



Excellent outcomes for all young people

Outstanding opportunities for staff

At the heart of our community

Induction Information for Academies within the Vale Academy Trust or those seeking to join the Trust from September 2017

General Information

For any academy within the Trust or any school seeking to join the Vale Academy Trust (VAT) from September 2017, the following information may be useful. It focuses mainly on operational issues, but also refers to ethos and Teaching and Learning aspects of our work together. This document will continue to be updated and adapted as we work together. However, the fundamental belief of the VAT is that schools will work together and share resources so that the maximum benefit can be gained for all pupils across our schools. This also includes removing from Headteachers some of the day-to-day tasks which we may currently undertake and passing these on to a central 'back office' team, thus allowing Headteachers to focus on Teaching and Learning, Progress and Attainment, Behaviour and Leadership.

Background

The Vale Academy Trust was formed on 1st October 2013 when three local schools came together to work in partnership. There are now eight current member academies. It is expected that other local schools will seek to join the Trust over the coming two years. Our Trust includes C of E and non C of E schools and, as such, is able to cater for either type of school ensuring that the individual ethos or faith element is protected. The Department for Education has also approved the Academy Trust as a Sponsoring Academy Trust.

A video has been produced to explain more about the workings of the Trust – this is viewable by clicking on the link below.

<https://youtu.be/lrZNRQvmyl8>

Wantage C of E Primary School

Wantage C of E Primary is a 3-11 Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School and Nursery with 421 pupils. It converted to an academy on 1st October 2013. The school is currently graded as 'Good' by Ofsted. (June 2015)

<http://www.wantagece.org/>

Charlton Primary School

Charlton Primary School in Wantage is a 4-11 Primary School and it also converted to an academy on 1st October 2013. It currently has 365 pupils but is expanding to two form entry across the school. The school is currently graded as 'Good' by Ofsted. (June 2015)

<https://charltonprimary.com/>

King Alfred's Academy

King Alfred's was a Foundation School until it converted to an academy in August 2011. It is an 11-18 school with 1850 students. It is also a Teaching School and a National Support School and helped form the Trust in October 2013. The school is currently graded as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. (September 2014)

<http://www.kaacademy.org>

St Nicholas C of E Primary School

St Nicholas C of E Primary joined the Trust on 1st October 2014. Currently it has 94 pupils from 4-11 and is graded as 'Good' by Ofsted (September 2017)

<http://www.st-nicholas-pri.oxon.sch.uk/>

Millbrook Primary School

Millbrook Primary joined the Vale Academy Trust on 1st December 2014. Currently it has 423 pupils. The school is currently judged as 'Requires Improvement' (September 2017) but achieved 'Good' for Leadership and Management, Behaviour and Early Years provision.

<http://millbrookschool.org.uk>

St James C of E Primary School

St James CE Primary School joined the Vale Academy Trust in March 2016. Currently it has 115 pupils and is expanding to one form entry. The school is currently graded as 'Good' by Ofsted.

<http://www.stjamesprimaryhanney.co.uk>

Larkmead School

Larkmead Secondary School joined the Trust in January 2017. Currently it has 800 pupils from 11-18. The school is currently graded as 'Good' by Ofsted.

<http://www.larkmead-school.com/>

Thameside Primary School

Thameside Primary joined the Trust on 1st August 2017. Currently it has 208 pupils from 3-11. This school is currently graded as 'Good' by Ofsted.

<https://www.thameside.oxon.sch.uk>

Ethos

The ethos of the Trust is very clear. It was formed by local Heads, governors, and other stakeholders to ensure high quality education for children within our local community during these very turbulent and changing times. We all believe that no school should work alone and that by working together we can deliver higher standards, more opportunities for children and fantastic opportunities for staff development.

We were the first trust in the UK to include both C of E and non C of E schools that came together to form a local multi academy trust. As such, each academy has its own distinctive nature and ethos, but underpinning this is our shared vision for high quality education for local children. The academies have agreed, therefore, to support each other in any way possible and this has already led to many exciting joint school projects which are proving beneficial, not only for the children within the Trust, but also for the development of staff working within the Trust.

