# Torbay Together

*A partnership of all education settings in Torbay*



## Education Strategy 2026-2029

Building Stronger System Leadership for children and young people through a co-owned strategy which works on collaborative priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people.

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# Foreword

We are pleased to introduce Torbay's Education Strategy.

*Our shared purpose:* This strategy has been developed by leaders from our schools and settings to commit to how we will work together to improve outcomes and life chances for Torbay's children and young people.

*Working together:* This strategy reflects our shared belief that we are stronger together and can achieve more for children and young people through collaboration.

*Partnership:* We will work alongside families and partners across health, social care, and the voluntary and community sector on shared priorities where joint action can make the greatest difference.

*Governance and oversight:* Our Strategy Group will oversee the delivery of the strategy, monitor progress against the key priorities, and work with partners across Torbay to support implementation.

*Strategic context:* This document is grounded in the government's Every Child Thriving priorities along with the curriculum and inspection reforms. It sets out Torbay education leaders' vision, our shared priorities, and how we will organise ourselves to work more collaboratively to achieve our goals.

# Torbay Context

Torbay is a place of significant strengths, opportunity and community spirit. However, too many children and young people continue to face barriers associated with deprivation, vulnerability, special educational needs, poor health outcomes and unequal life chances.

The most commonly used measure is the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), which ranks areas relative to one another rather than producing a percentage rate. The latest English Indices of Deprivation show that the South West is generally one of the less deprived regions of England, with most neighbourhoods falling in the middle to less deprived deciles rather than the most deprived deciles. However, Torbay remains one of the more deprived local authorities in the South West, ranking among the most deprived authorities in the region.

Educational outcomes remain strongly linked to where a child lives, their level of disadvantage and whether they have identified additional needs. This strategy represents a collective commitment from education leaders to work together to reduce those inequalities and ensure that every child can thrive, regardless of circumstance.



# Torbay Together – Purpose Statement

> **Torbay Education leaders will work together on shared priorities, in an inclusive, place-based way from early years to further education, so that every child and young person in Torbay can achieve, thrive, belong and improve life chances, with no one left behind.**

## Torbay Together Principles:

- We will act as one Torbay system
- We will put children and families first, especially those who need us most
- We will build trust and act with integrity
- We will listen to understand and communicate clearly and openly
- We will build an inclusive system where every voice matters
- We will act with urgency on what matters most
- We will challenge each other respectfully and honestly
- We will take shared responsibility for every child

## Our promise for every child

Together, we will work to ensure that every child born and raised in Torbay grows up:

- safe and well supported
- healthy
- able to achieve their full academic potential
- able to build strong and trusting relationships

## Working with partners

Education has the greatest impact when the full network around a child works towards a common goal. This strategy cannot succeed in isolation, so we will align our work with partners across Torbay, including health, social care, and the voluntary and community sector.

## Inclusion is our ‘Golden Thread’

Across Torbay there is a strong relationship between deprivation, SEND, attendance, exclusions and educational outcomes. We will therefore focus collective effort on children and communities facing the greatest disadvantage. This will become a golden thread through all five priorities.

# Our Young People's Voices

Listening to children and young people is essential. Their views should shape our priorities and inform the actions we take on the issues that matter most to them.

Young people tell us they want to be listened to, believed in and prepared for the future. We know these aspirations are not experienced equally across Torbay. This strategy commits us to ensuring that children's opportunities are not determined by their postcode, their level of need or their family circumstances.

