

Consultation

Monday 15.03.2021 – Friday 07.05.2021



**Life to the full
in pursuit of
what is good,
right and true.**

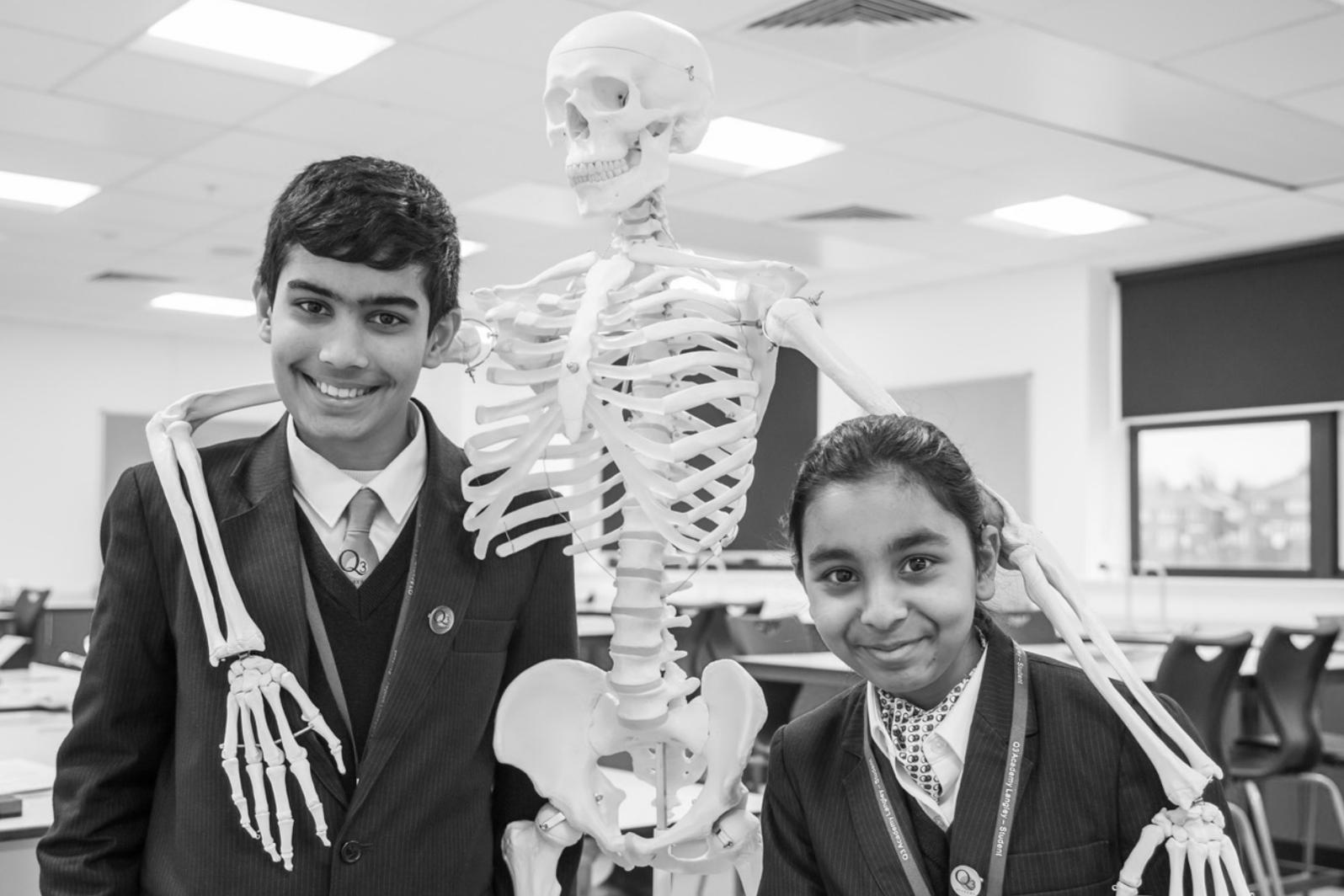
**The Proposed Merger of
Q3 Academies Trust and
The Mercian Trust.**

THE MERCIAN TRUST

ALDRIDGE SCHOOL
QUEEN MARY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL
QUEEN MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL
SHIRE OAK ACADEMY
THE LADDER SCHOOL
WALSALL STUDIO SCHOOL

Q3 ACADEMIES TRUST

Q3 ACADEMY GREAT BARR
Q3 ACADEMY LANGLEY
Q3 ACADEMY TIPTON



WHY MERGE?

