



About Your New Headteacher: Mr Sloan

Many of you will already know me, of course, through my work as Deputy Headteacher and Lead DSL, having joined Stokenchurch in September 2024. Taking on the role of Acting Headteacher means a great deal to me, and I take the responsibility very seriously.

I want our community to know a little more about the person now leading the school: where I come from, the people who shaped me and the values I try to live by.

I grew up in Cookstown, Northern Ireland. The expectations in my family were very clear: work hard, tell the truth, treat people properly and always remember where you came from. Aim high without getting above yourself. Keep your head down and keep working. As my granny would say: "Don't lose the run of yourself."

My parents are my greatest role models. No two people have influenced me more, and I love and respect them more than I could adequately express in words.

My mum became a secondary school headteacher — the first woman to lead the school in its history of more than a century. My dad also spent his career in public service, holding senior management roles across the NHS and social care.

Through both of them, I learned what it means to take responsibility for other people: to turn up every single day, make difficult decisions, solve problems properly and care deeply about the people and communities you serve.

My parents also taught me always to look at myself first. When something has gone wrong, do not spend your time blaming other people or worrying about what they should have done. Ask what you could have done differently, take responsibility for your own part, learn from it and move forward. That lesson has never left me. I believe that habit is one of the surest ways to grow.

Sport was a major part of our family life. Both of my parents played field hockey internationally. My younger brother represented Great Britain in field hockey at two Olympic Games (Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo), and I played international hockey through to under-21 level.

Written down, that sounds like quite a collection of achievements. In our family, very little fuss is made about any of it. The focus has always been on the work: training, preparation, responding to criticism, recovering from disappointment and supporting the people around you.

Do not get too high when things go well or too low when they do not. Learn from it and carry on.

That outlook has stayed with me. Results matter. Most of life, however, is lived in the process that leads to them. There is real joy and satisfaction in working at something, improving, contributing to a team and doing a difficult job properly.

Success is worth enjoying; it should never carry you away. There is always more to learn and more work to do.

I began my career as a class teacher before moving through middle and senior leadership roles in schools in Marlow and Aylesbury. I hold a BSc, a PGCE, QTS and an MA in Education, as well as national professional qualifications in Senior Leadership and Leading Behaviour and Culture. I am currently completing the National Professional Qualification for Headship.

The relationship between school and home has always been especially important to me. I wrote my MA dissertation about relationships between parents, carers and teachers. Parents and carers know their children deeply; teachers see them learning, forming friendships and responding to challenges in a different setting. Both perspectives matter. Strong relationships allow people to speak honestly, listen carefully and work through difficult moments together.

I am a straightforward person. I like things to be clear, organised and done properly. I believe in hard work, honesty, consistency and taking responsibility. I value substance over style.

I love working in education. A child gets one experience of primary school, and those years cannot be given back. We therefore have an enormously important job.

I see education as public service: using our knowledge, judgement and effort in service of children, families and the wider community. Schools are part of the communities they serve. They should be places in which people feel welcome, valued and proud to belong.

Outside school, family remains at the centre of my life. I am an extremely proud uncle, and my nephew and niece mean the world to me. I am a sports fanatic and I love music, film and reading. I love travelling and skiing, although I do not get to do either as often as I would like. I remain proudly Northern Irish, proudly British, and proud now to live and work in Buckinghamshire, England.

Stokenchurch has a great deal to be proud of, alongside areas where we must continue to improve. I will be honest about both.

When things go well, we will enjoy them and then get back to work. When something is difficult, we will keep it in perspective, learn from it and carry on. We will not get carried away by success or defeated by setbacks.

I want our children to believe in themselves, treat people properly and feel proud of their school and community. I want staff to know that their work is valued and families to know that we will listen, act and take our responsibilities seriously.

My promise for this year is simple: I will work hard, try my best and give absolutely everything I have to this school. I will always remember that I am here to serve our children, families, staff and community.

Mr Sloan

Mr Stephen Sloan
Acting Headteacher & Lead DSL
Stokenchurch Primary School and Nursery

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