



# SPRING 2025 ODBST NEWSLETTER



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## WELCOME FROM THE CEO



Dear Staff, Governors, Pupils, and Families,

As we embrace the season of Easter, we are reminded of the hope, renewal, and joy that this time brings. Easter is a celebration of new life, and a moment to reflect on the resurrection of Christ and the blessings we share as a community.

This term has been filled with many positive moments, and we are excited to share them with you in our Spring newsletter. It has truly been a season of growth, marked by remarkable achievements across the board. Each success, whether personal or collective, reflects the dedication and hard work of both our pupils and staff.

We have seen inspiring sporting victories that highlight the talent, determination, and teamwork of our pupils. The creative energy was also on full display with the dressing up and reenacting of historical events, providing our pupils with a hands-on way to learn and connect with history. World Book Day was another highlight, where our pupils showcased their love for reading through imaginative costumes and engaging activities, fostering a sense of community and sparking creativity. Our commitment to sustainability has also continued to be a central theme this term. Our collective drive to save our planet through eco-friendly strategies, empowering our students to actively participate in protecting the environment has been evident. I would like to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributes to the success of our schools.

Our staff's dedication goes beyond just academics; they foster an environment where pupils grow in character, faith, and resilience. Their tireless efforts make a lasting impact on every pupil. I also extend our thanks to our governors and trustees for their invaluable guidance and support. Their leadership ensures we stay on track with our shared mission to provide the best education possible, and we are deeply appreciative of their time and expertise.

To our wonderful pupils, your enthusiasm, curiosity, and resilience continue to shine brightly.



We are incredibly proud of the progress you have made this term. A special mention to our Year 6 pupils as you prepare for your SATs in May. We know this is an important moment, and we believe in your unique abilities. Take time to relax and recharge over Easter, knowing we are all cheering you on. Approach any challenges with confidence, and trust that your hard work will shine through. We are excited to see all that you will continue to accomplish.

Finally, to our families, thank you for your ongoing support. Your partnership is crucial to the success of our pupils, and we are grateful for the role you play in helping them thrive.

As we head into the Easter break, I hope it will be a time of reflection, rest, and renewal for you all. May you experience peace and joy in the days ahead, and we look forward to continuing our journey together in the next term.

**“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die.”** – John 11:25

Wishing you all a very blessed and joyful Easter.

With warm regards,

*Mrs Piesse*

Chief Executive Officer, the ODBST

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**Empowering our unique schools  
to excel together**

If you would like to find out more about our Trust you can watch our short promotional video.

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## Meet our Trustees



### Introducing our new Trustee Sophie Hill.

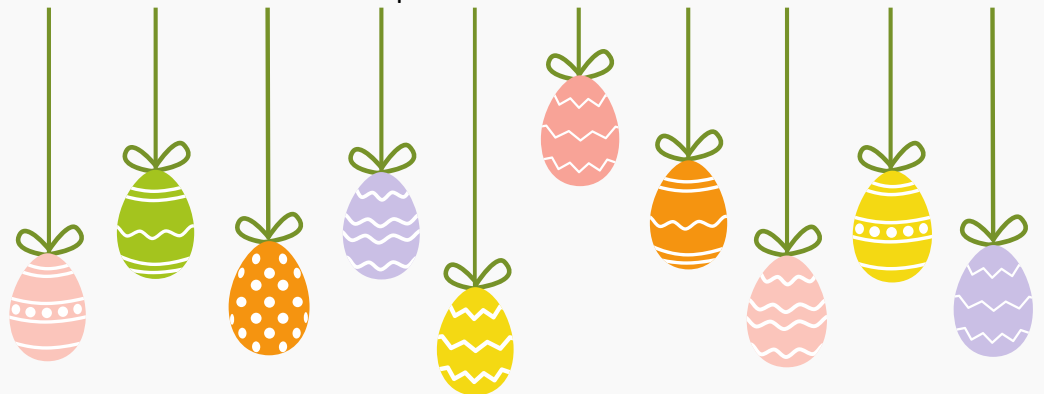
Thank you all for the very warm welcome to the Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust (ODBST) trust board, I'm excited to be joining the team.

I live in Oxfordshire and have two children - it was becoming a parent that sparked my passion for education. Since then I have dedicated over 13 years to both working and volunteering in the

education sector. My governance experience includes serving as a trustee for a multi-academy trust in Northamptonshire, as well as roles including Chair of Trustees for a Pre-School charity and Chair of Governors for a maintained primary school. These experiences have given me important insights into the challenges and opportunities within the education landscape.

Professionally, I have also been committed to education. Over the past 8 years, I have held commercial and operational leadership roles within the 'Edtech' sector, working with organisations such as Pearson Edexcel, SIMS, and Bromcom, where I focused on business strategy and growth. Currently, I work for a consultancy that supports multi-academy trusts in optimising their operations - the 'business' side of running trusts.

I'm really looking forward to visiting the trust's schools and collaborating with fellow trustees and staff. It's an exciting opportunity to contribute to the continued success and development of ODBST.




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## What has been happening at Chenies this term?

We have had an amazing Spring Term and have welcomed both new families to the school and new Governors.



Our celebrations have included NSPCC's Number Day, World Book Day, and Electric Umbrella's No Such Thing As Normal Day. Each event brought its own unique charm and excitement to our community. NSPCC's Number Day was a fantastic opportunity for the children to engage with mathematics in a fun and interactive way, fostering a love for numbers and problem-solving. World Book Day was a wonderful celebration of reading and storytelling, with children dressing up as their favourite book characters and sharing their favourite stories with their peers. It was amazing to see Electric Umbrella get the golden buzzer on Britain's Got Talent last weekend, a testament to their exceptional talent and the impact they have had.

