



Annual Report 2025

# The Athelstan Trust

Caring, Collaborative and Excellent



# Welcome

Welcome to The Athelstan Trust Annual Report for 2025.

2025 marked the 10th birthday for The Athelstan Trust and growth from 7 to 10 schools. As we have grown, it has become all the more important to remind ourselves of what we stand for, what has been achieved, and our ambitions for the future. I hope that this report achieves this.

We have deliberately kept this report succinct so that you do not have to wade through too many words. For those who want more, our full, audited accounts and report on activities is available on our website.

2025 saw many changes for The Trust. I was delighted to start as CEO in September 2025, taking on the mantle from the founding CEO, Tim Gilson. My aim is to build on Tim's legacy, ensuring that we remain a Trust that places care, collaboration, and excellence at the centre of everything we do.

We finished the year stronger than ever: with increasing outcomes, improving estates, three great new schools, financial stability, and an excellent reputation. Towards the end of this report, I set out our goals and priorities for the next four years. We owe it to the children in our schools to be ambitious and relentless in our pursuit of excellence. I look forward to working with you to deliver this.

**Matthew Evans, CEO**



2025 was a year of both celebration and transition for The Athelstan Trust.

As we reflect on our tenth anniversary, we also acknowledge an important moment in our history: the retirement of our founding CEO, Tim Gilson. Tim's vision, integrity, and unwavering commitment laid the foundations upon which the Trust has grown from the founding two schools to ten. His leadership established not only strong systems and outcomes, but a culture rooted in care, collaboration, and ambition. On behalf of the Board, I offer our sincere thanks for his remarkable contribution.

This year also saw several founding Trustees step down. Their stewardship over the past decade has shaped the Trust's direction and ensured that growth has been both responsible and values-led. We are deeply grateful for their service.

At the same time, we welcome new Trustees, a new CEO, Matthew Evans, and three new schools in Chippenham into our family. This blend of legacy and renewal positions us strongly for the future.

We continue to build on firm foundations: pupil numbers are rising, academic outcomes are improving, and the Trust remains financially secure and well regarded. Most importantly, our students and staff continue to live our values each day. They are the heart of our success and the driving force behind our ambition to transform lives through education.

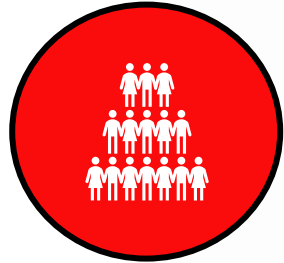
**Keval Shah, Chair of Trustees**



# Our Trust



10 Schools



850+ Staff



5000 Pupils



100 Governors



**Founded 2015**

## Primary

Avening Primary School  
Charter Primary School  
King's Lodge Primary School  
Leighterton Primary School

**Gloucestershire  
South Gloucestershire  
Wiltshire**

## Secondary

Abbeyfield School  
Bradon Forest School  
Chipping Sodbury School  
Malmesbury School  
Sir William Romney's School  
The Dean Academy

# What do we stand for?

**We aspire to be a trust where schools transform lives by creating opportunity for all, fostering ambition, and enabling every student and colleague to thrive.**

*Our vision*

We are a family of schools, rooted in our local communities, committed to:

- Empowering every pupil and colleague to fulfil their potential through high expectations, opportunity, and care.
- Valuing the distinctive character of each school while recognising that we achieve the most when we work together and support one another.
- Providing an inclusive and transformative education that nurtures talent, inspires ambition, and celebrates diversity.

