



Oswestry School
Founded 1407

Forte

Forte

We learn not for school, but for life.

Oswestry School Strategic Plan 2030

Forte

- (n.) From French *fort* (fortified place, stronghold; strong point of a sword blade). Meaning a strong point, that in which one excels.
- (adj.) Musical instruction; from Latin *fortis* (strong).

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D. HOLBACH FUNDATOR MCCCLVII

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Oswestry School has a proud history and heritage stretching back over 615 years. We are unique, confident to be different, and pride ourselves on the many ways in which we successfully prepare our pupils for life, whether in academic learning, co-curricular opportunities or in our pastoral support.

We aim to be an excelling school that enjoys a strong reputation as a leading school in Shropshire, known for its distinctive educational model and well respected both nationally and internationally.

We seek to deliver inspirational teaching and learning and an excitingly diverse co-curricular programme with excellent resources and facilities for pupils, staff and our local community. We are committed to supporting all pupils and, as a non-selective school, firmly believe that achievement and success isn't measured by exam results alone. We celebrate the efforts of all pupils

and staff, encouraging and nurturing our community to be lifelong learners in a supportive and inspiring environment, and aim to make an Oswestry School education accessible to as many as possible.

Teaching and learning are at the academic heart of our school but we firmly believe that learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom. In preparing our pupils for adult life beyond, we seek to provide them with the skills, attitudes and aptitudes required for happy, successful living. Above all, we seek to learn not just for school but for life.

“A unique school setting in which individuals are enabled to thrive, flourish, and find their forte.”



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Introduction

In recent years, Oswestry School has celebrated the significant milestones of our 615th anniversary and a half century of co-education.

Founded in 1407, this is a mighty oak of a school with deep and strong roots. Our history likewise bears testimony to a courageous, evolutionary spirit, and from our foundation to the present day, Oswestry has been a school that is proudly distinctive and deliberately different.

We are excited to now be looking ahead to the next phase in our long and proud history with a similarly innovative, enterprising and evolutionary spirit. The 2030 vision - Forte - seeks to retain all that is special and unique about Oswestry, building on strong foundations in developing a future-focused education where individuals are known, valued, nurtured and developed within our supportive, small school setting.

Forte is the culmination of a wide-ranging consultation process that has engaged with pupils, parents, staff, governors and alumni, and the views, ideas and suggestions of our community have informed the creation of a bold, innovative and ambitious roadmap for the years ahead.

Whilst this is a seven year plan, Forte is designed to provide strong foundations for the future. The deliberate word play on the number 'forty' points to the more distant horizon ensuring that institutional resilience, strength and excellence is future-proofed for those tasked as custodians in the decades ahead.



We move forward, then, into this next chapter in the Oswestry storybook with eager anticipation and a boldness in our ambition for the school and the individuals within it.

This is a school with both a proud past and an exciting future ahead. It is my tremendous privilege to be tasked with leading the school through this next chapter as we seek to be strong and excelling in all that we do, ensuring that all individuals are likewise empowered and enabled in their own Oswestry journey, finding their forte and thriving in this uniquely special place.

Peter Middleton
Headmaster, Oswestry School



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The Oswestory

As a school with an almost unrivalled history and heritage, it is important when looking to the future to recognise where we have come from.

Our foundation as a truly independent school, free from ties to either monarchy or church, was the pioneering vision of our founder David Holbache. The school continues to proudly wear the crest of the Holbache family as its badge; a family crest for a family school.

15th Century

Oswestry pupils are educated in a half-timbered school building in the grounds of the Parish Church of St Oswald's. They are schooled principally in Latin, Greek and English Grammar.

1644

Headmaster Rev Edward Payne is removed from his post by Oliver Cromwell accused of being a Royalist sympathiser. He is later reinstated as Headmaster in 1660 at the outset of the Reformation.

1863

The neo-Gothic Victorian school chapel is built, located adjacent to the rear of the original Georgian School House.

1407

Oswestry School is founded by David Holbache and his wife Guinevere; the second oldest truly independent school in the country.

