



OXFORD SPIRES ACADEMY



*Be the BEST you can be*

PROSPECTUS 2023/2024







# HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Welcome to the Oxford Spires Academy (OSA) prospectus.

I'd like to welcome you to the Oxford Spires Academy (OSA) prospectus. I hope that you will see the range of opportunities that all students partake in, fully representing our academy motto ***"Be the best you can be."***

Through the promotion of high expectations and challenge, we truly believe that all students can achieve high academic success rates. Our students achieve well and many progress into our Sixth Form. Our students have strong destinations after leaving OSA, often to Oxbridge and other Russell Group Universities, and into higher level apprenticeships. However, academic success is only part of our purpose. We also provide excellence in music, drama, sport, and the arts and we value all practical and creative pursuits. We also develop their personal qualities such as self-reliance,

courtesy, respect, initiative, and determination to ensure they become first class citizens.

OSA is a multicultural, multi-faith community school and we strongly believe that providing pastoral support for each and every child via the year teams and house teams that each student represents, underpinned by expert teaching and a challenging broad curriculum, enhances the life chances and potential of every student.

We think that enrichment opportunities are important for all students, and our offer in this area is extensive. We were particularly pleased to win the English-Speaking Union 2022 Oracy Culture Award, recognising us as the best state school in the country in this area, with national success in extra-curricular public speaking and debating, and a focus on speaking at the heart of our curriculum.

We are an outward facing school. We are proud to belong to Anthem Schools Trust, and this gives us the opportunity to collaborate with other schools, network, and provide opportunities for all staff to develop, whilst enhancing resources and sharing best practice for the benefit of the students. We also work with an extensive network of education providers, businesses, and charities to ensure that students are provided with careers guidance, personal development opportunities and the extra-curricular education that will equip them for years to come.

It is a privilege to be Principal of such a fantastic academy and I would be delighted to show you around. To arrange a Principal's Tour, please contact me at [principal@spires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:principal@spires.anthemtrust.uk).

**louise Cowley, Headteacher**



*"Teachers want us to do well and work hard because they want us to be proud of our achievements."*

Year 8 Student

## PRIMARY TO SECONDARY

We know that transition from primary to secondary school is a big event for families. OSA works closely with partner primaries to ensure that students are familiar with our key staff prior to starting in September.

Our transition team visit all the students in the partner primary schools.

We liaise with our primary colleagues so that we know and share their prior knowledge with key members of staff at OSA. We invite all parents and carers in for a primary transition evening

so that they can gain further insights into our school systems, pastoral support systems and our expectations. This evening also provides opportunities for parents and carers to share further information about their child.

We work hard to make sure that all students experience the very

best start at OSA. As well as our two primary transition days where we host all the students on site and give them a taster of what to expect for the new academic year, we also arrange for some additional transition time for some of our students where we feel it would be most helpful in settling them into life at Oxford Spire.





# THE CURRICULUM

**We provide all students with an ambitious curriculum that is both broad and balanced and includes the English Baccalaureate.**

We adhere to, or go beyond, the national curriculum to enable all students to build new skills and acquire new knowledge through high quality evidence-based learning experiences, both within and outside of the classroom that build character, resilience and social and cultural capital.

Learning is a journey, and we encourage students to learn from mistakes. We use regular assessment to identify and address gaps in knowledge and to celebrate their hard-earned success in end of term and House assemblies. We recognise the importance of examination results in enabling young people to move on to the next stage of their learning and prepare them for life in modern Britain, taking account

of each student's aspirations, the local, national and global job markets. We ensure diversity is celebrated to ensure all students feel welcomed, supported and valued in the school community.

## **Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9)**

We focus on giving every child the widest possible experience across a range of subjects. These include the arts, languages, humanities, PE and technical subjects whilst maintaining a strong focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Our PSHE programme teaches students to live healthy lives, to be the best they can be and to contribute to their community.

## **Key Stage 4 (Years 10 & 11)**

In Key Stage 4 the curriculum is a mixture of both core and optional subjects and is structured to allow for maximum flexibility of choice. Students can study a wide variety of GCSE courses from the arts, humanities, languages, sport and much more.

## **Key Stage 5 (Years 12 & 13)**

The sixth form curriculum offers a wide range of subjects for students to study at post-16 level, with most students opting to take between three and four qualifications. We offer both academic A Levels and a number of equivalent vocational qualifications. Sixth form students are also encouraged to become school leaders through the House Captain system.



*"I am challenged in my lessons to think and this has helped me to progress."*

Year 9 Student

## PROMOTING LITERACY

**We believe that reading is central to developing the powerful knowledge base necessary to empower students.**

We have a dedicated reading programme for tutor time in Key Stage 3 called 'OSA Tutor Reading Programme' for Key Stage 3 and Year 10. Teachers in lessons support reading comprehension and acquisition of challenging subject specific vocabulary.