We are centralising key services such as finance, premises and operations, HR and legal support, thus leaving Headteachers and senior staff to focus on Teaching and Learning within their schools. This has led to a number of key appointments across the academy trust, including:

- A Chief Executive (former Headteacher of King Alfred's 2010-2015 and National Leader of Education) supporting the Headteacher and Governors in each academy and working closely with the Board of Directors on strategy and long-term planning for the VAT
- An Executive Headteacher for Primary schools, as well as a Secondary School Improvement Leader
- A Director of Learning – Primary and Transition, responsible for performance and outcomes, working with key groups and supporting staff through high quality CPD. This person is supported by staff from across the Trust with key skills in English and Maths
- An Assistant Head to oversee Teaching and Learning - Primary
- An Assistant Head to oversee Inclusion/SEND across the Trust, working with SENCOs and staff across all the academies
- Members of the Central Team - see diagram over the page for full details.

As in all schools, Headteachers have operational control of their academies, although many of the issues which may have previously distracted them from Teaching and Learning and supporting teachers in the classrooms have been removed.

The Board of Directors is made up of 12 individuals who are passionate about local education from 3-18. They include representatives of the founding schools, including Foundation Governors appointed by the Diocese along with other appropriately skilled individuals from across Oxfordshire. This Board is responsible to the Department for Education in relation to key areas such as finance, staffing and pupil progress.

The day-to-day local operation of each academy remains the responsibility of the Headteacher, their staff and the Local Governing Body. Both the Board and the Local Governing Bodies are supported by various Committees. Please see the current Scheme of Delegation.

The Future

Our aim is to ensure that every child within the Trust has access to high quality and exciting education from 2-18, with staff being able to focus on the important aspects of Teaching and Learning whilst leaving the non-teaching aspects of the Trust to a dedicated specialist support team.

At the same time, the Trust is engaging with other stakeholders within education across our region to help develop our vision for the Trust. This includes discussions with Oxford Board of Education so that we will be able to welcome current voluntary aided (VA) schools into our Trust from September 2018. We are also talking with other local multi academy trusts to strengthen our collaborative style of working, which may, in future, lead to a closer working relationship with regard to both Teaching and Learning and School Improvement, and an expansion of 'back office' support.

The essential 'core' areas below will be administered, overseen and supported by the Academy Trust Executive Team:

- High level Teaching and Learning appointments
- Strategic Finance
- Operations
- Human Resources
- Digital Technology

Area of Activity	Details	Lead Person
Key staff appointments	CEO, Finance Director and finance team, HR Director, Operations Manager, Head of Governance and Policy and key Teaching and Learning posts are all funded centrally	CEO and Board
Strategic deployment of Central Teaching and Learning resources	At primary level support is discussed with the Executive Head and the Director of Learning who then deploy the central team as necessary. This includes annual two-day school improvement visits to support and challenge, as well as regular on-site visits to review progress and systems. For secondary schools this is led by our School Improvement Lead who will visit schools monthly to support and challenge. This support is funded by the Central Team.	Primary – Executive Head and Director of Learning Secondary – School Improvement Lead
Inspection Support	During any Ofsted inspection the central team will support with preparation of documentation, as well as providing support during the actual inspection and with any follow up evaluation needed. This will also apply to any RSC visits. This support is funded by the Central Team.	CEO
Strategic Finance	The preparation of individual budgets for each academy will be carried out by the Headteacher and LGB with support from the Central Finance Team. However, final approval of each budget will be overseen by the VAT Finance Committee and Board of Directors before submission to the EFA. Whilst each school will be supported by the Central Finance Team in this process, it is important that all timelines and deadlines must be adhered to. This service is covered by VAT central funds.	VAT Finance Director Overseen by Chair of the VAT Finance and Operations Committee
Annual Audit	The Trust and all academies within the Trust are subject to an annual externally led audit. This is covered by central funds.	VAT Finance Director Audit Committee
Payroll	Payroll systems are centralised for all academies in the VAT. The contract is negotiated by the VAT	VAT Finance Director

