



VALE ACADEMY TRUST

- EXCELLENT OUTCOMES
FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE
- OUTSTANDING
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
STAFF
- AT THE HEART OF OUR
COMMUNITY



*St Nicholas C of E Primary School
Larkmead School
and Charlton Primary School*

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WELCOME TO

THE VALE ACADEMY TRUST

THE VALE ACADEMY TRUST (VAT) WAS FORMED ON 1ST OCTOBER 2013 WHEN THREE LOCAL SCHOOLS (KING ALFRED'S ACADEMY, CHARLTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AND WANTAGE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL) CAME TOGETHER TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP.

There are now eight current member academies; the three founding schools, four other primary academies that have since joined the Trust, and another Secondary School (Larkmead School in Abingdon) which joined the Trust on 1st January 2017. It is expected that other local schools will seek to join the Trust over the coming years. The full list of Vale Academy Trust member schools can be seen below. Our Trust was the first to include

primary, secondary, non-faith and Church of England schools in a single multi academy trust. As such, the individual ethos or faith element of member schools is protected. Overall the VAT is performing well, and the Department for Education approved it as a Sponsoring Academy Trust in 2015. A video has been produced to explain more about the workings of the Trust – this is viewable on the Trust's website: www.vale-academy.org

Vale Academy Trust members (as at 1st January 2018) in alphabetical order:

Charlton Primary School, King Alfred's Academy, Larkmead School, Millbrook Primary School, St James C of E Primary School, St Nicholas C of E Primary School, Thameside Primary School, Wantage C of E Primary School.



Larkmead School



OUR VISION

AT THE TRUST

THE VISION 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.



ABOUT

THE TRUST

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.

We are centralising some key 'back office' services such as finance, premises and operations, HR and legal support, thus leaving the Headteachers and senior staff to focus on the important areas of Teaching and Learning, Progress and Attainment, Behaviour and Leadership. This has led to a number of key appointments across the Academy Trust, including;

- A Chief Executive 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 working with our primary schools for two days per week (currently one of our serving primary Headteachers)
- A secondary School Improvement Leader working to support secondary Headteachers one day a week
- A full time Director of Learning for Primary and Transition supporting everyone
- An Assistant Head to oversee Inclusion/SEND across the Trust, working with SENCOs and staff across all the academies
- A primary Assistant Head responsible for focusing on Teaching and Learning and curriculum issues with primary academies, working with key groups and supporting staff. This person is supported by a number of staff from across the Trust's academies with key skills in English and Maths
- A part time Music Specialist working across the



Thameside Primary School

primary academies supporting staff and leading inspirational music opportunities for all

- A full time Primary Specialist Physical Education leader supported by specialist PE staff from King Alfred's leads the delivery of high quality physical education and school sport across all our academies, including delivering excellent staff CPD
- A full time Finance Director, Operations Manager, Head of Governance and Policy, and HR Director also support the academies and the Trust.

The Board of Directors is made up of twelve individuals who are passionate about local education from ages 3 to 18. They include representatives of the academies, Directors appointed by the Diocese of Oxford and other appropriately skilled individuals from across Oxfordshire. The 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 a number of Committees.



GOVERNANCE

WITHIN THE VALE ACADEMY TRUST

THE VALE ACADEMY TRUST (VAT) HAS A TWO-TIER CENTRAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, CONSISTING OF MEMBERS (AKIN TO SHAREHOLDERS IN A PRIVATE COMPANY) AND TRUSTEES.

The Trustees are also Directors of the VAT and, as such, sit on the Board of Directors.

All academies within the VAT are governed by the Board of Directors at a strategic level and the Board is responsible for setting overall policy. The Board is accountable to the Secretary of State for the performance of all academies in the Trust and for setting strategic direction.

