



*Our Children Thrive*

*Our Colleagues Thrive*

*Our Community Thrives*

## About us

Odyssey Collaborative Trust was formed in 2019 to provide opportunities for collaboration, support and challenge among schools in Derby, while allowing each school to retain its identity and accountability to its local community.

We have seven schools in our trust...

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Asterdale Primary   | Beaufort Primary  | Borrow Wood Primary   | Cherry Tree Hill Primary  | Oakwood Juniors   | Portway Juniors   | Springfield Primary   |
| Joined March 2019   | Joined April 2019   | Joined March 2019   | Joined April 2019   | Joined April 2021   | Joined April 2019   | Joined March 2019   |
| 221 pupils  | 263 pupils  | 296 pupils  | 615 pupils  | 346 pupils  | 319 pupils  | 328 pupils  |
| Head: John O'Leary  | Head: Kate Beecroft   | Head: Zoe Fletcher  | Head: Paul Appleton   | Head: CT Atwal  | Head: Emma Wilkinson  | Head: David Blackwell   |

A year ago, the Trust revisited what we wanted to achieve as an organisation. We agreed that our aims are that:

- Our Children Thrive
- Our Colleagues Thrive
- Our Community Thrives

For our children to thrive we will:

*Make sure children are at the heart of what we do. Schools will be a safe, caring and happy place for all to learn and achieve excellent outcomes.*

For our colleagues to thrive we will:

*Recruit and retain the best staff by being a great place to work and by providing our colleagues with support to grow and develop their careers in a professional and inclusive environment.*

For our community to thrive we will:

*Be at the heart of the Derby community, working with other civic partners to respond to needs of the city.*

Being transparent in the way we work and being answerable to the communities we serve is important to us. This report is designed to give information to a wide audience about how we are working towards our vision. Each year we publish an annual report and this can be read on our website. It goes into a lot of detail about how our schools operate, but this long and detailed document is written from a compliance perspective for the government who give us funding. As well as being accountable to the government, we believe it is important to be accountable to our staff, families and the local communities our schools serve. This report takes key information from our annual report and puts it in a more readable format.

A few notes on this report: This document is mainly focused on the work of the Trust's Central Team and activities that take place across all schools in the Trust. People connected to each of the schools will be aware of the many examples of the brilliant work happening in each school and you can see more of this through each school's website. This report covers up until January 2025, with the exception of finance, which relates to the period September 2023 - August 2024, our last audited financial year. Finance figures are rounded to the nearest thousand, or, for larger amounts, to the nearest hundred thousand. You can find more detailed information on the Trust website.

We hope you find the report useful. Please feel free to contact us via the details on the last page if you would like to know more about the work of the Trust.

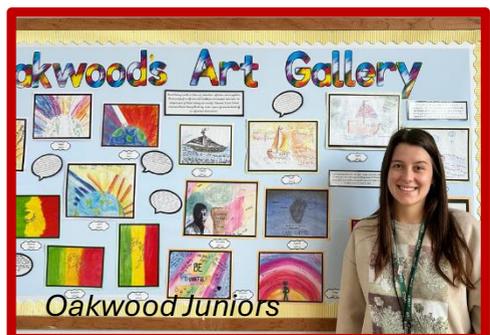
Ian Dewes, Chief Executive Officer

Jane Green and Phil Storer, Co-Chairs of Trustees

## Education

Our aim is for all pupils to experience excellent standards of education. Staff work hard across the Trust to carry out a wide range of activities to achieve this aim. Some of these are specific for each school and you can see some examples in the photos throughout this report. As well as this, schools' benefit from activities co-ordinated centrally, such as:

- Regular visits from our School Improvement Lead who supports in areas where the school's leadership team would benefit from help. This includes quality assurance activities with support from colleagues across the trust and support in any improvements identified.
- Checking different areas of a school's work like safeguarding and websites to help school leaders understand what is working well and what could be better.
- Professional development courses and opportunities for school leaders.
- Support from 'Trust Champion' colleagues with expertise in particular areas.
- Termly leadership networks for teachers who have leadership roles such as leading a particular subject.
- Annual Assessment Accuracy Checks where teachers across the Trust come together to discuss and compare assessments of children's learning in a particular year group.



Where schools require additional capacity, we have asked talented colleagues from across the Trust to support on a temporary basis for up to a year.

Keeping children safe is a vital part of the work of the trust. In the past year...

- All schools have continued to complete Derby Local Authority's annual audit of safeguarding, and improvements identified have been planned and actioned.
- On a two-year cycle, schools have a full external review of their safeguarding procedures.
- Schools have been supported in following safer recruitment procedures.
- In a small number of cases where concerns have been identified about a certain child's experiences at home, school leaders have worked hard to liaise with the relevant agencies to ensure that the child is protected.
- External experts have checked our systems and processes to ensure they work well.

## Community Links

Odyssey Collaborative Trust was set up with a focus specifically on the pupils and families of Derby. Each school has built strong links with local organisations and the Trust encourages these links. Through such relationships we are able to root ourselves in the work and needs of the communities our schools serve.

In the coming year we have some exciting developments, including:

- Working with the University of Derby as a 'delivery partner' to train the next generation of teachers.
- Opening a new Enhanced Resource Facility at Borrow Wood Primary School to cater for pupils across Derby with autism and high levels of need.
- Expanding the existing Enhanced Resource Facility at Springfield Primary from 30 pupils to 55.

Other examples of local collaboration include:

**Cultural organisations** such as Hot House Music, Derby Book Festival, Hallé Orchestra, Derbion Christmas Choir, the Derby Music Hub and Global Schools Alliance.