	Finance Director. Costs are covered from VAT central funds.	
Legal Services	The VAT has retained Legal Advice Services from Stone King Solicitors and each Head is able to access this service directly for relevant support. Initial support is covered from the central fund. More detailed or lengthy support would be charged back to each academy. For academy issues, including conversion or changes to the Articles, the VAT uses Stone King Solicitors. This is based on prior experience of dealing with Stone King through the initial setting-up of the Vale Academy Trust by the VAT academies. This means that much of the detail of conversion can be carried out by the central team, thus leaving the Headteacher to focus on other issues. Costs for this service will be recovered from the conversion grant via the Central Finance Team.	VAT Finance Director
Governor Development Programme	Governors and Directors from all academies within the Trust come together each term as part of a centralised training programme covering all key aspects of academy governance. This is led by the Chief Executive and others from within the Trust. The costs of this programme are covered from VAT central funds.	Chief Executive, LGB Chairs and Board of Directors
GDPR	This is led centrally by the Head of Governance and Policy. This work is funded centrally.	Head of Governance and Policy
LGB/Committee Clerking Service	The appointment of Clerks for LGB's is centralised to ensure quality and consistency. The Head of Governance and Policy, who is also the Company Secretary, will work with Heads and Chairs to plan Clerking arrangements during the conversion process. Costs are organised centrally to ensure best value but are charged back to academies.	Head of Governance and Policy
EFA/DfE Conversion Grants	Schools converting to academy status and then joining the Trust will be given a grant of £25,000 from the DfE to cover the costs of conversion from the DfE. This grant is held centrally as invoices are charged directly to the Trust. This grant will normally cover most aspects of conversion (legal costs, financial software and payroll set-up costs, and includes new signage where necessary).	
Other services which are required	The provision of other services is agreed following discussion within the Headteachers' Operational Group; it is then passed to the Finance Director to negotiate contracts. Individual academies must not enter into negotiations or new contracts without consultation and permission of the Finance Director. These costs are charged back to academies.	VAT Finance Director
Finance Software	All VAT schools will operate the same financial software package so that the Central Finance Team can strategically oversee financial aspects. New academies will be supported through the change process and this will include training of key staff where necessary. This software must be accessible once conversion takes place. Costs are covered from VAT central funds.	VAT Finance Director
Accounting Officer	The Academy Trust requires a single Accounting Officer as per the Education Funding Agency Financial Handbook. These costs are covered by central funds.	Currently undertaken by the Chief Executive. This role is overseen by the Audit Committee.
Internal Audit	The Education Skills and Funding Agency requires all Trusts to carry out regular internal audits to review work against ESFA guidelines. Individual academies will receive copies of their reports, as will the Finance Director, the Finance Committee and individual Chairs of Governors. Costs are covered from VAT central funds.	This is arranged by the VAT Finance Director and approved by the VAT Audit Committee.