*Our mission*

# Our Headteachers



**Nick Norgrove**  
*Abbeyfield School*



**Sarah Flack**  
*Charter Primary School*



**Jane Rushton**  
*Executive Headteacher  
Avening and Leighterton  
Primary Schools*



**Kim Spencer**  
*King's Lodge Primary  
School*



**Sarah Haines**  
*Bradon Forest School*



**Rob Skipp**  
*Chipping Sodbury School*



**Hannah Rowlands**  
*The Dean Academy*



**Brett Jouny**  
*Malmesbury School*



**Will Ruscoe**  
*Sir William Romney's  
School*

# Central Team Leadership



**Matthew Evans**  
CEO



**Amanda Dale**  
CFO



**Danielle Gregory**  
Director of Finance



**Dave Cox**  
IT Manager



**Tim Leaman**  
Director of Estates



**Michelle Kilburn-Bond**  
Director of Learning



**Sian Jones**  
HR Manager

# Trustees



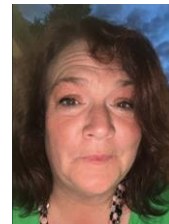
**Keval Shah**  
Chair



**Nicky Edmondson**



**Rich Jefferson**



**Louise Lewis**



**Chris Rawlinson**



**Naomi Tudor**



**Glyn Collen**



**Kevin Hall**



**Luke Jowett**



**Chris Montacute**



**Neil Spurdell**



**Paul Wilson**

# 2025 Highlights

## Welcoming 3 new schools to the Trust

Three Chippenham schools joined us in 2025: King's Lodge Primary School, Charter Primary School, and Abbeyfield School.

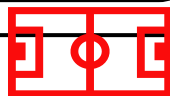


## Flexible Working

As the South-West Flexible Working Ambassador Trust, we have continued to champion the benefits of a flexible working culture both within and beyond Athelstan schools.

## An all-weather pitch for Tetbury

Sir William Romney's School opened a fantastic new 3G pitch for use by the school and the local community.



## Athelstan Professional Learning Days

Two Professional Learning days (June and December) enabled staff from across The Athelstan Trust to collaborate over shared priorities: SEND, Behaviour and Leadership. Across both days, 30 workshops were delivered by experts in their field and over 150 collaborative community discussions were facilitated.



*'Simply brilliant .. inspiring and uplifting as well as practical and useful. I really got something out of every session.'*

## Awards

Many Athelstan schools have celebrated the award of a range of accredited, national accolades this year, all representing their commitment to the wellbeing of students; the Healthy Schools Award; Music Mark of Recognition; Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark; Asthma Friendly Schools Award; the Youth Sport Trust Well Schools Accreditation.



## Enrichment events

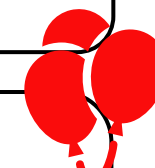
Students from across The Athelstan Trust have had the opportunity to meet and share a range of fun (and often competitive) enrichment events! These have included Maths Challenges, Science competitions and The Athelstan Festival of Speech and Debate.

