



# The Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust

Empowering our unique schools to excel

## Governors Briefing Pack

Prepared for Schools interested in joining our  
family



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

## Information pack for Schools and Academies thinking about joining the Oxford Diocesan Multi Academy Trust (ODBST)

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## 1. ODBST - Who we are

Our organisation, the ODBST, is a Church of England Multi Academy Trust (MAT) which operates in the Buckingham Episcopal area of the Diocese of Oxford. It covers Milton Keynes and Buckinghamshire. We are a MAT with sponsorship powers from the Department for Education (DfE). Our ODBST Trustees welcome applications from all schools interested in joining us: community or Church of England; primary or secondary; mainstream or special. We offer our communities high quality inclusive education, welcoming children from all faiths and none. There are currently 11 Primary schools that are part of our ODBST family. 10 of these are converter academies (3 of the schools were community schools before choosing to join the ODBST) and 1 is a sponsored academy. This reflects the powerfully attractive MAT we have developed.

### Our Schools, Our Learners, Our Trust

Our unique schools continue to retain their own character and individual feel just as the individual members of any family make up the whole whilst being individuals. They offer a broad, balanced, and exciting curriculum which allows all children to learn with interest and enthusiasm. Our schools are central to their community but are also committed to working collaboratively with other schools in the ODBST so that we all learn and grow together.

Our learners are at the centre of all we do; empowered to learn and achieve; valued within our schools as resilient, active, and responsible citizens; served so that they develop and thrive (intellectually, socially, culturally, and spiritually); aspire to reach their fullest potential.

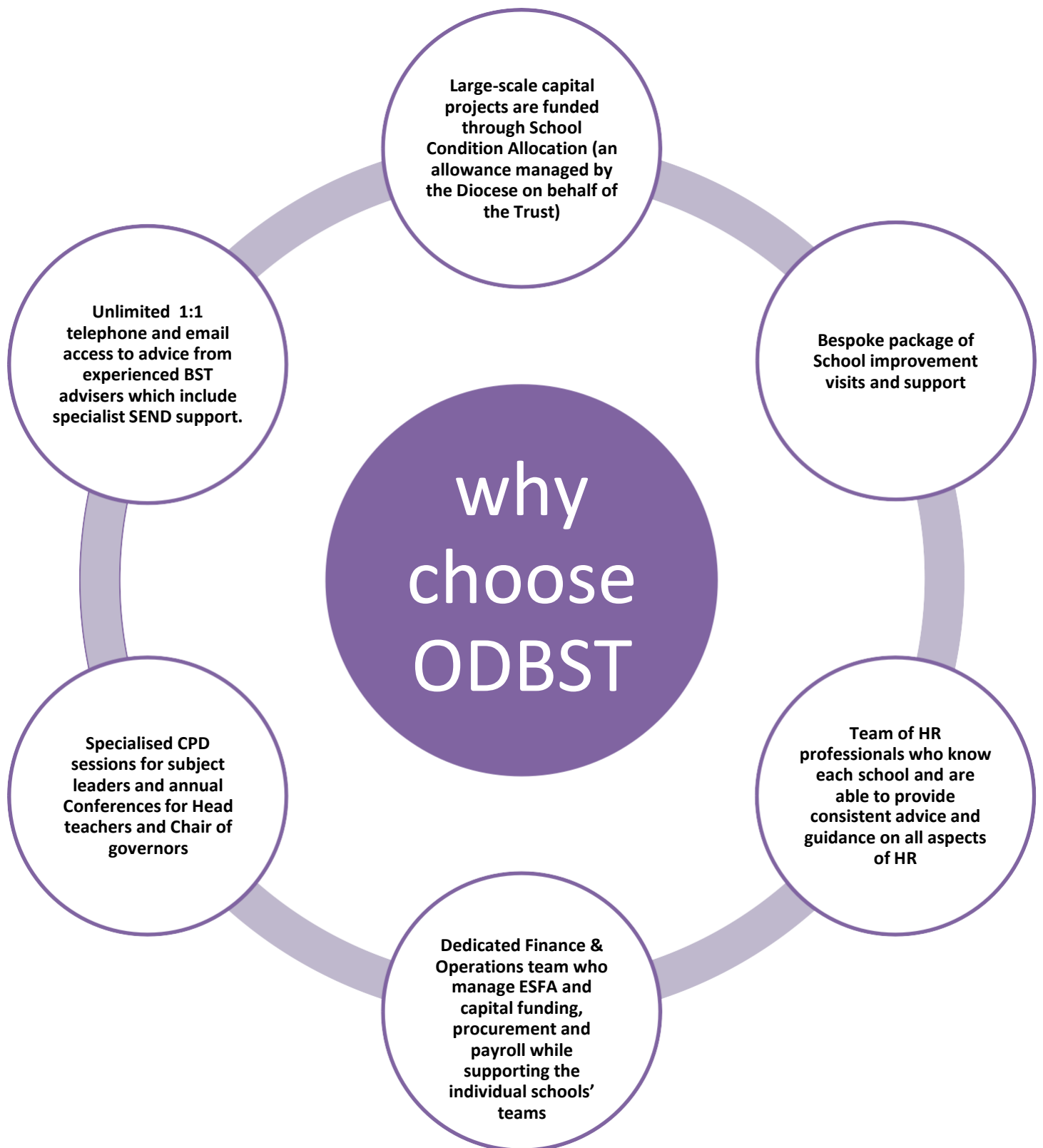
Our Trust strives to enable strong and effective local leadership that is supported and challenged to recruit, train and retain high quality staff and we offer career advancement opportunities within our group of schools. Our staff are passionate about giving all pupils the tools to be the best that they can be, providing them a plethora of opportunities and experiences for enriched learning, and working with governors to make key decisions in the best interest of the school community they serve.



### Our family of schools in the ODBST

- ✳ Chesham Bois CE School
- ✳ Thomas Harding Junior School
- ✳ Great Horwood CE School
- ✳ Padbury CE School
- ✳ St John's CE Primary School, Lacey Green
- ✳ Longwick CE Combined School
- ✳ Christ the Sower Ecumenical School
- ✳ Woodside Junior School
- ✳ St Mary's CE, Aylesbury
- ✳ Curzon CE Combined School
- ✳ Elmtree Infant School

Ref	Our current schools	URN	Conversion Date	School Status	Ofsted	Hub
01	Chesham Bois Church of England School	145033	Oct 17	Academy (converter) (VC)	Outstanding	Centre
02	Thomas Harding Junior School	145069	Oct 17	Academy (converter) (Com)	Good	Centre
03	Great Horwood Church of England School	145032	Nov 17	Academy (converter) (VC)	Good	North
04	Padbury Church of England School	145216	Feb 18	Academy (converter) (VA)	Good	North
05	St John's CofE Primary School, Lacey Green	145422	Feb-18	Academy (converter) (VA)	Good	Centre
06	Longwick Church of England Combined School	110432	Jul 18	Academy (converter) (VC)	Good	Centre
07	Christ the Sower Ecumenical School	134164	Sep 19	Academy (sponsored) (VA)	Inadequate	North
08	Woodside Junior School	110266	Dec 19	Academy (converter) (Com)	Good	Centre
09	St Mary's Church of England School (Aylesbury)	110416	Apr 20	Academy (converter) (VC)	Good	North
10	Curzon Church Of England	110429	June 20	Academy (converter) (VA)	Good	Centre
11	Elmtree Infant and Nursery School, Chesham	110309	July 20	Academy (converter) (Com)	Good	Centre



## 2. ODBST vision, values, and summary of our priorities

### “Empowering our unique schools to excel”

Each of our schools has a unique character of its own and we will 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: **Inclusivity, Community, Service, Empowerment** 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. Building on the uniqueness of our pupils, families, and school communities, we strive to enable everyone to develop and thrive intellectually, socially, culturally, and spiritually.

