

The King's School, Grantham

An Outline History



3. Pre-1600

Originally the school was called Grantham Free Grammar School. In the earliest days the principle purpose of education was to prepare youths for the Priesthood or the Law and that meant learning Latin, Greek and, perhaps, Hebrew. Pupils would have learnt to read and write before arriving at the school.

The known Masters of the 16th century were:

Walter Pigot was Master from 1329 to at least 1335
Memorial Rolls of 1347 name a Thomas as Master

Other Masters of the sixteenth century were:

1532 to 1534 Richard Queen (or Quyen) the Curteis Chantry Priest

1534 to 1537 Gervase Tyndale

[all before 1547 were probably Chantry Priests]

1549 to 1552 Leonard Vanderworthe

1561 to 1565 Thomas Larke

1565 to ? Matthew Maperley

1580 to 1586 Francis Somersall with James Hanson as Usher

1594 to 1604 W.Tawes

We know of very few scholars of the sixteenth century. No doubt, the local businessmen would have sent their sons to the school, many as Petits, but no records have been found.

The following were known to be scholars at the school:

William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, in about 1530, before moving to Stamford. He attained high State office in Elizabeth's reign.

Ralph Robinson who was a school friend of William Cecil. He translated Thomas More's Utopia

John Still son of William Still and at school in the mid-1550s. In 1570 he was appointed Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University and became Vice-Chancellor in 1592. Later that year he was elevated to Bishop of Bath and Wells. He died in 1608.

More is known about the Masters:

Richard Queen graduated from Oxford University in 1511. He was the Rector of South Stoke in 1550.

Gervase Tyndale graduated from Oxford University in 1529/30. In all probability he was related to William Tyndale, the first translator into English of the New Testament. He left Grantham in 1537 and was appointed Head Master of Eton College in 1543.

Leonard Vanderworthe described as the Master of the Grantham School in the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1549, 1551 and 1552. He was said to be of Dutch origin.

Thomas Larke became Master and Vicar of Branston in Leicestershire in 1561. The Grantham church register names his three children as George, Gervise and Augnes.

Matthew Maperley was Rector of a Northants parish in 1578 and died in 1592.

Francis Somersall (or Somerscale) was the centre of controversy. Some townfolk thought he was unlearned and "of evil life". A leading member of the Grantham community, Arthur Hall, defended him and wrote to Lord Burghley saying out of malice some townsmen had erected another School. The Alderman tried to dismiss him but no evidence of his dismissal by the Bishop has been found in the Ecclesiastical records.

W.Tawes saw the school through to the 17th century.