

ODST
Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust

ODST Ambition 2026-2029

Introduction from the CEO

Welcome to the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST).



At ODST, our vision and values underpin what we believe and how we strive to work together through meaningful collaboration and a shared common purpose.

ODST was founded in 2012 by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE) out of a commitment to excellent education for all, and has now grown into a large family serving thousands of pupils, their families and communities across Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead.

By building effective relationships across the Trust, schools benefit from our positive partnership approach which also incorporates a belief in valuing individual identity and serving its local community.

We believe

- our schools are at the heart of their local community.
- in working together for meaningful collaboration and partnership.
- that service, stewardship and inclusion run through every aspect of school life.
- in developing and growing our staff so that everyone feels valued and has a shared responsibility for educational quality and outcomes.

ODST is a place where all are welcome; for both Church of England schools and community schools, for staff and pupils of all faiths and none, where we strive for academic excellence and where pupils and staff are enabled, valued and encouraged to become outward-looking, resilient learners and professionals.

As we look to the future and how our Trust can both grow and continue to support all the children and staff within it, we have put together a framework that will help us achieve our ambitions while staying true to our values.

This overview of our strategic plan should give you a clear idea of how we will put our ambitions into action.

Sharon Mullins
CEO

About Us

ODST was set up in July 2012 by the ODBE to provide an effective vehicle for schools in the Diocese of Oxford to come together in order to raise educational standards.

The Trust has experience of running small rural schools and large city schools, in both challenging and affluent communities, and is open to both church and community schools. We are keen to maintain a balance of different schools to enrich our ODST community.

Growth of ODST has been carefully managed to ensure sufficient capacity and capability to support new schools and to ensure sustainable development. The Trust has a robust and well-considered growth strategy, to ensure effective growth is balanced with strong service delivery. This follows the diocesan tradition of service to the community and is at the heart of our mission.

Our Partners and Our Purpose

At ODST, we are proud to work in close partnership with organisations that share our commitment to educational excellence and community service, including the Diocese of Oxford.

As a Church of England trust, our identity is rooted in a distinctively Christian vision. We believe in “A Common Vision for the Common Good”, guided by a shared commitment to flourishing for all. This vision shapes everything we do — creating environments where every child is supported to live life in all its fullness and achieve their potential.

Our partnerships are central to this mission. By working collaboratively with local authorities, the diocese and our wider communities, we ensure our schools remain deeply connected, inclusive and responsive to the needs of those they serve.

We are proud that our schools are places of welcome — serving their communities with openness, compassion and respect. Our shared values unite us, fostering a strong sense of belonging where every individual is valued and empowered to succeed.

Together with our partners, we are building a family of schools where every child can thrive.

Our Vision and Values

ODST's vision centres on a community working together to achieve more.

Our "Common Vision for the Common Good" means we strive to support schools where we have the track record, capacity and local networks to be able to help.

We encourage ODST schools to consider how this vision is implemented locally at school-level, and how it complements the school's own specific values.

Our key values are identified below, with examples of the way in which this vision is put into practice and how it guides our strategic planning and organisational structures.

Empowerment

A fully functioning community is one where each person knows their own value and potential. Our job as educators is to enable that potential to flourish; to create a culture where children can be nurtured to be the best they can be. We believe this is best done by empowering each other to contribute the best we have to give.

Service

Our schools are outward-facing communities where we all learn to serve others and contribute to the common good.