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

### Our ODBST values in action



**Our inclusivity value** will be seen in action when our differences become our strength and achievement.

**Our community value** will be seen in action when pupils and adults are learning, loving, achieving, and flourishing together.

**Our service value** will be seen in action when pupils are seeking the common good in all that they do.

**Our empowerment value** will be seen in action when our pupils are able to say, ‘I am special because...and I am learning to excel at.....’





At ODBST this means that 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.

Many pupils and staff in our schools will come from diverse home backgrounds and our pupils will be at different stages of their own academic and spiritual journey during their time in school. All pupils will receive support, guidance, and challenge so that they are motivated, ambitious, and courageous individuals who seek to be the best they can be. We embody the experience of an inclusive community, where we share our gifts, where the emphasis is on what we can contribute, rather than on what we might receive and where we give to each according to need.

**“Our differences are our strength as a species and as a world community” Nelson Mandela**





At ODBST 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.

We believe quality relationships and partnerships are a central element of interdependence: all are needed and valued, and each person is important. We will work together to support each other so that everyone can make a contribution, and everyone feels included. We encourage everyone to have a sense of pride in their community and the wider world.

**“The minute we become an integrated whole, we look through the same eyes and we see a whole different world together”**

**Azizah Al-Hibri**







We encourage everyone to look after themselves and others around them. **We encourage pupils in our schools to seek the common good in all that they do through acts of kindness.** The ODBST believes that our gifts and talents are to be used in ways that will improve the lives of themselves and others. We help children to develop skills that will allow them to participate fully and contribute positively to the social and cultural life of modern Britain, maximizing opportunities for our pupils to serve their school and local community. We create a culture where serving one another and the wider community is celebrated and seen as an important mark of character development. We regularly invite visitors to our schools who are making a difference to society through their service and courageous advocacy, to inform and inspire us and to present positive role models with ethical and moral integrity for us to follow.

**“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others” Mahatma Gandhi**





At the ODBST 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 will encourage curiosity with a mindset of continuous improvement and personal growth. **We want our pupils to be able to say, 'I am special because and I am learning to excel at....'**

"There is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind" Virginia Woolf





### 3. How ODBST operates

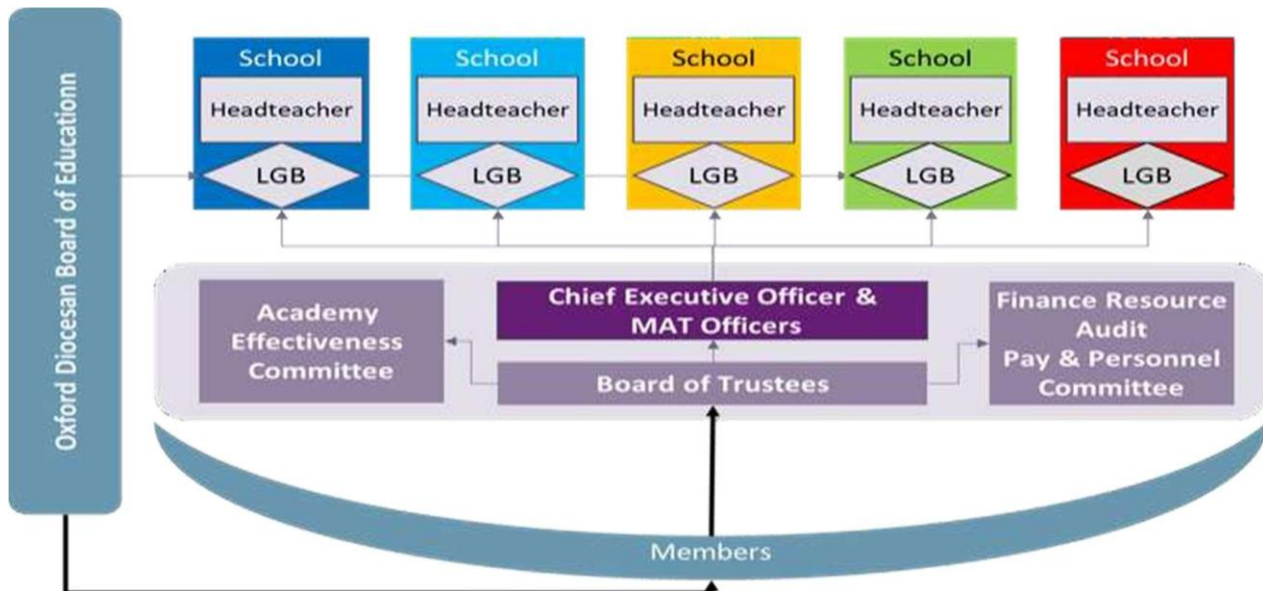
ODBST schools operate with a high level of accountability devolved to each Local Governing Body (LGB), which is supported by a “School to School” improvement model, facilitated by a core team of experienced professionals (i.e., ex-headteachers, lead inspectors) at the centre of the organisation, in partnership with the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE). The Trust retains a service charge to cover the cost of its corporate work, providing support to schools across a range of services. This is illustrated by our ‘wall of support.’



ODBST ensures it brings, develops, and makes use of the expertise of its staff to serve all its schools, the children and young people and the local communities. We are committed to drive improvement. We provide a wide range of services which ensure our schools and governors operate within an effective and strong framework which allows all our children to learn and flourish. Improving life chances by maintaining a high-quality offer of learning, development, and support for all is pivotal to our vision: ***‘Empowering our unique schools to excel’***.



