

Briefing Note



Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee

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Stantonbury International School

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Background

Stantonbury International School (SIS) is a large secondary comprehensive school for children aged 11-19 and is located on Purbeck, Stantonbury, Milton Keynes. The school opened in its current form on 1 September 2016 when it joined the Griffin School Trust (GST). When its predecessor school, Stantonbury Campus (which was a foundation school) was last inspected in April 2015 it was judged by Ofsted to be Requires Improvement. This was the second Requires Improvement judgement following the same judgement in March 2013 and this led to a change to academy status and brokerage by the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to GST.

Under GST leadership the school was first inspected in November 2018 when it was found to be Requires Improvement. The report stated that "school leaders and trust officers' actions have not yet had the impact required to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes". However, at that time inspectors found safeguarding to be "effective". The school was next inspected in January 2020 when the school was found to be Inadequate. The report stated that the "trust had overseen the decline of the school since the last inspection" and amongst other concerns the arrangements for safeguarding were deemed "not effective". The publication of this report was delayed until June 2020 due to Covid.

Throughout this period officers have continued to monitor, review, support and challenge safeguarding at the school and to raise concerns with both the trust and the RSC. Lack of reassurances of improvement led the RSC to publish a 'Minded to Terminate' letter in July 2020, followed by a 'Termination Warning Notice' in August 2020. Following an invitation to trusts to register interest in running the school and a formal "listening" (consultation) period, the "Headteacher Board" (which awards schools to trusts) discussed the transfer of the school on 26 May 2021 and the RSC approved that the school would transfer to Tove Learning Trust. The date for transfer was later confirmed as September 2021. Tove Learning Trust already runs three schools in Milton Keynes, namely Lord Grey, Knowles Primary and Water Hall Primary, all of which are in Bletchley.

The Director of Children's Services, Mac Heath and the Group Head of Education, Learning and Inclusion, Marie Denny have already met with the trust to discuss mutual ambitions for improving the school. In particular there have been discussions about supporting the school to stabilise by limiting new admissions to the school whenever appropriate to do so. This in turn should bring clarity about levels of finance and staffing at the school which will be critical in supporting school improvement and in recruiting and retaining the very highest quality of staff. The trust is already active in the Milton Keynes Secondary Heads (MKSH) group, and this will enable capacity and collaboration across the system where appropriate as all secondary heads in Milton Keynes wish to see the school improve. The trust has also purchased the council's governing board clerking service from September 2021 which will enable communication to be high quality, strong and consistent. We are all committed to working together moving forward to ensure that the very best provision is in place for our children.

The trust's vision, values and key people have been shared as follows:

"Tove Learning Trust Vision and Values

Mission

To ensure that all students in our academies are provided with inspiring educational experiences that lead to outstanding outcomes.

Vision

Tove Learning Trust ensures that all pupils, regardless of background and life experiences, achieve as highly as possible within stimulating environments that enable them to progress and flourish. Pupils experience a rich and diverse curriculum that equips them extremely well for their future lives enabling them to be active, successful, and positive citizens in their adult lives. This curriculum is ambitious, challenging and rewarding. High quality professional development opportunities ensure staff are well supported and developed.

Our values

The board is focused on what's best for each academy and the students within the trust. We will seek to drive improvements in standards by challenging in a constructive manner, asking probing questions and seeing the strategic picture. We understand our roles and responsibilities and are prepared to consider dynamic and innovative ideas. We share a passion about adopting an entrepreneurial stance to make the most of opportunities that are outside of academies normal day to day practices.

Key people

Dr Jamie Clarke - CEO

Jamie leads the strategic vision and development of the trust, and has directed the growth of the MAT, from two schools in Northamptonshire in 2016 to seven secondary schools and three primary schools across the Midlands and Central England by 2020. The primary education arm of the MAT has been established in 2020 providing links for all-through education and to support pupils with their transition through their education. As a National Leader of Education Jamie works with the Department for Education on a range of special projects to support leadership development in improving schools. He has been involved extensively in assessing school effectiveness in a wide range of contexts. He is also an experienced keynote speaker at national education conferences and holds a number of senior roles with advisory boards.

Mr Carl Salt - Director of Secondary Education

Carl has worked in secondary education for 22 years after commencing his working life in industry, in particular the engineering sector. As Director of Education, Carl's role is to support the academies

within the West Midland hub in ensuring our students are provided with inspiring educational experiences that lead to outstanding outcomes. Carl has consistently demonstrated that he is able to develop strong standards for student behaviour and progress in different settings. He is passionate about developing staff teams so they can reach their full potential in serving their school community.

Mr Jamie Nairn - Director of Primary Education

Jamie has been a primary teacher and leader for over 23 years. He began teaching in a very large four form entry, inner city primary school in Hull, before moving to a small rural school with only 90 children split across three classes. He has held a number of different roles from Leading Literacy Teacher, SENCo etc before becoming a headteacher 13 years ago. During his time as a headteacher, he has led three schools very successfully, moving one out of Ofsted category of Special Measures in only 9 months, before it gained a 'Good' grading 18 months later. Jamie believes in distributed leadership and autonomy for staff to be the best they can be. He is committed to every child succeeding and ensures that all pupils (including disadvantaged and those with SEND) achieve the very best outcomes, as well as having a memorable primary education.

Mr Richard Cahill - School Improvement Lead

Richard joined Tove Learning Trust in September 2020 as school improvement lead. Richard has worked in secondary schools for 26 years, with 20 of these leading teaching and learning in a senior position. Richard has supported other primary and secondary schools to develop their teaching and learning. He has worked across a variety of schools across the country and across the OFSTED range. Most recently, he undertook two headships of secondary schools in Leicestershire.

As School Improvement Lead, Richard is passionate about improving the practice of all teachers in the trust by creating connections within and across all schools. His firm belief is that by enabling teachers to engage in professional dialogues with each other, and by sharing best and next practice all will achieve a consistently high standard within the classroom which in turn will lead to improved outcomes for all learners.

Mr Jim Parker - Executive Principal

Jim joined Lord Grey Academy as Principal in September 2018 and has successfully led the ongoing school improvement journey since then. Jim is an experienced leader of large secondary schools and has a strong track record in delivering improvements in teaching and learning and improved outcomes for students. He works collaboratively with staff, pupils, governors and local communities to deliver transformational change. He develops positive working relationships across the whole school community and works in partnership with the local authority and other local agencies. “

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