



Thomas Clarkson Academy



# "HELPING PUPILS To Succeed"

OFSTED, 2020



A valued member of the

Brooke Weston Trust

# Welcome

Thank you for expressing an interest in our school. Thomas Clarkson Academy serves the needs of our 1,300 students, their families and the local community as an increasingly successful, vibrant, welcoming and inclusive, non-selective 11-18 academy.

In January 2020 the school achieved a 'good' Ofsted rating for the first time in its history, with inspectors noting that the

school is "unrecognisable" compared to a few years ago. We aim to build on this further and go from strength to strength. We would be delighted if your child could join us on this journey.

At TCA our motto is 'Transform, Challenge and Aspire' as we strive to transform the opportunities of young people in Wisbech by providing them with the best opportunities to achieve the academic qualifications and skills to progress to university or the career

of their choice. We challenge them to be the best version of themselves and expect students to challenge themselves and aspire to achieve the best they can. In turn we do all in our power to nurture their ambitions and provide students with a 'ticket for life'.

In 2020 OFSTED noted that the school had 'high expectations of all pupils and what they can achieve' and that the school has designed "a curriculum that helps pupils succeed". They highlighted that these

ambitions extended to pupils with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged. We are an inclusive school and always endeavour to leave no child behind. Inspectors also remarked on the positive relationships between staff and students and how the students felt safe and well supported.

We take pride in creating a calm, orderly and, importantly, friendly atmosphere in the academy.

We have high standards and want our students to wear their academy uniform with pride and be ambassadors for the academy in the local community. Whilst at the academy students can also expect to develop the important skills of leadership, teamwork and co-operation through participation in a

broad range of opportunities beyond the classroom such as sport, art, drama and community projects. As part of the Brooke Weston Trust, there are also further opportunities for students to develop, including Trust-wide competitions and events. Please do take a look at the News section of our website to get a taste of life at our academy and read more about our students' successes and achievements.

Thomas Clarkson Academy is a wonderful school and we are extremely proud of our young people. I look forward to working with you to ensure that all our young people make the most of all the opportunities on offer to transform, challenge and aspire.

**RICHARD SCOTT**  
Principal



## Our Vision

We expect all members of the school community to:



### INNOVATE

Develop key transferable skills ready for a fast-changing global market.



### PERSEVERE

Demonstrate relentless determination and resilience in all that they do.

### UNITE

Make a valuable contribution to society and thrive in a mutually supportive environment.

“ Leaders have high expectations of all pupils and what they can achieve. ”

OFSTED, 2020



## WHY CHOOSE US?



### OFSTED SUCCESS

Our Ofsted Good rating demonstrates the commitment by our staff to providing the young people of Wisbech with a 'ticket for life'



### RUSSELL GROUP

Students are now securing places at Russell Group universities, including the University of Cambridge



### MOST IMPROVED

TCA was the most improved school in the Fens in 2017-19 (based on improvements in Progress 8 which measures students' progress from the end of Year 6 to their GCSEs).

# OUR Vision

"The school is well led. The dedication of leaders and governors to the school, the pupils and the local community is impressive"

OFSTED, 2020



Thomas Clarkson Academy puts students at the heart of everything it does. The best schools are underpinned by an ethos, drive and behaviours that are understood, respected and valued by everyone across the school community.

Our vision is of a community where our students' learning enables them to realise their academic and personal potential at the highest levels.

We embrace ambition for all, by all, as the means to achieve this.

## Our building

### Facilities



Our building is one of the most impressive and innovative in the area.

Built on a grand scale, it is set on a large school site, with specifically designated outside areas for students to relax or play sport. Our building is light and spacious and all of our indoor facilities are contained under one roof.

Students make use of our impressive facilities as part of their lessons and extracurricular activities. These include: a three-storey climbing wall, a planted living wall, a 450-seater theatre, dance and drama studios, sports halls, all weather pitches as well as specialist classrooms, computer suites, laboratories and workshops.

### The Library Resource Centre



TCA is a reading school and developing a love of the English language is central to all that we do.

