



Oxford Diocesan
BUCKS SCHOOLS TRUST

Governance 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.

Sulina Piesse, Chief Executive Officer



OUR ODBST GOVERNANCE SERVICES FOR YOU

A tailored approach for our schools.

Our commitment to effective local governance is exemplified by our provision of support for our LGBs. We seek to develop and support effective, knowledgeable, and well-trained LGB governors through:

- a range of shared services support for Chairs and Clerks, including Forums for LGB Chairs with the link Trustees, the ODBST'S Governance Professional and a regular Clerks' Forum
- appropriate training for LGB governors some of which is provided by ODBE
- bespoke whole LGB training
- strategic briefings for Chairs and Clerks
- induction sessions for new LGB members

Our Governance Professional provides support in a number of ways:

- support for the appointment process for all LGB governors to ODBST schools
- telephone and email access to advice
- briefings on relevant statutory changes
- resource materials and model documents
- development and delivery of the governance training and events programme
- training resources and support materials
- support for independent review panels, disciplinary, capability or grievance hearings, statutory and other checks and reports

ODBST schools benefit from our link with ODBE. The ODBE Development, Training and Support (DTS) Programme is a modular programme for LGB support and complements the ODBST programme of governance training and events [Oxford Diocesan Board of Education | For Governors \(odbe.org.uk\)](https://www.odbe.org.uk/)

We also offer bespoke sessions through the shared services team according to need and demand as identified through LGBs skills' analysis/ requests (e.g. exclusions, induction for new LGB governors, induction for clerks). Further details can be found on GovernorHub.

All ODBST schools get a subsidised subscription to GovernorHub, including an online service designed to help governing bodies run efficiently. It helps Trustees, LGB members and Clerks to communicate and store documents, membership details, meeting schedules and other information in one secure and accessible place. It also brings together the key things that the LGB needs in a General Data Protection Regulation-compliant system, for instance:

- education news locally and from around the country
- a private area for LGBs to exchange messages and emails
- tools for clerks to manage membership, roles, committees and organise meetings quickly and easily

Governor Hub also gives LGB members access to:

- news and information from ODBST
- answers to most commonly asked questions
- standard documents, model policies and guidance documents from the Trust

Training and support in the operation and use of Governor Hub can be provided, however the system itself provides lots of different on-line hints, tips, and videos, which are easy to find and very helpful.

Subscribing ODBST schools can benefit from membership of the National Governance Association (NGA). Included in the membership is:

- NGA Guides at a discounted rate
- Governing Matters magazine



OUR ODBST GOVERNANCE SERVICES TO YOU Continued.

- access to members-only content in the online Knowledge Centre containing a wealth of governance resources
- free places at NGA conferences and events
- access to NGA's webinar and podcast series
- access to the Learning Link e-learning package, offering a mix of short, bitesize sessions and longer in-depth sessions aligned to the Knowledge Centre

LGB clerks or School Business Managers will be the point of contact for NGA Membership in participating schools.

ODBST is committed to high levels of delegation to its LGBs and seeks to provide a comprehensive support programme for them in respect of statutory and other policies.

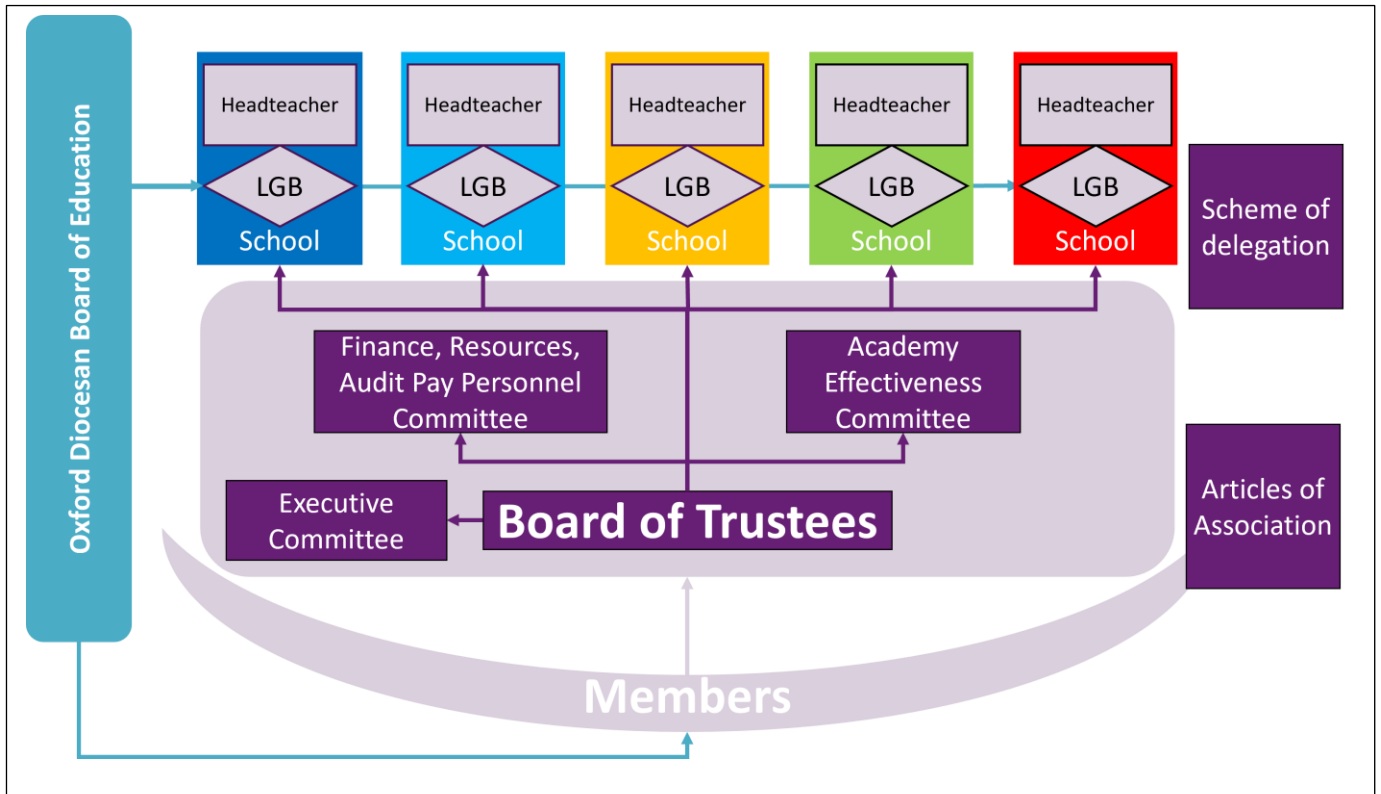
Whilst it is both appropriate and expedient to provide Trust-wide policies on certain issues which do not therefore require LGB input, we are keen to support decision-making at a local level whenever it is possible to do so. To enable this, we have produced a series of policy guidance materials designed to assist Headteachers and LGBs to formulate accurate, compliant policies which identify and respond to local needs and circumstances.