With reading materials available for the strongest readers to those who struggle, and a dedicated Librarian on hand to support these choices, we place a high value on literacy. To further support this we use the Accelerated

Reader programme to grow students' skills. This programme highlights where a student needs support, and we can then put the necessary steps in place. Our love of literacy extends to numerous competitions over the year, including the National Reading Championship Quiz, in which we have been consistently in the top five schools in Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

Supported by the enrichment team, we organise an annual celebration of Shakespeare's

birthday as well as inviting visiting authors in each year for World Book Day. We are always working with our students to expand our range of events and competition.

Our library is at the heart of our academy. Students make use of the library before school, after school and during their breaks and lunchtimes, with many students across the year groups seeing it as a special place within the academy to come and read and study.





# ENRICHMENT

**Students at OSA are busy out of the classroom too! We run a lot of extracurricular clubs and competitions in the academy and students can access those all through the year.**

This might be taking part in, for instance, sport, music or drama, and competing in House competitions, or going along to clubs set up, often at student request and based on hobbies and interests.

Oxford Spires is the 2022 winner of the national Oracy Culture Award, given by the English Speaking Union to the state school with the best culture of speaking and debating embedded in their curriculum. This reflects a lot that's happening in classrooms, but also our annual participation in ESU public speaking and debating, mock magistrates and mock bar competitions, and others held locally. We have reached the national final several times now in the ESU's Churchill Public Speaking and the Shakespeare Speaking competitions, and encourage all students to take part to develop

these vital life skills.

Many of our lunch and after school activities are House based. We have competitions across the Houses in all terms, and these include rugby, netball, football, basketball, cross country, drama, dance, public speaking and debating and art. Academy teams in many of these areas go on to represent Oxford Spires in local and national competitions too.

Many universities ask for students to develop their learning beyond the classroom, and we start to prepare our students to be thoughtful and inquisitive students from Year 7. There is a wealth of educational trips and visits that help bring learning alive.

We want your child to make the most of learning opportunities beyond the door of their classrooms.

Our students are inspired by external speakers and visits to other environments that challenge and extend their thinking. Some of our partners in providing high quality extracurricular and enrichment opportunities include: Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University, the Ashmolean Museum, the Bodleian Library, BMW (Mini) Cars and the Nuffield Foundation.

Work experience, internships, summer schools and placements have led students to successful applications for law, medicine, the creative arts, media and film, humanities, sciences, computer science and engineering. This combines with the OSA's extensive careers programme to enable students to apply successfully for competitive courses, universities, and apprenticeship schemes.



*"Being a student at Oxford Spires Academy has given me many opportunities to learn, develop and enjoy."*

Year 11 Student

# INDEPENDENT STUDY AND HOMEWORK

Homework is important for students to develop time management skills, consolidate learning from the academy day and create depth and understanding of topics away from the classroom. All students will receive homework in every subject.

We encourage students to be independent and to take ownership of their own learning and progress. From the beginning of Year 7 we support our students to develop effective study and independent learning skills and habits that will help them to achieve success and the best

outcomes possible in their public examinations. Should students wish to complete homework in school, the Library runs Homework Club each day of the week. Students are encouraged to try their best on their homework and to try and produce work that they are proud of.

Workshops and revision sessions are arranged across all departments in the academy. Students in their final year of exams may also be requested to attend revision and support sessions on specific days during the holidays and occasionally at weekends leading up to exams.





# HIGH ATTAINERS

**Oxford Spires is committed to providing a high quality and challenging education for all our students. We encourage high attainers with programmes of study that provide stretch and challenge across the curriculum.**

High attainers are identified from prior attainment data from Key Stage 2, primary school references, parental referrals and through staff assessments and our own assessments on arrival. Their progress is tracked using data to monitor their achievement, progress and effort.

Our teachers provide teaching and learning experiences at the highest levels, our highest expectations encourage this cohort to aim for a Grade 9 at GCSE and A\* at A Level.

For our exceptional students in Year 11 and 12, Extended Research Projects provide an additional challenge. This can be undertaken as a supplementary qualification at AS and will be awarded through the AQA exam board. Extended Research Projects are particularly valued by Oxford, Cambridge and by Russell Group universities, especially as they are awarded in Year 12 in plenty of time for applications.

Our students work with university mentors to ensure that they are prepared for the rigorous entry

requirements of Oxbridge. They are offered opportunities to listen to guest speakers, attend lectures and visits to both Oxford universities. Our students have the opportunity to work with university student mentors across a number of subjects including maths, English, languages, politics and within their extended projects.

In 2022 the majority of Year 13 left to study at university having met their UCAS offers, with three students going on to study at Oxford University.



# STUDENT LEADERSHIP

At OSA we look to develop the leadership potential in all our students. They are supported to become leaders of their own learning and to take responsibility for their progress.

We empower student leadership across all year groups and encourage student voice to contribute to our ongoing development as an academy. Student leaders play a vital part in House activities, performances, and school events more widely.

Our students at Oxford Spire take a leading role in writing and performing their own House drama productions. They write speeches for speaking and debating competitions at all levels, and older students run clubs and practices for younger ones, supporting them to feel valued, welcomed and part of their House and academy community.