Community

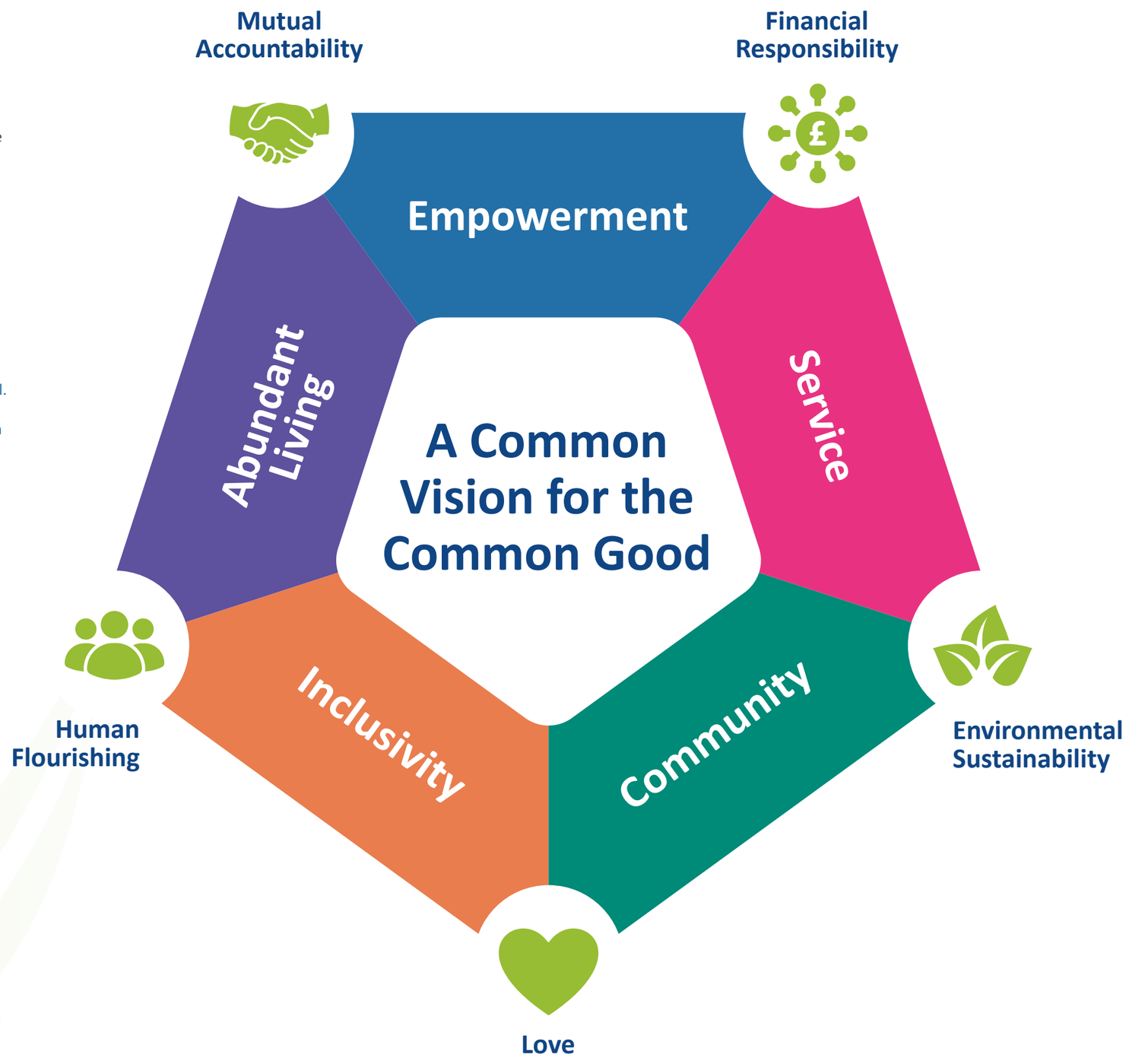
Communities are important and flourish best when relationships are strong. We believe our schools and the people in them are a vital part of many different communities, all of which can be enriched as we work together.

Inclusivity

Our schools embrace equality of opportunity and a wholly inclusive approach to education. We believe every person matters.

Abundant Living

We want our schools to be places where children are loved, nurtured and learn to live well. We believe all people should be enabled to fulfil their whole potential, not just professionally and academically, but also creatively, morally and spiritually.



ODST Ambition 2026-2029

Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust's 2026-2029 Strategic Plan sets out six interconnected goals designed to ensure that every school in the Trust can grow sustainably while continuing to put the needs of children, staff and communities first.

At the heart of the plan is a commitment to improving outcomes for all pupils — raising attainment and attendance in line with national standards, with a particular focus on closing the gap for disadvantaged children and developing truly inclusive provision across every school.

Alongside this, the Trust recognises that great outcomes depend on great people. The plan places significant emphasis on staff wellbeing, professional development and workload, with clear pathways for career progression, peer support networks and a commitment to making better use of technology so that staff can focus on what matters most.

Underpinning everything is a drive for financial and operational resilience. Through long-term financial planning, shared systems, smarter procurement and a dedicated strategy for smaller schools, ODST aims to ensure that every pound is directed where it has the greatest impact: in the classroom.

Strong governance and accountability sit at the core of the Trust's approach, with a clear scheme of delegation ensuring that leadership at every level — from individual schools to the Trust Board — understands its responsibilities and is equipped to fulfil them.