As such, the library is at the heart of our school. It houses an impressive collection of books and other resources, which have been carefully selected to appeal to students of all ages, abilities and interests.

The librarian works with teaching staff to support the curriculum, and library lessons are a regular feature of school life for all students, especially those in Years 7 and 8.

The library is open throughout the school day and after school, and students are encouraged to use the library facilities, including the computers, to complete homework and other studies. Experienced library staff are on hand at all times to assist students with their research, their homework or simply to choose a good book to read.

### Community Lettings



Our sports and theatre spaces are let out during evenings and weekends to support an extensive programme of clubs for the local community to access.

These include everything from gymnastics, trampolining, dance and fitness classes, to theatre productions. Our facilities can be hired for 'pay and play' or for longer-term bookings.

During the school holidays our lettings team operate a holiday sports programme for children aged 5 to 13.



# OUR SCHOOL DAY

The academy day starts at 8:30am and is divided into five formal 60-minute taught lessons with a timetabled 20-minute breakfast break and a 45-minute lunch break.

In addition, Year 11 have a bespoke, targeted Period 6 that runs every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2:55pm to 3:55pm. Year 10 may be invited for targeted intervention sessions on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2:55pm to 3:55pm, as directed by Mrs Tarsitano, Vice Principal for Outcomes. These sessions will be known as Session 6.

All students and staff follow a one week timetable and all students spend 20 minutes per day with their form tutor.

<b>Tutor Time</b>	8:30am – 8:50am
<b>Period 1</b>	8:50am – 9:50am
<b>Period 2</b>	9:50am – 10:50am
<b>Break</b>	10:50am – 11:10am
<b>Period 3</b>	11:10am – 12:10pm
<b>Period 4</b>	12:10pm – 1:10pm
<b>Lunch</b>	1:10pm – 1:55pm
<b>Period 5</b>	1:55pm – 2:55pm
<b>Period 6/Session 6</b>	2:55pm – 3:55pm



“All of our students and staff belong to one of our three Communities: King, Madiba or Pankhurst, named after inspirational figures in history.”

#### Transport

There are a number of bus services to and from the academy that are organised by Cambridgeshire County Council. Details are available on our website [🔗](#) and parents/carers can call the council on **0345 045 5208** if they have any queries regarding transport to and from the academy.

#### Cashless Catering

We operate a cashless catering system around the academy, so students do not have to carry money on their person. Parents/carers can top up their child’s meal allowance and manage their child’s account from home via Parentpay. [🔗](#)

#### Restaurant and Dining

The restaurant is led and managed in-house by a dedicated catering team. The restaurant opens daily and serves breakfast and lunch as per the timetabled rotas.

There is a varied, healthy and balanced menu to cater for all dietary needs.

