphs below provide details for these priorities while recognising that they overlap with each other and with our vision of actively engaging in the village and wider communities.

Skills: We prepare our children to participate actively in society, and help them develop the skills, confidence and resources they need to live in and to influence the world around them. We have already built a good base for nurturing reading, creativity (arts, crafts, music, drama) and innovation (design, technology), which we will actively maintain. We will now focus on: critical thinking and problem solving, particularly through mathematics and science, learned in ways that are fun and engaging, and communication skills, particularly in writing and speaking. Awareness of the limitations and risks, as well as the benefits of fast-changing technology is vital for mental well-being; we will equip our children with knowledge and skills to engage with technology.

Positive relationships: We believe that all encounters in the school community help to embed our ethos of mindfulness and thoughtfulness about others. Our children recognize they are fortunate to be in a close-knit community, and in beautiful rural surroundings, which enrich their experience of the day-to-day learning in lessons and in the other events/visits/extracurricular activities we provide. Reading for pleasure, music, performance, participation in sport and opportunities to take responsibilities in school all help develop self-confidence and contribute to mental well-being.

By teaching and learning in an inclusive way, our children witness and so become sensitive to the needs of others, in the school and more widely in other communities. Play is as important as lessons for developing positive relationships and building self-awareness. Working in partnership with, for instance, St Rose's School in Stroud, and schools and children in Japan and France, will broaden our children's perspectives from a variety of contemporary experiences and enable them to embrace diversity and see themselves as part of a global community.

We believe that working closely with parents enhances children's learning. In the past, we have done so mainly through individual relationships, particularly with the headteacher. We aim to make such relationships clearer and sustained, including those of pastoral care and parental participation.

The environment: Much has been done in the last few years to develop the school's commitment to sustainability. As a golden thread running through the curriculum, children from the Early Years will be made aware of the importance of protecting the environment and will actively help to create a carbon-neutral school. In each subject, children will be able to build their understanding of aspects of the natural world and our involvement in it. The continued commitment of the whole school, including parents, to see learning, creativity and critical thinking as a way to face the future optimistically will help build resilience in the face of climate and other changes.

Organizational resilience and sustainability: The context for small rural schools remains tough. We will continue to develop Sheepscombe's professional development mechanism (e.g. Lesson Study) to develop and share teaching practices that meet our children's needs in mixed age classrooms. To ensure financial and physical site sustainability, we will develop contingency planning to cope with financial shocks as well as a medium/long term plan for the physical site of the school.

Governors: Sheepscombe Primary School