Christian distinctiveness remains central to ODST's identity. The plan builds on the Trust's church school expertise — in areas such as chaplaincy, Religious Education and Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) — while also widening its focus on community, tackling educational disadvantage and supporting the most vulnerable pupils and families.

Finally, the Trust has ambitious plans to grow, aiming to expand by 2029, strengthen its secondary provision, and build its regional and national reputation through collaboration, knowledge-sharing and a more visible presence. Growth, however, is not an end in itself: it is seen as a means of deepening the support available to every school, child and member of staff within the ODST family.





Goal 1
Every child a successful learner

Goal 2
Sustainable efficient schools

Goal 3
Recruit, develop and retain our people

Goal 4
Stewardship for success

Goal 5
Flourishing for all

Goal 6
Growing and strengthening together



Goal 1
Every child a successful learner

1 Improve pupil outcomes to be in line with national standards for all pupils and with a key focus on disadvantaged pupils.

By 2029 we will have…

- Strengthened our pupil outcomes so that all schools are at least in line with national data for all pupils.
- A closing gap for disadvantaged pupils in all schools.
- Achievement judged as at least expected standard in all Ofsted inspections.
- Pupil voice and feedback which reflects strong curriculums in all our schools, enhancing experiences and learning as part of our belief to develop the whole child approach.

2 Improve attendance to be in line with national standards for all pupils and with a key focus on disadvantaged pupils.

By 2029 we will have…

- All schools being at least in line with national attendance data.
- A closing attendance gap for disadvantaged pupils in all schools.
- Attendance and behaviour judged as at least expected in all Ofsted inspections.

3 Develop equity and quality provision for inclusive education across all schools.

By 2029 we will have…

- A shared vision for inclusion across all schools with a framework that sets culture and expectation.
- Trust-wide benchmarking and all schools reaching an agreed inclusive provision standard with consistent approaches to early intervention, collaborative working and continuing professional development.
- Inclusion judged as at least expected in all Ofsted inspections.

Goal 2
Sustainable efficient schools

1 Development of long-term financial planning.

By 2029 we will have…

- Clear 5-year financial plan that gives the Trust confidence about its financial long-term outlook.
- A culture of robust financial management with clear expectations and accountability.
- A Trust fundraising strategy and capacity to be more proactive in supporting schools in large fundraising campaigns.
- Strong plans linked to our people which enable effective structures and ensure value for money.

2 To develop and further strengthen our central resource and support through efficient systems including operations and IT.

By 2029 we will have…

- Clear strategic leadership with effective estates and premises plans in place for all schools enabling a well-planned programme of maintenance.
- A shared single email domain and tenancy as a Trust enabling safer IT policies, training, compliance and cyber security.
- Well-developed policies and practice around the use of AI which enable the use of digital technology to enhance our efficiencies both within our central resourcing and at school level.
- A culture of rigour and excellence so that all schools use shared systems and processes for compliance.

3 Small Schools Strategy — development of collaborations between schools and as a Trust to maximise a greater degree of scales of economy.

By 2029 we will have…

- A clear Small Schools Strategy and approach linked to 5-year financial plan.
- A Trust-wide contract register and clear procurement cycle.
- A culture of shared support and equity for small schools through our well-developed strategy.





Goal 3

Recruit, develop and retain our people

1 Identify and promote practical initiatives that support the wellbeing of our staff teams.

By 2029 we will have…

- A well-developed culture for the wellbeing of our people at all levels through peer networks and wellbeing advocates in all our schools and central team.
- Developed a strong culture of feedback through annual surveys with a response rate of at least 70% and meaningful opportunities to contribute to new initiatives and projects as part of our steering groups.
- A strong culture and shared understanding of what balance looks and feels like through our working practices including the “right to disconnect”.

2 Review, revise and support the delivery of relevant and appropriate learning and development opportunities across all levels of the organisation.

By 2029 we will have…

- An offer of clear developmental pathways for our people in core roles through our Growing Great People reviews.
- Worked together to strengthen development opportunities through peer reviews, targeted training and mentoring so that this is reflected as a positive indicator in our staff surveys.
- High quality professional qualifications strengthening knowledge and leadership across the Trust to enable 50% of leadership appointments to come from within.

3 Identify opportunities for making better use of systems, processes and technology to support school teams with their workload.