We have had a number of visitors to the school, enriching our pupils' learning experiences. Charles MacLeod Matthew, an alumnus of Chenies School and representative of Chenies Manor, spoke to our Key Stage 1 children, captivating them with stories of local history and heritage. The Iver Environment Centre provided an engaging talk about the evolution of plants over the centuries, sparking curiosity and wonder among the children. Artist Hannah Gibson inspired creativity with her art workshops, and Image Musical Theatre delighted everyone with their lively production of The Jungle Book.



Year 1 to 6 had the opportunity to attend a screening of the film The Wild Robot, thanks to the Into Film team. This was a welcome break in the middle of assessment week, offering the children a chance to relax and enjoy a captivating story.

Monet (Key Stage 1) class went on a winter walk and had a wonderfully sunny trip to Odds Farm, where they learned about farm animals and enjoyed outdoor activities. Our Key Stage 2 Hockney class (Year 3/4) had a very educational trip to the Tring Natural History Museum and our Hepworth class (Year 5/6) had a fantastic day out at the Hindu temple, Bhaktivedanta Manor.

We are really looking forward to our Summer term with Earth Day, the ODBST ECO Conference, Freshwater Workshops, InConcert, a combined Chiltern schools Bucks Music Trust event, Chesham Carnival, Hepworth Residential, Sports Day, Key Stage 2 Production and much more!

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## What has been happening at Chesham Bois this term?

As part of our Book Week celebrations, the children in Year 6 took part in the 'balloon challenge'. They represented groups of characters from 'Alice in Wonderland', 'Percy Jackson', 'Three Little Pigs', 'Wizard of Oz' and Charlie and the 'Chocolate Factory' and performed to an audience of Chesham Bois School Children, staff and a panel of judges. The balloon challenge begins when the characters go on holiday to Storyland. A volcano erupts, forcing them to evacuate in five hot air balloons. Birds attack and damage the balloons, but the characters scare them away.



They spot a small island that only one balloon can land on safely. Each book group must then convince the judges why they deserve to land on the island. Some bribes were passed to the VVIPs, to help with their decisions! The winners were announced after a short break and the other groups had to jump into the shark-infested waters. The winning group was 'Wizard of Oz'.

Chesham Bois also participated in Prayer Day based activities to help us develop our understanding of spirituality. For the first activity, with a theme of windows, we were given natural items like flowers, pebbles, twigs. We used these in groups crafting an image of something God created that you would see when you look through a window. We found this activity calming but challenging as you had to think about the placement and sizing of the natural objects. The second activity, with a theme of mirrors, made us look at ourselves in a mirror and reflect on what makes you you. We had to draw ourselves and then think about words that would describe who we are. The third activity, with a theme of doors, encouraged us to open a door to the world around us. We reflected on different charities and wrote down a prayer and wish for others working for the charities and for ourselves. We then put these wishes in a treasure box and decorated it. It was a wonderful way to reflect, create, and connect with both ourselves and the world.

The Chesham Bois penalty shootout team put in a fantastic performance on Saturday at Chesham United. In front of a large crowd, the team did not put a foot wrong. They were confident and knew exactly what to do. The Hawridge and Cholesbury goalkeeper tried his best, but he only managed to save one penalty. We ended up winning 4-1! Player of the shootout had to be our captain and goalkeeper Alfie. Alfie was immense, showing lots of tenacity and resilience in never giving up. His performance was so good it was noticed by the St Albans fans behind his goal who were getting upset that he wouldn't let the opposition score; in true pantomime fashion Alfie made sure he let them know who was winning! Well done to all of the players, Gavin, Quinn, Dylan, Daniel, David and Alfie; you represented the school amazingly.



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## What has been happening at Christ the Sower this term?

We are thrilled to announce that CtS has been specially selected to participate in a prestigious #STEM project with The British Council and Formula One! Along with a select group of schools across the UK, we will be collaborating with partner schools in South Africa to tackle and solve problems using STEM. Recently, Mrs. Palfreyman and Miss Nugent took Year 4 on an inspiring tour around key locations in Milton Keynes, showcasing how technology is transforming lives and industries. These experiences will be shared with our STEM partner school in Johannesburg to give them a glimpse into life in our incredible city. You can watch the video we created from these clips by clicking on the adjacent image.



During our exploration of Grange Farm, we identified a local issue: overflowing recycling bins that are not being emptied regularly. This results in rubbish spilling onto the ground, affecting wildlife and contaminating waterways. To address this, we are excited to announce that Year 4 will be coding a solution using light sensors, micro: bits, and Raspberry Pi's.

This term, we celebrated British Science Week in a BIG way with the theme "Adapt and Change." Year 6 immersed themselves in their activities by playing a memory game to explore how different antibodies and antigens bind together. They also participated in a live lesson about space and designed posters for the competition, following the theme of "Change and Adaptation." One Year 6 student exclaimed, "The live lesson was amazing - seeing and hearing people speak from space was out of this world! Literally!"

Year 1 conducted a science experiment observing what happens when food colouring mixes with dish soap. They also rounded off the week by looking at how animals in different habitats adapt to their environment. Working in small groups, they created new animals with adapted features for their chosen habitats and presented their creations to the class.



