



Odyssey Collaborative Trust
Annual Report to School Communities
2023

Who we are

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 |
| 238 pupils | 299 pupils | 346 pupils | 631 pupils | 345 pupils | 339 pupils | 338 pupils |
| Headteacher: David Evans | Headteacher: Pam Baker | Headteacher: Zoe Fletcher | Headteacher: Paul Appleton | Headteacher: CT Atwal | Headteacher: Emma Wilkinson | Headteacher: David Blackwell |

Why we are writing 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.

Academy trusts are highly accountable, more so than maintained schools. For example, we have to publish annual accounts which contain information about how money is spent, the Trust's main achievements in the past year and arrangements for governance. The accounts are long and detailed and are designed to ensure compliance with the requirements placed on academy trusts, rather than be read by staff and parents. Consequently, we have written this document to highlight key messages from our annual accounts and also provides details about education in our schools and our work in the Derby community. Unlike our accountability to the government, there is no legal requirement surrounding accountability to our local communities, but as a trust we think this is of equal importance and so we hope as many people as possible read this report. If you would like to read our full accounts, they can be found on our website under 'financial statements'.

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 2023, with the exception of finance which relates to September 2021 - August 2022, our last audited financial year. Finance figures are rounded to the nearest thousand, or for larger amounts, to the nearest hundred thousand.

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.

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) | Gareth Allen |
| 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. In addition, in September last year we recruited to a new role – School Improvement Lead. For this role we appointed Gayle Bacon, an experienced Headteacher and OFSTED Inspector. Gayle helps our schools to provide the best possible education for pupils.

| The Trust Central team |
|--|
| Ian Dewes, Chief Executive Officer |
| Jo Bunting, Chief Finance Officer |
| Anita Breeze, Chief Operations Officer |
| Gayle Bacon, School Improvement Lead |
| Karen Windsor, Senior Administration and Finance Officer |
| Hollie Moore, Administration Apprentice |

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:

| | Chair of Local Governing Board |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Asterdale | Evonne Williams |
| Beaufort | Marion Close |
| Borrow Wood | Christine Merrick |
| Cherry Tree | Jennie Christie |
| Oakwood | Libby Partridge |
| Portway | Andy Ward |
| Springfield | James Wooley |



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.



Pupils at Cherry Tree Hill alongside the Bee Monument, a giant sculpture made out of weapons that is used to promote anti-violence education.



Pupils from Oakwood Juniors after winning a national competition promoting reading for pleasure.

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.
- Weekly or fortnightly 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) – Writing Champion

Laura Barrass (Cherry Tree Hill) – Teaching Professional Development Champion

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.

- All schools have had a comprehensive review of safeguarding practice and guidance.
- The Trust has revised and implemented better ways of safely recruiting staff.
- 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 authorities to ensure that the child is protected.
- External experts have checked our systems and processes to ensure they work well.



A Borrow Wood pupil competing in a Cyclo-cross competition against other schools.



All of our schools have a 'good' OFSTED grade with the exception of Borrow Wood whose last inspection had an outcome of 'requires improvement'. The trust believes it currently offers a good level of education and are confident this will be reflected in the next inspection. This view has been verified by external experts.

Pupils and staff from Springfield with England manager Gareth Southgate

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 such as Spondon Relief, Revive Healthy Living Centre, the Padley Centre and food banks, both those in our community and in our schools.

Cultural organisations such as Derby Book Festival, Chaddesden Historical Group, Derbion Christmas Choir Competition, Derby Dance Works and a range of libraries local to our school (including lobbying for the continued operations at Spondon Library).

Emergency services such as local Police Community Support Officers and the fire service at Nottingham Road.

Organisations which promote **sports and healthy lifestyles** such as Cycle Derby, Derby Sports Partnership and Derby County Community Trust.

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.

East Midlands Chamber of Commerce and local businesses such as Birds Bakery, Rolls Royce, local Co-Operative stores, Celanese, JCB, Asda, Severn Trent Water, CEVA.

Care homes for the elderly such as Laurels Nursing Home, Willowcroft Residential Home, Tree Tops Hospice.

Religious organisations such as St. Werburgh's Church, Derby Open Centre and St. Mary's Church, Chaddesden.



Pupils from Beaufort in their new football kit before a game (it didn't stay this clean!)



Pupils from Asterdale decorating the local Christmas tree with councillors.

Finance

Our annual accounts detail key figures relating to the finances of the trust for the year leading up to the end of August 2022. Rounded figures are as follows:

Money we have received:

- Total incoming resources were £16,300,000. 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 £583,000 to improve the school buildings.

Money we have spent:

- Total expenditure was slightly less than income – a surplus of £23,000 was recorded.
- As is the case in all schools, staffing costs were the highest expenditure. Total staff costs (including pension costs) were £12,100,000. 363 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.

It is important that our schools have some money in reserve, but not too much, as the money should be spent on pupils' education. The main source of funding for each school is called the General Allocation Grant and we aim for each school to have between 5% and 8% of this sum in reserve. In Autumn 2022 there were considerable cost pressures on schools, due to an unfunded pay rise for staff announced by the government and rising energy costs. Consequently, the Trust is looking to keep reserves high until there is more certainty over costs.

The central function of the Trust costs £530,000. This funds the following services from the central trust team:

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| 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:

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|---|--|
| Management Information System | Education Welfare Officer – a person who helps with attendance |
| Writing and project managing bids for building improvements | Finance system and support |

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|--|---|
| 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 nothing 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.

Thank you for you 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 2023