## Fond farewells

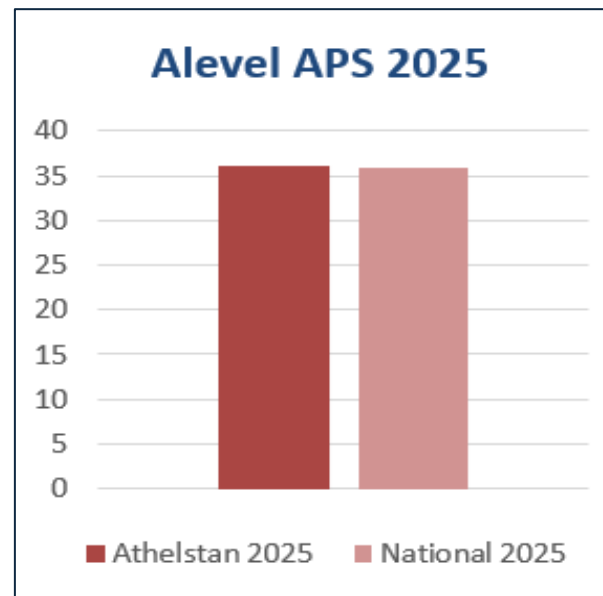
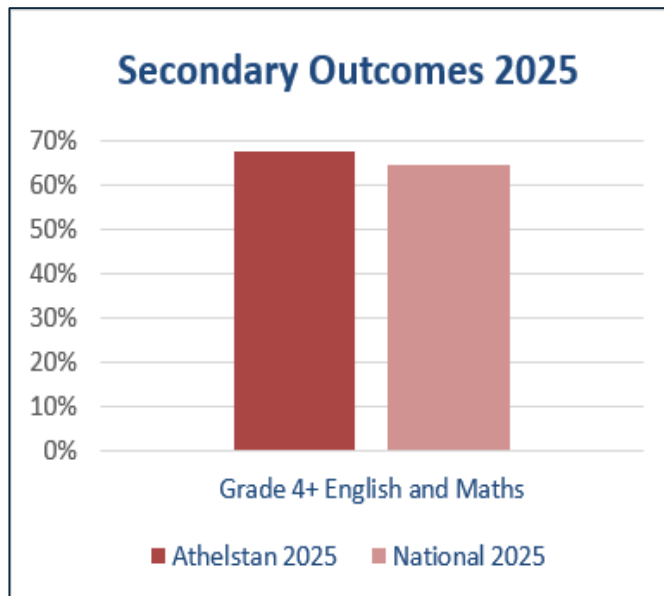
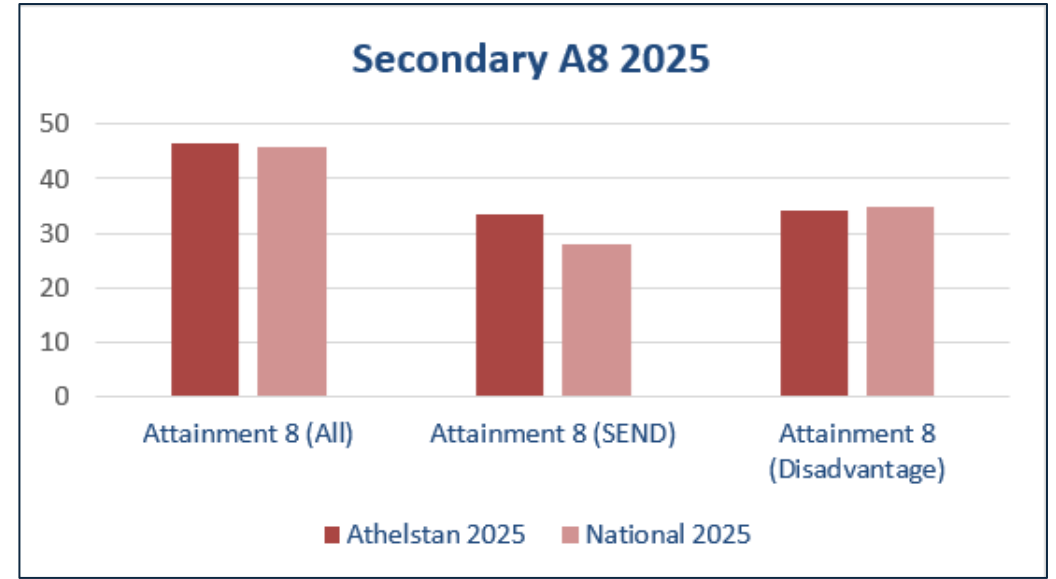
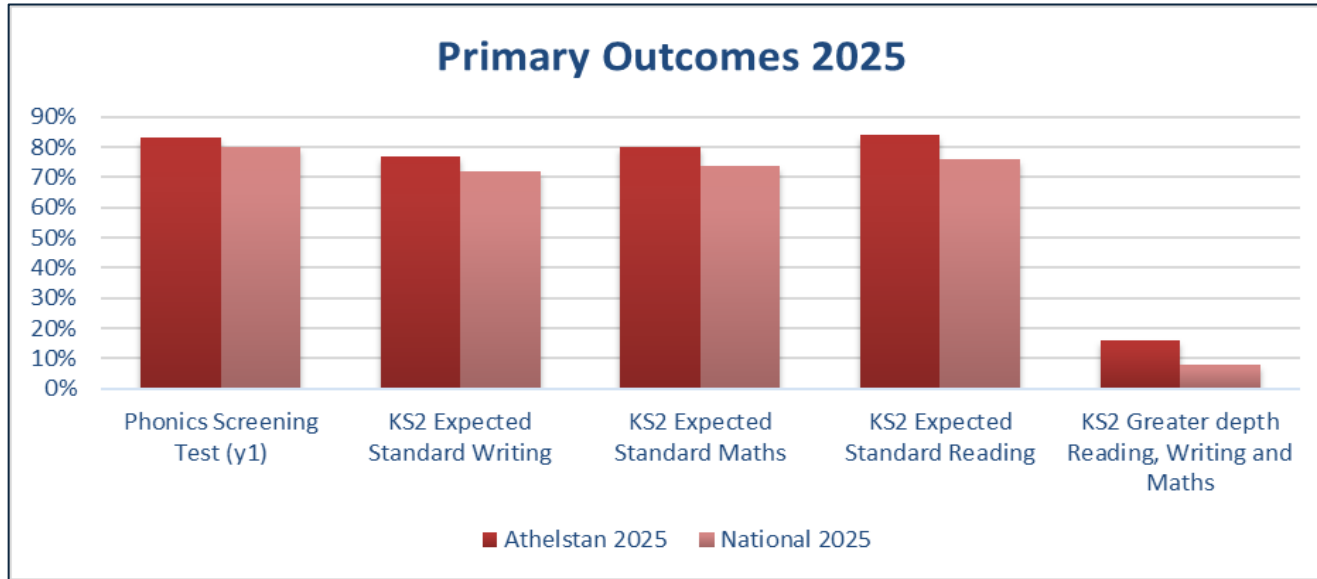
We said a fond farewell to some long-standing members of staff, not least our founding CEO, Tim Gilson, and COO, Richard Blacker, who will be greatly missed by all.