Our Daisy children had a fantastic time exploring sensory chocolate mud and finding out about some of its interesting properties and Year 2 shared some "wow moment" experiments. They watched raisins dance in sparkling water, a phenomenon caused by gas from the water attaching to the raisins and making them lift. They also made milk and food colouring move by touching them with washing-up liquid, demonstrating how soap breaks down fat molecules.


Year 4 investigated the viscosity of liquids. They thought carefully about variables and the importance of accuracy in an investigation before carrying out our fair test. Which did we think had a higher viscosity - honey or oil? Well, let's just say we were surprised by the results – which is, after all – just good science work! A big thank you to Mrs. Wilson Andoh for leading us in this aspirational week and inspiring our future scientists!

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## What has been happening at Curzon this term?

Our Key Stage 1 classes have enjoyed visiting their local library this term and learning how the books are classified. Our World Book Day was a huge success with children choosing to share a range of books. Children and staff thoroughly enjoyed wearing their pyjamas/costumes to school for the day! Our Year 6 pupils rose to the challenge of becoming mini-teachers and read their favourite picture books to younger pupils.



Our Reading Ambassadors and School Councillors have launched a Readathon and challenged our pupils to be sponsored for reading at home and school as much as they can for 4 weeks. The class with the most amount of reading will win a prize. The money raised will provide books and story tellers for children who are in hospital.

Upper Key Stage 2 held a Greek Day as part of their history unit on Ancient Greece. Pupils and staff dressed up and became immersed in Ancient Greek culture for the day. Activities included learning a dance, debating, performing a Greek play and making Greek food.

The whole school learnt and performed a song in sign language to raise awareness and funds for our local Hearing Dogs charity. This was a wonderful community event with the hall packed full of parents and family members. The children gave a fantastic performance and raised lots of money. We have invited one of the hearing dogs in to meet the children next term so they can learn more about the vital work this charity does.



Finally, we welcomed Sushma as part of RE learning about Hinduism. Sushma brought Indian artefacts and musical instruments to show, and the children listened to a variety of stories and music. Some of the music was quite rhythmic and they joined in enthusiastically with instruments, moving and dancing around the hall. A highlight for many was the food tasting activity and using our Curzon courage, many new foods were tried. Thank you to Sushma for bringing her knowledge and enthusiasm to Curzon and to the PTA for funding this workshop to enhance our RE curriculum.




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## What has been happening at The Downley this term?

Children’s Mental Health Week helped us to explore the value of Resilience through the theme of ‘Know Yourself, Grow Yourself’. The aim of the work this year focused on children being self-aware and getting to know and understand what they are good at, what they find difficult, their likes and dislikes, what makes them feel joy and what may cause them sadness. Through this work they also develop their understanding about what makes them unique.



Year 5 spent 2 days at Upton court furthering their understanding of Tudor life. Activities completed helped them to appreciate the effects of religious tensions in Tudor times and offered the experience of culture and life in the Tudor period. The banquet and dawn raid were highlights of the trip.

Year 6 visited Bletchley Park - an English country house and estate in Bletchley, Milton Keynes, that became the principal centre of Allied code breaking during the Second World War. This enriched the children’s learning about WW2 and supported their computing curriculum.



As part of our Geography curriculum Year 4 learned about rainforests and their importance to us. The children visited ‘The Living Rainforest’ (near Reading) and took part in an Amazing Adaptations tour. They examined how plants and animals



have adapted to suit living in a rainforest environment and how the different layers of the rainforest including microhabitats adaptation can lead to evolution over time. This trip is a highlight of the year and the centre commented on how polite and well behaved our children were; we could not have been any prouder!

We held a poetry themed week to celebrate world book day. Each phase had an assembly from Simon Mole, National Poetry Day Ambassador, where they created their own poem. Simon spent three days at our school providing poetry workshops for each class.

To support our PSHE theme ‘Healthy Me’ we teamed up with Veg Power and participated in ‘Eat them to defeat them’ campaign. This campaign encouraged children to eat vegetables to destroy the ‘vegiverse’. The lunch team have never seen so many vegetables consumed! We also have been learning about how exercise helps us to stay healthy and all completed the Downley Dash – a 30 minute Red Run for comic relief. It felt like an endurance task but was a lot of fun. We can’t wait to see what wonderful experiences the summer brings.

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## What has been happening at Elmtree this term?

We are excited to share updates on our efforts to make our school grounds vibrant and sustainable for local wildlife, especially pollinators and pond life! Over the past few months, we've worked hard to create spaces that enhance the beauty of our grounds and support the health of the natural world around us. Antonia and Chris from Chesham in Bloom have volunteered their time to clear and prepare our pond area for spring.



We have been creating a pollinator-friendly garden. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust came in to teach us all about the different types of bees, their importance and how we can attract them to Elmtree. To support the vital role of pollinators



such as bees, butterflies, and other insects, we've been transforming sections of our school grounds into pollinator-friendly habitats. We've planted a wide variety of native flowers, shrubs, and trees that will provide food and shelter throughout the year. This effort not only encourages biodiversity but also helps in educating our students about the importance of pollinators to the ecosystem.

We've also developed a small pond that is attracting local wildlife, including frogs, dragonflies, and birds. The pond serves as an educational resource, teaching children about aquatic ecosystems and the relationships between plants, insects, and animals. Designed with shallow and deep areas, it provides environments for different species to thrive. We look forward to releasing our tadpoles into the pond soon.



