



11th July 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another excellent year for the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership Trust. We have built on the outstanding outcomes across all key stages at the end of last academic year by having an unblemished record with Ofsted inspections this year. To date, we have had 12 of our schools inspected and I am delighted to report that they have all been graded at least 'good'. Two of these schools joined because they were not rated good by Ofsted and after a lot of effort to drive improvement, both have now been graded 'good'. Two other schools have been told they are likely to be outstanding at their next inspection – great news for the schools and the communities they serve. To add to this impressive record, the Trust itself was subject to an Ofsted Review some three weeks ago. This involved 4 Ofsted inspectors and a policy team member visiting the Trust and conducting interviews of Trust staff, scrutiny of data and documentation, as well as visiting schools to triangulate evidence. I am pleased to report that we were described as a: 'high performing Trust making a significant impact by raising standards for children in our schools'. Naturally, I am delighted that the hard work of pupils, staff and Trust colleagues has been recognised.

Next year looks equally exciting. We will have a further four schools join the Trust in September. Three Special Schools and one Alternative Provision School. These new additions will work in tight collaboration with our current special school and our resource bases, to improve education and prospects for children in non-mainstream schools. In addition, we plan to expand our own SEND provision to further help mainstream schools both in and outside of the Trust. We know there is a greater prevalence of need in mainstream schools than ever before and the complexity of issues facing children in schools has risen sharply. We hope that by building a new Special and Alternative Provision Hub of schools, we can better support children to achieve and have successful lives after their schooling.

We have a number of changes and new additions to senior staff across the Trust from September These include:

- Ms Sophie Addison - Executive Headteacher and Strategic Hub Lead for AP and Special Schools.
- Mr Mark Lees – Director of Education across Primary and Secondary.
- Mrs Emma West – Headteacher at Critchill Special School.
- Miss Clare Marsh – Headteacher at Preston Academy.
- Mr Josef Milverton - Trust Lead for Secondary Geography.
- Mr Dan Horsington - Trust Lead for Secondary History.
- Mr Daniel Skirrow – Trust Lead for Secondary English.

In other news, Frome College Governors have voted to join Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership Trust, which is great news for the town of Frome and the Trust. The College is a 14-19 provider serving 1,300 pupils with considerable expertise in Performing Arts. We hope to develop strong curriculum collaboration to support improvements both at the college and the secondary schools that are already part of MNSP.

I am also delighted to report that our primary schools have improved on the excellent results seen last year and smashed all national averages for Early Years Development, Phonics and Key Stage 1 outcomes. In all measures, Trust schools have exceeded national norms by at least 5%, firmly placing the Trust primary schools in the 'well above average' category.





Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership
www.midsomernortonschoolspartnership.com

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The Trust has now agreed term dates and most INSET days for 2024/25. We have tried to do this a little earlier this year, so parents can plan holidays and childcare arrangements. The dates can be found attached to this communication and will shortly be on school websites.

Many of you will be aware that nine of our schools are also church schools. As such, they are inspected for standards by the Church of England (SIAMS inspections) as well as Ofsted. Our church schools are currently graded 'good' or 'excellent' and whilst we are not expecting many inspections next year, I thought I would notify you that the SIAMS framework being used to assess schools is changing. There will no longer be separate grades and schools will either be deemed to reach the threshold and pass, or not.

Although we have had a tremendously successful year, we know there is always further room for improvement across our schools. We have some key improvement areas that we will be focussing on next year including:

- The quality of writing at primary and secondary schools. Although scores achieved by children are well-above national rates, we feel that the use of electronic devices has reduced writing stamina and quality. Almost all tests and exams are still administered in the way they were when I was at school – on paper and completed by writing answers using a pen! Therefore, we need to ensure pupils are well-prepared for this, so they can do well in tests and exams.
- The level of persistent absence of some groups of children. This is a national issue and the Government is concerned that we have still not managed to return to pre-pandemic levels of attendance. Again, we are well above national rates for attendance, but not quite back to pre-Covid rates.
- The behaviour and attitudes of some children. This is not a particular issue in our schools, but we are finding that disagreements or anti-social behaviour on-line or outside school time is increasing. We all want our children to be respectful and kind to others, so we are looking at ways to support this better.
- The well-being of children. Part of our role in schools is to ensure pupils are able to cope with the demands of modern life. Helping pupils manage anxiety or worries is something we feel we could do more work on across our schools.

There are many other areas that are part of the Trust Improvement Plan, but I thought I would share these, as I think they are key ones for us all to focus on this coming year.

In summary, this year has been a great success and I would like to thank parents and carers for their overwhelming support. I hope you all manage a good break over the Summer holidays.

Yours sincerely

Alun Williams
CEO





Term Dates
Academic Year 2024/2025

Term 1

Monday 2nd September 2024
Friday 25th October 2024

Term 2

Monday 4th November 2024
Friday 20th December 2024

Term 3

Monday 6th January 2025
Friday 14th February 2025

Term 4

Monday 24th February 2025
Friday 4th April 2025

Term 5

Tuesday 22nd April 2025
Friday 23rd May 2025

Term 6

Monday 2nd June 2025
*Friday 18th July 2025
(22nd July official end of term)

**please note this is a change to dates issued by local authorities. This is to avoid a broken week.*

INSET DAYS

Inset day 1

Monday 2nd September 2024

Inset day 2

TBC

Inset day 3

TBC

Inset day 4

Monday 21st July 2025

Inset day 5

Tuesday 22nd July 2025

National Bank Holidays:

Wednesday 25th December 2024

Thursday 26th December 2024

Wednesday 1st January 2025

Friday 18th April 2025

Monday 21st April 2025

Monday 5th May 2025

Monday 26th May 2025

Monday 25th August 2025