## The Trust's 10th Birthday

In 2015, The Athelstan Trust was formed from two schools: Malmesbury School and The Dean Academy. In the 10 years since, it has grown to become a medium-sized trust of 10 successful schools. The founding values of care, collaboration and excellence remain at the heart of what we do.



# Outcomes for Pupils



Across The Athelstan Trust, we were pleased that our outcomes in 2025 remained strong with some aspects significantly above national averages.

We were especially pleased that our KS2 Greater Depth outcomes in combined Reading/Writing/Maths were **double the national average**, that at KS4 we saw particularly **strong performance for SEND** pupils, and at KS5 performance remained secure, enabling students to go on to study at university or take up apprenticeships, employment and training.

The outcomes across The Trust reflect steady improvement, strong teaching, and our **continued focus on high-quality, inclusive learning for all pupils.**

# Financial Summary

The Athelstan Trust remains financially secure, enabling significant investment in estates, staff development, and opportunities for pupils.



Income increase from £34.5m in 2023/24 to **£40.2m in 2024/25\***.



The Trust holds **reserves of >5%** to mitigate against unexpected risk.



**£1.1m** was invested in maintaining and improving school estates.



**33% drop** in per-pupil energy spend compared to 2023/24



Capital income per pupil grew from £225 in 2023/24 to **£306 in 2024/25**

## Estates investment ending and starting in 2025

**£135k** refurbishment, grounds and boiler investment at The Dean Academy

**£172k** reception remodel at Chipping Sodbury School

**£540k** roofing, grounds and internal refurbishment at Bradon Forest School

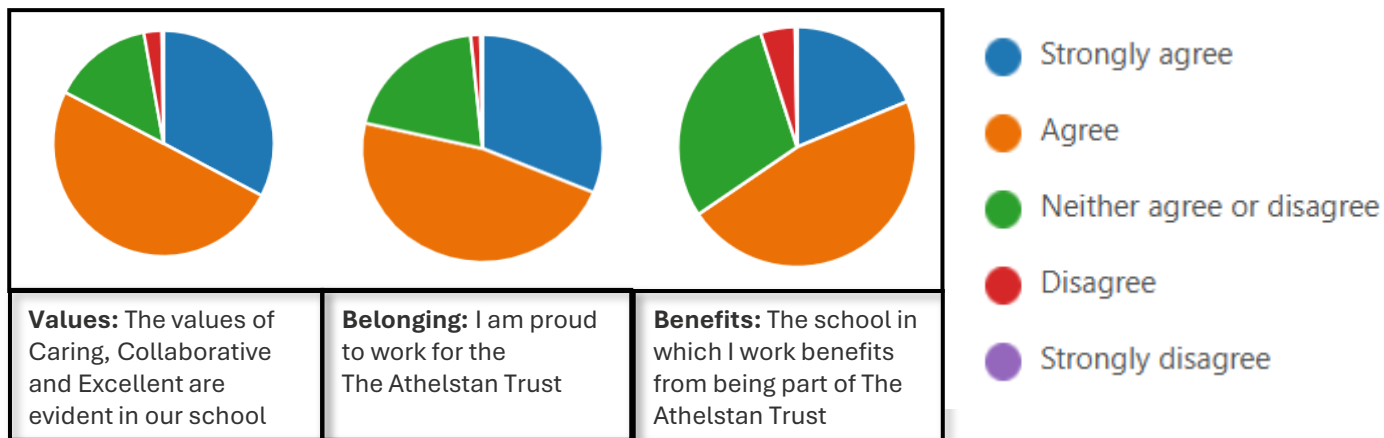
**£247k** toilet refurbishment at Sir William Romney's School