The new habitats on our grounds are not just for wildlife—they are also a fantastic opportunity for children to learn first-hand about conservation and ecology. In the coming weeks, teachers will integrate lessons about biodiversity into their curriculum, encouraging students to observe the different species that visit our garden, pond, and birdhouses. Pupils have also participated in planting sessions, taking an active role in growing and maintaining these spaces.

We plan to continue enhancing our school grounds by adding more native plants, expanding our wildlife-friendly spaces, and involving children in additional conservation activities. With the support of our dedicated staff, children, and families, we can make our school a model of environmental stewardship and sustainability.

We hope that you are as excited as we are about these Elmtree's eco-life. By nurturing our school's grounds for pollinators and wildlife, we are helping to protect and celebrate the natural world around us.

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## What has been happening at Great Horwood this term?

The children (and staff) at Great Horwood had a brilliant time celebrating World Book Day. We kicked off the day with an exciting assembly all about reading and the theme of 'reading your way'. Everyone came to school in their pyjamas and shared their favourite bedtime story with their classmates, creating a cosy and fun atmosphere. The assembly highlighted the joy of reading and encouraged everyone to explore books in their own unique way.



In addition to the assembly, we held a World Book Day competition where students designed bookmarks that illustrated what 'reading our way' looks like. The creativity and effort put into the bookmarks were truly impressive. The winners of the competition were very kindly gifted a £10 book voucher from the PTFA, which was a wonderful surprise and greatly appreciated by the students.

At the beginning of March, we had two wonderful ladies from The Swan Pool visit us to lead an assembly all about winter water safety. They taught the children (and staff) how to stay safe around water and what to do if they or a friend were to fall in. The assembly was both informative and engaging, with practical demonstrations that included learning to tread water and commando crawling across the school hall. The children enjoyed these activities immensely and gained valuable knowledge about water safety.



As part of a busy March, we were fortunate enough to be paid a visit by the New Mozart Orchestra. They told a wonderful story through their performance and gave us lots of interesting information about the instruments that make up the Orchestra. We enjoyed joining them for a sing along of 'You've got a friend in me' and Jack, from Year 6, even had a go at playing the violin!




The wonderful ladies from Springs Dance Company came into school and worked with every class to create an Easter routine, depicting a section of the Easter story. The routines were incredibly moving and challenging, reflecting just how hard the children had been working. The children performed amazingly well and gave their best, showing perseverance and professionalism throughout.

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## What has been happening at Longwick this term?

We recently hosted our renowned and hugely successful Art Show, celebrating incredible local artists whilst raising funds for our school. On the opening night, guests were treated to canapés and entertained by a local musician. Our children



worked hard throughout Art Week to produce some wonderful pieces to contribute to the art displays.

Our theme for World Book Day was “Book an Adventure,” and what an adventure it was! After a fun assembly where staff and pupils paraded and danced around the hall, every child was given their own passport to complete. Then, throughout the day, we embarked on a journey around the world, visiting different classrooms and immersing ourselves in folktales from various countries. The children participated in engaging storytelling sessions and creative craft activities that inspired their love of reading and storytelling. Highlights included our Site Manager, Mr Pitkin, demonstrating how to play the diggeridoo and our teaching assistant Mrs Hubko retelling a Ukrainian folktale in her native language. Following our adventure around the world, the children were inspired to write their own folktales.



Our choir participated in an unforgettable experience in Birmingham recently with Young Voices. After an afternoon of rehearsals and being entertained by dance group Urban Strides and none other than MC Grammar, the children performed in a Young Voices Concert with around 5000 children - the largest children’s choir in the world!

Blessed with sunshine and blue-skies, our Year 4 children had an amazing time on their two-night residential at Woodrow High House. On their first day they perfected their bush-craft skills and enjoyed a movie and popcorn evening. Day two involved braving the high ropes and finished with a campfire in the evening.



We have had a fun-filled D.T. Week with a range of engaging projects taking place around the school. Year Two have been busy designing and making their own props for their upcoming Easter Production at St. Marys Church, Year 5 have been exploring Chinese Inventions and Year 6 have been ‘Programming Pioneers’, using micro-bits and programming technology to design and make their own gadget.


We have been carefully watching and waiting for our eggs to hatch in the Reception Class. The children have been very excited about the imminent arrivals and have been busy contributing to a class book all about eggs.

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## What has been happening at Padbury this term?

This has been another very busy term for us at Padbury. I can't believe we are two thirds of the way through the school year.

Tracy Kelly, one of our amazing teaching assistants, has thrown her heart and soul into helping get our allotment ready for growing now the weather is warming up. Her vision of getting every child in school involved in the pleasure of growing, picking and eating food is closer to becoming a reality! The scrubbed area has been cleared, membrane put down, raised beds positioned and bark spread between the beds for ease of maintenance. Wickes from Bicester donated 1 tonne of compost to our project and now the beds are nearly ready for growing. All the classes are growing seeds ready to be planted out in the summer term. We hope to grow enough food to support others in our community later this year as well as enter the Padbury Produce Show in September 25 for the first time! Thank you, Mrs Kelly, for all your hard work in turning our dream into reality!



In January, Oak class, Year 3/4, started their Bronze Junior Duke of Edinburgh Awards. They are all carrying out a variety of tasks which will support and develop life skills as well as tasks which help others. We hope every child will be able to achieve the Bronze certificate before July 2025.

