



**Odyssey Collaborative Trust
Annual Report to School Communities
February 2024**



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
215 pupils	273 pupils	298 pupils	623 pupils	353 pupils	345 pupils	341 pupils
Headteacher: David Evans	Headteacher: Kate Beecroft	Headteacher: Zoe Fletcher	Headteacher: Paul Appleton	Headteacher: CT Atwal	Headteacher: Emma Wilkinson	Headteacher: David Blackwell

Why we have written this report

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 about what we do to a wide audience. Each year we publish an annual report which 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 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 2024, with the exception of finance, which relates to the period September 2022 - August 2023, 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, under financial reports.

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. We also have our Annual General Meeting on 27th February 2024. This is an important meeting where the governance structure of the Trust checks the Trust is being well run. If you have any comments or questions raised at the meeting, please email AGMquestions@odysseyct.org.uk and these will be shared with attendees.

Ian Dewes, Chief Executive Officer

Jane Green, Chair of Trustees

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.

Our Members	Our Trustees	
Krishna Naidu (Chair)	Jane Green (Chair)	Sam Mitchell
Arron Anderson	Natalie Fowkes	James Wright
Rev. Robert Atkins	Sarah Charles	Claire Brown
Jayde Tipper	Mike Moore	Jessica Barker
	Rose Richmond	

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 and the Chief Operations Officer and a School Improvement Lead.

The Trust Central team
Ian Dewes, Chief Executive Officer
Jo Bunting, Chief Finance Officer
Anita Breeze, Chief Operations Officer
Maxine Bull, Interim School Improvement Lead
Karen Windsor, Senior Administration and Finance Officer

Complementing the Trust Central Team are a group of experienced colleagues who mostly work in one school but also support others in particular areas. You can read more about these **Trust Champion** roles on the next page.

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.

	Chair of Local Governing Board
Asterdale	Simon Higginbotham
Beaufort	Jane Green
Borrow Wood	Laura Smith
Cherry Tree	Jennie Christie/Claire Farris
Oakwood	Rob Wood
Portway	Andy Ward
Springfield	James Wooley



One of Cherry Tree Hill's football teams.

Which activities are delegated can be seen in a document called the Scheme of Delegation. This sets out what different people at different levels of the organisation are responsible for. This document was rewritten in 2022 and you can be found on our website.



Reception pupils at Beaufort enjoying their new library.

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:

- Leadership networks, where colleagues across the Trust who have the same leadership role meet and learn from each other.
- Regular visits from our School Improvement Lead who supports in areas where the school's leadership team would benefit from help.
- Checking different areas of a school's work like safeguarding and websites to help school leaders identify areas of improvement.
- Professional development courses and opportunities for school leaders.
- Support from 'Trust Champion' colleagues with expertise in particular areas:

Paula Willis (Springfield) and Kerry Knowles (Asterdale) – Mental Health and Wellbeing Champions

Emily Maskell (Cherry Tree Hill) – Early Years Champion

Adilah Hussain (Springfield) – Teaching and Learning Champion

Laura Barrass (Cherry Tree Hill) – Teaching and Learning Champion

Claire Beecroft – Teaching and Learning Champion

Tracey Fletcher (Borrow Wood) – Pastoral Support

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.
- After a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice by our School Improvement Lead, schools have been supported to make improvements.
- 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.



Forest School at Portway

Cherry Tree Hill, Portway Juniors and Springfield all were inspected and were judged to have retained their 'good' outcomes. Borrow Wood were judged to be 'good' overall for the first time since 2015 and inspectors identified practise in two areas as 'outstanding'. After a period of considerable change in leadership positions at Beaufort Primary School, the school was judged to be 'requires improvement' as was the case at Asterdale. Inspectors at both schools acknowledged there were clear signs of improvements, and both schools are receiving additional support which was praised in both reports.



Children from Springfield touring Pride Park with Chinese pupils.

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. We work closely with the local authority in a range of areas and other examples include:

Local charities including Aspire Food Hub, the Padley Centre Derbyshire Children's Holiday Centre, Aquarius (drug and alcohol support for families) and the Bells of St. Mary's

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

Cultural organisations such Derby Book Festival, Hallé Orchestra, Derbion Christmas Choir, the Derby Music Hub

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.

Promote **healthy living** by working with sports organisations such as Derby 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, Birds Bakery and organisations related to businesses such East Midlands Chamber of Commerce and Our Future.

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 The Open Centre and the Humanist Society.

Educational organisations such 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.

Children at Oakwood embarking on a residential trip.