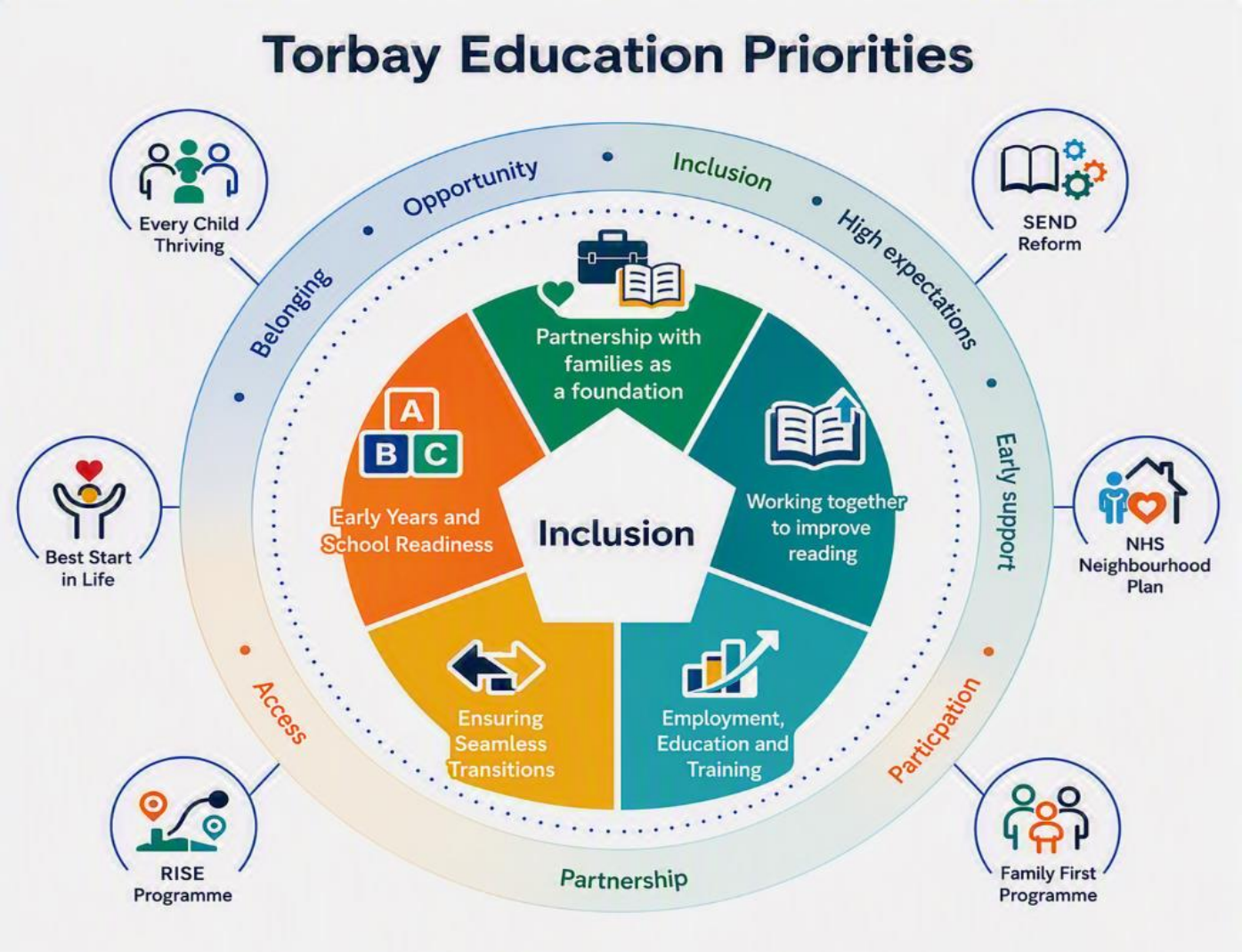
> **Children and young people say…..**
>
> **"I really want to learn even if it's hard because education is important to me."**
>
> **"I want teachers to listen to me when I have something to say"**
>
> **"We want more chances to try different things so we can discover what we are good at and what we might want to do when we are older."**
>
> **"We want greater exposure to jobs and opportunities so we can see how learning in school connects to real life."**
>
> **"We want more high-quality jobs and opportunities in Torbay, so that those of us who want to stay can build a successful future here."**
>
> **"I want to feel prepared for the future."**
>
> **"I want teachers who believe that I will be a success"**



# Education Strategy: Our Key Priorities

## Our Torbay Priorities on a page

We all know how important high-quality education is for children and young people. When it works well it provides skills for life and aspiration for the future. The challenge we face is ensuring that every child and young person has their barriers removed so they can access good quality education and therefore thrive. As a group we have chosen to align our **COLLECTIVE POWER** to working on these five key focuses for the next three years.



# Priority 1 – Early Years and School Readiness

## Goal

***68.5% of children achieved a Good Level of Development at the end of EYFS in 2024/25 (749 children). By the end of 2027/28 academic year, we aim for 77.8% of all children and 61.6% of children eligible for free school meals to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD).***

## Key actions

- Implement the Best Start in Life Plan across all partner organisations.
- Develop a Torbay-wide definition of school readiness, supported by a shared implementation plan.
- Map services available during the first 1,000 days, identify gaps and coordinate collaborative action to address them.
- Share effective practice more widely and provide a joint training offer for all early years settings across Torbay.
- Target support to vulnerable children to increase the Good level of Development for this key cohort.

## Measures of success

**Key measure:** Children achieve a Good Level of Development in excess of 77%/61% as above. A Reduction of EYFS gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children

**Potential other measures:**

- Completion of 2 to 2½-year health visitor checks.
- Increased engagement with Family Hub early learning programmes.
- ASQ assessments.
- Access to early education places by age 3 increase.
- Take-up of nursery places for disadvantaged children.
- Shared use of the Torbay-wide school readiness framework.
- Completion of service mapping across the first 1,000 days.
- Delivery of a shared CPD offer for early years settings.

