

Stanchester Academy

Information for applicants



Stanchester

Academy



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Stanchester Academy is a semi-rural secondary academy that sits on the outskirts of the Somerset village of Stoke-Sub-Hamdon. With capacity for almost a thousand students it currently has 800 students spread across five year groups with larger numbers joining in Year 7 each year than leave from Year 11. As such, the school is steadily increasing in size and looks set to do so in years to come.

Originally a Stand-alone Academy the Board of Governors took the decision in 2019 to join the Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust to provide additional resource and capacity to the school to bring about further school improvement and raise standards.

The school is well regarded locally by the community and is known for the care, compassion and support that it provides students. The school was last inspected in 2019, just prior to joining the BTCT and was graded as 'Good' by Ofsted. Results and outcomes over time (prior to and including 2019) are regarded as erratic with some Progress 8 scores being stronger than others. The school has yet to achieve a positive Progress 8 score meaning it has not yet shown or achieved its full potential academically.

The new headteacher will benefit from joining a school with a very committed staff body. Both support staff and teaching staff have worked incredibly hard over the past year to provide the best possible face to face and online learning experience for students. They have consistently demonstrated their willingness to go above and beyond for children, their flexibility has been profound and they have embraced new ways of working and professional growth. They are looking for a school leader that will provide them with a clear vision for the future, that will sustain and maintain the focus on understanding the child in the whole, and who will support them to achieve superb outcomes.

Underpinning the school and the wider Trust is an enhanced understanding of Inclusion. The new Headteacher is expected to truly embrace and be a champion of comprehensive education in its widest sense and will work with the Trust, and the comprehensive offer of support to ensure that students are present, engaged and learning with a provision that is suited to their needs.

The new Headteacher is expected to be a champion of the school, its community and young people. They will understand the importance that schools play as civic 'anchor' organisations in their locality and above all they will be expected to collaborate widely with other leaders and schools in the Trust and beyond. The new Headteacher can expect unparalleled professional support and development from the Trust, the space and flexibility to execute their own decision making and the challenge that comes from holding such an important public role.

The Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust

Introduction

The Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust (BTCT) formed in 2012 with the creation of the Bridgwater College Academy. This new and innovative ‘all-through’ Academy drove school improvement through a radical redesign of education in the heart of the Sydenham Estate. Facilitating school improvement by taking three previously inadequate schools and creating a ‘Good’ all through school was at the centre of our thinking at the time. Now, eight years later, seven schools with almost 5000 students, the BTCT is an engine room for school improvement across Bridgwater, West and South Somerset. Working in some of our most challenging communities, and across all ages and phases of education, our Central School Improvement team have a strong track record of working alongside school leaders, teachers and colleagues to bring about transformational change through co-constructed solutions. The BTCT recognises that there is no ‘lead’ school in our group and there are also no islands. We are collectively only as good as our weakest school and that all colleagues and schools, regardless of how good they are, can reasonably be expected to contribute to and receive support from each other. Collectively, we have the skills, knowledge, experience and expertise to bring about school improvement in all settings. The role of the Trust is to facilitate interschool learning, sharing of our capacity and to challenge assumptions about how good we can be. It is to find and understand best practice amongst our colleagues, grow and nurture talent and leadership which results in us providing a world class experience for our young people.

We are a charitable schools Trust that exists with one legal and moral purpose- to extend education for public benefit. As such we are a group of likeminded schools working in collaboration as one entity to improve and maintain high standards of education within and beyond our own schools. Our core purpose is to ensure that:

“Every Child Achieves”

The overarching strategic intent of the Bridgwater College Trust is to ensure that **every** child in **every** Academy achieves by attending an Academy that:

- positively impacts on their life chances as a result of making *outstanding* progress academically.
- provides rich and diverse opportunities which stretch individuals, raise their aspirations and broaden their horizons.
- prepares young people well for the next stage in their learning and personal development.
- has an unconditional positive regard for children and young adults making them feel valued and included.
- nurtures their personal development in a safe environment where students develop an advanced understanding of their responsibilities to themselves and others.