Finance

Our annual accounts detail key figures relating to the finances of the trust for the year leading up to the end of August 2023. Rounded figures are as follows:

Money we have received:

- Total incoming resources were £16.4m. 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 more than income as it was decided to invest reserves into improving some of the school buildings and IT. This included new outdoor areas in for Early Years pupils in two schools, improved play areas in another two schools, improved IT in two schools. Other schools have benefitted from improved fencing, refurbished staff toilets and a new boiler. Owing to this, reserves across the Trust reduced from £1.6m to £1.3m.
- As is the case in all schools, staffing costs were the highest expenditure. Total staff costs (including pension costs) were £11.9m. 390 staff were employed at the end of the financial year.
- There have been some academy trusts where there have been controversies over the pay of the Chief Executive Officer. 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 £590,000. 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	Professional development opportunities for staff in different roles
Auditors who give assurance that the trust's finances are sound	Support for writing documentation, such as those relating to Pupil Premium and sports funding
Trade Union Facilities time and negotiations with unions on relevant matters	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	Statutory policies support

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 & budget systems	Attendance at termly Health & Safety and property services visits if required
Fortnightly SBM support meetings covering Health & Safety, Safeguarding, HR, Finance	Budget planning

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.

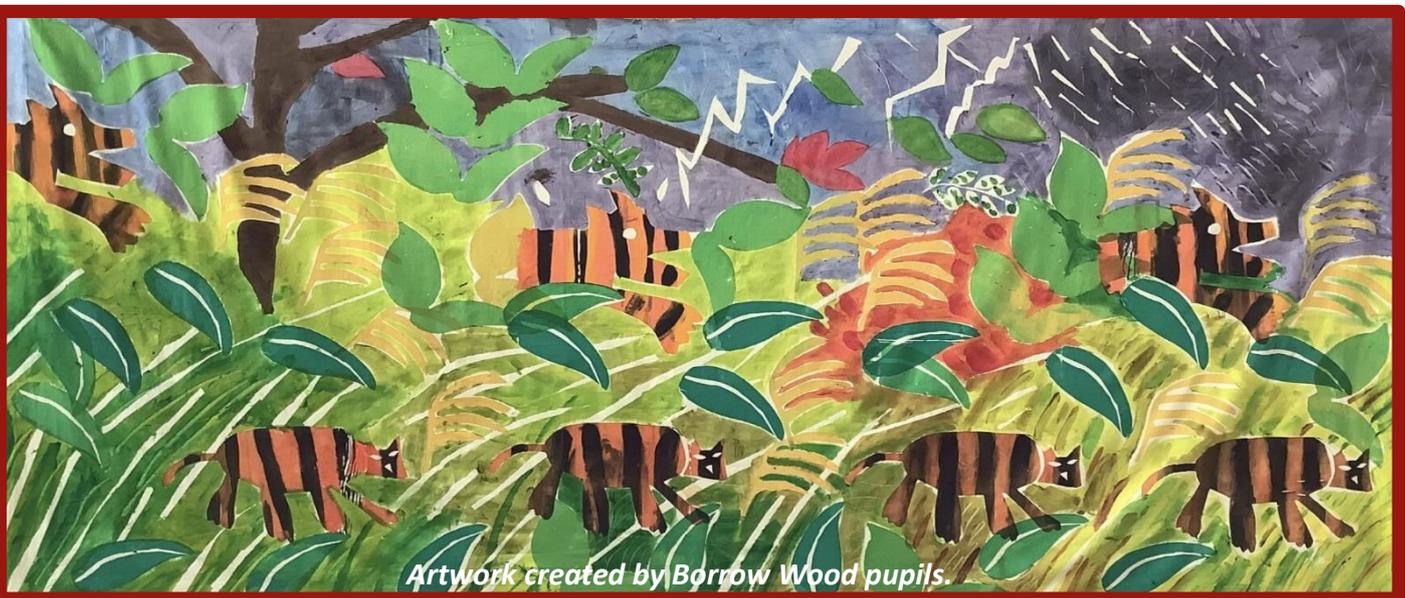
As well as external auditors, all academy trusts are required to undergo an internal audit process. While this can be carried out by the Trust's own staff, as an additional level of scrutiny, the Trust has chosen to use an external audit firm for this purpose. Smith Cooper were employed to carry out a series of checks and their very positive findings were shared with the Trust's central team and the Board of Trustees.



Forest school at Asterdale.

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.

Ian Dewes and Jane Green, January 2024



Artwork created by Borrow Wood pupils.