By 2029 we will have…

- Effective systems and shared processes which streamline roles and workload for our people, which is reflected as a positive indicator in our staff surveys.
- Support and development opportunities for all to ensure they confidently use technology as part of their role through effective training opportunities.
- A positive use of technology to improve ways of working together, reflected in positive feedback from our people and as part of staff surveys.

Goal 4
Stewardship for success

1 Ensure that the governance model for ODST enables effective oversight and accountability at all levels.

By 2029 we will have…

- A model of Trust Board and local governance that addresses the needs and context of stewardship for each ODST school individually, each hub, and as part of the Trust; recognising and celebrating the value that volunteer governance brings to the Trust.
- Worked with local governance and leadership teams to review and exemplify excellent practice to disseminate across and beyond ODST.
- Recruitment, training, retention and succession planning for governor effectiveness that is robust, and that commitment and expertise is celebrated.

2 Ensure continuing Board effectiveness, working alongside all local and national partners for the benefit of the ODST team and all the wider ODST community.

By 2029 we will have…

- Ensured ODST is considered a key partner across the southeast region including with the Regional Director team, local trusts, all partner local authorities, the Diocese, National Society for Education, HMI Ofsted team and others.
- Enabled the ODST executive team in all departments to play an outward facing role with external partners for the benefit of their professional development and the enhancement of ODST's wider reputation.
- Projected a vision that advocates for ODST schools and their communities in the face of local and national contexts and with pragmatism and a solution-focused approach.

3 Ensure that the Scheme of Delegation is understood by all stakeholders and enables accountability at all levels for compliance and effective service to each ODST community.

By 2029 we will have…

- Explored creating in-house teams for areas including ODST governance professional role, complaints handling, admissions and appeals advice and management.
- Reflected the Trust Board vision for the organisation effectively through a well-expressed scheme of delegation that has been rigorously checked and implementation monitored.
- Continued to respond to feedback from the local governance layer about the effective implementation of the scheme of delegation and respond to challenges in a timely manner.



