

Board of Directors 2026/27

Board Directors/ Trustees		
Name	Responsibility	Biography
Ian Sibbald	Chair of WAT Board	Ian is a first-class graduate from Middlesex and a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants. Ian has held financial posts with Cranfield University since 1994, latterly as Director of Finance. Ian's key areas of expertise are around financial management and accounting, corporate taxation including VAT and management information systems for finance and resources. To this end, Ian has been heavily involved with the UNIT4 Agresso Business World system where he project managed the implementation of Agresso into Cranfield for Finance and Estates and was on the steering team for the HR and Payroll implementation. Ian's early career was based in a medium-sized accountancy firm in central London where he undertook numerous audits on a diverse client portfolio from the local milk man through to large unit trusts fund managers, stockbrokers and large wine merchants. Ian has been Chair of Wootton Academy Trust since September 2023 and was appointed to the Board in April 2018. Outside of work Ian enjoys time with his family, traveling and attempting to play golf.
Judy Chandler	Vice Chair of the Board/ Chair of the Wootton Upper School LGB	A proud mother of two young people who both attended Wootton from year 9 to year 11, and a local Wootton resident, Judy works as the Programme Lead for the MA in Education and MA in Childhood and Youth at The Open University. She has worked in education for over eighteen years, eight as a teacher in Secondary Schools including running a whole-school mentoring scheme. In addition to Secondary School teaching, Judy has taught in Further Education, working with post-16 students and also work-based learning as well as working as an Examiner for AQA and providing educational consultancy to a charity. Judy also has a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Management. Outside of work Judy enjoys family time, trying out different foods from around the world and spending time outdoors, including hiking. Judy is the Chair and SEND governor for Wootton Upper School LGB. Judy was appointed to the MAT Board as a director in January 2023.

Sally Knight	HR Trustee	Sally worked in the private sector until July 2013 holding a post of Head of HR (Corporate HR Manager) for many years. As a Senior Leader, Sally has been fortunate enough to experience great coaching and in 2013 became a Leaders & Climate Trainer with Hay. From 2013 Sally moved to the public sector working for MKSP managing and supporting complex HR Employee Relations and under-performing schools, working closely with Milton Keynes Council. In 2016, Sally moved to a local Multi Academy Trust as its dedicated HR Manager. In her little spare time, Sally enjoys fitness, and family time. Sally was elected to the LGB by parents in March 2017. In March 2021, the MAT Board asked Sally to become an appointed Trustee. Sally is a safer recruitment trainer and level 3 safeguarding trainer. Currently is the Director of People in a MAT where she is also Deputy DSL for the Trust.
Bob Bunting	Chair of Kimberley College LGB	Bob worked for BT for more than 30 years, latterly in internal communications, and more recently worked in a similar role for Autoglass. He still does freelance writing and editing work, and currently enjoys working as exams assistant and lead invigilator in another Bedford school. He was a parent governor of Castle Lower School in Bedford (2006-12), including two years as vice-chair. He was briefly co-opted back onto Castle's governing body in 2015 to help finalise their successful federation with Newnham Middle, to become the Castle Newnham School we know today. Bob joined Kimberley College LGB as a parent governor in 2017 and continued to serve as appointed governor from October 2021. Having been LGB vice-chair and training lead since 2018, he took the chair and was appointed to the MAT Board March 2024. He also now chairs Bedford Borough's Governance Strategic Partnership Group, and in that capacity is a member of the borough's Education Improvement Governance Group. Both Bob's sons attended Kimberley, leaving in 2019 and 2021 respectively. His main passions as a governor are in communication with parents and the wider community, student attainment, and listening to student and staff voice.
Nick Martin	Chair of Curriculum and Standards Committee	Nick was first elected to the LGB as a parent governor in October 2017. At the end of his term of office, the MAT board invited Nick to become an appointed Trustee. Nick has two sons, both of whom attended Wootton Upper School and then Kimberley College. Nick has taught for 30 years and is currently Principal of Samuel Whitbread Academy, a mixed rural comprehensive school, including a sixth form of 450. Prior to working at Samuel Whitbread Academy, Nick was Deputy Headteacher of Harlington Upper School, another large rural upper school. Nick has also worked for a Local Authority as a School Improvement Advisor. Nick also worked for the National College for School Leadership on a two-year project looking at how schools could work together in networks. This work was the foundation for the Multi Academy Trust government initiative.

Jacqueline Henry	Safeguarding Trustee	As a fully qualified chef and craft-based caterer with extensive operational experience within the catering industry, Jacqueline has established, overseen and managed diverse successful businesses in B&I, Highstreet Restaurants, Hotels and Events, but has specialised in providing pupil feeding, hospitality and training within the Independent School sector. She has over 30 years within the industry and has a wealth of working knowledge in Budgetary Acquisition, Project Management, Food Safety, Health & Safety, Risk Management, Nutrition and a complimentary PTLLS teaching qualification, and is currently working as an independent consultant within the industry. In her free time Jacqueline enjoys baking, attending live concerts and theatre and is active within her local community. Jacqueline was appointed to the Board of Trustees in July 2024.
Ian Joyce	Chair of Finance Committee	Ian has a wealth of experience in the education sphere, having worked for more than 30 years in the Further Education and Academies sectors. A fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountant, he originally worked in accountancy practice and also has experience working in the NHS. Ian's early roles within the education sector focused on Finance, including roles as Finance Director, and Chief Financial Officer, but in the last 10 years have broadened to include those of Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer of local Multi Academy Trust's. He was appointed Chair of the Finance Committee in 2026.
Rob Parsons	Trustee	Rob is a consultant operations adviser to a number of Trusts. Until September 2025 Rob was Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) at a local Trust, supporting its growth from 3 to 20 schools in 9 years. Prior to that he was Head of School Organisation and capital planning at Central Bedfordshire Council. Originally working in the construction industry Rob has worked at senior management in the public sector for 30 years in various roles. He brings significant expertise to the Trust as a Trustee in addition to local knowledge of schools in Bedford and Central Bedfordshire. His experience includes school system change, admissions, transport, capital investment, risk management, health and safety compliance, procurement and contract management.

Mark Lehain	CEO/ Executive Headteacher/ Ex-officio Trustee	Mark brings with him a wealth of experience and expertise. He taught maths at Wootton Upper School between 2003 and 2010, before setting up and leading Bedford Free School. In recent years he has supported schools across the country working in government as Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for Education. He was appointed as Executive Headteacher at WAT in June 2024. His dedication to fostering a culture of excellence, promoting inclusive learning environments, and nurturing the holistic development of students aligns perfectly with our Trust's values and aspirations.
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Directors/ Trustees of Wootton Academy Trust may also be Governors of Wootton Academy and/or Kimberley 16-19 STEM College