



## **HOW DOES BEING PART OF ABINGDON LEARNING TRUST BENEFIT SCHOOLS?**

We start from the position that:

- Heads have the freedom to run their school in their own way, and
- Local governors know their school well and are therefore best placed to make local decisions.

The Trust provides 'value added' – more than a school on its own - using the opportunities and benefits of working as part of an open and professional group of schools, with children and pupils at the heart of all decisions and actions.

Where there are cost savings, these are put back into teaching and learning, and support and challenge is provided to heads and governors for improving the continued improvement in the quality of education and for staff development.

We help schools run more smoothly. We do this by providing a range of support called Tier One services. These include:

- Audit and insurances
- Payroll
- HR advice and administration
- Finance processes and payments
- Legal support
- Union consultation/support
- Annual school review
- Governance training, document management and clerking at LAB level
- Support with school census, UIFSM
- Capital property bids and project management
- Support for Headteacher performance review
- H&S overview and support
- School improvement support and challenge
- School improvement partners
- Annual external review of schools' own self-evaluation
- Leadership development and support
- Safe recruitment and annual safeguarding reviews
- DSL/nominated safeguarding governor network
- Preparation for and support with Ofsted and other external inspection/evaluation
- Analysis against similar schools and national benchmarks
- Annual policy schedule and statutory policies
- Support for school leaders with access to executive members outside of work hours

- Governor training network

### **Impact of working as a Trust**

In the first year of working as a trust, there was a saving of £120 000 across the three schools, resulting from joint procurement, going back into teaching and learning.

We have developed a Trust-wide Workload and Wellbeing Charter, with annual staff wellbeing survey to measure how well we are doing. We have also implemented wellbeing managers in each school to support staff.

The CEO has regular meetings with union reps across all schools, bringing a distinct perspective to the Trust.

Opportunities for retaining high quality staff and promotion within the 'group' have been taken and these include new posts of Secondary Executive Head and Heads of School, opening up positions of middle leadership where they have been 'locked in' previously.

Leadership development is a priority for this academic year which includes funding for NPQs, secondments and school visits beyond the Trust.

Expanded JDs to work across more than one school have been agreed as well as taking advantage of small pots of funding available in each school to consolidate into full-time new appointments working across the schools (for example, site staff and languages teaching).

A Professional Pathways approach is in place supporting staff development, using strengths within the schools and expertise from outside to benefit all.

Improved attainment in the primary phase to well above national from EY to KS2, from close scrutiny of curriculum plans and strong whole school focus on phonics and literature, and maths, from EY to Year 6, within a broad curriculum.

In 2018, both secondary schools started work as a joint sixth form, which was judged outstanding in May 2019 – direct evidence of the benefit of working together.

Improved overall evaluation at last inspection for John Mason School to good.

### **Developments**

Tier Two services now include options for schools to have premises management, strategic ICT provision and catering.

### **Summary**

- Your school's unique strengths to share, benefitting all pupils in the trust
- School development is a collective endeavour
- A trajectory of continued improvement – learning from each other, and from the best elsewhere
- A trusting relationship with reciprocal respect.

### **Further information**

Please do feel free to contact the Chair of the Trust Board, Jonathan Hopkins – [jhopkins@abingdonlearningtrust.org](mailto:jhopkins@abingdonlearningtrust.org)

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