## The ODBST Leadership model



### Trustees

- Michael Mill (Chair of the Board)
- Michael Phipps (Vice-Chair of the Board)
- The Rt Revd Dr Alan Wilson (Bishop of Buckingham)
- Denise Shepherd (Chair –Academy Improvement Committee)
- Revd Canon Rosie Harper
- Andrew Jeffrey (Chair - Finance, Resources, Pay & Personnel Committee)
- Pragasen Morgan
- Tony Wilson (Diocesan Director of Education)
- Sulina Piesse (Chief Executive Officer)

### Officers

- Sulina Piesse (Chief Executive Officer)
- Ruth Falkus (Chief Finance Officer)
- Rachael Hollinshead (Chief Operating Officer)
- Sarah Rowe (Director of HR)
- Deborah Stainer (Governance Professional)
- Jan Martin (Director of Education)
- Lorraine Quirk (Challenge Partner)
- Victoria Davies (Finance Officer)
- Rebecca Hussein-Allin (HR Officer)
- Emily Gatis (CPD and Team Administrator)



As a charity and company limited by guarantee, the ODBST is governed by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for and oversee the management and administration of the Company and the academies run by the Company. Governance arrangements comply with our articles of association. All our schools have their own Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) who serve our local communities. The communities which serve our Trust are diverse, which both enriches the Trust and makes it sensitive to local needs, pressures, and opportunities. Although Trustees delegate considerable responsibility to LGBs, there is oversight and scrutiny by them. The ODBST help support the LGBs to shape the needs of their communities. Our Trustees are accountable to external government agencies including the Department for Education (for the quality of the education they provide) and Ofsted (both at a school level for the quality of education and across the MAT as part of their Academy Trust Review cycle). Each school with their LGBs have systems in place through which they can assure themselves of the quality, safety, and good practice which the ODBST provides.

### **Local governing bodies (LGBs)**

There is a real focus on maintaining schools in their communities and for the ODBST to be responsive to parents and other communities' interests. Trustees are elected to establish LGBs to focus this individuality and contextual reflection. To achieve this, Trustees are clear about the levels and areas of delegation of Trustee responsibility to a local level through a Scheme of Delegation. Please see Appendix 1 – Summary of ODBST scheme of delegation. Our LGBs have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and have the right skill set, (through a rigorous induction, ongoing training program) to ensure they drive a clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction within the ODBST family; hold leaders to account for the educational performance of their school, its pupils, and staff; overseeing the financial performance of the school with its delegated budget, making sure its money is well spent and assuming delegated responsibility for ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties. Having a local governing body is an essential feature of the ODBST as these local governors understand their schools well-the staff, the parents, the children, and the community. LGBs play a pivotal part in canvassing the views of our academies' stakeholders, which we believe is essential to the success of all our schools.

### **Trustees**

ODBST Trustees are appointed by Members. The Trustees set the strategic direction of the Trust, hold Senior Leaders to account and, as a business, oversee the Trust's financial performance. They are both company directors and charity Trustees for the ODBST. They retain overall responsibility for the operation of the ODBST and its academies and determine the level of delegation and the subsequent level of autonomy at the level where decisions can best impact on the quality of education and the experience pupils in the school.

### **Members**

The Members at ODBST are akin to the shareholders of a company. They have ultimate control over our Trust, with the ability to appoint the Trustees and the right to amend the Trust's articles of association.

#### **4. Academisation frequently asked questions and answers**

##### **a. What is an Academy?**

An academy is a government funded school that is independent to the Local Authority. Whilst academy status gives schools additional responsibilities and greater freedoms, in terms of the day to day functioning an academy will not be noticeably different for parents/the community compared to a Local Authority maintained school.

Responsibility for funding an academy, monitoring performance and any capital projects will fall to central government rather to local government, although in reality this will be via an Academy Trust.

If the decision is made to transfer to become an academy, the school and governing body will join an academy trust, which is a charitable company.

No one can make any money from the company. The company is limited by guarantee. It does not pay dividends and makes no profit.

##### **b. How much work is it to become an academy within an established Trust?**

The conversion process is managed by the ODBST team to enable the school to remain focused on the day to day running of their school. However, it helps if there is a standing Governing Body working group who can be involved in the statutory consultation. The school bursar and Headteacher will also need to be around in the run up to key dates identified by the DfE to ensure the various documents are signed and submitted in time.

##### **c. What does the conversion process involve?**

After you as a governing body have expressed an interest, and made the final decision to join the ODBST, you will need to register your request to join us, which will also need to be sent to the Diocese for approval. An application to the DfE for an Academy Order can be made at any stage of the process and does not commit you to becoming an academy within the ODBST, but usefully it releases Academy Support Grant funding that covers the costs of conversion (legal, new IT systems, and related set up costs) before works turn to detailed legal processes. You must complete a statutory consultation with interested parties before the funding agreement is signed, which is one of the final parts in the process.

##### **Key steps:**

1. The Governing Body formally agrees to consult on becoming an academy and within which MAT
2. Obtain the Secretary of State's initial consent by securing an "Academy Order"
3. Carry out the necessary consultation and decide to proceed
4. Agree a supplementary funding agreement with the DfE and the MAT
5. Ensure that the school site is made available to the MAT via leases and/or supplemental agreements
6. Ensure that financial systems are in place to manage funding
7. Transfer, renew or procure new contracts, service level agreements and licenses, and purchase insurance as appropriate
8. Transfer under TUPE all contract arrangements for staff. This is a formal legal consultation process which is separate from the consultation with all stakeholders. This would not start until after the vote by the Governing Body to apply for academy status

**d. How will the ODBST prioritise the order for conversion?**

The academy conversion journey will be individual to each school but will include a Due Diligence process which the ODBST carries out. The formal process can happen any time between applying for the Academy Order through to conversion. This process may identify issues which will require attention before conversion is complete. In conversation between the school, the Trust and the Local Authority, a convenient date for conversion will be developed and requested as part of the application process.

**e. How long does it take for a school to become an Academy?**

It is expected that most schools are able to convert to academy status in around five to eight months after achieving the initial DfE approval to proceed.

**f. Do schools need to consult before converting?**

Yes. All schools are required to carry out a consultation, but it is up to each school to decide whom and how to consult. There is no legally specified length of time for the consultation and schools have flexibility in how it is conducted. We are currently consulting with parents, staff, local schools, and the local community. We will also conduct information sessions for pupils.

**g. How should we engage interested parties?**

Whilst it is a legal requirement to carry out a consultation, there is no specification about how this should be carried out. An early consultation could take place at the point the governors are considering whether to become an academy asking opinions on whether to progress the idea, whereas later on in the process, the consultation would be more along the lines of whether there are objections to the proposal to become an academy with a specific MAT. A 4-week consultation period during term time with a public meeting is considered appropriate by the Diocese. ODBST will be present at the consultation meeting and will provide documents for the process. It should be noted that a public consultation is separate to the staff consultation which relates to TUPE.



## **5. School Improvement frequently asked questions and answers**

### **h. How many schools are in the Trust?**

Currently there are 11 school in the ODBST, 1 further school has an Academy Orders to join before the end of the academic year and there are others in the pipeline.

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

Of the schools in the ODBST, 1 school is not yet good – all the rest are good or better. Christ the Sower joined the ODBST in September 2018 as an inadequate school. We believe it to be judged as a good school now.

### **j. 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 just Ofsted, then 1 of the trust's schools joined in special measures and we believe it is now good. Thomas Harding Junior School, Great Horwood School, Padbury and St Johns have all been inspected this year, and 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: Assessment without level and tracking the assessments of pupils' outcomes; challenge and support cycles; governance and LGB training, HR services, well-being, and leadership development at all levels.

### **k. 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 and outstanding 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 Christ the Sower. 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.

### **l. 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. 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.

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.

### **m. What would happen to SEN 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.

**n. Will academies be free from Ofsted inspections?**

No, academies remain fully under Ofsted's inspection arrangements.