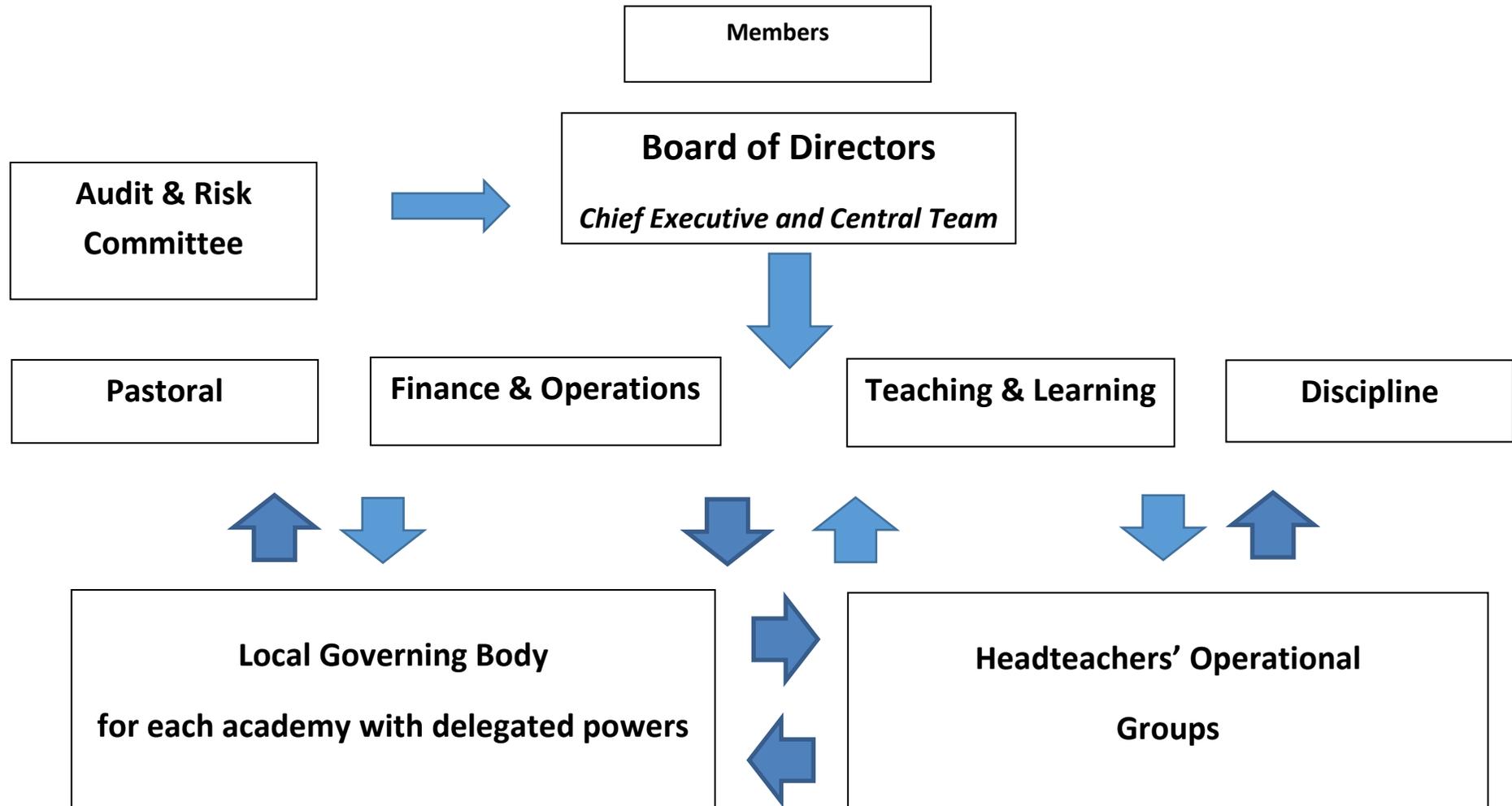
Buildings and Operations	All aspects concerning strategic capital buildings and operations will be channelled through the Central Operations Team. This includes all contract issues relating to: grounds, plant, and contracts linked to professional services. Individual academies wishing to undertake building improvement work should contact the Operations Manager for advice and guidance before work is authorised. It is understood that certain contracts may be in place when an individual academy joins the VAT and, as such, that contract may need to run through to its conclusion. However, no contract should be renewed without the approval of the Operations Manager and Finance Director of the Trust. Costs for high level support are covered from VAT central funds.	VAT Operations Manager Contract issues will be agreed in consultation with the VAT Finance Director.
Formulaic Capital Allocations	Due to the size of the Trust, we receive a capital allocation each year. This is based on the condition of school buildings and, as such, is overseen and monitored centrally. Spending plans are scrutinised by Headteachers, LGB's, and the VAT Finance and Operations Committee. Costs linked to preparing all condition reports are covered from VAT central funds.	VAT Operations Manager, Finance Director and Chief Executive
Human Resources	All academies within the VAT operate under a single set of policies which are reviewed regularly by various committees. All HR related policies are overseen by the VAT Human Resources Director. Challenging staffing matters should be discussed with the HR Director and the Chief Executive. Support staff vacancies must fit within the VAT agreed structure. As such, new appointments should be discussed to see whether economies of scale or succession planning possibilities could be investigated. This must include the grading of support staff posts across the individual academies.	VAT HR Director and Chief Executive All VAT policies must be followed by Headteachers.
General Policies	Most policies are now organised and reviewed centrally. Heads and governors are consulted and schools arrange their own procedures once policy is agreed. This process is centrally funded.	Head of Governance and Policy
Pay and Conditions for Staff	All VAT academies continue to follow National Pay and Conditions (2017) for both teaching staff and support staff, otherwise known as the 'Green Book' and 'Burgundy Book'. Any changes to these arrangements could only take place after widespread consultation and a decision by the Board.	The Board of Directors, Chief Executive and Headteachers
Management Information System	Currently most academies within the VAT operate under one MIS system (Bromcom). New schools joining the VAT will need to discuss their options with the Chief Executive during the conversion process. Some costs associated with this will be covered from the conversion grant.	Chief Executive
Digital Technology	The VAT can advise on all strategic digital technology services. This includes aspects of work such as purchasing of servers, computers and wifi set up, along with appropriate 'in house' advice and guidance. This support is covered from VAT central funds. For schools without their own IT support staff, IT Technician support can be arranged on request and this will operate under a cross charging system between academies, overseen by the Finance Team.	Operations Manager
Email	All VAT academies use a common email system. Again, introduction of this can be planned as part of a timeline when converting or joining the Trust.	
Catering Services	Currently all VAT academies use the 'in house' catering service, as they are 'local'. If a school joins which is not 'local' alternative arrangements may be considered.	VAT Operations Manager and Finance Director
Headteachers' Annual Appraisal	The VAT employs primary and secondary specialist external consultants to support the annual appraisal process for VAT Headteachers and the Chief Executive. The Local Governing Body Chair,	Chief Executive and Headteachers' Operational Group

