Bath & Wells Multi Academy Trust

Assurance Review of St Vigor and St John - Risk Management

September 2025

Draft

Executive Summary

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

ASSURANCE OVER KEY STRATEGIC RISK / OBJECTIVE

It is important for all organisations to have effective risk management processes in place to support decision-making, to encourage innovation and growth, protect it from incidents that affect service delivery, and which harm its reputation and to minimise losses.

SCOPE

The review considered the arrangements in place for identifying and monitoring risk, establishing appropriate controls and actions aimed at mitigating risk and the reporting arrangements that provide assurance that risks are being effectively managed. Liaison was also undertaken with the Central Team to identify the link between the management of the risk at a school level and how risk is communicated to the Trust.

KEY STRATEGIC FINDINGS

Risk management is embedded across all levels, with ultimate oversight by the Trust Board and local risks managed by school governors.

The school aligns with the Trust's Risk Management Framework, ensuring consistency in risk categorisation, scoring, and reporting.

Risk management is integrated into governance, with governors trained and actively participating in risk reviews and discussions.

No Urgent or Important recommendations are made.

GOOD PRACTICE IDENTIFIED

Use of platforms such as "I am Compliant" (health and safety), "EEC Live" (incident reporting), and Child Protection Online Management System (safeguarding) helps ensure risks are documented, monitored and addressed.

ACTION POINTS

Urgent	Important	Routine	Operational
0	0	1	0

Assurance - Key Findings and Management Action Plan (MAP)

Rec.	Risk Area	Finding	Recommendation	Priority	Management Comments	Implementation Timetable (dd/mm/yy)	Responsible Officer (Job Title)
1	Directed	The St Vigor and St John Risk Register does not include explicit identification of risks related to pupil welfare, particularly in safeguarding and site security. This oversight is significant given the critical importance of child protection and physical safety in an educational environment. There is no direct identification, assessment, or mitigation of risks associated with: - Child protection and safeguarding procedures. - Physical security of the school premises. - Online safety and cyber threats. - Safeguarding training. - Mental health and wellbeing. This omission presents a significant gap in the school's risk management framework, particularly given the statutory importance of safeguarding in educational settings.	Safeguarding risk assessment be undertaken and be added to the risk register.	3			

PRIORITY GRADINGS

1	URGENT	Fundamental control issue on which action should be taken immediately.
2	IMPORTANT	Control issue on which action should be taken at the earliest opportunity.
3	ROUTINE	Control issue on which action should be taken.

Operational - Effectiveness Matter (OEM) Action Plan

Ref	Risk Area	Finding	Suggested Action	Management Comments
No Operational Effectiveness Matter recommendations are made.				

ADVISORY NOTE

Operational Effectiveness Matters need to be considered as part of management review of procedures.

Findings

Directed Risk:

Failure to properly direct the service to ensure compliance with the requirements of the organisation.

Ref	Expected Key Risk Mitigation		Effectiveness of arrangements	Cross Reference to MAP	Cross Reference to OEM
GF	**Governance Framework**	There is a documented process instruction which accords with the relevant regulatory guidance, Financial Instructions and Scheme of Delegation.	In place	-	-
RM	**Risk Mitigation**	The documented process aligns with the mitigating arrangements set out in the corporate risk register.	Partially in place	1	-
C	**Compliance**	Compliance with statutory, regulatory and policy requirements is demonstrated, with action taken in cases of identified non-compliance.	In place	-	-

Other Findings

The Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust's Risk Management Framework, last reviewed and updated in April 2025, provides a structured approach to managing risks across the Trust. It outlines the processes for identifying, categorising, assessing and controlling risks, while also detailing the roles and responsibilities of the Trust Board, the Audit and Scrutiny (A&S) Committee, and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The framework incorporates the Trust's risk appetite and capacity and uses the "4 T's" model for risk treatment. It also emphasises continuous monitoring through a live risk register and regular reporting to ensure risks are managed effectively and aligned with strategic objectives. The Audit & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for directing internal scrutiny and ensuring compliance with financial and non-financial controls. The next scheduled review of the framework is due in April 2026, maintaining an annual review cycle to ensure it remains current and effective in addressing emerging and organisational changes.

The school management of risk aligns with the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Risk Management Framework by integrating its principles and procedures into local operations and decision-making. Risk identification at the school level is conducted in partnership with the Trust leadership team, ensuring that operational risks are assessed and managed in line with MAT's overarching policies. Schools replicate the Trust-wide risk register, categorising risks under internal, external, strategic, and project-related types, and apply the same scoring system for likelihood and impact. The scoring system adheres to the Charity Commission Model ((Likelihood x Impact) + Impact)).

Monitoring is continuous, with school-level risks documented and reviewed regularly, and emerging risks reflected in individual school registers. The Trust Board and Audit & Scrutiny Committee oversee this alignment, ensuring that schools are not only identifying and managing risks appropriately but also reporting them in a way that supports strategic oversight. This collaborative approach ensures that risk management is embedded throughout the Trust, from the classroom to the boardroom.