The leadership of each academy is delegated to the Local Governing Body (LGB) by the Board of Directors; the LGB then delegates the operational leadership of the academy to the Headteacher as with any school. The LGB deals with the management, organisation and financial oversight of the academy, in line with any development plan for the Trust. It also sets the ethos and vision for the individual academy whilst monitoring and challenging the Headteacher on pupil performance. It will implement applicable policies set by the VAT and align its reporting structures and timetables (including meetings) to those of the Trust. Each LGB will do this whilst experiencing the fullest support, guidance and challenge of the Trust and the central team, including the Chief Executive.

Each LGB is comprised of a mix of parent and staff governors, the Headteacher (ex-officio) and director appointed governors. In the case of Church of England academies, foundation governors are appointed by the Diocese of Oxford.

The responsibilities of each LGB are defined in the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation. These are reviewed on an annual basis but the Directors reserve the right to review and make amendments at any time.



King Alfred's Academy



WORKING

FOR THE TRUST

AS ALL THE SCHOOLS ACROSS THE VALE ACADEMY TRUST WORK COLLABORATIVELY TOGETHER AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER, MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ARE OPENING UP.

Since October 2013 our Trust has grown significantly within the local area of Wantage and South Oxfordshire. The VAT currently works with eight schools to support the educational provision of more than 4000 children from 3-18, including King Alfred's Academy which is a designated Teaching School and National Support School. Larkmead School in Abingdon joined the Trust on 1st January 2017, meaning there are now two secondary schools within the Trust. There are also six excellent primary schools; the latest to join, Thameside Primary School in Abingdon, converted and joined the Trust on 1st August 2017. We are also developing excellent links with a number of pre-school settings linked to our academies.



St Nicholas C of E Primary School

The VAT is responsible for the education of 4250 children and young people, and almost 650 members of staff across our schools, making us the largest employer in the area.

Continuing professional development is at the heart of our Trust. We have a proven track record of developing our own leaders and this applies to all, from trainee teachers through to school Heads. The Trust works very closely with Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) to identify, recruit, train and develop staff at every level within our academies.

Newly qualified teachers are supported not only



King Alfred's Academy

within each academy; they are also able to access developmental opportunities across our Trust and within OTSA. Young leaders are identified early and are offered a wide range of additional opportunities to sample leadership in a supportive way. Middle leaders have the chance to work with teachers in a similar role across our academies and we do all we can to promote from within the Trust.

For senior leaders, the Trust offers unrivalled opportunities to work with other leaders and Headteachers across the Trust. There is also scope for engaging with the OTSA Growing Future Leaders Programme with plenty of support for those that are aiming to prepare for headship.



Millbrook Primary School



St James C of E Primary School

For more information on the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance visit: www.otsa.org.uk

There is a growing central team linked to teaching and learning, and also other key services such as: finance, operations, human resources and IT. The aim is to support teaching staff in each academy with quality 'back office' services so that the main focus is always on first class teaching and learning.

The VAT also supports staff in many other ways. There are a range of options linked to staff wellbeing, including social events, staff weekends away and subsidised use of the swimming pool at the local

Leisure Centre. The range of extra-curricular activities on offer involving taking young people all over the world is second to none within our Trust.

If you join one of our academies you will be part of a team of dynamic, exciting and friendly staff who support each other and where those who want to progress rapidly will have every opportunity to do so. Headteachers leading our academies do so in a very collaborative and supportive way; they meet regularly, not only to discuss current educational strategy and policy, but also to support each other with regular 'peer visits' to each other's academies, reporting back to on key areas. Our academies operate an 'open door' policy with regard to visitors from across the Trust - whether they be other Headteachers, members of staff from other academies or from the central team, who are 'in and out' of academies on a daily basis working with staff. Headteachers meet with key central staff regularly to review progress against their own development plans. During any form of external visit - such as an Ofsted inspection - the central team will support individual academies directly. Whilst all academies can expect support from everyone within the Trust, any academy requiring bespoke support for whatever reason will receive it from the central team.

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