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Tom Canning, Chief Executive Officer
The Boleyn Trust
Tollgate Primary School
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Dear Mr Canning

Summary evaluation of The Boleyn Trust

Following the summary evaluation of The Boleyn Trust (or 'the trust') in November 2022, when I was accompanied by David Radomsky and Nick Turvey, His Majesty's Inspectors, I am writing on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the findings.

Thank you for your cooperation during our visit to the trust on 28 to 30 November 2022. Please pass on our thanks to your staff and other stakeholders who kindly gave up their time to meet us.

The findings from the summary evaluation and a wider consideration of the trust's overall performance are set out below.

Summary of evidence gathering activities

For stage 1 of this summary evaluation, four schools were inspected between January and July 2022. All these inspections were carried out under either section 5 or 8 of the Education Act 2005 (the Act), as amended.

The inspection outcomes were:

- Two schools had their first graded inspection as a converter academy. Both of these schools were judged to be outstanding.
- One school continued to be good.
- One school continued to be good with evidence of improved performance.

Over the course of the on-site visit to the trust, discussions were held with you, the deputy chief executive officer/director of school improvement and the chief finance and operating officer. Other trust leaders and academy leaders joined discussions, including the director of the teaching school hub, the designated safeguarding leader and the director of secondary from the trust's School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT). We met with three representatives from the board of trustees, including the chair of the board. Discussions were also held with the external school improvement partner and the external quality assurance consultant. We visited four trust schools that had not been inspected during stage 1 of the summary evaluation process and one school that had been inspected during stage 1. In each of these schools, we met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, representatives from the local governing board and other staff. Inspectors also conducted remote meetings with academy leaders from three schools in the trust.

Context

The Boleyn Trust is a trust which serves eight primary schools. The schools are located in two London local authorities, Newham and Tower Hamlets. The trust was established in 2017. One school has joined the trust in the last 18 months. This is a converter academy that was transferred into the trust from The Tower Trust.

The trust's schools vary in size from just below 450 pupils in Tollgate Primary School to around 635 pupils in Shaftesbury Primary School.

Three of the schools have specialist resource provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Within the trust, there is an established teaching school hub offering strategic support to schools across London. The trust also runs the London District East SCITT.

The trust board is made up of eight trustees. This group is responsible for the strategic oversight and performance of the trust and its schools.

Main findings

Currently, the inspection outcomes for the trust's academies, including the most recent inspections, are as follows:

- Five of the eight schools in the trust are judged to be outstanding.
- Three schools are judged to be good.

- The most recent ungraded inspection of Rosetta Primary School found that the school remained good, but inspectors had evidence that the school may be improving. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.
- The trust's founding school, Tollgate Primary School, has recently been inspected since converting to academy status. The report has not yet been published. Its predecessor school was judged to be outstanding at its last inspection in March 2008.

Impact of the trust on its academies – governance and delegation

- The founding principles of the trust underpin its work. These include a commitment to life-long learning for all and a 'pursuit of excellence'. The principles are as relevant now as they were when the trust was established in 2017. Trust leaders are uncompromising in their ambition for their pupils and the communities they serve. Academy leaders and staff understand and subscribe to the trust's vision of excellent education for all.
- Trustees have rigorous systems to check schools' effectiveness and identify patterns and trends across the trust. Headteachers report their work and its impact to governors and trust leaders. These reports are validated through regular school reviews conducted by executive leaders and external partners. Newly appointed leaders can join these review visits to better understand their schools, and to develop their skills in monitoring and evaluation. Trustees have clearly defined 'trigger points' if a school is not performing at the expected high standard. The trust is quick to intervene.
- All schools are judged to be good or outstanding. The trust succeeds in driving improvements and maintaining high standards across all of its schools. Trust leaders share the expertise within trust schools to support schools outside of the trust.
- Local governors share the overarching aims, values and vision of the trust. They understand the connection between local governance and the trust board. Many local governing boards include a trustee who supports local governors and keeps trust leaders informed. Trustees have identified that further work is needed to improve the effectiveness of the local governing board in some schools.

Impact of the trust on its academies – leadership and management

- Trust leaders empower academy leaders to lead and manage their own schools. However, academy leaders are in no doubt about the high standards they are expected to uphold. Executive leaders hold academy leaders strongly to account for their school development plans. They are quick to identify and address any signs of complacency or schools in danger of underperforming.

Executive leaders put in targeted support for schools, such as enhanced leadership capacity, training or additional resources.

- The trust is strategic in their approach to recruitment, training and leadership succession planning. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the ongoing professional development and training opportunities they are offered. These include national leadership qualifications and opportunities to mentor trainee teachers. With new academies joining the trust and the trust's outreach work, many opportunities arise for career progression. This leads to high retention and ensures that there is leadership capacity to support joining schools.
- Early career teachers are well supported to manage their transition into the teaching profession and consider how they might develop professionally in the future. Similarly, support staff are identified to train as teachers or to support other school areas such as therapies and counselling.
- All staff reported that managing workload and well-being is a priority for trust leaders. 'Well-being days' are warmly welcomed by staff. Staff find the weekly trust newsletter, Heads Up, a good way of sharing what is working well and finding out about successful initiatives other schools have used.