Other Findings

The Risk Management Policy of the Bath and Wells Diocesan Academy Trust outlines the Trust's structured approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risks that could impact its ability to deliver high-quality services. Approved in April 2025 and reviewed annually, the policy is owned by the Director of Operations and was last updated in 2022 with no significant changes from the previous version. It categorises risks into internal, external, strategic, and project-related, emphasising that effective risk management is a shared responsibility across all levels of the Trust. The Board of Trustees holds ultimate oversight, supported by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and the Senior Executive Leadership Team (SELT), with local governance expected to manage school-level risks. The Policy aligns with the Trust's strategic goal of maximising financial resources and complies with the Academy's Financial Handbook 2024, which mandates risk registers and contingency planning.

The Trust defines its risk appetite as the level of risk it is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives, balanced against its capacity to manage those risks using available resources. Risks are identified collaboratively by the Senior Leadership Team, drawing on insights from across the organisation, and are categorised into internal, external, strategic and project risks. Once identified, each risk is measured by assessing its likelihood and potential impact, using a 1–5 scoring system to calculate both gross and net risk scores. The Trust then applies one or more of the "4 T's" as its treatment strategy: Tolerate, Treat, Transfer, or Terminate, depending on the nature and severity of the risk. This structured approach ensures that risks are consistently identified, evaluated, and managed in alignment with the Trust's strategic goals and operational capacity.

St Vigor and St John (SVSJ) aligns closely with the MAT risk policies by adhering to the centralised risk management framework and policy issued by the Trust. While the core policy remains consistent across all schools within the Trust, St Vigor and St John customises its implementation to reflect the school's specific context, leadership structure and staffing. The school completes Trust-mandated audits such as the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) audit and maintains a bespoke risk register that is reviewed regularly with Governors. This register uses the Trust's scoring matrix and includes risks identified locally, which are escalated to the Trust governance team if deemed significant.

The school also follows Trust guidance for compliance and safeguarding, using platforms such "I am Compliant" and "EEC Live" to record and manage risks. Cybersecurity, GDPR and health and safety are managed centrally by the Trust, while school-specific risks, such as admissions-related reputational concerns are overseen locally and shared with Governors. Training and oversight are provided by the Trust, and governors participate in risk-related discussions and inspections. This layered approach ensures that the school's risk management practices are both locally responsive and fully aligned with Trust expectations.

The school uses digital platforms such as "I am Compliant" for health and safety compliance, "EEC Live" for incident reporting, and the "Child Protection Online Management System" (CPOMs) for safeguarding issues. These systems support layered monitoring and ensure that risks are documented, tracked and addressed appropriately. Strategic risks such as maintaining high standards, community reputation and financial sustainability are prioritised, with leadership and governors working together to ensure continuity and resilience. The school also integrates risk management into its governance processes, with governors receiving training and participating in risk discussions.

The Health and Safety Policy - Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust, reviewed annually by the Local Governing Committee (LGC) and the Head Teacher, provides a framework for ensuring a safe environment for all stakeholders within the school community. It delineates specific responsibilities assigned to various personnel concerning safety management tasks, which include conducting fire drills, administering first aid, and overseeing school trips. Essential documentation, such as risk assessments and emergency plans, is readily accessible on SharePoint or through the school office.

The Policy addresses key areas of safety management, including accident response, school trip oversight and maintaining secure infrastructure. It provides guidelines for various situations such as working alone and handling hazardous materials, also promoting training of staff to identify hazards and conduct regular safety inspections.

Additionally, it outlines procedures for managing visitors and external use of school facilities, emphasising staff wellbeing, occupational stress management and the medical needs of students.

The risk register at St Vigor and St John School is primarily maintained and updated by the Executive Headteacher, who is responsible for ensuring it reflects the current risk landscape of the school. The risk register is reviewed at least twice a year, often three times, depending on the nature and severity of the risks identified. Updates are triggered by incidents, audits or changes in school operations. The register is discussed during Governor meetings, where risks may be amended, downgraded or removed based on mitigation progress. The Chair of Governors plays a key role in oversight, regularly reviewing the register with the Headteacher, while the Clerk to Governors records updates in the meeting minutes. Risks identified as significant may be escalated to the Trust-level risk register, although no such escalations have occurred recently.

Other Findings

The St Vigor and St John School Risk Register presents a structured overview of key operational and strategic risks facing the school, with each risk clearly articulated and rated using the Trust's risk assessment scoring system. The mitigating actions outlined are appropriate and demonstrate a proactive approach, including strong governance, leadership support, and strategic planning, particularly in areas such as staffing, budget management, and community engagement. However, while pupil welfare is indirectly addressed through concerns about leadership capacity and teaching standards, the register does not include explicit entries for safeguarding and site security, critical areas that should be distinctly included to ensure comprehensive risk management. Including specific risks related to child protection, physical site safety, and emergency preparedness would strengthen the register and better reflect the full scope of responsibilities in a school setting.

