



## **PRESS RELEASE - 6 MARCH 2019**

### **'LISTENING TRUST' ODST WELCOMES PRAISE FROM OFSTED INSPECTORS**

Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST), which comprises 33 schools in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, has been recognised for its strong values, leadership and outcomes for children, after being selected as the first multi-academy trust (MAT) in the country to undergo a newly-introduced 'Ofsted summary evaluation'.

Ofsted inspectors visited ODST between 8-11 January 2019 to conduct a whole-trust review, which included meeting with central staff and trustees, visiting schools and speaking to many headteachers and governors. Five trust schools were also inspected by Ofsted in the six months prior to the review, with positive reports.

A letter to ODST, published by Ofsted on 6 March, says 'The trust's 'common vision for the common good' permeates all aspects of its work', and recognises its 'commitment to preserving schools' individual characters'. It highlights the 'empowerment' felt by headteachers and governors, who describe ODST as 'a listening trust' and value the level of responsibility and freedom they have, for example to 'design a curriculum suited to the needs of their pupils.'

The report notes that 'leadership and teaching are effective' and strengths in early years, phonics and key stage 1 were identified in school inspections. Inspectors also highlighted the steady increase in pupil attainment at key stage 2.

Ofsted also found that:

- Children in ODST schools are kept safe through a 'strong culture of safeguarding'.
- Trustees have 'effective oversight of finance, steering the trust skilfully through a challenging economic climate'.
- 'Communication at all levels is a strength of the Trust', and collaboration between schools, particularly within the five local hubs, is growing.

ODST Chief Executive Anne Davey and her team were praised for displaying 'high levels of professionalism balanced with warmth, care and respect'. She said:

*'I am delighted Ofsted has recognised the impact that our focus on people has had on outcomes for the children in our care. This letter illustrates how our approach is highly valued by schools and communities. We've welcomed this chance to showcase our Trust, having already dedicated 2018-19 to consolidating the way we work before taking on any more schools. We are already developing our practice to ensure all children make the best possible progress from their starting points, along the lines that Ofsted recommends.'*

**END OF PRESS RELEASE**

**Note to editors:**

- [Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust \(ODST\)](#) is the largest multi-academy trust in Oxfordshire by number of schools. It comprises of 33 primary, infant, junior and middle schools, with 28 in Oxfordshire and 5 in Berkshire. It includes a mix of both church and community schools. We aim to offer a meaningful partnership where schools can share best practice and work in support of one another, while retaining their individual identity.
- ODST'S five local hubs of schools are Oxford City, North Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, Southern Oxfordshire and Thames (Windsor and Maidenhead).
- Ofsted introduced [Summary Evaluations of Multi Academy Trusts](#) in January 2019.
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