

Leo Bruce

I left St. Thomas More in 2020 after spending seven happy years there completing both my GCSEs and A-Levels, and helping shape me into the person I am today. Ever since being a young boy, I've always been crazy about aviation and have always had the ambition to one day work in the industry that I'm so passionate about. Unfortunately, the final year at STM was cut short due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and not only did this effect all of our lives, but the aviation industry was one of the hardest hit sectors.

Faced with an industry which was tainted in unpredictability, I took the decision to wait and instead further my education. I went to the University of East Anglia from 2020 to 2023 to study BSc Environmental Sciences, and whilst not exactly related to my dream of aviation, it was a degree composed of my favourite subjects at STM, Geography and Geology. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at university, I met so many great friends and had a fantastic experience and I graduated with a 2:1 in 2023.



Control Assistant at Southend Airport. Over the next two years, I became fully qualified in the assistant position, supporting the Air Traffic Controllers and gaining vast amounts of experience in the environment. I was able to go away on a course with the Met Office to become an accredited aviation weather observer as a part of my role.

After two years, was extremely fortunate to be selected in my unit to go on and train to become an Air Traffic Controller. This involved an intensive six-month course based in Gloucester, learning all the regulations and rules in UK and European Air Traffic Control. After several exams and classroom-

PROFILE:

NAME: Leo Bruce

JOB: Air Traffic Controller at London Southend Airport

SUBJECTS studied at A LEVEL: Geography, Geology and History

What next? University of East Anglia, BSc Environmental Science

YEAR left STM: 2020

Towards the end of my degree, the aviation industry was once again on the up and recovering from the pandemic. An Air Traffic Control position opened at London Southend Airport, and I was determined to get it! I remember visiting the control tower as a part of the selection process, and the moment I got to the top and saw the control room, I was in awe and knew that this was the career for me.

Just a couple months after graduating, I was over the moon to be offered the role as an Air Traffic

based learning, we then got to be able to do it for 'real' albeit start training to control traffic on state-of-the-art simulators. I passed my Aerodrome Control Instrument course in June 2025, enabling me to return to Southend and start controlling aircraft for real!

Since then, I have been a Trainee Air Traffic Controller for the tower (ADI) environment, meaning I am responsible for all vehicles and aircraft manoeuvring on the airport's taxiways and runway, any aircraft flying in the vicinity of the airport and all aircraft landing and taking off. It is a surreal

experience, and an enormous amount of responsibility which we are trained for from day one and I love every minute. At the time of writing, I have nearly completed all my training after hundreds of hours with an instructor helping me get to the stage where I can gain my personal licence and be on



my own. Whether I'm controlling a small Cessna for someone learning to fly, or a big EasyJet taking people away on their holidays, I still pinch myself that I am able to do such an amazing career.

I still fondly look back to my years at STM which undoubtedly helped me become the person I am today, and gave me so many qualities which I take in daily life.

Quote I live by: "Everything will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end."

