



Vale Academy Trust

Induction Information for Schools joining the Vale Academy Trust from March 2016

General Information

For any school seeking to join the Vale Academy Trust from March 2016, the following information may be useful. It focuses mainly on operational issues but also makes reference to ethos and Teaching and Learning aspects of our Trust. This document will continue to be updated and adapted as we work together. However, the fundamental belief of the Vale Academy Trust is that schools will work in partnership and share resources so that the maximum benefit can be gained for all the young people in our schools. This also includes removing from Headteachers some of the day-to-day mundane tasks which they 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 six current member academies; the three founding schools, and three that have since joined the Trust. It is expected that other local schools will seek to join the Trust over the coming two years. Our Trust is made up of 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 Vale Academy Trust is expecting to expand over the coming months. The Department of Education has also approved the Academy Trust as a Sponsoring Trust.

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 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://charltonschool.wordpress.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.

<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. The school is currently graded as Good by Ofsted.

<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 waiting for its first Ofsted visit since joining the Trust but it is expected to be Good in all areas.

<http://millbrookschool.org.uk>

St James C of E Primary School

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

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

Ethos

The ethos of the Trust is very clear. It was formed by local Heads, governors, and other stakeholders within our community to ensure high quality education for children within south Oxfordshire 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 of its kind in the country where non C of E schools and C of E schools 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 for the development of the staff as well.

We are centralising key 'back office' services such as finance, premises and operations, HR and legal support and Digital Technology, thus leaving the Headteachers and senior staff to focus on Teaching, Learning and Progress. This has led to a number of key appointments focusing on Teaching and Learning across the academy trust which include;

- A Chief Executive supporting Governors and Headteachers within each academy and working directly with the Board of Directors on strategy and long term planning for the VAT (Simon Spiers)
- An academy improvement leader working to support Heads with data (Andrew Browne)
- An Assistant Headteacher to oversee Inclusion/SEND across the Trust, working with SENCos and staff across all the academies (Will Harvey)

- A primary Assistant Headteacher overseeing Teaching and Learning in primary schools who leads a small team of literacy and numeracy specialists working with key groups and supporting staff through high quality CPD (Hazel Pittard)

As in all schools, Headteachers on the ground have operational control of their academies, although many of the issues which 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 2-18. This Board is responsible for key areas such as finance, staffing and pupil progress.

The day-to-day operation of each academy remains the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Local Governing Body, who work with staff locally. Both the Board and the Local Governing Bodies are supported by a number of Committees and all Governors and Directors attend regular training sessions led either by the Chief Executive and other staff from the Trust or by external specialists brought in as necessary, such as the Regional Director of Ofsted.

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 our staff being able to focus on the really important aspects of Teaching and Learning whilst leaving the non-teaching aspects of the Trust to a dedicated specialist 'back office' team.

Below are the areas which are seen as 'core' to the VAT and which will be administered and overseen by the Academy Trust Executive Team:

- Strategic Finance
- Operations
- Human Resources
- Project Management of Digital Technology

As of March 2016, key staff are:

Chief Executive of Vale Academy Trust	Simon Spiers
Charlton Primary Headteacher	Steve Rose
Wantage C of E Headteacher	Clare Morgan
King Alfred's Headteacher	Jo Halliday
St Nicholas C of E Headteacher	Andrew Browne
Millbrook Headteacher	Jane Ratcliffe
St James C of E Headteacher	Janice Peacock
VAT Finance Director	Peter Thompson
VAT Operations Director	Allison Ashcroft
VAT Assistant Headteacher - Inclusion	Will Harvey
VAT Assistant Headteacher (primary) - Teaching and Learning	Hazel Pittard
VAT Specialist Literacy Teacher (p/t)	Kate Wigley
VAT Specialist Numeracy Teacher (p/t)	Wendy Dobbenie
VAT Project Lead - Digital Technology	Tim Cave
VAT EYFS Specialist Lead Teacher	Alison Base (from September 2016)
Peer Reviewer	tbc
PA to Chief Executive	Roxie Boulter