This term our Year 4 children visited the Padbury Friendly Afternoon Group, (a group of older residents in the village) to play games board games together. Some games were traditional while there were also some new games to learn. Everyone had smiles on their faces, young and old and it was lovely to see year 4 talking and socialising with confidence




In February, we took 60 children to Young Voices, Birmingham, to sing our hearts out. The children made us very proud with how they managed a long day and the energy they showed throughout. Mrs Grace, who has organised the event for the last few years couldn't go last year as she was battling breast cancer, but this year she was back and loving every minute of it! In the picture a group of children loved meeting up with Andy from Urban Strides!

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## What has been happening at St John's this term?

We are thrilled to announce the successful completion of our solar energy project, which not only supports our sustainability goals but also provides valuable learning opportunities for the children. A special mention goes to David Bundock, our Operations Officer, whose vision and hard work brought this project to life.



What an inspiring day we had with Olympic athletes Steve Frew, a British artistic gymnast who won Scotland's first-ever gymnastics gold medal at the Commonwealth Games and Nerys Pearce, who has won medals in track and field, handcycling, swimming, basketball, and weightlifting at the Warrior and Invictus Games. who led a fitness circuit with the children. Their enthusiasm and dedication to promoting physical

health left a lasting impression on everyone involved.

The children were excited to participate and learn from such accomplished athletes, making it a day to remember.



This year's World Book Day was a wonderful celebration of reading and storytelling. We were privileged to welcome author Val Rutt, who captivated the children with her passion for writing. Her visit encouraged the children to embrace their own creativity and discover the joy of crafting stories. EYFS enjoyed a special visit from Nanny Jan, author of Wobbly Bobbly, who kindly donated a copy of her book to the school. Her storytelling session was a highlight, sparking imaginations and fostering a love for reading among our youngest students.

Our children had a truly memorable experience during our STEM Day, which featured a visit from a Bell 47 H-1 helicopter. The sight of the helicopter landing on our grounds was awe-inspiring and provided a unique hands-on learning opportunity. The children also took part in STEM activities led by early-career Boeing employees, sparking their interest in science and engineering.



These activities were designed to be both educational and fun, encouraging the children to explore the


wonders of STEM fields. The day was a fantastic success, leaving the children eager to learn more about the exciting world of science and technology.

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## What has been happening at St Mary's this term?

At St Mary's School, our Christian Values, Respect, Integrity and Resilience, underpin everything that we do. Children understand how these values help them to be good learners and outstanding citizens enabling them to 'shine as lights in the world'. Children at St Mary's continue to have their curriculum brought to life through curriculum experience days. Whether it is seeing their Tudor houses burning like the Great Fire of London or stepping on board a British Airways flight to Sicily, children are able to immerse themselves in their learning.



At St Mary's, we are really proud of the extra-curricular sporting activities that we offer. Children have taken part in a range of sporting activities including hockey tournaments,

swimming galas, football and netball matches and cross country. Although we do not always win, children are able to demonstrate the Christian values of resilience, integrity and respect reflected in our winning the Fairplay award at the Aylesbury hockey tournament.



Children continue to embrace the performing arts and this term, a group of 30 Year 5 children had the opportunity to perform at the Wycombe Swan taking part in Energise. The children put everything into their performance and were truly mesmerising. We are all so very proud of them.

We were also delighted to have been joined by ex-student Louis Cordice. He was a pupil at St Mary's 23 years ago. Year 6 were lucky enough to learn about his role as Blaise Zabini in Harry Potter. He spoke about how he began his career in the film industry and how the children should embrace every opportunity that is given to them. He was incredibly positive and inspirational and has demonstrated throughout his career all of our values of Respect, Integrity and Resilience. At St Mary's, we are very proud of him. The children from Year 2 - Year 6 were also treated to a visit from The New Mozart Orchestra. As part of their concert of Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf, they also talked about the different instrument families and how the sounds are produced.



It's been a fun packed term for the children and staff of St Marys, and we cannot wait to see what the Summer Term will bring!

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## What has been happening at Thomas Harding this term?

We've had wonderful influx of visitors to our school including our dedicated school governors. They have completed lots of monitoring visits across various aspects of our curriculum including History, Design Technology, Music, Physical Education, Assessment and Teaching and Learning. All the feedback has been positive, highlighting our strengths and offering constructive points for further development.



Our ASPIRE curriculum has been bursting with fantastic opportunities this term. The children of Thomas Harding have enthusiastically participated in several enriching events including NSPCC Number Day, Safer Internet Day and British Science Week. These activities have provided invaluable learning experiences and fosters a deeper understanding of important topics.



Our educational visits have been equally exciting and included a trip to Hazard Alley where children enjoyed hands on learning and exploration as well as the STEM Discovery Centre and local visits too. We also have plans to develop our outdoor garden space and to have a sensory area. Great things to come.

Our wider curriculum has included the school being part of the award winning Veg Power 'Eat Them to Defeat Them' campaign focusing on healthy eating and eating more vegetables! The children have been brilliant and are really committed to trying new and eating more vegetables.

We have also showcased our talents in the school's Dance Festival with some great songs being represented. Our different student representatives' groups have been active too! Our Junior Leadership Team have organised an Easter raffle and our House Captains have organised Thomas Harding Has Got Talent. Our Rocksteady performance this term also included our school teacher band. Go teachers! The School's Book Fair have also visited and we all had a great day celebrating World Book Day. Thank you to our PTA for organising a brilliant school disco and helping with the Talent Show.