**£560k** 3G pitch, grounds and décor improvement at Sir William Romney's School

\*excluding the impact of conversion balances for new schools

# Investing in People


At The Athelstan Trust, our people are our greatest strength. In 2025, we have continued to invest in our staff, recognising that caring for our people, working collaboratively, and striving for excellence are essential in securing the best outcomes for our pupils.



## Professional Learning

Over **600 staff** attended our two Professional Learning Days 


**15** future leaders signed up for the OLEVI leadership programmes

 **24** staff undertook NPQ qualifications

## Recruitment and Retention

**9.4%** Staff turnover versus industry average of around 20%

**12 Internal promotions.** 71% of senior leadership vacancies were filled internally.

**261** staff with more than 10 years' service 

## Collaboration

Over **100** staff attended one of our 25 Collaborative Community networks

Our **Headteacher Forum** remains at the centre of decision making



# Strategic Priorities

2026-2030

As we turn 10 years old, we have given a great deal of thought to the future of The Trust. It is important to us that we retain our founding values and ethos. **We are, first and foremost, a Trust that seeks to serve our schools' communities by providing an excellent education to all pupils.**

We hold true to our values of being **caring, collaborative and excellent**. Being an organisation that people are proud to be associated with, and where they can develop and thrive, is core to our identity and success.

The last decade has proved turbulent in education, and we expect that the next 10 years will be too. Schools continue to be expected to solve the ills of society with very limited resources and too many children struggle to attend school and achieve what they are capable of. Within this context, **we must deliver an inclusive education which provides the stability, support and positivity that children need.**

We will know we have been successful when:

- Pupil **attendance** in every school exceeds national average.
- Pupil **progress** in each school is above national average.
- There are **no significant gaps** in progress for disadvantaged groups.
- No **Ofsted** judgements across our schools are less than expected standard.
- Our **inclusion** is rated as being of a strong standard across schools.
- 90% or more of staff deem their school to be **well led and managed**.
- All schools are **financially sustainable**.



## Education excellence that benefits all

We can only claim to deliver an excellent education if we are excellent for every pupil, no matter their starting point, background, need or aspiration. This is an inclusive education, and the principle should underpin all we do. It shows that we care about excellence for all.



## One Trust, diverse schools

We are most successful when we pull in the same direction, with clear purpose and a common approach. This should not mean losing our identity or agency, rather that we are empowered to achieve shared goals; deliberately diverse, purposefully aligned.



## Learning in our DNA

Excellence is a journey, not a destination. The pursuit of excellence is a collaborative endeavour in which we care enough to be honest, open, reflective and aspirational to ensure we are the best we can be. This culture must reverberate across our organisation.

## \*\*\* First choice for parents, pupils and professionals

We should be a place where people benefit and belong. For children, this means schools that are safe, supporting, enriching, and academically strong. For adults, this means a professionally enriching environment where there are opportunities to progress and make a difference.



## Organisational health and resilience

The Trust should make it easier for schools to be excellent. This means financial resilience, operational effectiveness, strong governance, mitigation of risk, well-managed estates and access to expertise.



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