



Griffin Great Schools





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. In the Spring Term, Founders Day (2016) centres on community and the Griffin Science Symposium (2017) on scientific enquiry. In Autumn it is the Griffin Sports Festival (2016) 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. 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 resources to reinforce culture and realise 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 recognisable as GST schools in branding and standards of presentation, whilst having a strong individual identity within the family
- create their own customs and traditions which bind the community and strengthen the sense of belonging



## 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
- support staff in further study and research, such as GST's masters Programme
- look outwards, nationally and internationally for ideas and partnerships



## 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 opportunities 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, the academic world or other arenas

# Trust Engagement

As a Trust we share a conviction that great schools are built on rich extra curricular programmes and high quality pastoral care as well as an inspiring curriculum, expertly taught. We know there are no limits for pupils and staff where commitment and enjoyment go together.

Throughout the year there are a number of Trust-wide events that each school takes part in:

## Autumn Term



**The Griffin Sports Festival**, hosted by Nicholas Chamberlaine School and led by our Director of Sport with a staff team from every school. Five 'new' sports form the basis of fierce inter-school competition and the event is officiated by representatives of national sports bodies.

**Shakespeare Schools Festival**, a National Theatre project which sees every school direct and produce a Shakespeare Play which is performed in a public theatre. This is led by our Director of Performance with a staff team in every school.

**The Pantomime.** A partnership with Greenwich Theatre, with a professional cast supported by three teams of Stantonbury International School students and performed in the SIS theatre, the GST pantomime is attended by children from every school as well as being hugely popular with residents of Milton Keynes and the surrounding area.

## Spring Term

**Founders Day**, raising funds to support a cause chosen by students and connected with the theme of the year. In every school the day centres on community: what it means to be a part of GST and on citizenship so that students experience in practice the difference they can make individually and collectively. This often lights leadership sparks in our pupils.

**The Griffin Science Symposium** is hosted by Stantonbury International School and revolves around the theme of the year. Eminent scientists come from the John Innes Centre and the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London to give lively talks, demonstrations and workshops to students in years 6 and 7 from all schools.



## Summer Term



**The Griffin Arts Festival**, established in 2014. All schools run two weeks of events which include performances and activities open to their local communities. In addition, Year 5 and 12 students compete for places to enjoy the London Experience hosted by Willow Brook and Riverley: 5 days of intensive visits to national arts venues, workshops with professional choreographers, performances by poets and musicians, a student-composed opera (with help from our Director of Music) and art exhibitions and workshops in collaboration with well-known galleries led by our Director of Art. The London week ends with our very own Last Night of the Proms concert which itself is preceded by performances from our schools.

So, every year children know what they have to look forward to in terms of Trust-wide experiences as well as a host of in-school events and activities. By the time they leave primary school, pupils have begun to discover their inner musician, artist, poet, scientist, philosopher, sportsperson or campaigner. That voyage of discovery continues at our secondary schools, which is why the GST strategy is to have through education in all our geographical locations so we truly build foundations for life.

# Trust Fundraising

The opportunities provided at school and at home mean that many pupils develop really strong interests to which they devote a lot of time and energy beyond the curriculum. At GST we want to support students to progress in their chosen interests, to grow their skills and develop their talents to the full. That costs money.

There is never enough money and making fundraising part of what we do is a given for schools and Trusts in these times of very reduced public funding. The key consideration is what we raise funds for, so that relatively small sums have a major impact on our students.



**The Sports and Arts Fund (SAF)** was established on Founders Day 2018. All pupils in Years 3 to 13 can apply for financial support to continue their extra-curricular interests in sports and the arts. The fund is intended to help pay for better quality or higher standard specialist equipment to take their skill to the next level.

Each year there are two main channels through which we fundraise for SAF: Pop-Up at the Factory and Challenge 26.

**Pop-Up at the Factory** was established in 2018. We have set ourselves the challenge of gathering and selling 2018 items during the year. Our Founders, staff in the central team and colleagues from schools are donating personal items to raise funds for SAF. The items range from antiques and crafts to good quality clothing and accessories. Once a month we invite local artists and crafters in to our Trust base and open our doors to the public as a pop-up arts, crafts and boutique market.



Every April a School or Trust leader runs the London Marathon on behalf of the Trust for our preferred Children's charity. Inspired by the 26.2 miles of the marathon, **Challenge 26** is a sporting challenge involving the number 26. Examples of previous challenges include rowing 26 miles, doing 26 star jumps each day for 26 days, running a 26 mile relay. The challenges are meant to help get students active and can be completed by individuals or in groups. Everyone taking part collects sponsorship and all money raised is added to the Sports and Arts Fund.



# The GST Family

Stantonbury International School  
Milton Keynes  
Joined September 2016



Bramford  
West Midlands  
Joined June 2013

Lammas  
East London

Joined December 2018



Chivenor  
West Midlands  
Joined February 2014

Riverley  
East London

Joined November 2013



Perry Wood  
West Midlands  
Joined December 2012

Willow Brook  
East London

Joined April 2015



Nicholas Chamberlaine  
North Warwickshire  
Joined September 2013

Kingfisher  
Medway

Joined September 2013



Park Lane  
North Warwickshire  
Joined November 2013

Lordswood  
Medway

Joined September 2013



Race Leys  
North Warwickshire  
Joined September 2012

Saxon Way  
Medway

Joined November 2013



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