As a Trust we prefer to operate with a ‘High Impact—Low Presence’ approach. We are really clear that schools need to develop and maintain their own identity and serve their own community. With such a diverse range of schools in our Trust, we are confident that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to policy, curriculum design and teaching isn’t always successful and there is an expectation that

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schools will work with us to develop and co-construct solutions to their specific priorities. Underpinning the approach from the BTCT is an attitude of 'done with' not 'done to.'

Each of our schools retains a Local Governing Body (LGB) that works with school leadership teams to determine and uphold the values, ethos and culture of their school. They are powerful agents of change that hold Headteachers to account publically working within our agreed scheme of delegation. In recognising that no two schools are alike, our approach to school improvement is one of co-construction and our Director of Education will work extensively alongside Headteachers to coordinate and plan a rich diet of school improvement. The BTCT is a high-trust organisation that recognises that you are better able to attract and retain brilliant colleagues by nurturing their well being and professional development. We have published to all colleagues a clear plan for reducing teacher workload and for advancing career progression into leadership posts. We have scrapped ineffective performance management of teachers preferring a high trust mechanism of professional growth. We also have a more generous pay structure than the national model. This means we have one of the lowest staff turnover rates in our sector. People want to work for the BTCT and they stay with us—this results in less disruption to schools and children as the adults remain constant.

The BTCT has three highly skilled and knowledgeable teams that operate from the Centre of the Trust providing support for schools. This intentionally removes many functions from Headteachers, freeing up their time to work on their areas of expertise; teaching, learning and personal development.

School Improvement —the SI team is lead by our Director of Education and includes experts in curriculum, assessment, data handling and developing teacher pedagogy. Every teaching colleague in our Trust has their own, personalised development plan for improving their own professional practice. All colleagues have access to a professional coach. Headteachers have access to a professional coach from outside the sector.

Business Development— The BD team includes all areas of running and managing schools that traditionally might fall to the Headteacher. Lead by our Chief Finance Officer this includes our IT services team, our HR team, our Premises and Estates team, our Operations Team, Health and Safety and our Finance Team. We know that by using these teams Headteachers report that they are saving circa two days a week of their time to focus on Young People.

Specialist Support Team— Our SS Team includes the skills, knowledge and experience to provide additional capacity for schools and students that require additional support. Our team is lead by our Head of Inclusion and includes additional and spare SENCO capacity that can be deployed to any school at any time. It also includes our Family Therapy Lead who provide support to families that are in crisis. It hosts our SEN Access lead, Speech and Language Therapist and Educational Psychologist all of whom are available to our constituent schools. We also host a specialist facility for children with Autism.



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BTCT Academies



Bridgwater College Academy—Established in 2012. An all-through school of 1500 students covering Pre-school and Nursery education through to GCSEs.
Ofsted—Good



Brymore Academy—Joined the BTCT in 2013. A state-funded boarding school for 360 boys that specialises in 'Typical' GCSEs but also focusses on developing skills within Horticulture, Agriculture, Technology and Sport.
Ofsted—Good



Hamp Academy—Also Joined the BTCT in 2013. A Junior School with 360 students situated in the heart of the Hamp community. Currently rated as 'Requires Improvement'.



West Somerset College—an Upper school in a three tier system with 950 students across Years 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13. WSC joined the Trust in 2015/16. Previously 'Special Measures' before joining the Trust, moved to 'Good' after just 9 months.



Otterhampton Primary School—Joined the Trust in 2018 following a period of turbulence in the school. 77 students attend this small village school which was rated as 'Requires Improvement' by Ofsted prior to conversion. It is awaiting inspection and our quality assurance indicates that it is now solidly 'Good'.



Maiden Beech Academy—a Middle school in the heart of Crewkerne with 400 students. MBA asked to join our Trust in 2018 and joined in 2019. Currently rated 'Good'.



Stanchester Academy— A secondary school of 800 students located in Stoke-sub-Hamdon. The Academy asked to join the BTCT in 2019 and joined on the 1st December 2019. Currently rated Ofsted 'Good'.