16th Century

Oswestry School attracts the attention of Queen Elizabeth I who pledges an endowment of "40 shillings per annum" to assist with the running of the school.

1776

Due to an increase in numbers, the school moves to its present site at Upper Brook Street adjacent to the Maes-y-Llan playing fields.





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 **1926**

Old Oswestrian John Godfrey Parry-Thomas breaks the land speed record in his car 'Babs' at Pendine Sands, Wales.

 **1973**

The full-length statue of Winston Churchill is unveiled in Parliament Square, London, sculpted by Old Oswestrian artist Ivor Roberts-Jones.

 **2007**

Oswestry School celebrates its 600th anniversary.

 **1893**

Old Oswestrian Robert Topham gains his first England football cap and wins the FA Cup with his side Wolverhampton Wanderers.

 **1971**

With the admission of girls, Oswestry School is one of the very first Shropshire schools to become co-educational.

 **1978**

With Bellan House joining the family of schools, Oswestry becomes an all-through school educating girls and boys from age 4-18.

 **2023**

Launch of Forte, the Oswestry School 2030 Strategic Plan.

“A family crest for a family school.”

Forte







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Our Vision

The *Forte* vision is focused on four key pillars, a commitment to ensuring that our school - and the individuals within it - are empowered and enabled to be strong and excelling.

A Strong and Distinct Identity

-  A leading independent co-educational all-through school with a strong reputation for individualised care and opportunities for all;
-  A distinctive whole-school approach with a sector-leading transition programme;
-  A non-selective school that is best placed to get the very best out of all;
-  The family school of choice in Shropshire and beyond- providing unrivalled value for money;
-  A proudly diverse and inclusive day and boarding community that celebrates and respects difference and individuality.

A Strong and Expansive Education

-  An innovative and aspirational approach to whole school Teaching & Learning focused on independent learning and intellectual curiosity;
-  A contemporary future-focused education that looks to the horizon whilst deep-rooted in the values that are core to our community;
-  Excellence in the Performing Arts, Sport and Adventure Education and a co-curricular programme that develops roundedness and enables all pupils to find their forte;
-  Expanded bursary programme ensuring an Oswestry School education is more accessible;
-  A pastoral support programme that prioritises and promotes happiness and wellbeing for all.



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A Strong and Secure Preparation for Life

-  A Learning Journey from 4-18 with outstanding preparation for life;
-  A school culture driven by core values of kindness, compassion, and community;
-  A school with a global mindset, encouraging intercultural fluency and an expansive outlook;
-  Outstanding Futures & Careers programme with strong links to the alumni community;
-  Aligned curricular, co-curricular and pastoral objectives focused on developing aptitudes and attitudes to enable our pupils to make a positive impact in their lives beyond school.

A Strong and Sustainable Future

-  Recruiting, training and retaining outstanding staff with a strong and supportive community and working environment;
-  Investment in campus and facilities to support the educational objectives of the school;
-  Robust financial management to support the school's operations and development;
-  Commitment to environmental sustainability recognising our responsibilities in working towards a greener school;
-  Strong and supportive governance with a diverse range of experience and skill sets.

Our Values

Oswestry School's Values are deeply rooted and provide the firm foundations for a school with a long and proud history: refined through the centuries and fit for the future.



Flourishment

We believe that every member of our community should be empowered and enabled to thrive within our school setting, their aspirations supported, and their individual aptitudes and abilities developed and nurtured.



Opportunity

We believe that excellence in education is rooted in challenge and discovery both inside and outside the classroom; we seek to provide opportunities for all to find their forte and excel.



Responsibility

We believe in individual and collective responsibility, developing independence and self-reflectiveness in our own journeys, and likewise our place within the wider world, taking responsibility for contributing positively and making a meaningful impact.



Trust

We believe in the importance of a safe, secure and supported community. We prioritise the safeguarding of our pupils and staff, and above all else, value the human relationships that are developed within a close-knit, caring community.



Empathy

We believe kindness, compassion and respect are vital to a happy and thriving community, and we celebrate being a diverse and inclusive community of individuals who support, understand and encourage one another.