**o. 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

## **5. Finance frequently asked questions and answers**

### **a. How is the funding calculated for schools?**

Funding for academies is currently matched to the Average Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) in the LA in which the school sits. So, the ODBST schools are funded in the same way as maintained schools with a slight top-up to cover the LA central services which the school would have to source independently. The Education Funding Agency passes the funding to the ODBST monthly and this is then credited to each school's bank account for governors to decide how to spend. The ODBST has a % service charge for the services it provides to its schools which is kept centrally. Premises funding is now devolved to the ODBST, and we have a process for allocating most of this to the highest priority condition issues with allowance for schools to bid for smaller or undertake specific projects.

### **b. Can the ODBST change the funding formula for just one school in the Trust, or does the same formula apply to all schools?**

The same process for funding applies to all schools in the trust. Our master funding agreement with the DfE sets out how we are expected to manage funding, and this applies to all schools in the trust. Directors can remove delegation from a school if there is evidence that pupils' outcomes are not improving or that the LGB lacks the skills to manage their stewardship effectively – but this is the same power that the LA holds.

### **c. Is there a risk the ODBST could reduce our funding?**

So long as the funding formula stays the same then schools should receive the same funding. We are however in a world where national funding formulae are suggested, and this could see our schools get either more or less according to how this is designed.

### **d. Does the school have to cover the full cost to convert to an academy?**

No. The Department for Education currently pay a flat rate grant of £25,000 and the conversion is not expected to impact on the academy's revenue budget.

### **e. Will there be a capital fund or a specific grant for insurance to cover for emergencies in academies?**

Academies are required to cover insurance at specified minimum levels of cover. The ODBST will ensure that the necessary insurance is in place through the Government's approved insurance scheme (RPA).

### **f. Who would own the land and buildings?**

The land and buildings remain in their current ownership but are made available to the academy via a 125-year lease and/or a supplemental agreement.

### **g. Will we retain the existing financial systems?**

The financial system will change to better reflect the requirements of an academy Trust and meet the company accounts requirements.

#### **h. How would we get a capital building project carried out?**

The ODBST is part of a pooled capital funding scheme co-ordinated through the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE) and is awarded an annual allocation from the Department for Education. This is allocated to schools on the basis of our condition surveys. Our condition survey will be updated as part of the conversion process.

We will continue to receive an annual allocation for small capital projects as we do currently.

#### **i. As a school, we were left money in trust. We are working on plans which would use much of that money, but what effect would joining ODBST have on our ability as a governing body to choose how that money is spent?**

Any money left in trust to a school, remains in trust and under the ownership of the trustees. Conversion would have no impact on how it is spent. ODBST would only seek to reassure itself that the company's good name or reputation was not compromised by the actions or decisions of trustees of any private fund.

#### **j. Would this have any impact on our funding from the ODBST?**

Not on the base funding – however if there were any decisions made by private fund trustees to, for example fund an employee, ODBST would expect any such payment to be made through the school's payment mechanisms and so vectored through the school's main bank account.

#### **k. Can you advise us of the tender process which ODBST undertakes for contractors/suppliers?**

In most cases this is a local decision – however for core processes (i.e., payroll) we undertook a classic tender process with board level decisions. In some cases, schools are beginning to want to explore joint/shared procurement and officers would use leadership briefings to explore these areas with our schools.

#### **l. We still need to pay our service agreement charge to the diocese schools support or would that be part of the ODBST offer?**

The core package of ODBE support is included within the ODBST service charge.

#### **m. What is ODBST policy on selling school assets...e.g., playing fields?**

Any assets are on lease to ODBST only, so we have no power to sell them.



## **6. Human Resources frequently asked questions and answers**

### **a. What happens to all of the staff?**

All staff are entitled to transfer, under TUPE regulations, to the Academy with their same terms and conditions as at present.

### **b. Can academies alter the pay and conditions of employees?**

When a school converts to a new academy, employees are entitled to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions. There is a legal process to go through, which is called TUPE, whereby staff maintain existing pay, conditions and length of service. Any alterations can only be made as they would have been by the Council (for example, changes to pay and annual leave negotiated with employee's representatives). This position will continue unless and until the contract of employment is varied with the agreement of the employee.

It is important to note that there are no plans to alter the pay and conditions of staff. Of course, any changes made nationally would apply.

### **c. How will union membership (NUT, NASUWT, Unison, etc.) work?**

Union recognition would remain as it currently stands; all employees are entitled to be part of a union.

### **d. Can you advise on any changes to pensions and employment details for staff?**

Current employees undergo a TUPE process which protects their pay and conditions at the point of transfer – this applies to both teaching and non-teaching staff. The ODBST is a member of the TPA and LGPS and has chosen to maintain the Teachers pay and Conditions as set out in the latest STPCD. Non-teaching staff continue to be paid using Green Book and local salary scales (where applicable).

### **e. Can you advise on the training and support for our school admin/bursar with regard to monthly budgeting/finance system?**

All our bursars get extensive training, and the finance team provides half-termly meetings/briefings for finance managers to come together to discuss their work. We have finance team members who will work in schools where there are particular needs.

### **f. What support is there for schools with recruitment?**

Our HR team will support schools with day-to-day recruitment queries. In terms of selection processes, the ODBST would support any leadership recruitment but we tend to find that schools want to manage other roles internally.

### **g. Will the school need to employ additional support staff to cope with the change of status?**

Many of the additional tasks associated with conversion and academy status are met by the ODBST or School Business Manager, Headteacher or Chair of Governors. It is not anticipated that further support staff would be required. However, the Governing Body would need to keep this under review.



## **7. Admissions frequently asked questions and answers**

### **a. Will admissions to the school change?**

Upon conversion, the admission arrangements will not change as they will remain the same as the local authority arrangements, although the governing body will become the admissions authority for the school. If any changes are proposed in the future to admission arrangements, there would be a full consultation prior to any changes being made in accordance with the School Admissions Code 2014. Our admission arrangements will be published on our website well in advance of each academic year.

The Local Authority retains responsibility for co-ordination of admission arrangements for entry into normal entry points to the school (i.e., Year R).

## **8. Governance frequently asked questions and answers**

### **a. 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 will also be established which will be responsible for the day-to-day operational matters, and accountable to the board of Trustees.

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

### **b. What will happen to local links and partnerships that we already have?**

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

### **c. 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 draft Scheme of Delegation is available for schools to consider.

### **d. 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, just as in the same way the Local Authority could at present. Whilst such a scenario hasn't arisen to date, we would always seek to discuss matters firstly with the local governing body.

### **e. What Governor requirement will the ODBST place on the school, e.g., x parish councilors, y diocese governors etc.?**

The model for a Church of England converter is HT, 2 elected parents, 1 elected staff, 8 Foundation. In practice we normally find the existing governing body is accommodated in the new local governing body; if there are vacancies at the point of conversion we would work with the school to help fill them; if there are more than 12 governors at the point of conversion we find we are usually able to accommodate them and then through time if governors leave, they aren't replaced until the number overall reduces to 12.