The different levels of policy are outlined below, and which body is therefore responsible for them.

Level 1	ODBST Trust Statutory Policy ALL Schools require this policy with no changes allowed to core text. No changes are necessary to personalise this with school name and branding, as this is a Trust level policy for use, without change, by all schools. LGBs will note adoption in LGB meetings. Review will take place at Trust level, and schools will be notified of updates and review dates as necessary.
Level 2	ODBST Statutory Policy ALL Schools require this policy, which may be adapted to suit local requirements and schools may add their own branding. LGBs will note adoption of this locally adapted policy in LGB meetings. Review will take place at Trust level, and schools will be notified of updates and review dates as necessary.



OUR GOVERNANCE MODEL



OUR STATUTORY DUTIES

We will support you in your statutory governance functions of:

- Ensuring **clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**
- Holding leaders to account for the **educational performance** of the and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- Overseeing the **financial performance** of the school and making sure its money is well spent



At a local governance level, depending on needs, support may come from:

- **Head of Governance**, for strategic governance functions, governor recruitment support, meeting planning, governor training, support with the paperwork and templates surrounding the monitoring work of local governors
- At an operational level, with support for leadership and management, support will come from school **Challenge Partners**



DEVELOPING GOVERNORS

ODBST is very keen to support and develop its governors. We offer a termly calendar of governor training, which can be booked free of charge via our website. This is delivered between the Head of Governance and the Director of Education, according to the focus of the training. All sessions are online (usually Teams) and we hold this in the early evening, so that governors can fit training around working/family life. Examples of our training offer for governors are:

- Termly New Governor Induction Training
- Suspensions and Exclusions training
- Ofsted updates
- Monitoring the school
- Termly Safeguarding Forum
- Safer Recruitment
- Headteacher performance Management

In addition to this, we offer bespoke training for your LGB, if you let us know what you need.

Additionally, when you join the ODBST, our Head of Governance will work closely with your Chair and LGB to offer training and support on the structure of local governance in the Trust, and will outline the Trust templates and resources we provide to help with agenda planning and the administration of your meetings, support for governor monitoring and how to access the wide range of governance support materials we have available.



GOVERNANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What are the expected changes to the Governing Body?

The ODBST has a central board of Trustees, appointed by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, which is responsible to the Secretary of State for overall standards for each school in the ODBST and for maintaining a strategic oversight of the Trust. The school's Local Governing Body, which is a committee of the Trust, will also be established which will be responsible for the day-to-day operational matters, and accountable to the board of Trustees. This relationship is explained in detail with the Trust's extensive Scheme of delegation.

Recruiting and retaining governors with key skills and experience remains a key task for all schools and the ODBST are committed to supporting governors in their role.

2. What will happen to local links and partnerships that we already have?

These will continue. By joining the ODBST it does not preclude schools from being part of local partnerships which are for the benefit of the school.

3. What will our governing body delegated powers and functions consist of?

It would be called a Local Governing Body (LGB) and its delegated powers are set out in what is known as a scheme of delegation. Although the ODBST is accountable for the success of your school, we are committed to delegating powers back to local schools so that they maintain their individuality. The Scheme of Delegation is available for schools to consider in this pack.

4. If we were to be part of the ODBST would the Trust have the final say in everything that Governor's decide?

No, it doesn't necessarily work like that; the scheme of delegation captures the general principles and in many important aspects of school governance, everything stays the same but with different terminology. There will be some areas where the ODBST would be directly involved - e.g., in Headteacher recruitment- and there could conceivably be some scenarios, such as in finance or school improvement, where the ODBST would make a final decision on the basis that the underlying accountability for the school lies with the ODBST and the LGB has failed to demonstrate its effectiveness. Whilst such a scenario hasn't arisen to date, we would always seek to discuss matters firstly with the local governing body.

5. What support is there for schools who are recruiting governors?

The usual sources/pools are explored and there is also support from the ODBST to recruit suitable governors.



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