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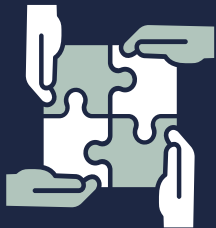
Our Virtues

Whilst all within our community are encouraged to be - and are respected as - individuals, we collectively strive towards character strengths that are entwined with the school's Values. We believe these character virtues are the foundation for happy and successful living and learning, and the framework on which our Futures vision is rooted.



Analytical

We are problem solvers. We challenge the accepted. We are methodical and can tackle the most complex of problems. As critical thinkers, Oswestrians go out into the world equipped with logical reasoning and the ability to forge smart and justified conclusions.



Collaborative

We work together. We grow through collective learning. We value emotional intelligence and respect the opinions and ideas of others. Our approach encourages Oswestrians to be team players, strengthening interpersonal relationships and cultivating empathy, understanding, and a sense of belonging and community.



Independent

We are self-motivated. We reflect on our successes and failures through a journey of self-mastery. We are self-propelled to reach our full potential through a growth mindset. Leaders of the future, Oswestrians are flexible and adaptive, yet are firm in their convictions, guiding their actions, decisions and behaviours.

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Innovative

We champion creativity. We forge new paths with imagination. We foster initiative, embracing opportunities and igniting change. Oswestrians are empowered to think differently, offering unique perspectives and original ideas.



Proactive

We are propelled by a future-focused mindset. We are informed and sensitive global citizens, ready to play a part in positive change. We grasp the opportunities and challenges of the world around us. Oswestrians anticipate the needs of tomorrow, approaching it with integrity, humanity and fairness.



Resilient

We thrive on challenge. We step out of our comfort zones. We face failure fearlessly. Within a supportive framework, Oswestrians develop a courageousness that enables them to step confidently and boldly into their adult lives.



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The Road Ahead: *Forte* Milestones

Protecting, retaining and enhancing our identity - that which makes us special and unique - *Forte* is likewise future-focused, looking to the horizon as we develop, grow and adapt to the changing nature of education and the wider world.

Throughout Oswestry School's history, we have been no strangers to change and evolution and, as we embark upon this next phase, we are propelled by creativity, ambition and innovation in ensuring that we are a school - and a school community - that is increasingly strong and excelling.

Whilst not exhaustive, these milestones are indicative of the Forte vision's desire to drive the school forward in the years ahead. As with all journeys, there will be moments along the way to pause, reflect, and revisit the roadmap, and likewise to adapt, react, and respond to both challenges and opportunities.

Above all else, we are driven by the aim to ensure that the pupils within our care are provided with the best possible education, and are best prepared for happy, thriving, impactful lives.

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The Road Ahead: *Forte* Milestones

A Thirst for Learning

The creation of a new **Library** was an important first academic priority, providing pupils with a dynamic and inspiring space for independent and collaborative study, and encouraging a passion for reading and learning. Further investment in academic facilities across both school sites will follow in the years ahead.

Preparation for Life

The newly-refurbished **Sigi Faith Sixth Form Centre** - a major capital project made possible through the legacy donation of the Faith family - provides our senior pupils with a contemporary space for study as they are prepared for the wider world beyond.

Future-focused

Led by our Deputy Head Futures, the years ahead will see the development of our **whole-school Futures vision**, an adaptive and evolving programme to ensure that all pupils are best prepared for an ever-changing world with future-focused skillsets and mindsets, and the attributes and attitudes to make a positive and meaningful difference.

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Living and Learning Together

September 2024 will see the opening of a first **Coeducational Sixth Form Boarding House** following a major refurbishment of our boarding facilities. This exciting evolution will be an era-defining moment, providing our senior pupils with the unique stepping-stone opportunity to live and learn within a coeducational setting.

Expanding Global Horizons

A similarly evolutionary moment will come as we expand our family of schools to include a first **International Summer School**, rooted in the Oswestry School values and virtues and further affirming our fervent belief in the transformative power of global education.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Passionate **advocates of holistic education**, we aim to enhance and strengthen our co-curricular provision, ensuring that breadth and excellence is provided for our pupils both inside and outside the classroom. Amongst other projects, initial scoping work has been undertaken to develop a new and exciting space for the Performing Arts, the timeline for which will be dependent on fundraising and other external factors.