**f. 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.

**g. Would it be possible for a governor from one of the existing ODBST schools to attend a Full Governing Body meeting to inform us of the process and the pros and cons of the ODBST academy?**

We can provide you with a listing of Chairs of Governors at other schools and you would be welcome to contact any of them. Please contact us for more information.

**h. Who has the power to close an academy?**

There is a strict legal process to close a school, which is greater for church schools, as it requires the involvement and consent of the Diocese. For all schools there would need to be a public consultation to explain the actions of the trust.

There are a number of other possible ways an academy could shut.

- i. The Academy Trust (and the DfE) could give 7 years notice to terminate the funding agreement without any specific reason.
- ii. If the DfE, was unhappy with the educational (or financial standards) in the Academy they could terminate the funding agreement (and thereby force closure) after issuing appropriate warnings.
- iii. After receipt of the annual funding letter, the Academy Trust could give notice to terminate the funding agreement at the end of the financially critical year if the funding could make the school insolvent - after taking into account any resources available from other schools in the Trust.





# Governors' Briefing Pack

## Appendices





## Appendix 1 – Summary of ODBST scheme of delegation

### Key Principles of Delegation (Sept 2022)

Key Function	Trust Responsibility: Trustees*	LGB Responsibility: Governors*
<b>Vision and Ethos</b>	Sets Vision and Ethos for the MAT	Ensures implementation and adaption to meet the specifics of the school; provides scrutiny, monitors and reports on Vision and Ethos
<b>Target Setting</b>	Sets key performance indicators and agrees improvement and attainment targets	Recommends improvement and attainment targets and reports on progress
<b>Academy Budget</b>	Approval of annual budgets and variations	Oversees the setting of a budget for the school including the staffing structure for the school and recommends to the Trust for agreement Monitors and assures budget is appropriately spent
	Sets and reviews delegation limits	Operates within defined financial delegation limits Oversees, with support, virement across budget headings
<b>Staffing</b>	Formally agrees the appointment of a Headteacher  Supports with officer attendance the appointment of other leadership posts, including the school business manager.  Suspension and dismissal of Headteacher  Sets pay policy and discretions for all employees  Establishes performance management policy	Confirms the appointment of all staff following a suitable recruitment event to ODBST HR staff  Recommends to the Trust appointment of the Headteacher after agreement from attending officers  Undertakes all disciplinary procedures below Headteacher level  Agree any salary changes or levels within the budget  Actions the performance management of the headteacher with external advisory support by ODBST/ODBE  Ensures implementation, provides scrutiny of effectiveness, monitors and reports on staff appraisal and performance management including any arising salary decisions.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Establishes overarching curriculum policy/statement	Ensure implementation of Trust's expectations for curriculum intent  Sets subject specific curriculum policies incl. SMSC  Provides scrutiny of effectiveness, monitors, and reports
<b>Discipline and Exclusions</b>	Establishes behaviour statement  Supports the management of exclusion appeals	Ensure implementation, provides scrutiny of effectiveness, monitors, and reports  Responds to exclusion appeals and costs of additional members

<b>Admissions</b>	Sets admissions policy and acts as admissions authority,	Determines applications against the policy criteria for in-term applications Manages appeals against admissions decisions
<b>Premises</b>	Develops and implements buildings strategy and management	Maintains small scale repairs and maintenance Propose projects for consideration under shared SCA responsibility
<b>Health and Safety</b>	Develops Health & Safety Policy Provides H&S support, guidance, and reporting through retained 'competent person'. Provides software to monitor H&S	Ensures implementation, provides scrutiny of effectiveness, monitoring and reports.
<b>School Organisation</b>	Responsible for all aspects of school organisation, including increases in numbers etc. Agree any significant changes proposed for academies in the Trust Manage expressions of interest from schools joining the Trust Provides insurance for all schools in the Trust	Provide information about admissions and local pressure on places Develop any plans of action and the business case for changes in age range or significant size increase or other changes. Monitor and provide information around insurance claims etc.
<b>Information for Parents</b>		Develops prospectus, reports to parents and parental engagement activities
<b>Governing Body Procedures</b>	Establishes Local Governing Bodies and ensures effective operation Recommends Foundation Governors for appointment to ODBE Agrees other governor appointments.	Ensures election of parent and staff governors; sourcing and suggest appointment of other (co-opted) Governors
<b>Extended School</b>		Determines and manages range of extended activities with financial agreement

## Governance Structure 2022-23

				Date Appointed	
<b>Members</b>	Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft Oxford Diocesan Board of Education acting corporately (Current named officer: Gordon Joyner) Peter Norman			01/09/2017  01/09/2017 01/09/2017	
	Name	Appointed date	Appointing Body	Office	Position
<b>Trustees</b>	Michael Mill	01/09/2021	Members	4 years	Chair of Trustees
	Rt Revd Dr Alan Wilson	01/09/2017 <i>Term of office renewed on 1/9/2021</i>	Members	4 years	
	Michael Phipps	01/09/2017 <i>Term of office renewed on 1/9/2021</i>	Members	4 years	Vice Chair of Trustees
	Denise Shepherd	01/09/2021	Members	4 years	Chair of the Academy Effectiveness Committee
	Andrew Jeffrey	12/07/2019	Members	4 years	Chair of the Finance, Resources, Audit, Pay and Personnel Committee
	Tony Wilson	07/01/2019	Ex Officio	4 years	Ex officio as Director of Education for ODBE
	Sulina Piesse	01/01/2021	Ex Officio	4 years	Chief Executive Officer
	Revd Rosie Harper	01/09/2017 <i>Term of office renewed on 1/9/2021</i>	Members	4 years	
	Pragasen Morgan	01/09/2021	Members	4 years	
<b>Trustees who resigned within the last 12 months</b>	Malcolm Peckham	05/11/2018	Members		Resigned 14/07/2022
	Aman Aujla	12/7/2019	Members		Resigned 14/7/2022
	Nat Wakely	20/03/2018	Members		Resigned 29/3/2022

Committees	Academy Effectiveness (AEC)	Finance, Resources, Audit, Pay and Personnel (FRAPP)	Executive Committee
	Denise Shepherd (Chair) Michael Phipps (VC) Michael Mill Rosie Harper Rt Revd Dr Alan Wilson Sulina Piesse Tony Wilson	Andrew Jeffrey (Chair) Michael Phipps (VC) Sulina Piesse Pragasen Morgan	(Chair and vice chair of the board + chairs of FRAPP and AEC) Michael Mill Michael Phipps Denise Shepherd Andrew Jeffrey
<b>Local Governing Bodies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Padbury CE School (Previously VA)</li> <li>• Great Horwood CE School (Previously VC)</li> <li>• St John's CE Combined School (Previously VA)</li> <li>• Chesham Bois CE School (Previously VC)</li> <li>• Thomas Harding Junior School (Community)</li> <li>• Longwick CE Combined School (Previously VC)</li> <li>• Christ the Sower Ecumenical School – sponsored (previously VA)</li> <li>• Woodside Junior School (Community)</li> <li>• St Mary's CE Combined School (Previously VC)</li> <li>• Curzon CE Combined School (Previously VA)</li> <li>• Elmtree Infant and Nursery School (previously Community)</li> </ul>		(Using the agreed schemes of delegation for VC, VA and Community schools as indicated on the ODBST website)

## Appendix 2 – Our Member and Trustee profiles

### ODBST Members

#### **The Rt. Revd. Dr. Steven Croft**

The Rt. Revd. Dr. Steven Croft became Bishop of Oxford in 2016. He was previously the Bishop of Sheffield, team leader of Fresh Expressions, Warden of Cranmer Hall, and Vicar of Ovenden in Halifax. He is co-author of Emmaus and Pilgrim Resources. His latest book is The Gift of Leadership (Canterbury Press, 2016).

#### **Oxford Diocesan Board of Education**

**Oxford Diocesan Board of Education acting corporately (current named officer: Gordon Joyner).** The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education is a member acting corporately by hand of one of its directors.

#### **Peter Norman**

Peter was head of The Warriner School, Oxfordshire (2001 - 2007) and Waddesdon Church of England School, Buckinghamshire (2007 - 2017). He has served as an ex-officio governor at both The Warriner and Waddesdon CofE School and as a parent governor and chair of governors at Waddesdon Village Primary School, Buckinghamshire. Peter is a member of the Diocese of Oxford Board of Education and currently chairs the School Effectiveness Committee and serves on the Executive Committee.

### **ODBST Trustees**

#### **The Bishop of Buckingham (Rt Revd Dr Alan Wilson)**

The Bishop of Buckingham (Rt Revd Dr Alan Wilson) has served in the Diocese of Oxford since 1979, at Balliol College 1979-81 and NSM at Eynsham, then Curate of Caversham & Mapledurham (1982-89), and first incumbent of St John the Baptist Caversham from 1989-92. Moving to Sandhurst as Rector in 1992, he contributed to continuing ministerial education by developing residential training workshops in supervision skills for training incumbents, and as a Diocesan Work Consultant.

He led the planning group for the Diocesan Convention at High Wycombe in 2002. He was Area Dean of Sonning from 1998-2003, and honorary Canon of Christ Church, Oxford 2002-3. In October 2003 he became Area Bishop of Buckingham.



### **Tony Wilson**

Currently the Director of Education for the Diocese of Oxford, Tony possesses extensive headship experience including providing intervention for schools in challenging circumstances as well as leading a school designated as outstanding. Tony has led two different schools towards good and in another was able to raise the school's Progress 8 performance from being well below average to above the national average at the same time as eradicating a budget deficit of -£2 million. He oversees all aspects of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education's work across 283 schools, 19 MATs and 9 local authorities. In addition, Tony has international school improvement and system leadership experience gained from his role as Principal Education Consultant in The Kingdom of Bahrain and is the director of an educational consultancy.

### **Denise Shepherd**

A highly successful senior educational leader with over 30 years of experience. Headteacher of an outstanding Grammar School, National Teaching School, and National Support School. The founding CEO of the Thinking Schools Academy Trust a high performing Multi-Academy Trust in the Southeast (TSAT). A designated National Leader of Education since 2010 and an elected member of SESL Headteacher Board advising the RSC. As CEO Denise has successfully sponsored and turned around several high-profile failing schools. After leaving TSAT at the end of 2016 Denise supported a small MAT of Free Schools to improve their educational standards, develop and undertake their first Ofsted inspections. All schools were rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted 2017-2019.

### **Rosie Harper**

Rosie runs a three church Parish with a large turnover. Rosie is a member of the Archdeaconry senior staff with oversight of 270 churches, a member of Bishop's Council: The Governing body of the Diocese of Oxford, and a trustee of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance. She is an elected member of The General Synod of the Church of England.

She is the chair of the Oxford Nandyal Education Foundation -an education charity in India. All these roles give her experience of Trusteeship, strategic planning, financial planning and compliance, change management, values-based judgement, safeguarding matters and relationship and team building.

### **Michael Phipps**

Michael is a retired Department for Education senior civil servant, who had responsible for policy advice to Ministers on school sector, managing passage of education legislation through Parliament, delivering various school standards programmes, and directing various major public expenditure programmes amounting to several hundred £million.

He has been chair of governors of Seer Green CE Primary Academy for the last 5 years steering its academy conversion in 2013 and preparation for successful Ofsted and SIAMS inspections in 2017; initiating development of the new vision, values and strategic 5-year plan; introducing new school and governing board self-evaluation programmes; he led the headteacher recruitment process in 2015/16; is chair of its admissions and performance management committees, and of various working groups.

Michael is an experienced trustee of several charities both large and small. He chaired two Quaker church boards of trustees: one local for Buckinghamshire (annual turnover up to £100k), one national for whole of UK (100+ staff, annual turnover £10m).

### **Michael Mill**

Michael has had significant experience in the public sector in local government, consultancy, and a senior position within a diocese, involving both policy development, setting strategic direction, providing support to a range of stakeholders and project management. Michael is a highly self-motivated professional with extensive experience of delivering innovative solutions which have helped schools and local authorities get the best out of national programmes whilst meeting local priorities and objectives. Michael has a strong background in partnership working with demonstrable success in developing effective networks and has knowledge of the operation of the charitable sector. He has demonstrated an ability to create new organisations implementing complex projects to time and budget whilst meeting the needs of a variety of stakeholders and leading a variety of large successful teams.

### **Andrew Jeffrey**

Andrew is currently a manager in the 'Not for Profit' team at Cooper Parry which has a significant Not for Profit and Academy presence in the Midlands. Andrew joined Cooper Parry in August 2019 when the Education team at Whitley Stimpson Limited transferred their Academy and Not for profit portfolio to facilitate the team's growth and knowledge base. He has over 12 years 'experience with audit and accounting. In 2014 he joined the Whitley Stimpson newly created Education team, having previously completed his training as a Chartered Accountant there.

Andrew specialises in the education and charity sector and has worked with, and advised, a diverse range of educational organisations, including Academies, Free Schools, Independent Schools, Further Education colleges, Catholic Education offices and systemic schools as well as a wide range of local, regional, and national charities. Andrew's role in particular within the education team has been to work closely with Academy Trusts, not only through the audit and production of year end accounts, but also providing financial advice and support to schools and assisting them in undertaking and completing the relevant reporting requirements of the ESFA.

He has also been a church warden within his local community since 2012.

### **Sulina Piesse, ex-officio, Chief Executive Officer**

Sulina is the Chief Executive Officer for the ODBST. Sulina has worked in education for 20 years and has been a senior leader for the last 13 years. She has held two successful headships where outcomes for children both academically and personally have been strong. Sulina is well versed in all areas of school improvement having had training as an Ofsted Inspector. She has mainly spent her career in Secondary education, although the latter part of her work has been with Primary as well. She has a fervent passion for teaching languages and has taught French and Spanish in an array of different schools across all age ranges. She has led on whole school projects and has often been contracted to provide training on whole school curriculum and timetabling and has been instrumental in working on new school capital build projects. As a passionate educationalist, she holds a Master's in Education, the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers and is currently completing her Doctorate in Education.