**Local charities** including Revive Healthy Living Centre, Aspire Food Hub, Derby Hospital Neo-natal Unit, the Padley Centre, Aquarius (drug and alcohol support for families), Treetops Hospice and the Bells of St. Mary's





**National charities** including World Mental Health Day, Comic Relief, Children in Need, Save the Children and events such as Jeans for Genes, Blue Monday and the British Legion's Poppy Appeal.

Promoting **healthy living** by working with sports organisations such as Derby County Community Trust, Cycle Derby and disadvantaged pupils have taken part in Derby County Football Club's 'Tea and a Tour'.

**Local businesses** including Rolls Royce, Severn Trent Water, Co-Operative shops, Birds Bakery and organisations related to businesses such as East Midlands Chamber of Commerce and Our Future.

**Emergency services** such as local Police Community Support Officers and the Derbyshire Fire Service and related organisations such as the Youth Justice Service and the Red Cross.

**Educational organisations** such as Our Future Derby, Derby University, Chaddesden Historical Group as well as the secondary schools our pupils go to and our feeder nurseries and infant schools.

**Care homes** for the elderly such as Laurels Nursing Home, Willowcroft Residential Home, The Park Residential & Nursing Home and Tree Tops Hospice.

Places of **religious workshop** such as Churches, Synagogues, Gurdwaras, Mandirs and Mosques as well as organisations such as The Open Centre and the Humanist Society.



## Finance

Our annual accounts detail key figures relating to the finances of the Trust for the year leading up to the end of August 2024. Rounded figures are as follows:

### Money we have received:

- Total incoming resources were £17.1m. This includes the money the government gives us to operate the schools, buy resources and pay staff, plus some additional money to improve some of the school buildings.
- The Trust was successful in bidding for £600,000 to improve the school buildings.

### Money we have spent:

- Total expenditure was £16.7m meaning we had a surplus of around £400,000. This was used to build up reserves (some of which has since been spent, see below).
- As is the case in all schools, staffing costs were the highest expenditure. Total staff costs (including pension costs) were £12.2m. 382 staff were employed at the end of the financial year.
- At Odyssey Collaborative Trust there are rigorous processes in place to ensure salaries are proportionate and lower than the sector average, meaning the Trust's central leadership costs are kept to a minimum.



The central function of the Trust costs £614,000. This funds the following services from the central trust team:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Support from the central team members, including access to support in school improvement, finance and operations | Support for writing documentation, such as those relating to Pupil Premium and sports funding |
| Auditors who give assurance that the trust's finances are sound  | Professional development opportunities for staff in different roles                           |
| Support with statutory policies  | Policy management with the majority of statutory policies written for the school              |
| Pension and actuary costs  | Headteacher performance management  |
| Facilitating of leadership networks  | Validation of school performance standards  |
| Support and advice regarding governance  |   |

It also includes the cost of the following services purchased by the Trust on behalf of schools:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Management Information System  | Education Welfare Officer – a person who helps with attendance                    |
| Writing and project managing bids for building improvements                        | Finance system and support  |
| A website for compliance and policy system   | Annual subscription to the School Bus   |
| Data Protection Officer. This includes help with any subject access data requests. | A centrally maintained register of contractors who can carry out work in schools. |
| Online training for all staff  | Free School Meal checking service   |
| Governance advice, National Governance Association gold package and Governor Hub   | Payroll services  |

In addition to the services listed above, the Central Team provide the following support and advice:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Monthly budget monitoring reports and regular finance meetings                     | Headteacher and leadership network meetings                                     |
| Training on new finance and budget systems   | Attendance at termly Health and Safety and property services visits if required |
| Regular SBM support meetings covering Health and Safety, Safeguarding, HR, Finance | Budget planning   |

This year we have pooled reserves across the Trust to allow money to be allocated to the area of most need. Twice a year schools can bid for money for particular priorities. Just under £300,000 was allocated to the following projects:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Asterdale        | School improvement activities                                     |
| Beaufort         | Refurbishment of the basement, extra leadership capacity          |
| Borrow Wood      | Laptops for pupils, money towards a bid to the DfE for a new roof |
| Cherry Tree Hill | Refurbishment of staff toilets                                    |
| Oakwood          | Money towards bids to the DfE for a new roof and improved drains. |
| Portway          | Money towards bids to the DfE for improved drains.                |
| Springfield      | Laptops and iPads for pupils                                      |

All academy trusts must have their finances independently audited each year. Our auditors are UHY Hacker Young and they have reviewed the financial activities of the Trust in detail. They have given assurance that the Trust's accounts meet all the laws and regulations they are obliged to meet. They have written a formal report as part of the Trust's full annual report. In this, they must report if they have any concerns over the Trust's accounts. They had no concerns to report. As part of the external audit process, UHY Hacker Young checked that money is being used appropriately.

## **Governance**

To provide added assurance, an academy trust has several layers of governance. At the top of the structure are the Members who check that the Board of Trustees are carrying out their duties. The Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for the activities of the schools in the Trust.

Trustees write a Scheme of Delegation which sets out what they do and what activities are delegated to others. Some are delegated to the Trust Central Team which includes the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Finance Officer, the Chief Operations Officer and a School Improvement Lead.

Complementing the Trust Central Team are a group of experienced colleagues who mostly work in one school but also support others in particular areas.

Some activities are delegated to each school's Headteacher or Local Governing Board. These people are focused on one of the Trust's schools, while the Trust Central Team work across the seven schools. Each Local Governing Board has a chairperson and meet regularly. Our members, trustees and local governors are all volunteers and we are grateful for the time they give to the Trust. If you are interested in being a governor at one of our schools, or on the board of trustees, let us know via the email address below!



*Thank you for your interest in Odyssey Collaborative Trust. We hope you have found this report useful. For more information visit our website or contact us at [enquiries@odysseyct.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@odysseyct.org.uk).*