Transformative Opportunity

The launch of our **Development and Fundraising** programme will assist in expanding access to an Oswestry School education through bursary support, ensuring that future generations can benefit from the transformative experience of an Oswestry School education for many years to come.



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Join the Journey

As we embark upon this exciting next phase, we warmly invite you to join us in the journey, staying connected both in person and online, sharing with us as the seeds of the *Forte* vision are embedded, flourish and grow.



Website

The school website is the principal way of keeping in touch and staying up to date with developments and school progress. A new-look website is planned for launch in the 2024/25 academic year. Head to www.oswestryschool.com to stay connected.



Social Media

We aim to showcase school life through a variety of different social media channels, telling the Oswestry story with regular posts on **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Twitter**, celebrating both individual and collective achievements alongside signposting future school events and activities.



E-newsletter

Our e-newsletters are a popular weekly digest of all the wonderful variety of school life, with all current parents and alumni receiving the newsletter at the end of each week. Newsletters are archived on the school website, whilst more expansive musings on school life - and education more generally - can be found in the Headmaster's monthly blog posts which can be found at <https://petermiddleton.blog>



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Events

The Oswestry School community is a tight knit one, and we relish opportunities to bring our community together, whether current or former pupils, parents or staff. Key dates in the diary are the annual Founder's Day and Speech Day which bookend the academic school year, with numerous talks, events and social gatherings organised throughout the year to create a vibrant and diverse range of opportunities for community connection. Once an Oswestrian, always an Oswestrian!



Oswestry Connect

Oswestry Connect is a community network bringing together school leavers with alumni, current parents and past parents, retaining a strong connection between OOs and the school. An invaluable resource for creating opportunities and supporting one another, for more details contact oldoswestrians@oswestryschool.com or to join the community directly, head to <https://alumni.oswestryschool.com>



Friends of Oswestry School

Oswestry School benefits from a very active and supportive parent association. The Friends of Oswestry School (FoOS) has been an integral part of our community for many years, supporting the school through fundraising and the organisation of events, including the annual Fireworks display, the popular Burns Night Ball, and the end of year Summer Ball. For further details about the work of the committee please contact friends@oswestryschool.com

Expanding Opportunities at Oswestry School

From its very foundation, Oswestry School has sought to educate and inspire its pupils in order that they are best prepared for fulfilling and meaningful lives.

Opportunities abound both inside and outside the classroom, and we remain committed to ensuring that an Oswestry School education is outstanding in all areas, and likewise accessible to as many as possible.

Countless thousands of Oswestrians over the years have benefited from the financial support of the school to make an Oswestry education possible.

To this day, we continue to support those experiencing adversity, hardship and conflict, with transformational bursaries providing similar such opportunities for youngsters to thrive and flourish within our nurturing and supportive school community. We likewise support significant numbers of families through smaller-scale bursaries to make an Oswestry education accessible and affordable. We are determined to enable future generations to benefit in similar ways, and seek to build up endowment funds in the years ahead to ensure that many more young men and women can be given the chance of a truly transformational education at Oswestry School.

Whilst supporting individuals in this way, we also seek to support all Oswestrians in providing the very best possible educational experience both inside and outside the classroom. In recent years, major capital projects that have benefited from generous donations and legacies have included the floodlit artificial pitch on the Maes-y-Llan and the Momentum Sports Hall and, as we look to further enhance and improve the facilities for current- and future - Oswestrians, we will welcome individuals and groups who share in our vision and want to help make them a reality whether alumni, current parents, past parents or friends of the school.

During the course of the year - and years - ahead, we will be prioritising the growth of our Development and Fundraising, and will share in more detail our vision for the next chapter in the school's history and ways in which Oswestrians can support making the vision a reality. For further information about how you can be a part of the story, please contact development@oswestryschool.com

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