	the Chief Executive and the external consultant form an appraisal panel to set objectives and review progress. External specialists' fees are charged back to academies.	
Inclusion	Inclusion and SEND strategic development is supported by the VAT Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion. The post holder liaises with individual SENCo's and Heads and reports to the Operational Headteachers' Group. This post is funded from the VAT central fund.	VAT Assistant Head of Inclusion, reporting to Heads' Operational Group. Line managed by Chief Executive
Teaching and Learning	Deployment of VAT specialist staff is overseen by the Executive Headteacher (primary) and Chief Executive along with our Secondary School Improvement Leader. This includes the work of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion • Director of Learning (Primary and Transition) • Assistant Headteacher – Teaching and Learning/curriculum • Specialist Literacy and Maths teachers • Specialist Teacher of Music • Head of Primary PE* (funded through Primary Sport Premium funding) • Specialist EYFS lead practitioner All the above posts (except the PE post) are funded from the VAT central fund.	Executive Head – Primary, Chief Executive.
Succession Planning	The VAT will endeavour to appoint to promoted posts from within the Trust in order to develop future leaders. This may not always be possible, in which case local and national adverts will be used as necessary.	Operational Headteachers' Group and Chief Executive
Admissions and Appeals Service	The Vale Academy Trust operates under one Admissions Policy and one Appeals Process, both currently operated through OCC. Costs are covered through the VAT central fund.	Chief Executive
Primary Sport Premium	All primary academies within the VAT 'buy-back' into the sport packages organised by the Vale SGO. Depending on the skills existing within each academy, a decision is then taken on 'Gold Package' subscription (which includes intensive CPD led by a primary specialist). The Trust does not support the use of external coaching companies for the delivery of high quality physical education during curriculum time.	Head of Primary PE, Headteachers and the Chief Executive
CPD	Many central CPD opportunities are organised on Thursday afternoons (academies should keep this day free from other activities). The central CPD package is organised by the VAT and is often led by current practitioners from within the Trust. These sessions include curriculum, assessment and moderation. Costs are covered from VAT central funds.	Director of Learning, Headteachers
Primary Standardised Assessment	Currently VAT primary academies use PIRA/PUMA standardised tests three times a year for most pupils. Costs are covered from VAT central funds.	VAT Assistant Headteacher – Teaching and Learning
Public Relations and Media	Support and guidance is offered for all media issues. This includes support and monitoring of individual academy websites. Costs for advice and guidance are covered from VAT central funds.	Executive Assistant to the CEO
Cost Sharing	The founding schools formed this educational trust based on trust and goodwill. This year, primary academies will allocate 5% of their funding received from the ESFA/OCC to the Central Budget to cover the cost sharing of the services listed. Secondary academies will allocate 4% of their funding. This is reviewed each year. Academies which generate income through other sources retain that funding (along with any surplus) each year. Academies are not allowed to post deficit budgets.	Chief Executive, Headteachers' Operational Group, VAT Finance Director and VAT Finance and Operations Committee

From September 2017 key staff across the VAT are:

Chief Executive	Simon Spiers
Charlton Headteacher	Steve Rose
Wantage C of E Headteacher	Evvy Boehm (interim April – September). Andrew Browne as of September 2018
St Nicholas C of E Headteacher	Elise Keymer (Interim April – September).
King Alfred's Headteacher	Jon Smart (Interim April – September). Rick Holroyd as of September 2018
Millbrook Headteacher	Jane Ratcliffe
St James C of E Headteacher	Janice Peacock
Larkmead Headteacher	Chris Harris
Thameside Headteacher	Anna Grice
VAT Head of Governance and Policy	Vicky Roberts
VAT Finance Director	Richard Quayle
VAT HR Director	Jean Creagh
VAT Finance Controller	Shelley Cook
VAT Senior Finance Officer	Sarah Keane
VAT Operations Manager	Hayley Munro
VAT Assistant Operations Manager	Suzy Smart
VAT Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion	Will Harvey
VAT Director of Learning – Primary and Transition	Hazel Pittard
VAT Assistant Headteacher – Teaching and Learning – Primary (P/T)	Kerry Cottrill
VAT EYFS Lead Practitioner (P/T)	Alison Base
VAT Specialist Literacy Teacher (P/T)	Kate Wigley
VAT Specialist Numeracy Teacher (P/T)	Katie Mallinson and Sarah Read
VAT Primary Music Specialist (P/T)	Gordon Campbell
VAT CPD Lead	Hazel Pittard
VAT Public Relations and Media Specialist and EA to Chief Executive	Roxie Boulter
VAT Head of Primary PE	Paul Chadwick
VAT Data Officer	Robert Hosking

