

## Merger of the Sherborne School group and Sherborne Girls group

The Governors of the [Sherborne School group](#) and [Sherborne Girls group](#) are delighted to announce that on 1 July 2024 the two charitable trusts that own the two senior schools and their associated schools will be formally merged into one charity called the Sherborne Schools Group.

In recent years Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls have been extending the scope of their collaboration to the benefit of pupils at both schools. The mergers with Sherborne Prep in 2021 and Hanford in 2023 have created further exciting opportunities for all four schools to work together. We believe that the most effective way of harnessing these additional opportunities is through the creation of a single, overarching governance structure to facilitate and support cooperation between the schools.

Whilst Sherborne School, Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep and Hanford will continue as discrete entities with their own names, identities and ethos, the merger will allow us most effectively to explore and harness many more exciting possibilities for pupils and staff to work together, share facilities and resources and leverage economies of scale. Through the creation of a strong, resilient and well-resourced group of schools, the Sherborne Schools Group will remain synonymous with the country's best schooling, representing a unique and exciting educational offering in the UK for girls and boys aged 3 to 19.

The Sherborne School group currently comprises Sherborne School, Sherborne Prep School and Sherborne International; and the Sherborne Girls group consists of Sherborne Girls and Hanford School. The merged Group will also include Sherborne Schools Worldwide, a joint venture set up by Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls in 2017 to establish Sherborne-branded schools around the world, as well as several wholly owned trading companies.

For many years Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls have benefitted from a close relationship, underpinned by shared values, a Christian foundation and a commitment to full-boarding. The schools' unique collaboration, marketed under the 'Separate yet Together' tagline, is distinctive and offers pupils all the advantages of a single-sex senior school education alongside many of the benefits of co-education.

Many families choose to send their sons to Sherborne School and daughters to Sherborne Girls recognising the logistical advantages of the schools' close partnership, as well as the educational benefits of the joint offering. In many cases, families also choose Sherborne Prep or Hanford for their children before they progress to one of the senior schools; however, both Sherborne Prep and Hanford will continue to prepare pupils for entry and scholarship to a wide range of senior schools.

Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls will remain committed to single-sex education in the classroom and boarding houses. Developing the successful 'Separate yet Together' offering



through even closer collaboration, pupils will benefit from additional academic enrichment, co-curricular, creative, pastoral, leadership and social opportunities. This will include greater sharing of educational resources, facilities and expertise; increased participation in joint UCAS/Higher Education and careers activity; joint trips, and coordinated sports and activities, clubs, societies and social programmes.

For Sherborne Prep and Hanford, the merger presents an opportunity for the schools to collaborate, share and learn from each other, as well as from the senior schools, and in so doing broaden and deepen the educational offering to the pupils and strengthen the futures of both schools. Where practical and beneficial, the schools will also share aspects of the Group's facilities and resources to enhance the pupils' educational experience.

As well as enriching the educational offering and experience for pupils, the merger will also help ensure the financial resilience of the schools. The larger, stronger, and more commercially competitive Group will harness the advantages of the schools working in a more coordinated and collaborative way to drive efficiencies and cost savings. This comes at a time when the external threats are well documented and the likelihood that independent schools will have to charge VAT on school fees compounds an already complicated financial picture.

Each school will remain committed to enhancing the educational opportunities for pupils in a warm, supportive environment, underpinned by a breadth of opportunity and exceptional pastoral care. The schools will remain on their current sites and retain control of their operations through their own Heads and Senior Management/Senior Leadership Teams. Matters of more strategic and Group wide significance will be determined by a newly formed Group Board of Governors comprised of an equal number of existing Governors from both senior school charities and led by an Executive Chair in conjunction with the Heads and a Chief Operating Officer. Recruitment for an Executive Chair is currently underway.

Chair of Governors at Sherborne School, David Leakey, commented, "Joining forces with the Sherborne Girls group reflects the schools' commitment to innovation and collaboration. It will allow for greater educational and financial agility and resilience, as well as create exciting opportunities for growth and development."

Louise Hall, Chair of Governors at Sherborne Girls, agreed, "We are incredibly lucky to be able to offer a much-valued single-sex education alongside our brother school, Sherborne School, thereby delivering the "best of both worlds" experience appreciated by parents and pupils alike. We look forward to building on this partnership further, along with Hanford and Sherborne Prep, to enrich our offering, pool knowledge and expertise, share resources and facilities and deliver efficiencies."

Dr Ruth Sullivan, Head of Sherborne Girls, and Dr Dominic Luckett, Headmaster of Sherborne School, speaking on behalf of their schools, added, "Coming together as the Sherborne Schools Group will ensure we continue to deliver the highest level of educational provision against a backdrop of each of the four schools' unique ethos. A combined strategic direction and economies of scale will also ensure we remain a compelling option in an increasingly competitive market."

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