WHY ARE WE PROPOSING A MERGER?

1. We are two strong, values driven Multi Academy Trusts who in many ways are likeminded organisations. In coming together as one charitable trust we will best secure and support the future of our schools with a common purpose of equipping students to live life to the full in pursuit of that which is good, right and true. We believe students and staff will benefit being part of a larger family of schools committed to increasing opportunities and improving outcomes for students in our local area.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MERGER?

2. We believe the benefits of our proposed merger include:
 - More opportunities for students, including enrichment activities and at transition points such as progression into sixth form study.
 - More opportunities for staff development including greater mutual support and challenge between schools.
 - Better collaboration, coordination and understanding in areas of curriculum and staffing and in the sourcing of services across our schools.
 - Better leadership and governance with staff (leaders, teachers and associate staff) and volunteer governors and trustees each developing their knowledge, understanding and skill to become even more effective.
3. Our merged MAT will deliver:
 - More money directed into teaching and learning as we ensure value for taxpayer's money through efficiency savings and economies of scale.
 - The strongest possible resilience within the context of changes and uncertainty in the national education landscape (including providing a strong degree of protection from national academy chains who are being encouraged to expand).
 - Effective structures and systems to share ethos and vision with our local community and help others benefit from the combined strength of our merged MAT.

WHICH SCHOOLS ARE INVOLVED IN OUR PROPOSED MERGER?

4. The Mercian Trust is currently responsible for governing and improving six academies; four secondary, a studio school and an alternative provision school, as follows (Mercian Schools):
 - Aldridge School
 - Queen Mary's Grammar School
 - Queen Mary's High School
 - Shire Oak Academy
 - The Ladder School
 - Walsall Studio School

5. Q3 Academies Trust is currently responsible for governing and improving three secondary academies as follows (Q3 Academies):
 - Q3 Academy Great Barr
 - Q3 Academy Langley
 - Q3 Academy Tipton

6. All Mercian schools and Q3 Academies are part of our proposed MAT merger and will become part of the same family of schools governed by one charitable trust.



OUR AMBITIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

7. We have ambitious plans for our students, our staff, our schools and local communities. In summary, these include:

FOR STUDENTS

- Ensuring values-driven leadership extends opportunities and support for students and their personal development beyond what could be achieved in our existing composition.
- Providing students with tools and experiences needed to learn now and in the future in the world of work.
- Accelerating the pace of school improvement and increasing its impact to ensure no individual or group of students is left behind by focusing our combined resources on shared needs and priorities.

FOR STAFF

- Creating the right environment for staff to share knowledge, understanding, expertise and resources to improve outcomes for students.
- Providing better career progression opportunities for staff (and therefore addressing the national teacher recruitment and retention challenge).
- Reducing corporate costs including those associated with executive leadership and management.

FOR OUR SCHOOL AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- Ensuring the foundation of a shared common purpose and core values are promoted while maintaining the ethos, identity and brands (including names) of our respective schools.
- Mitigating risk (strategic and financial) by building a sustainable, successful future by working together with a common purpose.
- Maintaining and enhancing our reputation with external stakeholders (including parents, employers and regulatory bodies) and ensuring we have the confidence of the Regional Schools Commissioner, the ESFA and the DFE Ministerial team.

HOW OUR MERGER WILL WORK.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF OUR MERGER?

8. We anticipate many advantages of coming together as one MAT including:
 - Reinforcing vision while extending the reach and influence of our values and ethos (including the unique characteristics of our schools).
 - Increasing opportunities for students (particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable students) in our communities.
 - Creating the right environment for transferring skills and sharing expertise and resources to improve outcomes for students.
 - Focussing resources on shared needs and priorities including extending the reach of the best teachers beyond their classes and the most experienced leaders beyond one school.
 - Accelerating the pace of school improvement and increasing its impact.
 - Creating a broader curriculum offer, including in post-16 education, that further develops students, preparing them for the world of work.
 - Responding to the teacher recruitment and retention challenge by providing better career opportunities for staff.
 - Reducing corporate costs including those associated with executive leadership and management.
 - Mitigating risk (strategic and financial) and building a sustainable, successful future by working together with a common purpose to maintain and enhance the performance and reputation of our schools.