**Accountability:** Health visitors, early years providers, Family Hubs, SEND services and Public Health Torbay.

# Priority 2 – Working Together to Improve Reading from Early Years through to Secondary School

## Goal

**75.7% of pupils achieved the Expected Standard (EXS+) in Reading in Torbay in 2026. By 2029 Key stage two attainment in reading shows an improvement to above national levels of at least 80%. Vulnerable learners reading attainment should also improve to above national levels.**

## Key actions

- Improve our understanding of which children are not working at the expected levels at every age range.
- Create shared improvement plans for pupils who are below the expected standard in reading in every age range.
- Use expertise in our English hub and via other areas to create a community of good practice more coherently across clusters of schools.
- Use targeted interventions to tackle vulnerable cohorts of learners not making expected progress such as small-group tutoring, extended learning opportunities and attendance mentoring.
- Work across phases and between schools to strengthen approaches to the teaching of reading across Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3.
- Include parents and carers as key partners in all our plans for enhancing reading across the Bay so they are empowered to be part of the solution to enhance this area of learning.

## Measures of success

**Key measure:** The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 as above.

**Potential other measures:**

- Reading attainment of vulnerable cohorts.
- Reading fluency by Year 3.
- Records of audit, training and information sharing.
- Records of parental engagement with reading improves.

**Accountability:** Primary headteachers, multi-academy trusts, local authority education teams, and Reading Working Group leaders.

# Priority 3 – Partnerships with Families to Improve Belonging and Attendance for everyone

## Goal

**In 2026 the latest local data indicates an overall attendance rate of approximately 89.3%, compared with a national average of around 91.1%  All partners will work with families to achieve average attendance of 94% for all children and young people. Where attendance falls below this level, targeted support will help secure improvements for this cohort of up to 5% across the academic year over the next three years.**

## Key Actions

- We recognise that attendance is often a symptom rather than a cause. Our approach will focus on belonging, relationships, wellbeing and practical support for families experiencing adversity.
- Settings will come together to create a set of Torbay shared relational, restorative 'Belonging' principles to guide all the work we do.
- Schools and services will jointly review pupils who fall below key attendance thresholds and co-design individual recovery plans.
- Support will move from reacting to absence towards proactively building relationships with families through mentoring, engagement programmes and effective interventions.
- Strengthen relationships between schools and families through Reach approaches.
- Everyone collaborates to create a Belonging Strategy which creates a collective culture of belonging to "The Torbay Family", showcasing all the opportunities open to children in Torbay.
- Develop impactful solutions for young people who may need a fresh-start approach to improve behaviour and attendance.

## Measures of success

**Key measure:** Overall pupil attendance and a reduction in persistent absence, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs is seen over the course of the next three years.

**Potential other measures:**

- Overall attendance meeting the 94%+ target.
- Reduced exclusion and suspension rates at all ages.
- Less persistent and severe absence rates.
- Collaboration between local leaders in families of schools and with partner agencies on this shared priority.
- A collated and published extra-curricular offer across Torbay.

**Accountability:** Primary and secondary headteachers, the local authority attendance team, family support teams, and the Family and Attendance Working Group.

# Priority 4 – Working Together to Ensure High-Quality and Consistent Transitions

## Goal

**In Year 1, we will focus on improving transition from Year 6 to Year 7; this will lead to improved attendance and engagement in the Year 7 cohort from September 2027. After Year 1 our focus will turn to other key transition points, such as Early Years to Primary school and Year 11 to Post16, using the collective learning we have gained to improve these other transition points.**

## Key Actions

- By September 2026, install and implement the Transitions Portal across Torbay for Year 6 to Year 7 transition for September 2027.
- In Year 2, use this information to strengthen transition arrangements between Year 6 and Year 7 in time for September 2027.
- In Year 2, extend the transitions focus to early years and post-16 so that high-quality transitions become consistent across the system.
- We will align with work in other priority areas such as improving reading and align this with the need to focus on English and Maths outcomes for prosperous transition outcomes.
- Deepen transition support through the Cradle to Career transition community and wider Torbay work supported by the Department for Education.

## Measures of success

**Key measures:**

- By 2026-7, Year 6 pupils benefit from improved information-sharing with secondary schools.
- By 2027 improved attendance and engagement can be seen from the new Year 7 cohort.
- By 2027-8 Early Years and Post16 transition focus shows an improvement from September 2028.
- By 2029, every secondary school offers a consistent and high-quality transition offer for all children.