### **Pragasen Morgan**

Prior to joining the OBDST, Pragasen has been the Chair of Governors for Christ the Sower primary. He then supported the transition of the school to the ODBST family. He is also a partner with EY and is a specialist in Technology Risk and Governance. He has a strong understanding of Board risk and has worked closely with a number of organisations to manage risk and create value. He is passionate about education and also has a role with EY in Diversity and Inclusion. He also works with a number of organisations and charities which support minority ethnics or previously disadvantaged access education.

### Appendix 3 - Our Unique selling points as a Church of England Trust

- We are a trust with clarity about our mission and vision, with our strong Christian ethos underpinning everything we do
- Our strategic plan seamlessly sits within academy plans
- There is clear accountability that enables discussions to take place from the Trust Board Chair to the CEO, the Trust Board Chair to Chair(s) of any local governing bodies, the CEO to Principals and Principals to their team members that improves standards
- The Trust has a common understanding of what outstanding performance is and has a strong, bespoke Professional Development program to support staff across all our schools
- Our local governing bodies are effective at quality assuring standards at their school and the CEO, and the Shared Service Team are subject to the same scrutiny
- The Trust continuously supports and challenges its schools to be able to serve the community and ensure all children live life in its fullness
- The Trust's school improvement strategy is built around an emerging pool of talented teachers and leaders who know the impact of their work and can name it and describe it
- The Board risk is managed well and there is a clear relationship between risk and mitigation
- The Trust has a talent management plan that has matured and now includes staff at all levels across the Trust
- Senior leaders are encouraged to support in more than one Trust academy and middle leaders and the best teachers are deployed across the Trust to sustain and deepen impact
- The Trust is a key part of the regional system leadership capacity to improve standards for all and works to support and challenges new and experienced schools
- Our Shared Services Team are available to offer tailored one to one advice in their key areas of expertise to schools
- ODBST are proud to have signed up to the Department for Education's Staff Well-Being Charter and established a well-being ambassador group to enhance staff well-being across the Trust. We have open channels of communication and encourage well-being suggestions from our staff
- ODBST run a comprehensive and accessible CPD program throughout the academic year; this includes tailored Subject Leader sessions and evening-based Governor training. We are passionate about the development of the staff and volunteers in our schools



## Appendix 4 - ODBST's growth plan which shows how we can accommodate this application

### a. Why ODBST?

Headteachers and chairs of governors cite a strong sense of purpose and an aspiration to improve their schools within the supportive framework of a diocese with a powerful and proven track record in school support and challenge, as key drivers for joining ODBST. The Multi Academy Trust (MAT) structures allow member schools to build on existing partnerships, work collaboratively, and build on ODBST support for one another to improve pupil outcomes and the effectiveness of leadership, management, and governance.

The MAT model has also allowed them to capitalise on the benefits of this approach, including:

- sharing best practice
- economic benefits, such as centralised services
- the ability to focus funds where they are most needed
- increased and flexible staffing resources
- the opportunity to establish succession planning programmes and, in doing so, retain good staff who might otherwise move on – including headteachers

For ODBST schools, a MAT model has enabled them to remain local but also to grow and improve, finding support from a wider network of schools. Equally, the ODBST model offers a school the potential to retain its unique characteristics and maintain its own local governing body. It also offers headteachers a high degree of autonomy in leading their schools, whilst giving them the support and challenge to focus on teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Our schools all sought a MAT whose philosophy and values were strongly aligned with their own. They also valued the experience and expertise in school improvement that ODBST offered. This support structure, time and expertise made a significant difference to leaders and chairs of local governing bodies by allowing them to maintain a strong focus on teaching and learning.

Some schools are already seeing the benefits of being part of a MAT, including:

- high-quality staff development
- support for key HR, Operations and Finance functions
- established legal, site and transfer experience
- focused advice and guidance on admissions and the potential to review admission numbers and age ranges with confidence
- investment & understanding of school facilities & premises issues
- greater community involvement
- a clearer identity and focus
- a stronger focus on teaching and learning
- a stronger focus on data and pupil attainment
- more effective governance

## **b. What Next?**

A DfE- report, *multi-academy trusts Good practice guidance and expectations for growth* offered advice and guidance for board's wanting to expand and remain effective providers in the same position that ODBST finds itself in.

### **Growth and development**

The report is clear that effective providers:

- a. have clear and realistic visions for the future size and structure of the MAT
- b. have conducted a thorough, review of its own effectiveness and readiness for growth and in particular has a clear view of the skills it will need in its next phase of growth and robust plans in place to fill any gaps through training or recruitment
- c. have worked on common information management and reporting standards and processes across all schools in the MAT to enable comparison and aggregation of data at board level

### **Portfolio of schools**

- d. In most reports on MAT growth it is seen as preferable to have a mixed portfolio of schools – specifically a balance of sponsored and converter projects. Chains with exclusively primaries also appear to find it tougher – although our local diocesan evidence shows that primary specialists can thrive
- e. When planning growth trustees consider the geography of the MAT, planning development in terms of clusters and understand the risks of adding isolated schools to chains

### **People and leadership**

- f. The leadership of high performing chains tend to be focused around strong, ambitious, and determined leaders with clear moral purpose – an appetite to grow is healthy but in ODBST is focused on delivering great outcomes for the schools in the trust first.
- g. Vision and purpose are well understood throughout the organisation
- h. Appointing trustees with strong commercial skills at board level is seen as crucial - the importance of these skills increases when chains grow beyond 4 - 5 and ODBST has an active board with a clear match of skills to need
- i. High performing trusts like ODBST makes the most of cross-chain CPD and progression opportunities. This is particularly strong within the diocesan links
- j. As trusts grow beyond 5, a full-time financial director has been seen as essential and we have already recruited this person

### **Governance and finance**

- k. Clear accountability and governance are vital
- l. Proactive, innovative ways to achieve efficiencies
- m. Formulate a business model – capitalising on what others have done
- n. Keep the academy charge and central services under review
- o. Strong financial planning is vital. If you have very strong school improvement and nothing goes wrong you may be lucky for a while but cannot rely on this

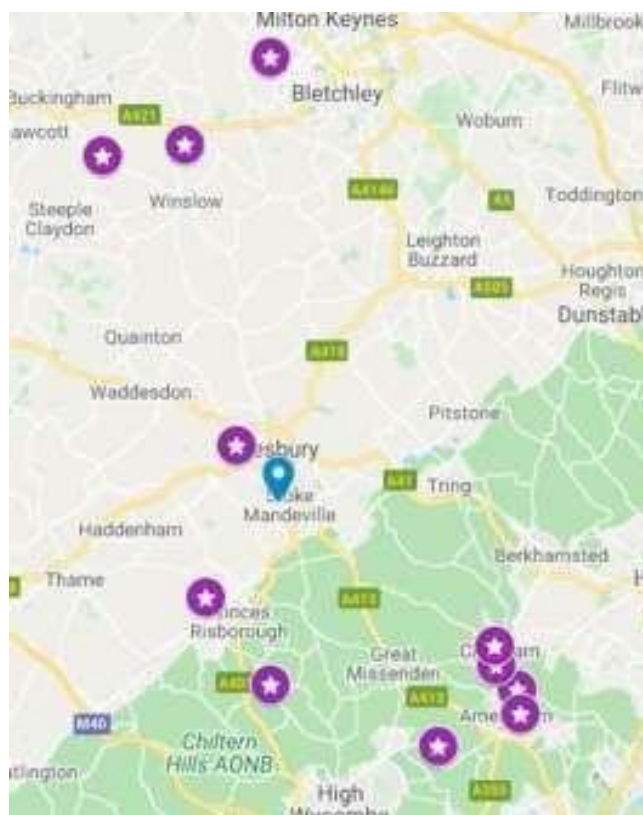
### **School improvement**

- p. The initial phase of development has been prescriptive even with schools which are performing well – but the trust takes swift and assertive action with failing schools