9. In summary, in merging to form a MAT of 9 schools we feel we can:
 - Drive improvement, support and innovation in all our schools.
 - Grow in size and significance for the benefit of our students, staff and communities we serve.
 - Secure an even stronger reputation and even greater financial security.



WHAT DO MOST PEOPLE ASK?

10. We have collated a range of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from informal conversations in recent weeks. These have been published on our consultation website and will be updated each week as new questions are submitted as part of this formal consultation. Below are the questions that most people ask when they first hear about our proposed merger.

WILL THE NAMES OF THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS CHANGE?

11. The names of each individual schools will remain the same. We understand that the names of the individual schools are what parents know and recognise (more than the Multi Academy Trust that governs them).
12. The MAT (a single charitable trust) will be called The Mercian Trust, but each of the Q3 academies will retain and maintain the Q3 name. Together we will invest in building what our larger family of schools stands for and will take the opportunity to communicate a strong set of MAT values and characteristics both internally and externally in the future.

WILL SCHOOLS LOSE THEIR IDENTITY OR INDIVIDUALITY?

13. We believe the individual identity of each school is very important. The Mercian Trust is a diverse family of schools and does not implement a one-size-fits-all model for school identity or student-facing policies and procedures. Schools in the Mercian Trust do not carry a Mercian prefix to their name. We value the uniqueness of our schools as much as we value the uniqueness of every student in our schools. While each Q3 school has the Q3 name and brand, we recognise that each school is different and is shaped to serve its community. We will continue to recognise and celebrate the rich history and identities of the different schools within the MAT as we embrace a larger family of schools.
14. Q3 schools have a designated Christian religious character in their governing documents similarly to church schools. Each school implements the values that underpin their work in a way that best serves their student community. While none of the Mercian schools have a designated religious character, they each recognise the underpinning values and ethos that comes from the Christian tradition in England. The identity and ethos of each school, including the designated religious character, will not change as part of our proposed merger.

WHAT WILL THE MERGER MEAN FOR STUDENTS?

15. There will be increased opportunities for students through the collective expertise and resources in all our schools. It is not anticipated that students will move between school sites unless it is in their educational interests to do so, for example if a particular A level subject is available to them at another site and they wish to study that subject. This already happens within the Mercian Trust schools and could be developed further.
16. We will also explore opportunities for further collaboration in sport and the arts and through providing opportunities for learning outside of the classroom with enrichment activities and events. Where facilities are available for students at some schools but not all in these areas, we will look to increase access and opportunities for all our students.

WHAT WILL THE MERGER MEAN FOR STAFF?

17. There will be increased opportunities for staff who are currently employed by both Q3 Academies Trust and The Mercian Trust including career development, progression and coordinated succession planning across a larger family of schools. We also hope there will be a significant positive impact on staff recruitment and retention, as new teachers recognise the greater personalised professional opportunities of developing their career within a larger family of schools.
18. We will continue our commitment to staff well-being to ensure that teachers can enjoy their time in the classroom and ensure that staff voice is listened to and acted upon including through regular staff meetings, surveys, livestream webinars and live Q&As.
19. Our schools are already committed to investing in the next generation of successful teachers through teacher training programmes – and this will continue. Our NQTs will benefit hugely from the expertise of middle and senior leaders and will have greater opportunities to learn from observing colleagues in different schools (as well as meetings for moral support, coaching and development).

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?

20. Our two Trusts have been working together to explore opportunities through collaboration since 2019/2020. We agreed a formal strategic partnership in July 2020 and have been discussing in detail the opportunities and challenges that may arise through merger.
21. Working together, the Q3 Sponsor and the Chairs of each Trust have empowered the CEOs of each Trust to work closely together and have ensured each MAT board considers carefully our proposed merger.
22. This academic year, conversations have begun with Heads and as part of the formal merger process, we now feel ready to open the discussion to a wider audience including with staff, parents and other key stakeholders of all our schools.

MORE INFORMATION

*Please use the form on our consultation website to submit any questions you have.
If you experience difficulties accessing information please contact:*

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FAQS AND CONSULTATION SURVEY

Please note that FAQs will be updated regularly on our consultation website.

***Once you have reviewed all the published information
please complete the online consultation survey.***

www.smithgadzik.online/consultation