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## What has been happening at Woodside this term?

It's been a really exciting Spring term at Woodside Junior School. The children have celebrated sporting successes and engaged in some great community activities, showing our school values of curiosity, kindness and collaboration.

This term, Woodside School celebrated World Book Day with several exciting events. We hosted a Book Swap, allowed children to dress up as their favourite characters and held an afternoon where children listened to teachers reading their favourite stories. It was a lovely day and great to see the children celebrating their love of reading. The highlight of our celebrations was a new event: The Big Community Read. In this, children from Woodside School and our local feeder infant and nursery schools were placed in pairs and shared the enjoyment of reading a book. It was a great event which was enjoyed by the children from all three schools. We hope this will become an annual event!



Woodside School has also achieved a sporting first for the school! At the recent Bucks Cross-Country Championships, we had four pupils who have qualified for the National Championships! They have done incredibly well to earn the right to compete at this level. This is also the first time that Woodside have ever qualified for nationals, and to have four pupils achieve this is incredible! Everybody at Woodside is immensely proud and wish them the best of luck in their competition!

We have had lots of other opportunities to show off our sporting skills as a school this term, including a netball match for our year 6 girls against Chalfont St Giles School. Year 3 attended the Amersham Schools Benchball festival, throughout the day the won most of their matches and walked away the most successful school at the event. We have also had a cricket coach working with our year 4 and 6 teams to help train our teachers to deliver high quality cricket sessions.

Last week, led by the Eco Council members, Mrs Bannister, Ms Barnes and Mr Appleby, children from across the school helped plant out 15 tree saplings to create a new woodland area in the school grounds. This is part of the Eco Councils project to improve our biodiversity and create new habitats around the school as we work towards achieving Eco School status. Future projects will include creating bug houses to add to our new woodland along with improving the planting in our courtyard area for pollinators. There's plenty more to come this year, with the year 6 residential, more author visits and many more fun events, like our Summer Fair, planned for the summer term! Have a lovely Easter break!



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## Getting to know Speen

What a busy term we have had at Speen School, we have so much to celebrate!



Our love of books has been a huge focus with our World Book Day Celebrations. We all dressed up as our favourite book characters, designed book covers, listened to mystery readers and took part in a sponsored read. We have also welcomed the wonderful guest author and writing coach, Lou Treleven, into school who shared a number of her stories with us. She also put on a play with the help of one of our talented teachers! We were very inspired so we all wrote our own stories which was great fun to share with all of our friends!

Our Eco-Council have been very active and arranged a whole school litter pick for the Speen playing fields and skate park. We collected 6 full sacks of rubbish! They have also arranged a Big Wheel and Walk event for the school to encourage our families to walk to school where possible.



In our forest school sessions, we have been making dens, searching for minibeasts and thinking about making different bird houses to support the wildlife on the school grounds.

Our love of the outside was also reflected in our Shrove Tuesday celebrations. As part of our forest schools programme, we made pancakes on the camp fire, they were delicious! With the left-over pancakes we had pancake races in the playground. It was so much fun!



To support our work in RE our Key Stage 1 class went on a trip to the Maidenhead Synagogue. We had a tour of the synagogue and had the opportunity to see the most important features of a synagogue e.g. the Prayer Hall, the Ark with the Eternal Light, the Bimah and the Torah scrolls. Our guide shared what happens on Shabbat in the synagogue and in Jewish homes. She also talked about some of the most important Jewish celebrations. We had the opportunity to see authentic and kosher Jewish artefacts that are used in she Shabbat service and in different celebrations.

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## ODBST vision, values, and priorities

Each of our schools has a unique character of its own and we work to ensure that this vision embraces all our pupils and adults, regardless of background and belief. We empower our schools to deliver a broad, enriched, and exciting curriculum, coupled with a shared zest for life and learning.

We have identified 4 core values that resonate with what we believe the ODBST Learner, and Leader should follow and live by. They reflect the values that are central to our schools and the diocese. Through our values, we aim for excellence for everyone in our Trust.



**Service** We encourage everyone to look after themselves and others around them. We encourage children in our schools to seek the common good in all that they do through acts of kindness. ODBST believes that our gifts and talents are to be used in ways that will improve the lives of themselves and others.

**Inclusivity** Everyone is accepted and supported, regardless of faith or culture. We will strive for everyone to be given every opportunity to reach their potential. We believe everyone is unique and everyone matters

**Community** We work in unison with all our families. Together we learn, love, achieve and flourish. Within our family of schools, each individual is encouraged to discover and grow their talents to their fullest potential. We believe by encouraging, inspiring and building each other up we secure the best outcomes for every member of our community.

**Empowerment** We will encourage everyone to trust in their own capabilities and to recognise their potential. We want to challenge ourselves to be the best we can be – even when this becomes hard. We will do this by leading by example, supporting and guiding one another, celebrating accomplishments, providing opportunities for all, developing confidence, resilience and perseverance in both our children and our adults.


**We aspire for every pupil and adult to  
'experience life in all its fullness' (John 10:10)**

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## What has been happening in the Shared Services Team this term?

### School improvement

The Spring term has been a really positive one for our ODBST schools with plenty going on for our children to enjoy. The School Effectiveness team have continued to visit all of our settings and to work with leaders and teaching staff as we develop and refine our offer. The writing project continues with all teaching staff thinking carefully about how to improve children’s outcomes and how to better enable children to write with fluency and technical accuracy, alongside enabling them to record their imaginative thinking.