Vale Academy Trust Structure





March 2018

Full time Central Team post

Part time Central Team post

**Vale Academy Trust
Board of Directors (12)**

**Chief Executive
Accounting
Officer**

**Chief Finance
Officer
Richard Quayle**

**Executive Assistant to CEO
Roxie Boulter
Marketing/Media/Complaints**

**Finance Controller
Shelley Cooke**

**Operations
Manager
Hayley Munro**

**Human Resources Director
Jean Creagh Tue-Thr**

**Executive Headteacher -
Primary
Jane Ratcliffe Thr-Fri**

**Secondary School
Improvement Lead Duncan
Millard
25 days per year**

**Head of Governance & Policy
Company Secretary
Vicky Roberts**

**Senior Finance
Officer
Sarah Keane
Mon-Thr**

**Operations
Assistant
Suzy Smart
Mon-Fri 20
hours**

**Director of Learning
(Primary & Transition)
Hazel Pittard**

**Assistant Headteacher
Inclusion
Will Harvey**

**Catering
Manager
Sally Cox
KA post**

**EYFS Lead Practitioner
Alison Base - Fri**

**Music Specialist
Gordon Campbell
2.5 days**

**Assistant Headteacher
Teaching & Learning – Primary &
Transition - Kerry Cottrell 2 days**

**Data Officer
Robert Hosking
(30 hours)**

**Numeracy Specialist Sarah
Read/Katie Mallinson -
Wednesdays**

**Literary Specialist
Kate Wigley 2 days**

**LGB/Committee
Clerks**

Vale Academy Trust – Growth Timeline (including student and staff numbers)



- Vale Academy Trust
- Charlton
- Wantage CE
- King Alfred's
- St Nicholas CE
- Millbrook
- St James CE
- Larkmead
- Thameside
- Other primaries?
- Grove Free School 2021

Student numbers

2590 2680 3165 3280 4000 5000+

Staff numbers

370 395 470 508 600+

Scheme of Delegated Authority

October 2017

The board will take action, including the full or partial withdrawal of delegated authorities to individuals, groups and local governing bodies, should the individual, group, or local governing body, fail to carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively.

Key:

Level 0	Members
Level 1	VAT Board of Directors
Level 2	VAT Committees:
	1 All groups (1)
	2 Finance & Operations (2)
	3 Teaching & Learning (3)
	4 Student Discipline (4)
	5 Pastoral (5)
	6 Audit (6)
	7 Pay Committee (7)
Level 3	Local Governing Bodies
Level 4	Executive Team

Accountable - approve, appoint (strategic/non-executive responsibility) **M**onitor/ensure (delegated strategic/non-executive responsibility) **R**esponsible - do the work (operational/executive responsibility) **C**onsulted - opinions sought

Where groups have a shared duty, overall lead/authority is as shown in **bold text** and with asterisk*

Key Function	No.	Task				Executive Team
			Members	Board of Directors	VAT Ctees	
Governance	1.	Structure of VAT Board	AR			
	2.	Changes to the Governance structure, Terms of Reference, Schemes of Delegation		AR	M6	
	3.	Appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board		AR		

Key Function	No.	Task	Members	Board of Directors	VAT Ctrees	LGB	Executive Team
	45.	Exclude a pupil permanently		A	R4*	R	M
	46.	Review exclusion on appeal		A	R4*	R	
	47.	Direct reinstatement of excluded students		AR		C	C
	48.	Exclude a pupil for a fix period		A	M4 M5	R	M
Admissions	49.	Admissions policy		A	R5	C	M
	50.	Admissions: application decisions.		A		R	M
	51.	Admissions prospectus			AR 5	R	M
Premises & Insurance	52.	Premises-related polices		A	R2	C	M
	53.	Academy premises & capital strategy		A	R2*	C	R
Health & Safety	54.	Health & Safety Policy		A	R2*	C	M
	55.	Monitor implementation of H&S Policy		A	R2*	R	R
	56.	H&S Risk Management Plan		A	R2*	R	R
	57.	Monitor H&S Risks		A	R2*	R	R
School Organisation	58.	Set times of the Academy day and dates of Academy terms and holidays		A	M1	C	R