**Other potential measures:**

- Year 7 attendance for 2026-7 and 2027-8 improves in their transition year.
- Attendance and engagement data for reception and post16 from September 2028 onwards.

**Accountability:** Primary and secondary headteachers, local authority support teams, family support teams, and the Family and Attendance Working Group.

# Priority 5 – Increase Education, Employment and Training for Young People on a Pathway to Adulthood

## Goal

**In 2026 nationally around 13% of all 16-24 year olds were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). Our aim is that more than 90% of 16 to 24-year-olds in Torbay will be in education, employment or training by 2029-30.**

## Key Actions

- By January 2027 work with partner agencies to develop a joint specific NEET strategy.
- By September 2027, build capacity with South Devon College to support more young people back into education.
- In 2027-8, implement interventions that coach and mentor young people back into employment, education and training.
- In 2027-8, target barriers to access and engagement, including mental health, wellbeing and life skills.
- From 2026, begin a focused workstream on young people at risk of becoming NEET while still in secondary school and during post16 in alignment with the SEND Reform Plan and with wider partners.

## Measures of success

**Key measure:** Torbay NEET data shows a decline and remains below national and statistical-neighbour rates, falling to less than 10% by 2030. Destination Data grows and is strong in comparison with statistical neighbours.

**Other potential measures:**

- By 2027/28, support packages are improving engagement and helping young people sustain participation in education, employment and training.
- By 2029/30, a preventative programme is in place to help keep NEET levels low.

**Accountability:** Education leaders, the local authority, health and public health teams, and family support teams.

# ‘Torbay Together’ - How will we work together?

The Department for Education led an evaluation with a range of leaders to understand how the education system in Torbay was operating and collaborating.

Our proposed new way of working together is built around four layers of organisation, each with a distinct role in the system:

**Future Strategy Group**
Where decisions are made about future educational issues

**Education Leaders Forum**
Where information is shared, views are heard and priorities are shaped

**Workstreams for each priority area**
Where priorities are delivered

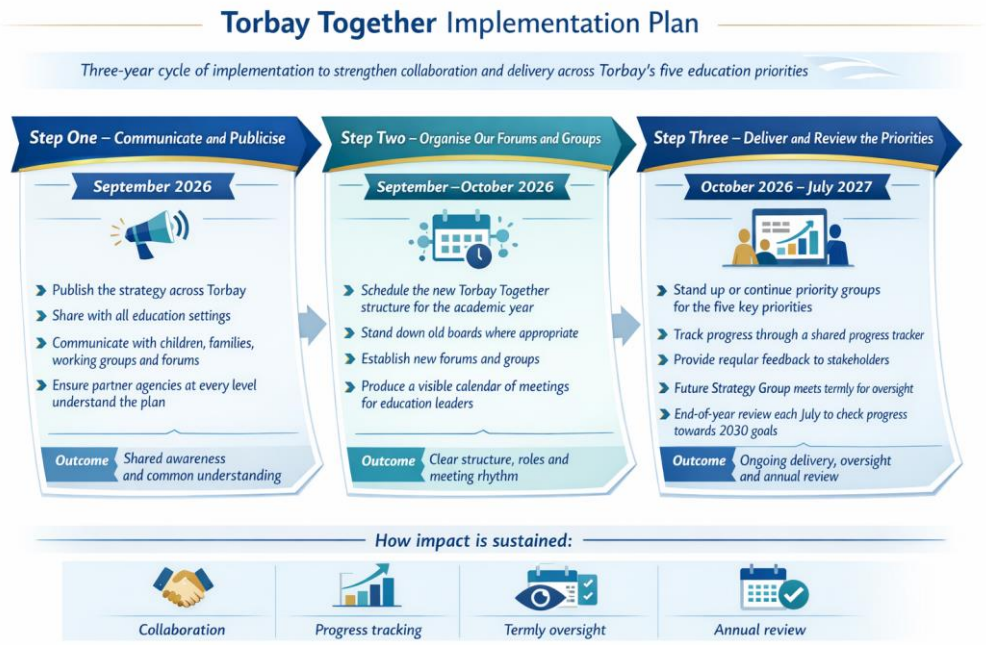
**Education Peer Support Forums**
Where peer support is gained

# Next Steps

Our new ‘Torbay Together’ methodology of working together will be widely communicating through this plan.

Our next steps will be to implement this change of how we organise ourselves to enable us all to work collaboratively to fulfil the shared priorities in this Strategy.

Our final section of this strategy explains how we plan to implement the changes we have made in year 1 and how we will monitor the success of our priority areas.



# Appendix –

If you would like to know more about how this strategy is grounded in our legislative responsibilities, please click on our Appendix Document link.