



Oxford Diocesan
BUCKS SCHOOLS TRUST

Our School Improvement Offer

Empowering our unique schools together



OXFORD DIOCESAN BUCKS SCHOOLS TRUST

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Be part of an exciting and growing MAT.

Be part of a family of schools growing into a community of schools.

OUR ODBST SHARED SERVICES OFFER FOR YOU

The ODBST provides a range of high-quality services to support schools and help them to provide the best learning environment for their pupils. The service also ensures all schools achieve efficiency improvements and cost savings. These shared services are available for all schools in the ODBST and are also offered to other schools and Trusts who need additional support or guidance.

The ODBST Shared Services are those services and functions of the Trust that are not contained within a school budget and are not the responsibility of a school headteacher and/or governing body, including:

- Functions and services required for the ODBST to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.
- Core shared services that the Board of Trustees has decided need to be consistent across the ODBST, or are only done effectively as a single or trust-provided service.
- Trust-wide shared services that schools and the Board of Trustees have agreed collectively should be used by all ODBST schools and/or provided centrally.
- Functions and services provided by and through the ODBST Shared Service to one or more ODBST schools.
- Functions and services offered by and through the Trust Shared Service on a traded basis to schools outside the ODBST.

The Shared Services team consists of experts including school improvement, finance, human resources, estates, health and safety, clerking, and pupil support services. The team evolves to meet the needs of the ODBST's corporate responsibilities and of our unique schools.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sulina Piesse".

Sulina Piesse, Chief Executive Officer



OUR ODBST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICE FOR YOU

A tailored approach to continuous improvement: we strive for all our schools to be the best that they can be and know that our children lie at the heart of what we do and how we work.

The School Improvement Team, led by the Director of Education, is made up of a core team of Challenge Partners who are all experienced and successful former headteachers who have experience within both primary and secondary settings. The team holds expertise around SEND, PP, and behaviour management as well as work around our more able pupils and SIAMS expertise. There is a close relationship between the School Improvement Team and our schools and local governing bodies.

Strategic safeguarding work is carried out with all schools to ensure they are not only compliant but that the right resources and the right training is in place to support our Safeguarding leaders. Safeguarding supervision forms part of our offer to schools.

The agreed work pattern for schools in the Trust consists of core visits to each of our schools. The visits have areas of focus agreed with the Headteacher of the school and the Challenge Partner and align directly with each individual school improvement plan and its links to the core Trust plan. This ensures visits have a more bespoke nature and are tailored to the needs of the school whilst working within our wider framework of development and improvement.

All schools are internally evaluated during the annual visit cycle. This allows our School Improvement Team and school leaders to engage in discussion regarding where the school's performance is currently in terms of pupil outcomes, quality of education, safeguarding, and leadership and governance. This ensures plans to address areas for development are robust. Our LGBs are encouraged to also be part of this process and the subsequent monitoring. We also engage with external partners to ensure that our schools and our shared service team have judgements which are externally validated.

We facilitate peer working and collaboration between school leaders within our Trust as well as with our external links. Our Headteachers are guided and encouraged to take on specific pieces of work, determine their own development and undertake monitoring, and moderation activities.

As schools come into an OFSTED or SIAMS window, we provide extra support for our school leaders. There is no single approach, but we ensure that everyone is well prepared and supported by giving additional time to schools; no ODBST school has to go through external processes feeling alone.

Our whole process is underpinned by a carefully planned, meaningful offer of CPD for all of our schools, CPD which is responsive to school and Trust need and personalised to our schools accordingly.

Bromcom, our trust wide MIS system is used by our schools, supporting analysis, and sharing of pupil attendance, progress, and attainment data. It is used widely by schools nationally, from Early Years to the end of Key Stage 5. It includes complete support for the National Curriculum subjects. This system allows teachers, leaders, LGB governors and the shared services team access to data at a range of levels and enables secure and efficient data management.



SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS:

We operate a graded system of support for our schools so that we can channel the right resources to the right places. We seek to intervene early if there is variance in performance so that our schools remain strong and purposeful places to learn.

We have an additional package for our sponsored schools, indicated as red, which is supported by additional funding. Work is planned for carefully; visits are more regular and targets set are over shorter timeframes.

School Category	OFSTED	SIAMS	Performance in relation to National Benchmarks	QA Trust visits	Intelligence gained from the wider SST
Purple	1 or 2	1	Very strong and consistently above national	No real issues; moving forward and self-challenging.	No real issues
Green	2	1	In line with or slightly above national	Minor issues or developments that are school led.	Minor issues that are school led
Amber	2 or 3	1	Variable and/or Declining	Some issues that require more focussed support; more time and resources are given to the school.	Some issues that require more focussed support
Red	3 or 4	2	Performance is too often below national.	Significant issues that require intensive support. SDP is led by the Director of Education.	Significant issues that require intervention and support

CPD OUR CORE BUSINESS: TEACHING AND LEARNING

We offer a wide and extensive CPD programme to develop learning in our schools and for our school leaders. Our CPD programme seeks to inform and to train everyone. It provides opportunity to share good practice, to find out from others, to develop confidence and to meet with like-minded colleagues so that our Trust is an exciting place of learning for everyone.