Impact of the trust on its academies – curriculum and quality of education

- Academy leaders have the autonomy to develop a curriculum that suits their school. Trust leaders work with academy leaders to refine the curriculum in each school, ensuring that it aligns with the high expectations of the trust's 'root' curriculum. 'Non-negotiables' for each curriculum includes having suitably high ambitions and appropriate sequencing of content that builds on previous learning, covering the full national curriculum, and meeting the needs of all learners.
- Executive leaders work with a range of partners to review the quality of education in each school. They conduct regular reviews in each school. These are purposeful, tailored to each school and fit in with the ongoing cycle of monitoring and review.
- Network meetings across the trust provide a useful opportunity for leaders at different stages of their development to come together, share practice and act as critical friends. Subject leaders value the chance to develop their subject expertise and talk through research findings at these meetings. The headteachers' forum meets regularly to discuss curricular matters, such as ideas for improvement and piloting of new strategies. For many staff, these networks are the main benefit of working within the trust.
- Across the schools, there is an agreed focus on high attainment for all pupils. The trust has clear strategies for identifying pupils with SEND, assessing needs, planning for improvement and reviewing actions taken. The 'lowest

20% toolkit' gives guidance for how to make adaptations to teaching for the range of SEND and for pupils who need extra support.

Impact of the trust on its academies – Behaviour and Attitudes

- Academy leaders develop behaviour policies to reflect their school's context. Executive leaders quality assure these to ensure that they align with the trust's core values. It is a non-negotiable that each school has high expectations of behaviour and that classrooms are calm and orderly. The ethos of 'Five Cs' (care, courtesy, consideration, cooperation and commitment) provides a framework for setting expectations. A trust network for leaders overseeing behaviour is used to discuss complex cases and share best practice.
- The executive team monitors closely the effectiveness and implementation of each school's behaviour policy. For example, the termly safeguarding audit includes analysis of behaviour logs, checking that leaders have followed up and identified any patterns of behaviour.
- Each school has a team of pastoral staff to support and mentor pupils. Executive leaders carefully consider the use of alternative provision to support individual pupils. To date, there have been no permanent exclusions from any of the schools across the trust. The trust has a successful record of integrating managed moves from outside trust schools. This is an indication of high-quality behaviour support.
- Expectations for attendance are high. Attendance rates are gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels and leaders are doing what they can under challenging circumstances to ensure that pupils attend as regularly as they should. The attendance network meeting has been used to sharpen and refine specific school approaches where this is needed. For example, attendance meetings with parents have been modelled to leaders new in this role.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a priority in all schools. Each school has a well-trained team of safeguarding and welfare leaders who work collaboratively. This includes family support and attendance officers. Safeguarding policies are kept up to date with statutory guidance and they are written for each school to reflect their unique safeguarding context.

Executive leaders carry out detailed audits of the safeguarding arrangements in each school, including checks on the single central record. Governors and trustees fulfil their statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

Schools inspected at stage 1 were judged to have effective safeguarding with strengths in pupils' personal development. This reflects the trust's commitment to 'strong emotional and pastoral care for all young people' in their founding principles.

Staff help pupils to recognise unacceptable behaviour and different kinds of abuse through safeguarding summaries written specifically for children. In each school, pupils name three adults who they feel confident to talk to if they have any concerns.

Individual well-being support and supervision is in place for staff who deal with safeguarding, family support and SEND. Staff understand the whistle-blowing procedure, including raising concerns about senior leaders should they arise. Pre-recruitment procedures are robust.

Recommendations

- Trust leaders should continue to support local governing boards to understand fully their roles and responsibilities, particularly those governors who are new to the role.

Yours sincerely

Jude Wilson
His Majesty's Inspector

Annex: Academies that are part of the trust

School Information				Most recent inspection		
URN	School name	Local Authority	Date joined trust	Does the inspection relate to the school in its current form?	Inspection date	OE grade
144140	Ravenscroft Primary School	Newham	01/04/2017	No	19/11/2019	Good
143881	Tollgate Primary School	Newham	01/01/2017	No	19/03/2008	Outstanding
143882	Cleves Primary School	Newham	01/01/2017	No	19/10/2021	Outstanding
144699	The Clara Grant Primary School	Tower Hamlets	01/10/2021	No	02/03/2022	Good
145087	Rosetta Primary School	Newham	01/11/2017	Yes	26/01/2022	Good
145235	Monega Primary School	Newham	01/11/2017	Yes	25/01/2022	Outstanding
145627	Shaftesbury Primary School	Newham	01/04/2018	No	16/11/2021	Outstanding
145367	New City Primary School	Newham	01/04/2018	Yes	13/07/2022	Outstanding

*Schools highlighted received either a graded or ungraded inspection in stage 1 of the MAT SE