We continue to work hard on improving attendance and particularly for our more vulnerable learners. Just 10 days absence in Year 6 alone reduces the chance of children achieving the expected standard by 25%; that’s any 10 school days over the year! The knock on effect of having 10 days absence every year makes a huge difference and really reduces the life chances of our primary aged pupils, even



though it can sound like it isn’t very much. Managing attendance is part of our safeguarding responsibilities and it really is everyone’s responsibility. Well done to everyone who is playing such a significant role in helping more children to come to school every day.

Positive outcomes in SIAMS and OFSTED are celebrating all the work that schools are doing to enhance the opportunities for children. Inspectors are pleased to see so much on offer and are impressed by the vigilance and dedication our school have towards keeping all children safe, well and happy. We know that sometimes children find things tricky and that sometimes they are sad too, but schools work tirelessly to support and encourage everyone and this really shines through.

### CPD this term



**28 Sessions run by the School Improvement Team**



**203 attendees from across our schools**

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## What has been happening in the Shared Services Team this term?

### HR

As we approach the end of this term, we wanted to take a moment to thank all the staff across the Trust for your hard work and dedication. With Easter just around the corner, we hope you take this time to relax, recharge, and enjoy the festivities with your loved ones. Easter is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on renewal and hope, and we encourage you to embrace these themes in your personal and professional lives.

As always, your well-being is our top priority. Please remember to take care of yourselves, both physically and mentally. Whether it's spending quality time with family, indulging in a hobby, or simply taking a moment for yourself, self-care is essential for maintaining a healthy balance. Remember you can download the SAS employee app if you have not done so already. As well as giving you access to wellbeing podcasts, there are free 6 week wellness webinar programmes, live online exercise classes and pre-recorded workouts. You can also access wellbeing services including counselling, online GP services, nurse support on cancer and chronic illness, menopause, bereavement and mental health. Please scan the QR code today to start exploring the benefits (this is for ODBST employees only).



Following our employee survey last year, we introduced a free voucher scheme for eye tests for staff that use computers through Specsavers. Please remember to use your voucher promptly so that it does not expire or, if you change your mind and do not need the voucher, please let us know on [hr@odbst.org](mailto:hr@odbst.org) and we can re-issue the voucher to another employee. If you then wish to have a test at a later date, you can just reorder the voucher using this [form](#).

As the days are getting longer and warmer, we also wanted to remind you about the Trust's Cycle 2 Work scheme. This was another initiative introduced last year following the staff survey. The scheme is offered through the Green Commute Initiative. You can find out more about the scheme by following this [link](#). More details on the application process can be found [here](#). If this is something you're interested in, once you have read through the documents, if you have any further questions you can contact [hr@odbst.org](mailto:hr@odbst.org).

Thank you once again for your incredible contributions this term and we wish you all a joyful and restful Easter!

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## What has been happening in the Shared Services Team this term?

### New CFO, Rachel Brown



I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Chief Financial Officer of ODBST. Having had the pleasure of working with the shared services team for the past year, I am excited to take on this new role and to continue supporting the growth and success of the Trust.

Before joining the team, I spent seven years as Finance Manager at Thomas Harding Junior School, and before raising my family (I have two teenage boys), I worked in various commercial companies where I focussed on developing strategic business plans, budgets and forecasts. I am passionate about helping the Trust thrive and am committed to ensuring that our financial strategies support the continued development of our schools to deliver the best possible education for the children. I look forward to working closely with all!

### Finance

The Central Finance team are enjoying using the new accounting system which is much more flexible and easier to use than the old system, PSF. Feedback from the Headteachers and School Business Managers are extremely positive. The Finance team would like to thank everyone for being so patient while we have implemented the new system.

Budgeting season is in full swing with schools working hard to produce first drafts of their budget before the Easter break. We look forward to fine-tuning the budgets after Easter with Headteachers and School Business Managers.

### Operations

The Operations Team remains dedicated to supporting schools and ensuring their buildings are maintained to the best possible standards within their budgets. The Trust has applied for additional Government funding to replace boilers and improve distribution systems, and we are hopeful of hearing the outcome by May.

Our Managed Service Provider, Turn IT On, continues to support and guide schools, ensuring that pupils and staff have access to the equipment and infrastructure necessary to enhance teaching and learning. The ongoing budgeting for the schools' Estate and IT needs poses significant challenges, given the high costs involved. However, the support of the community and families in raising additional funds plays a crucial role in helping us meet these demands. All schools have now undergone comprehensive external Health and Safety surveys. We are pleased with the positive outcomes and are actively addressing areas where improvements are recommended.


Our collaboration with schools remains strong as we strive to provide tailored support and guidance to help pupils reach their full potential.

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## ODBST drive for sustainability



In a ground-breaking move for primary schools in Buckinghamshire, St Johns CofE School in Lacey Green has taken a giant leap towards sustainability by installing a substantial number of solar panels and storage batteries. This initiative not only underscores the school's dedication to the environment but also offers an exciting, hands-on educational opportunity for students to explore renewable energy up close.

At a time when many village schools are grappling with financial challenges, this visionary project is set to slash energy costs, enabling the school to channel savings directly into resources and programs that benefit their children. "This isn't just about saving money—it's about teaching our pupils the importance of sustainability and demonstrating that even small communities can make a big difference," said Rebecca Wright, Headteacher at St Johns School. "We're proud to lead by example and give our students a chance to engage with real-world solutions to climate change."