CPD is delivered by our School Improvement Team, by external facilitators and by school staff from across the Trust. Training is offered to all members of the ODBST and is personalised to meet the needs of our schools.

An example of our offer includes:

- Annual leadership conference
- Bespoke meetings for Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, SENDCos, PP leads and behaviour leads
- Secondment Opportunities in other Trust schools to broaden experience
- Governance training programme
- Data management
- Termly Subject leader meetings
- Training for aspirant leaders wanting to develop their leadership styles
- ECT group
- Behaviour training
- Safeguarding including CPD, support groups and strategic mentoring
- OFSTED/SIAMS updates and prep
- Bespoke CPD for schools and LGBs



DEVELOPING TEACHING THROUGH INNOVATION AND RESEARCH

We are proud of the initiatives we have put in place in our schools already and encourage our leaders to be brave and to be bold. Our School Improvement Team and our school leaders are well researched professionals who come together to share ideas and to work through their successful implementation. We have already worked through projects around Character Education, Overcoming Disadvantage, Assessment post SATS and Sustainability through the Green Curriculum. We know that innovation develops and excites our teams so that our schools remain invigorating places to be without compromising workload or well-being. Initiatives are well researched, considered and managed competently.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. How many schools are in the Trust?

Currently there are 13 schools in the ODBST.

2. Of these, how many are requires improvement category schools and how many are good or outstanding?

All of our schools that came into the Trust as Good schools remain as at least Good schools with many displaying Outstanding features. We have taken one school in as a sponsored academy in 2019 and it is now a Good strong school. The Downley joined the ODBST as a sponsored school as it was graded as an inadequate school in 2022. The school joined the ODBST on 1st September 2023. Chenies school was graded as requires improvement in their 2022 inspection and joined the Trust in December 2023.

3. What difference has the ODBST made to the schools within it?

There are various measures and metrics that could be used, although their validity varies. If looking at Ofsted, our schools which have all been inspected over the last 18 months have all remained good schools with specific reference given to the contribution the ODBST team has made to their effectiveness.

Evidence suggests we have positive impact on the quality of education, assessment and tracking of pupils' outcomes; challenge and support cycles; governance, including LGB training, HR services, safeguarding support, well-being initiatives, and leadership development at all levels.

4. Is the ODBST's focus to maintain good and outstanding schools or to bring up failing schools?

The ODBST is a trust open to all schools and we do not nor will the DfE allow us to cherry pick specific grades of schools. We have had a run of good schools join us, but this has given us the capacity to extend the offer of support and a possible home to schools causing concern such as with The Downley. This is important given our Christian foundation and, also serves to give our leaders and managers the opportunities of providing system leadership in other schools – which is a key driver for schools who wish to be rated as outstanding.

5. Who makes decisions regarding the Curriculum?

The devolution of decisions and accountability is set out in our scheme of delegation. The curriculum is a delegated responsibility to Local Governing Bodies with final approval from the Director of Education. The ODBST produces an overarching curriculum statement and provides guidance on areas where trustees need to remind LGBs of their statutory responsibility – i.e., sex and relationships education. In setting out these guidance/policy statements the directors do not seek to dictate the content of the curriculum or what is taught. Officers will monitor LGB decisions on the curriculum through their visits and final approval is given by the Director of Education.

Academies are able to offer a more flexible curriculum, but they are required to provide a 'balanced and broadly based curriculum'. The teaching of English, Maths, and Science would, of course, remain central and as a church school RE would be important. The teachers and governors will work with the ODBST to implement the curriculum to best meet the needs of its pupils using the freedoms available to it.

6. What would happen to SEND provision?

We would continue to provide the same support for pupils with an ECHP and for those in receipt of SEND top up funding and indeed the funding for this element continues to be provided by the Local Authority. The Local Authority retains its responsibility for statutory duties, obligations and procedures remain in place when a school converts to academy status.



7. How does the ODBST monitor standards and on what evidence are judgements made?

We use the Ofsted handbook to judge pupil outcomes and Ofsted processes to ensure that this is backed up by the work and teaching seen in school. We use a central tracking system in our schools to ensure that our training and CPD for teachers, leaders and support staff has a common vocabulary and we support leaders and governors in their vital role of holding the school to account for the progress pupils make. The DfE uses end of key stage assessment outcomes to measure and hold to account Trustees for the outcomes of their schools and we would expect governors to similarly understand the information in Raise Online and understand how it may be reflected in judgements made on the overall effectiveness of the school. The ODBST will have ultimate accountability for the performance of each school, not the LGB, although robust monitoring and support will be expected from everyone involved.



Thank you for your interest in the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust