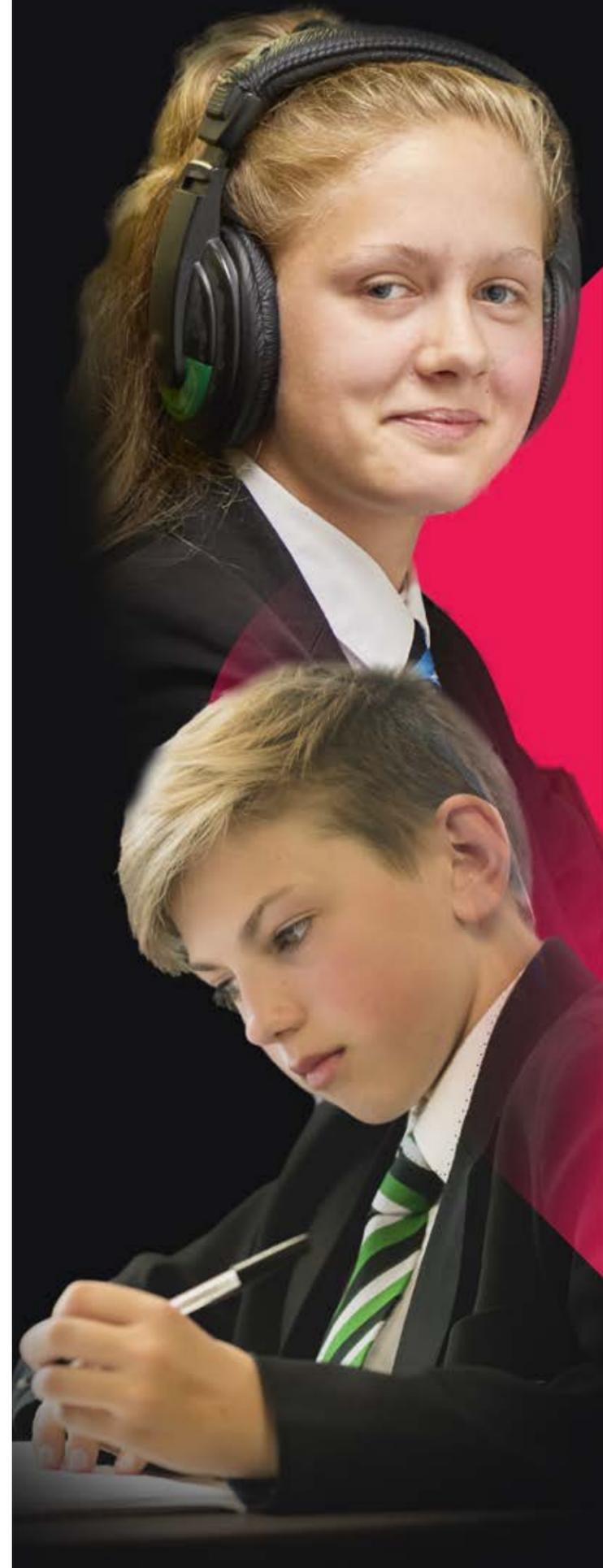
#### Communities and Tutor Groups

All of our students and staff belong to one of our three Communities: **King, Madiba or Pankhurst**. Named after inspirational figures in history, the Communities are led by the centrally located Student Services team and are places where pastoral support is available at any time of the school day. There is a real sense of care and belonging.

As well as a Community, each student belongs to a tutor group in their year group with a dedicated form tutor. Students attend a daily form tutor period and a weekly calendared assembly as year groups, or with their Community once per half term.

#### Uniform

Our professional and purposeful attitude is encapsulated in our smart uniform. Each student wears a black blazer embossed with the academy logo, formal black trousers and a smart school tie, the colour of which co-ordinates with their Community. Girls can opt to wear a formal black pleated skirt which should be knee-length. Further details regarding uniform are available on our website. [🔗](#)



# CURRICULUM YEARS 7 TO 11

The curriculum at Thomas Clarkson Academy aims to enable our students to:

- Develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills, to encourage a lifelong love of learning
- Fulfil their academic potential
- Develop their creativity and talents to the full

Our curriculum is broad and balanced, offering a range of subjects that are designed to develop personal and academic skills. Our curriculum is further enriched by additional services such as our Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) provision.

#### Mentoring Schemes

At the academy we offer a broad range of personalised support to our students, to complement the close monitoring of their academic progress by a Raising Standards Leader.

Academic mentoring and timely intervention is carried out by tutors, class teachers, middle leaders, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and English as an Additional Language (EAL) leads, our Children Looked After (CLA) and Safeguarding leads, and the senior leadership team.

Form tutors act as students' first point of contact and monitor, support and influence their progress, performance and good behaviour.

#### Key Stage 3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)

**KS3** We have a strong focus on the core subjects; English, maths and science and these are complemented with the compulsory study of history, geography, religious education, personal social and health education (PSHE), French, physical education (PE), dance, design technology, computer science, art, drama, and music.

We are a 'reading school' with a focus on all aspects of literacy and this underpins subjects.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is embedded across the curriculum. Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural (SMSC) and PSHE is delivered through discrete lessons and tutor time.

During Year 9 students continue to study a breadth of subjects. They prepare for, and are taken through an exciting GCSE Options process which frames their GCSE courses at Key Stage 4. Students are encouraged, with detailed careers support, to maximise their academic potential by pursuing the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) suite of qualifications.

#### Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11)

**KS4** Our robust and rigorous Year 9 options Process leads into an exciting two year Key Stage 4 curriculum, one that offers breadth and depth across a wide range of GCSE and vocational qualifications. In addition to the core subjects - English, maths, science and core PE - students can choose four option subjects from a plethora of subjects.

Students spend four hours per week in each of their core subject areas and a further three hours per week in each of their option subjects. Classwork is supported with meaningful homework and independent study in preparation for their end of Year 11 exams, with access to additional help and support via the Session 6 compulsory tutoring programme that is directed by Mrs Tarsitano, Vice Principal for Outcomes.

In addition, Year 10 and Year 11 students are guided by their respective Raising Standards Leaders throughout their Key Stage 4 experience. Our Key Stage 4 curriculum is supported by educational trips and visits, residential trips where appropriate, practical lessons, high quality and bespoke Careers Education Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and a two-week work experience placement in Year 10, helping our young people forge links for life and prepare for the world outside of secondary education. Our programme of study in Year 10 and Year 11 leads on to opportunities in further education, apprenticeships and employment.



Leaders have designed a curriculum that helps pupils to succeed... leaders want pupils to gain qualifications that will act as 'tickets for life' and help pupils to move on successfully to the next stage of education or employment.

OFSTED, 2020

# SIXTH FORM

Our wide range of courses allow students to focus and excel in areas that interest them. We offer a largely academic A Level curriculum, and a small number of Vocational courses, to prepare students for university, college or apprenticeships.

Our aim is to offer students the best of both worlds - the advantages of studying in an academic environment plus the atmosphere and freedom of post-16 life. Our Sixth Form promotes a highly aspirational learning environment ensuring students work closely with specialised staff, striving for excellence in all areas. In recent years, we have had record numbers of students securing places at Russell Group universities, including the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London.

To support lessons and individual studies all Sixth Form students are issued a personal laptop for use at home and in school.

Alongside our general academic provision, our Sixth Form also offers detailed career and higher education advice including specific guidance for those who are aiming to progress to Russell Group universities. All students receive regular workshops, guidance, visits and specific one-to-one UCAS application support to enable successful university applications.

Students are supported by a very experienced team which includes Head of Sixth Form, Head of Year 12 and form tutors who they spend time with each day. We know all of our students individually

and work tirelessly to ensure they reach their full potential, both academically and through extra-curricular activities.

#### Sixth Form enrichment

**6TH** Our students benefit from a wide range of different experiences so they can develop into confident young people and can manage the transition between school life and early adulthood. These include curriculum based trips, such as theatre trips, field trips and visits to museums and exhibitions.

Students have access to excellent Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and numerous opportunities to attend careers conventions, visit universities and explore the benefits of top class apprenticeships.

All Year 12 students fulfil a two-week high quality work experience placement as well as access to the PiXL Edge framework to guide their wider skill development in preparation for the world after post-16.

Throughout the year students take part in a variety of different sessions to build skills, particularly in teamwork and communication. Our Sixth Form students make a huge contribution to the school community. Their work as volunteers can involve a wide range of activities such as assisting a younger student with paired reading, or helping a small group of GCSE students to revise for an exam or even assisting at a local primary school.

Students are part of specific Sixth Form tutor groups who meet daily to offer support and guidance where required.



Leaders ensure that Sixth Form students have the support required to be successful.

OFSTED, 2020

# ENRICHMENT

## Extra-Curricular/Clubs

We encourage students to continue with their learning and social development outside of the classroom. We have a Session 6 that runs every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, where we provide a number of sports clubs, enrichment activities and homework clubs. All students are encouraged to make the most of these opportunities and the academy's facilities.



## Student Voice

We believe it is important that students have their say and feel happy in their learning environment.

The elected Student Voice, which is led by the Head Boy and Head Girl, plays a vibrant role in our community. Our Student Leadership Team represents the student body, shares views, opinions and suggests changes to continuously improve our academy.



## Trips and Residential

We run a large number of educational visits, field trips and residential throughout the year led by various departments across the academy. We run a very successful aspirations programme with strong links to business, run by our dedicated CEIAG (Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) team.

## Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award Scheme

We are proud to run the DofE Award and have a strong track record of success in the region. A challenging programme of activities helps students to learn new skills, help others, experience adventure and provide a great sense of achievement. We offer all three levels - Bronze, Silver and Gold.

## Combined Cadet Force (CCF)

The CCF is an educational partnership between the school and the Ministry of Defence and offers students a range of challenging, exciting, adventurous and educational activities. The Brooke Weston Trust Combined Cadet Force (Army Section) (BWT CCF) develops personal responsibility, leadership and self-discipline.

CCF is a weekly commitment and timetabled every Wednesday Period 2 to post 4pm. Our cadets are transported to and from Corby Business Academy by mini-bus. There are also up to two field weekends per year plus a week long summer camp at an Army Training Area.

“Pupils feel safe and well supported in school. They are known as individuals by their teachers and other staff”

OFSTED, 2020



# Care, Welfare and Inclusion for all

## Care and guidance

Each Community has a network of support staff, whose priority is the welfare and progress of students to ensure their experience of academy life is a happy one. Students benefit from the twin pillars of support offered by our Student Services team and the Raising Standards Leader for their year group.

Our attendance team works closely with parents and the Educational Welfare Service if extra support is needed to reach our high standards of attendance and punctuality. Students spend their community time with their tutor group, which consists of students from the same year group.

The role of the tutor is to develop a relationship with each student, which ensures they monitor, support and broaden the student's education effectively. In addition we have excellent access to various youth organisations, which enables us to identify support packages if necessary.

At the academy we offer a range of personalised support to our students, coupled with close monitoring of their academic progress via the Raising Standards Leaders.

Academic mentoring is carried out by tutors across the Communities with a particular focus on Year 11 students, giving them intense support in their examination year.

## Students with English as an Additional Language (EAL)



EAL students are assessed when they start at the academy in order to establish their skills and abilities. Each student can access a dedicated induction programme designed to equip them for their first, potentially daunting, days in a new environment. Students, specifically trained as Young Interpreters within TCA, support new arrivals to settle into academy life. They assist with the initial translation on arrival and provide a 'buddy system' for EAL students.



“Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive”

OFSTED, 2020

# SAFEGUARDING

## Safeguarding

We take our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students and staff very seriously. We provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued.

Child protection monitoring and reporting form part of the school's safeguarding responsibilities. We work closely with Children's Social Care, Early Help Hub and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to ensure all of our students have the highest standard of safeguarding and care throughout their time with us.

## Inclusion

We aim to raise the aspirations of our young people, celebrate their achievements and help them overcome any challenge they may face throughout their time at TCA. The SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) team focuses on working with young people with a range of different needs. Our team focuses on offering targeted support for our young people to develop their literacy, numeracy, communication skills and wellbeing.

Alongside these we offer a programme of support for students who are identified as having additional learning needs. For the students who have an Education Health Care Plan, we are fortunate to have a specialist educational provision within TCA known as The Cooper Centre. This centre provides students with specialist learning support in addition to accessing mainstream lessons where appropriate. More information can be found on the Cambridgeshire Local Offer.

## Mobile phones

To promote learning, improve concentration and safeguard our students, we have a ban on the use of mobile phones anywhere on the school site.

## Communicating with parents

Building strong relationships with parents is key to enhancing achievement.

Parent Voice drop-in sessions are held regularly, giving families the opportunity to meet a member of our leadership team and give any feedback or suggestions.

Along with this, we encourage on-going communication between home and school via phone and email. At every parents' evening we survey our parents and act on the results.

We also have a dedicated complaints officer who investigates individual concerns.

Our website features regular updates on life at the academy with news of our student achievements and we also send out weekly parent bulletins.

Our policies are available on the Brooke Weston Trust website via a link from the TCA website so that parents are clear about our guidelines on areas such as safeguarding children, behaviour, attendance, classroom practice and admissions.

## Community

Community values and considerations are at the heart of our philosophy. We are focused on giving our students opportunities within the academy, the local community and wider world to help them become active citizens.