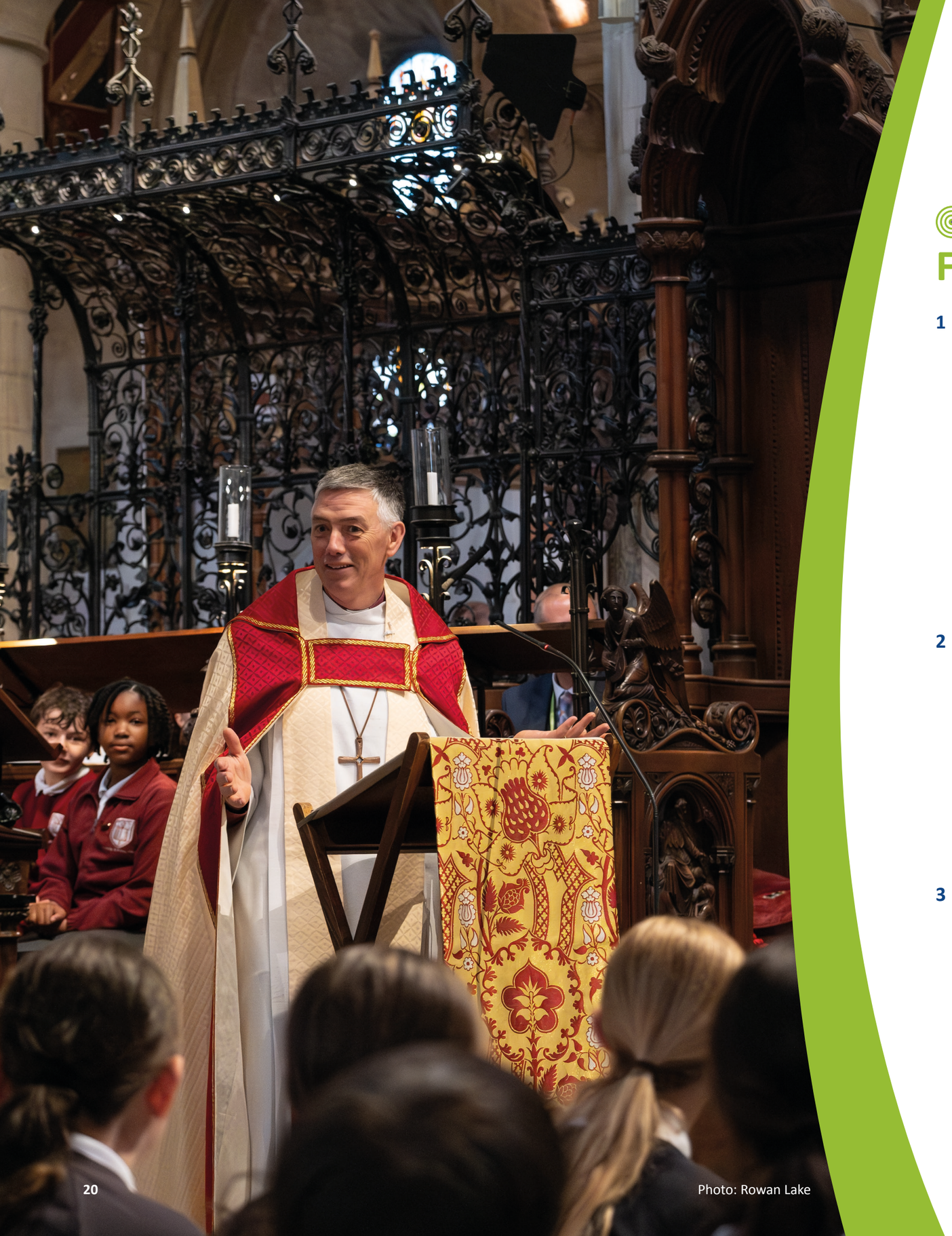


Photo: Rowan Lake

Goal 5
Flourishing for all

1 Christian distinctiveness sits at the heart of ODST's core purpose and our support for schools. Build a reputation as a highly effective provider of church school advice, resources, expertise and training, and become a more outward-looking Diocesan Trust.

By 2029 we will have…

- Developed a model for chaplaincy which is responsive to need, with schools in each ODST hub who participate effectively with this support.
- Become nationally recognised for SIAMS expertise and share this excellent practice at key national events and presentations.
- Developed RE and SIAMS expertise as integral to our school improvement team – strengthening our Church of England ethos as a Trust.

2 Create a culture where our leaders flourish through strong recruitment processes, high quality training and excellent development and support.

By 2029 we will have…

- Highly effective systems to recognise potential and enable our people to flourish as part of their development.
- Become nationally recognised for the delivery of our courses for leaders, building and contributing to flourishing as a system leader.
- A personalised training offer which recruits and retains the best leaders.

3 Serve our communities including in the alleviation of the education impact of poverty, supporting key groups where educational disadvantage and vulnerability is high, and where our leaders bring high expectations to this collective work.

By 2029 we will have…

- Strong and effective support for our families as part of our belief for abundant living which shines a light on our most vulnerable pupils and families, enabling a shared and focussed approach for equality and inclusivity.
- Embedded pupil-level programmes of volunteering and leadership in all schools in line with our vision that we serve our communities.
- Strong pupil leadership including as part of our ECO and Sustainability Charter across hubs and the wider Trust.

Goal 6
Growing and strengthening together

1 To strengthen as a Trust, building our capacity through a well-considered approach for growth and communication.

By 2029 we will have…

- Continued to strengthen as a Trust through a well-considered approach to growth that includes new schools to the Trust across all age ranges.
- Increased the number of secondary schools in the Trust, strengthening our capacity and support across all age ranges.
- Strengthened and extended our hub way of working, enabling our schools to collaborate and support each other as models of excellence.
- Evidenced our effectiveness and readiness to grow through the DfE High Quality Trust Descriptors.

2 To strengthen our reputation and presence in a positive way, across our region and beyond.

By 2029 we will have…

- Shared our expertise and knowledge at regional and national events each year.
- Supported other schools and trusts through peer reviews, training and presentations at national level.
- Promoted ODST through regular media releases, social media platforms and materials, strengthening a wider understanding of ODST as a national Multi-Academy Trust.

3 Develop and extend our reach as a Trust through positive communication and marketing.

By 2029 we will have…

- Positive messaging and engagement about our schools and trust work through known and regular social media presence for all schools.
- Highly effective communication as a Trust through both external and internal systems as part of our daily work including using technology.
- A wider presence as a Trust for our key groups and communities through effective marketing and information sharing.





Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust, St Mary's Convent,
Denchworth Road, Wantage, OX12 9AU

odst.org.uk
ODST.admin@oxford.anglican.org
01865 208217