Student voice is very important to our students at OSA. Students are empowered through the Sixth Form student leadership team to share and communicate ideas that improve our academy and community. Some examples of student leadership across all year groups at our academy include:

- Students running subject activities for primary school pupils
- Students front of house at performances
- Sports leadership for younger students or primary pupils
- Prefects and House Captains within Houses
- Arts leaders in the performing arts
- Student debaters training younger ones
- Mentoring younger students and providing support for others in their House
- Supporting during transition from Year 6 and within partner primary schools





# PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

Working with parents/carers is very important to Oxford Spires Academy. Whether it is keeping up contact about a student's academic performance, working together to improve an individual's wellbeing or planning strategies to help them achieve their chosen progression route through and after school, we encourage parents to take part in our scheduled events and to contact staff at other times.

From parents/carers consultation evenings to one-to-one meetings as students enter Year 7 and Year 12, this contact is vital to ensure a smooth and successful path through school.

Oxford Spires benefits from the experience of its parents/carers in many ways, with many parents/carers engaging with our careers

programmes and taking on mentoring roles in Sixth Form. It is always useful when parents/carers with expertise in particular areas volunteer for the benefit of our students and anyone who wishes to do this should contact the academy with ideas.

Parents/carers helping with fundraising and supporting

the wider life of the academy is also welcomed. Our parent body, the Friends of Oxford Spires Academy (FOSA) is open to any parent wishing, to help with this, and they can be contacted on [osafriends@gmail.com](mailto:osafriends@gmail.com)



*"The Houses are great because we are all together as a team and look after each other as one family."*

Year 11 Student

# PASTORAL CARE AND OUR HOUSE SYSTEM

Oxford Spires has a vibrant House system which is the heartbeat of our academy. Students are placed in one of four Houses on their arrival in Year 7, where they remain throughout their school life.

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Siblings are placed into the same House. The four Houses: Bannister, Earhart, Seacole and Tolkien are named after local and national people of note. Each house has its own identity, strengths and qualities.

Every student will have daily support from their tutors and additional support from the Pastoral Team comprising of a Head of Year, a Year Team Support Manager, Safeguarding Officers and Learning Mentors. The Pastoral Team also work closely with the SEND Team to ensure students are supported both academically and pastorally ensuring we understand the needs of every student in our care.

We pride ourselves on our reward system which is based upon effort and participation is used to recognise students in embracing the academy. There are numerous activities and competitions that take place.

We empower students as leaders with opportunities to work across year groups as prefects, sports leaders and student mentors.





# INCLUSION AT OSA

**Oxford Spires Academy is an inclusive school where we truly believe that every one of our students can succeed and thrive in all aspects of their lives.**

Our highly trained teaching and support staff ensure that all students with SEND are fully supported but also challenged in their lessons. We have a well-equipped and spacious SEND department with dedicated staff who support students in 1:1 sessions and group sessions to supplement their learning in

the classroom. The SEND team work closely with parents / carers and numerous external agencies to ensure that students at OSA have the very best provision. We are also lucky to have a team of teachers who solely support students with English as an Additional Language (EAL). We know that these students

have an array of needs and the team work closely to support each student as an individual. The inclusion team also supports students who are eligible for pupil premium funding to ensure they can access all areas of school life and be the BEST they can be.



*"The sixth form is so different to lower school. We are given lots of different opportunities to learn in and out of the classroom to find out more about what we enjoy"*

**Year 12 Student**

## OSA SIXTH FORM

### What does Spires offer after GCSE?

Oxford Spires has a very successful Sixth Form of over 200 students, mainly studying A level courses. We offer 25 A level courses and two Level 3 BTECs (equivalent to A level). In addition, students are able to retake GCSE Maths or English if they didn't reach Grade 4 in Year 11, and we offer a range of other courses and activities – including LAMDA Drama courses and Sixth Form recreational sport.

Students are preparing to make applications for university, apprenticeships, or traineeships,

and therefore build their transferable skills through Sixth Form. They elect a student leadership team, run clubs, mentor younger students, lead House competitions, and so on. Many take part in our highly successful public speaking and debating programme, including English Speaking Union competitions and the Mock Bar for those interested in learning more about Law.

There is a lot of supercurricular activity in these upper years, as many of our students apply to competitive universities Oxford,

Cambridge, or for courses such as Medicine. These require students to develop their subject knowledge beyond what they learn in class, and, as well as subject trips, we have a full programme of opportunities to go to lectures, attend subject days and summer schools, complete online courses, etc. In terms of careers, ALL Year 12 students have work experience and individual interviews with our careers advisor, and many take part in schemes such as the Nuffield Science Research and In2Science programmes.





*"We have great teachers  
at the school, they always  
give up their time to help you."*

Year 7 Student

# VISIT OXFORD SPIRES

## VISIT OXFORD SPIRES

The Principal would be delighted to show you around the academy on a normal school day. To arrange a Principal's tour please contact us by email at [principal@spires.anthemtrust.uk](mailto:principal@spires.anthemtrust.uk)

## ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The full Admissions Policy, with information on appeals and more, is available on the academy's website.

The Published Admissions Number (PAN) for Oxford Spires Academy is 220.



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PROSPECTUS 2023/2024

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