

The single most important mission of GST is to provide the conditions in which children discover who they are and then go on confidently to take their places in society, making a contribution to it through the use of their talents. We will never prepare children to know their places.

The challenge for Heads is to attract, recruit and develop staff with excellent knowledge and broad interests and then to grow them into taking their places within a school culture, which not only preaches but practices distributed leadership and which places a high value on creativity.

Proud Traditions

Schools bring their histories to us and together we turn them into traditions which reflect the Trust's mission and values whilst preserving each school's individuality.

We also build GST traditions so that children in every school feel part of the same family with clearly shared values. Every summer term we hold the Griffin Arts Festival (established in 2014) which celebrates identity. Founders Day is the spring term event (established 2016) and centres on community. Autumn term 2016 will see our first Sports Festival focused on competition and personal best.

Traditions are part of the fabric of a school community and give a sense of belonging.

A great GST school will have nothing institutional about it. It will demonstrate a range of features that can be experienced through smell, taste and hearing as well as sight. Great GST schools:

- emphasise good hospitality
- provide good quality food enjoyed communally by children and staff in comfortable and companionable surroundings
- welcome all visitors and arrange for frequent speakers/artists/performers/scientists/explorers/sportspeople/campaigners for a range of causes
- grow and maintain a vibrant environment, with active staff and student involvement
- use their estate and all resource to reinforce culture and realize vision
- cultivate open and positive relationships based on equality and diversity
- keep abreast of the political and professional agenda but never let it intrude on culture
- are recognizable as GST schools in branding and standards of presentation, whilst having a strong individual identity within the family
- create their own customs and rituals which bind the community and strengthen the sense of belonging (e.g. special privileges: year 7s can't wait to be sixth formers so they can use a staircase reserved for staff; honours boards for a sense of long history and increased aspiration.)

Wide Horizons

Recent decades have narrowed the scope of many maintained schools' focus and provision. The effect can be as serious as to create a climate in which children are statistics and staff operatives combining to make or break the school's league table position. GST's mission is to build community, with teams of committed staff providing all children/students with the best and broadest education experience. In this way adults and children are engaged in something bigger than the delivery and receipt of a curriculum. They work in a framework of explicitly shared values so that

informed choices and decisions are the drivers rather than conformity to a complex set of rules.

Great GST schools:

- emphasise leadership and service
- provide rich programmes of visits from speakers/artists/performers/scientists/explorers/sportspeople/campaigners for a range of causes
- encourage excursions, expeditions, projects, virtual links of discovery, so that children see beyond the familiar and the local
- demonstrate their commitment to equality and diversity in their staff profile and structure, their curriculum and extra-curricular provision
- spend minimal resource on intervention programmes aimed at meeting national benchmarks because they are 100% cultures
- recruit interesting/inspiring people as well as outstanding teachers and support staff
- build self-driven CPD with every adult a learner and a teacher
- engage in high-quality school-school improvement/development, within and beyond the Trust
- look for opportunities for staff exchanges nationally and internationally

High Achievement

Claiming to value achievement and not just attainment trips off the tongue in prospectus-speak, but growing a culture where this is an explicit reality is rare. A school needs to be driven by multiple and connected sources of energy (proud traditions, wide horizons and high achievement) so that it makes sense to and motivates all who learn and work there.

Great GST schools:

- nurture and 'teach' achievement beyond the timetabled curriculum
- regularly celebrate adult and student achievement
- set appropriate value on achievements, neither overpraising nor overlooking
- know all children individually, their talents, strengths and areas for improvement
- give frequent opportunity for children to perform and demonstrate their skills and talents
- set the bar high and cast the net wide for performing arts material from Western and wider world culture
- attract staff who have achieved themselves beyond their teaching area of expertise
- support staff to continue their achievement in sport, the arts or other arenas

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June 2016