### c. Growth Strategy?

ODBST is growing its membership because:

1. It has come under pressure by schools that are aware of the continuing DfE direction for 'academisation' as the norm
2. The growing reputation and attraction for schools of ODBST considering becoming an academy.
3. Reduction in local authority services
4. The Regional Schools Commissioner's (RSC) provision of sponsored capacity for ODBST and statement of confidence in the trust as a capacity giver within the local system.
5. Active and effective marketing



#### ODBST Schools

- ✧ Chesham Bois CE School
- ✧ Thomas Harding Junior School
- ✧ Great Horwood CE School
- ✧ Padbury CE School
- ✧ St John's CE Primary School, Lacey Green
- ✧ Longwick CE Combined School
- ✧ Christ the Sower Ecumenical School
- ✧ Woodside Junior School
- ✧ St Mary's CE, Aylesbury
- ✧ Curzon CE Combined School
- ✧ Elmtree Infant School

Current regional structures allow us to consider schools in 2 areas of the Bucks and MK area:

- Northern Cluster - Aylesbury Vale, Milton Keynes
- Southern Cluster – Wycombe and Chiltern Areas

Expansion south of the M40 would necessitate a third hub focused around South Bucks.

Other applications which do not support this model will need careful consideration on the supporting structures and capacity of the MAT to take on additional geographical structures and direct permission from the RD/DfE.

**d. Agreed Growth Plan**

1. Trustees plan is for the Trust to growth at between 3 and 4 schools a year
2. Such growth will be within the episcopal area of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes and support the current cluster model
3. That such growth should consider the balance of schools so that resources and services are not impacted by taking on, for example significant numbers of sponsored academies or very small schools
4. Officers are empowered to talk to schools seeking information about academization and information about ODBST without approval from Trustees
5. Information about these contacts will be shared regularly within the 'pipeline' report to full board and committees
6. Minuted permission to move on an academy application will be confirmed by the production of a 'project plan' for each potential school prior to due diligence activities
7. Post due diligence at Trust Committee Meetings approval will allow Officers to move to an academy application and associated resource allocation to the project



## **Appendix 5 -ODBST's Shared Services Team offer**

### **ODBST enables school leaders to focus on the local needs of their school**

#### **Our ODBST School Improvement**

- A bespoke package of up to six school improvement support visits provided by ODBST officers and advisers
- Supporting the development of collaborations
- Attendance at Headteacher & other senior leader Interviews
- Brokering of leadership support
- Headteacher mentoring and coaching
- School Effectiveness Partner support for Section 5 Ofsted Inspections– this includes support for post inspection Statement of Action
- Headteacher performance management for those schools that require improvement, or which are in a category
- Compliance checks and contacts
- Professional learning and development including termly Subject Leader training and annual Leadership conferences for School Leaders and Governors.
- Respond to central and local government consultations and provide support for schools to engage in these
- Develop and consult on policies where statutory for the trust and provide guidance on other policies for LGBs and support materials to ensure compliance of schools with statute
- Unlimited 1:1 telephone and email access to advice from experienced BST advisers.

#### **In addition, the Oxford Diocese Board of Education will offer:**

- Two half day visits from ODBE advisers per year for primary schools or four half day visits for secondary schools on an agreed focus provided by ODBST
- DBE support according to need as agreed at the joint annual categorisation meeting. This may include support for:
- support for elements of leadership and governance including governance, subject/middle leadership
- Teaching & Learning – support for ECTs and other aspects of teaching. Curriculum, SIAMs inspection, RE subject leadership, Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development, worship
- For CE schools, one visit over three years to ensure the school meets the statutory responsibilities for RE/Collective Worship
- Co-ordination and quality assurance over Section 48 inspections (where applicable)
- Unlimited telephone and email access to advice from experienced ODBE advisers

#### **Finance & Operations**

- Individual school bank accounts enable local monitoring of cashflow and flexibility with purchasing
- Schools use the same financial IT system for budgeting and financial monitoring

- Annual external and internal audit requirements are centrally managed, including pension audits
- A support network for school business managers, including training
- Central team supports schools with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook
- One Gift Aid account with HMRC to recover gift aid claims, one registration for the Trust
- Centralised VAT recovery on behalf of the schools, again one registration
- SRMSAT submitted by Trust based on data from the common finance system
- Support for GDPR, H&S, Procurement (including economies of scale across multiple schools), Net Zero programme, risk management (support & advice on risk registers)

### **Human Resources**

- Support with the TUPE and onboarding process for existing staff
- Support from our team of HR professionals who know each school and are able to provide consistent advice and guidance on all aspects of HR (policies, recruitment, restructures, disciplinary, appraisal etc.)
- Trust (through its centrally appointed payroll provider) issue employment contracts, at the request of schools who lead on local recruitment
- Membership of the Teacher Pension Scheme and Local Government Pension Scheme ensures staff retain pension benefits
- Wellbeing helpline and resources (Health Assured)

### **Data Protection**

- ODBST has one registration with the ICO on behalf of all its schools and one central Data Protection Officer

### **Health and Safety**

- Our professional Health & Safety Competent Advisor engages regularly with schools to assure their legal duties, statutory requirements are carried out, offer training, ensure the school is safe and secure, and undertake an annual site inspection.

### **Admissions**

- The Trust Board is the admission authority, and the policy is written for schools centrally
- Support for School Admissions and Appeals is provided by the Diocese

### **Capital Projects**

- Large-scale capital projects are funded through School Condition Allocation (an allowance managed by the Diocese on behalf of the Trust) rather than through an annual application process into the DfE
- Devolved Formula Capital continues to be managed by the Local Governing Body, but is required to be authorised through the approved purchasing limit guidelines

Thank you for considering us as you think about your future plans.  
If we can help you in anyway, we will. Please feel free to  
contact us with your questions.

Academies within ODBST predominantly receive support from Trust officers and, for some specific areas, from colleagues from Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE). This support is funded through a central service charge, which is retained by the Trust from the funding provided to the school from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The central service charge reviewed annually. There are some mandatory systems, which may or may not be covered by the service charge. Please note, the details are subject to change.



## The Oxford Diocesan Bucks Schools Trust

Contact details: Sulina Piesse (ODBST CEO)



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