As a Brooke Weston Trust school we belong to a successful network of schools that strive for academic excellence.

Within the Trust successful practices are shared to ensure we are always at the forefront of educational development.

We are particularly fortunate to benefit from accessing the Trust's pioneering Teaching School to improve the quality of our teaching and learning.

## Our Governing Body

Our Governing Body, chaired by David Bailey, is dedicated to the success of the academy and works closely with staff and partner organisations to ensure the academy achieves its aims and objectives.



## CEIAG/Student Guidance

We offer expert independent careers advice, supporting all students through carefully planned and timely advice. The full time CEIAG advisor is in school to support students and through all stages of their decision making processes from KS3, KS4 and KS5.

Careful advice as well as high quality, bespoke work experience is provided to all students to help bridge the transition between the world of school and work.

## Industry

We have developed beneficial links with major national companies, such as Anglian Water, which provide our students with a context to their studies and underpin the importance of employability skills.

## Admissions

Thomas Clarkson Academy has been oversubscribed for the last three years.

We increased our Pupil Admission Number to 270 in 2020 but still remain heavily oversubscribed, receiving 10% more applications than available spaces in 2021.

**The academy will consider all applications for places and offers will be made on March 1st 2022.**

If there are fewer applications received than places, the academy will offer places to all those who have applied. If the academy again receives more applications than it has spaces, the oversubscription

Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct

OFSTED, 2020



The curriculum is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged

OFSTED, 2020

# Life @ TCA



## TCA's first Oxbridge student

2020 saw the first-ever student from TCA secure a place at an Oxbridge university. **Anna Ivaskevica** is reading English literature at the **University of Cambridge**, and is one of a number of students to gain places at Russell Group universities in the last few years.



## What our students say...

"If you're ever unsure about anything, ask people around you or ask your teachers because the teachers always want you to succeed."  
**GRACE**

"I have greatly enjoyed being a Year 7 student at TCA. I have enjoyed the opportunities to stretch myself and take part in interesting and enjoyable lessons. There are friendly, helpful teachers and adults to help whenever you need them."  
**SAM**

"TCA is a lovely school and it feels like a second home. There is a wide range of sports to do in PE."  
**LAUREN**

"The teachers are always available to ask for help. Student Services is great for supporting me with anything I need."  
**ELEINA**

"Friends are always there for you and to help you. There are lots of different sports to take part in both in and out of lessons."  
**MACKENZIE**

## Ofsted Good judgement: Community feedback

"Matches exactly with the experience that both my daughters had at the school. Well done TCA... well deserved."

"Excellent news for Wisbech and a massive thank you to all the hardworking staff and students whose achievement this is."

"This academy has transformed itself very much for the better. Well done all!"

"Well done, everyone's hard work has paid off. My daughter started there this year and I can't fault it."

"Many congratulations to everyone at TCA for their good Ofsted report. I am extremely pleased the school's hard work and commitment to all students has been recognised. I myself cannot praise the school enough for their hard work and support of my children at the school. Well done to you all – greatly deserved!"



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# The Brooke Weston Trust

Proven track record: 30 years of making a difference



## Thomas Clarkson Academy is a valued member of the Brooke Weston Trust

The mission of the Trust is 'to transform educational performance in the communities where we work, to improve student achievement by removing the barriers to learning and providing opportunities for personal development.'

Brooke Weston Trust was established in 2018 and is led by our CEO, Dr Andrew Campbell. BWT is a family of schools,

each with its own unique character. However, we all share a culture of high expectations and ambition for all – this is 'The BWT Way'.

Our schools, primary and secondary, are based in Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. As a family, we regularly collaborate with each other to drive towards providing the best educational

opportunities and life chances for our young people. This means that staff and students from across BWT work together to support each other, share best practice and try new ideas.

Over each academic year there are many opportunities for students from all our schools to meet, compete and celebrate success together.



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Aspire’ as we strive to  
transform the opportunities  
of young people in Wisbech ”

RICHARD SCOTT, 2020



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*A valued member of the*

**Brooke Weston Trust** 