The Ofsted inspection of St Vigor and St John Church School, conducted in October 2022, rated the school as "Good" overall, with "Outstanding" grades in both behaviour and attitudes, and early years provision. Inspectors praised the school's strong culture of respect, high expectations, and inclusive values, which the Inspectors stated were evident from nursery through to Year 6. The Inspectors found that Safeguarding was effective, with vigilant staff and well-established procedures. The only area for development noted in the Ofsted inspection report was the need for the recently restructured governing body to continue strengthening its capacity to challenge and support school leadership effectively.

An inspection was carried in April 2023, part of the Department for Education's Blue Risk Management Program and the school received an overall Blue Rating, indicating best practice in many areas.

Review of the subsequent report, "School Audit (MAT) Recommendation Report", noted that the audit assessed 15 key areas, including leadership, Health and Safety policy, contractor management, risk assessments, accident reporting, and statutory inspections. While several areas, such as the Health and Safety policy, competent persons, and stress management, received high marks, others, like contractor management, risk assessments, and asbestos management, were flagged for urgent attention. The school scored 142 out of a possible 201 points, which reflects a generally positive performance with room for improvement.

Delivery Risk:

Failure to deliver the service in an effective manner which meets the requirements of the organisation.

Ref	Expected Key Risk Mitigation		Effectiveness of arrangements	Cross Reference to MAP	Cross Reference to OEM
PM	**Performance Monitoring**	There are agreed KPIs for the process which align with the business plan requirements and are independently monitored, with corrective action taken in a timely manner.	In place	-	-
S	**Sustainability**	The impact on the organisation's sustainability agenda has been considered.	In place	-	-
R	**Resilience**	Good practice to respond to business interruption events and to enhance the economic, effective and efficient delivery is adopted.	In place	-	-

Other Findings

Minutes of meetings where risk is discussed were provided during the audit and demonstrate a structured approach to risk management through both proactive mitigation strategies and robust reporting arrangements.

St Vigor and St John's LGC has established a clear and proactive approach to risk management. Safeguarding is a key focus, with regular Single Central Record (SCR) audits, incident reporting, and a transition to the Child Protection Online Management System to improve oversight. Health and Safety is monitored through internal systems and external audits, with compliance scores consistently reported and actions taken in response to incidents.

Governance arrangements include a maintained risk register, business continuity planning, and regular governor training. Risks and mitigation actions are standing items at LGC meetings, with detailed records and follow-up. External assurance is provided through Trust audits, Assistant Director of Education (ADE) visits, and inspection preparation, helping to ensure risks are effectively identified, reported and managed.

St Vigor and St John School has strengthened its risk management through targeted training for both leadership and governors. The Executive Head Teacher and Chair of Governors have completed recent risk management training provided by the Trust, which also provides ongoing guidance and digital compliance tools such as I am Compliant and EEC Live recording and monitoring risks. The governing body is actively involved in risk oversight and receives regular updates. The governing established a designated Health and Safety Governor.

EXPLANATORY INFORMATION

Appendix A

Scope and Limitations of the Review

1. The definition of the type of review, the limitations and the responsibilities of management in regard to this review are set out in the Annual Plan. As set out in the Audit Charter, substantive testing is only carried out where this has been agreed with management and unless explicitly shown in the scope no such work has been performed.

Disclaimer

2. The matters raised in this report are only those that came to the attention of the auditor during the course of the review, and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all the improvements that might be made. This report has been prepared solely for management's use and must not be recited or referred to in whole or in part to third parties without our prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. TIAA neither owes nor accepts any duty of care to any other party who may receive this report and specifically disclaims any liability for loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature, which is caused by their reliance on our report.

Effectiveness of arrangements

3. The definitions of the effectiveness of arrangements are set out below. These are based solely upon the audit work performed, assume business as usual, and do not necessarily cover management override or exceptional circumstances.

In place	The control arrangements in place mitigate the risk from arising.
Partially in place	The control arrangements in place only partially mitigate the risk from arising.
Not in place	The control arrangements in place do not effectively mitigate the risk from arising.

Assurance Assessment

4. The definitions of the assurance assessments are:

Substantial Assurance	There is a robust system of internal controls operating effectively to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
Reasonable Assurance	The system of internal controls is generally adequate and operating effectively but some improvements are required to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
Limited Assurance	The system of internal controls is generally inadequate or not operating effectively and significant improvements are required to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
No Assurance	There is a fundamental breakdown or absence of core internal controls requiring immediate action.

Acknowledgement

5. We would like to thank staff for their co-operation and assistance during the course of our work.

Release of Report

6. The table below sets out the history of this report.

Stage	Issued	Response Received
Audit Planning Memorandum:	17th December 2024	17th December 2024
Draft Report:	26th September 2025	
Final Report:		