The installation is expected to significantly reduce the school's carbon footprint while doubling as a dynamic learning tool. Teachers plan to weave the solar panels into science and geography lessons, providing students with a deeper understanding of renewable energy and its impact on our planet. Local officials and community members have lauded the initiative, viewing it as a beacon of progress and innovation in the region.



The local community was warmly invited to celebrate the completion of the solar project by joining the school for a special "Solar Day." The event began with an assembly where the project and its numerous benefits were discussed. The children were thrilled to have the opportunity to speak with the project manager, who joined the event virtually

all the way from Las Vegas to answer their questions.


Throughout the day, various engaging activities took place, allowing students to explore and learn more about solar energy. The festivities culminated in an impressive display for parents, showcasing the students' newfound knowledge about solar power and the energy-saving panels in action.

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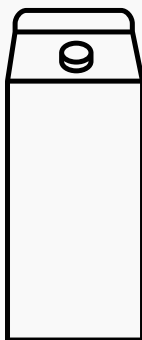
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ODBST drive for sustainability



Since our schools have converted to using Lukart products in their schools they have helped Lukart to:



**RECOVER**

154,931

Tetra Pak-type beverage cartons



**AVOID THE USE OF**

**70**

Average-sized trees that would have been used to produce the equivalent amount of paper from virgin fibre



**AVOID THE EMISSION INTO THE ATMOSPHERE**

**OF**

6,061.7


kg CO2e by avoiding the disposal of the beverage cartons in landfills

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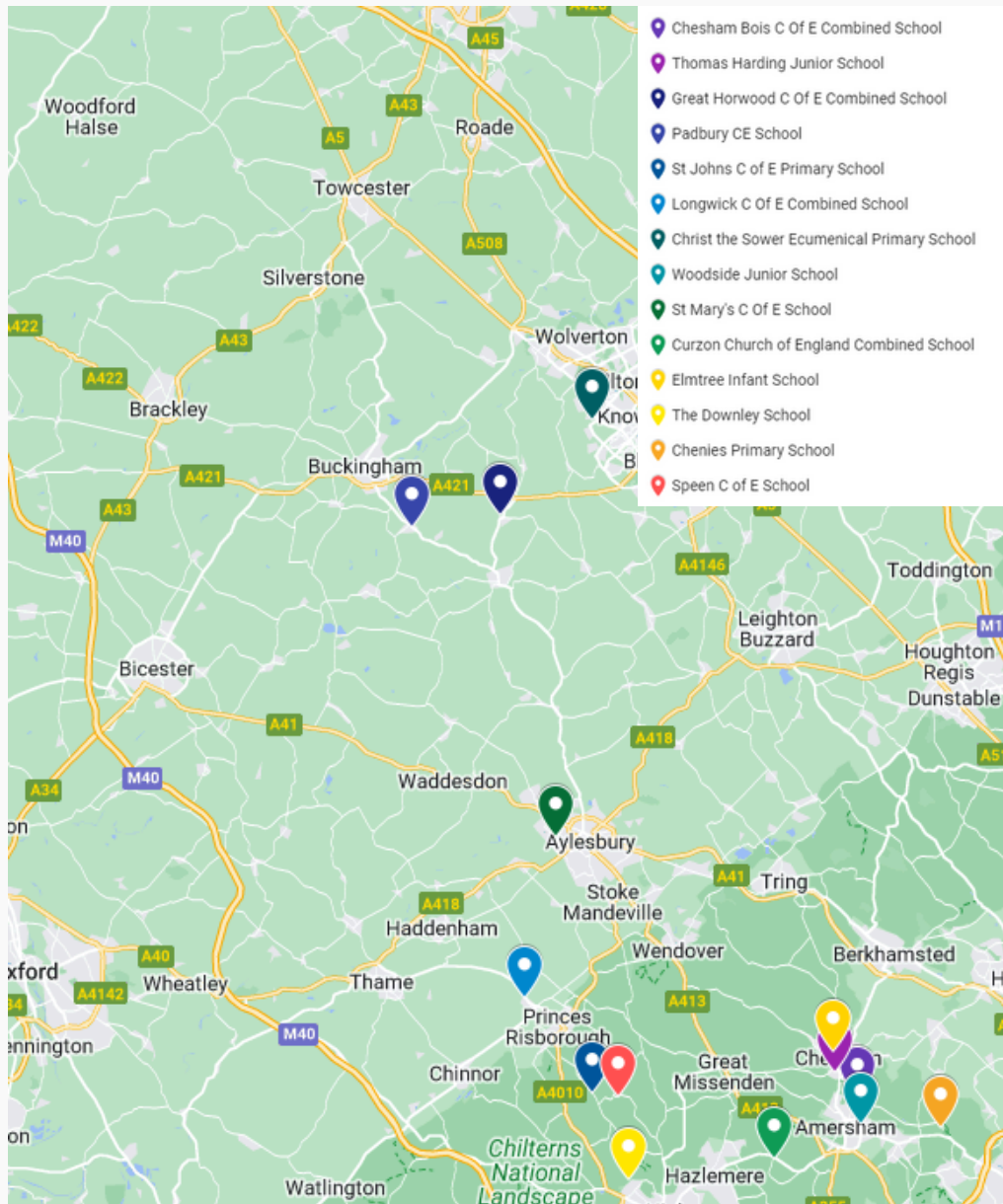
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*Have a  
Wonderful Easter  
break*