

The Ladder School Consultation Report

July 2018

Our mission

The Ladder School will be a safe, well ordered and caring environment for learning. It will deliver high quality education to all its students and will support them to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.



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1. Introduction

Following the success of The Ladder School application in 2016 Walsall Studio School (who submitted the application) and the Department for Education (DfE) and Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have been working together to secure a permanent site for the new school. At the time of submitting the original application Walsall Studio School was also holding discussions with Queen Marys Grammar School about the possibility of forming a new Multi Academy Trust 'The Mercian Trust' which subsequently was created in January 2018. In May 2018 the permanent site was secured, and Mercian Trust has moved forward with consultation on the detailed school proposals.

The following report summarises the key information and data which was shared as part of the consultation and informs stakeholders of the outcomes and actions resulting from this consultation period. Consultation ran from 23rd May 2018 – 11th July 2018.

1.1 Geographic position of the school(s)

The map below shows where The Ladder School is proposing to be located in the region. The close proximity to the other schools in the Mercian Trust will significantly aid joint working.

The screenshot shows a Google My Maps interface. On the left, a sidebar titled "The Mercian Trust" contains a search icon, a "1 view" indicator, and "SHARE" and "EDIT" buttons. Below this, a checked box indicates "Schools within The Mercian Trust". A list of schools is displayed with red school icons:

- Walsall Studio School
- Queen Mary's High School
- Queen Mary's Grammar School
- Aldridge School
- Shire Oak Academy
- Ladder Free School

The main map area shows a street map of Walsall and Bloxwich. Red school icons are placed on the map corresponding to the list. Other landmarks include "The Golf Academy", "Bloxwich Golf Club", "Pelsall North Common", "Walsall Wood", "Aldridge", "Druids Heath Golf Club", "Walsall Arboretum", "Calderfields Golf and Country Club", "Walsall Studio School", "Queen Mary's High School", "Queen Mary's Grammar School", "Aldridge School", "Shire Oak Academy", "Ladder Free School", "Reedswood Park", "Walsall Arboretum", "Walsall Wood", "Aldridge", "Pool Green", "Sutton Coldfield Golf Club", "Caldmore", "Birmingham Rd", "A4038", "A4148", "A452", "A454", "A457", "A458", "A459", "A460", "A461", "A462", "A463", "A464", "A465", "A466", "A467", "A468", "A469", "A470", "A471", "A472", "A473", "A474", "A475", "A476", "A477", "A478", "A479", "A480", "A481", "A482", "A483", "A484", "A485", "A486", "A487", "A488", "A489", "A490", "A491", "A492", "A493", "A494", "A495", "A496", "A497", "A498", "A499", "A500".

At the bottom of the map, it says "Made with Google My Maps" and "Map data ©2018 Google".

2. Consultation Methodology

The overall aim of the consultation process was to ensure that everyone who has a stake in the development of the new school had the opportunity to hear about the proposals and to share their views about the plans.

The objectives of the process were to:

- Provide relevant background information for stakeholders
- Explain the reasons for the new school
- Share key detail including key policies, site and curriculum plans
- Provide an opportunity for stakeholders to hear / read more and ask questions

The principles laid down by the project team for the consultation were that it should be:

- An open and transparent process
- Accessible to all stakeholders in terms of:
 - The times of the events
 - The language used (jargon-free wherever possible and acronyms fully explained)
 - Well-publicised and advertised
 - The venues being DDA compliant

A variety of media were used to consult including:

- Direct letters to all schools in Walsall, The Local and Neighbouring Authorities, public buildings including libraries, Colleges
- Press releases / Media content
- Leaflets distributed
- Publicised meetings involving presentations and questions and answer sessions
- Online Survey
- Website / Social Media
- Email

2.1 Direct letters

A letter and/or email introducing the consultation were sent electronically to the following groups and an example is included at Appendix 1:

- Parents/community members
- School staff and Trades Unions
- Local schools, colleges and training providers
- Local Authorities (Black Country)

2.2 Online survey

Throughout consultation survey monkey was used to capture a response to 9 key questions, these included:

1. Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?
2. Do you agree with our admissions policy?
3. Do you agree with our safeguarding policy?
4. Do you agree with our SEN policy?
5. Is the curriculum offer engaging for the students who may attend the school?
6. Do you agree it is a good idea for students to have additional input from employers to prepare them for future work/employment opportunities?
7. Our proposed permanent site is situated in the St Matthews Quarter in the town centre and will be easily accessible for pupils travelling on public transport. Do you agree this is an appropriate location?
8. Should the Trust enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State to open Ladder Free School?
9. If you would like to receive a copy of the final report and findings and/or would like a response to any question asked whilst completing this survey please complete the details below before submitting your form

There was also an opportunity with all 9 questions to leave additional comments should the stakeholder wish to do so.

2.3 Press Release

Two press releases were issued (see Appendix 2) one highlighting the consultation and proposed site for the new school the second highlighting the appointment of the Principal Designate and a last chance to have a say in the consultation.

Press release 1 issued 24 May 18

Press release 2 issued 5 July 18

2.4 Website

www.ladderschool.co.uk was live throughout the consultation period. The site was aimed at providing detailed information about the proposals with an opportunity to email questions or comments or to conduct the online survey. Screen shots of the site can be seen on the next page.

Welcome to The Ladder School

The proposed new Ladder School is a specialist alternative provision school providing education for children aged 13-18. We are due to open in the January 2019 and we will have 40 pupils in school growing to 112 children in September 2020.

The school will deliver a broad and balanced curriculum designed to enable students to return to their mainstream setting and/or to leave the school with the same academic currency as any other student attending a mainstream school.

Under section 10 of the Academies Act 2010 the Trust is required to consult with stakeholders on our proposals for the new school and as a result this website outlines further detail on where and how you can find out more about our proposed new free school.

This is your opportunity to have your say on our proposals.

Our mission

The Ladder School will be a safe, well ordered and caring environment for learning. It will deliver high quality education to all its students and will support them to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.

High quality outstanding teaching, and clear and consistent guidance and support will facilitate students in succeeding in education. Our broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum will provide students with access to a range of accredited qualifications as well as educational and social experiences, which will address their learning and emotional needs (including SEND and Mental Health support). Our purpose is to support every student to develop their true potential, make a positive contribution to their families and find fulfilment in employment.

Our vision for the Ladder School

Our aims:

1. To challenge every student to raise their aspirations and excel in both academic achievement and in developing vocational skill sets
2. To nurture and develop in students the values and characteristics necessary to become successful, confident and responsible members of society
3. To teach students the value of self-discipline, resilience and respect in order to become life-long learners with the positive attitudes required by employers now and in the future
4. To prepare students for employment in a world with ever-changing scientific, technical and global needs through problem-solving workshops and work with employers
5. To build strong partnership relationships between students, home, school, community and local employers

Useful information

Working with host schools and agency partners we provide all pupils every opportunity to enjoy their education and achieve their potential. Our education is excellent and tailored for all pupils, challenging them to succeed and support their personal growth.

Have your say

We are keen to hear your views during this consultation phase which runs until 11th July, 2018. This is your opportunity to influence our proposals and to ask any questions you feel are relevant.

[Complete our online survey](#)

Consultation events

If you would like to attend one of our meetings, hear more and ask any questions we have scheduled three meetings during the consultation:

Thursday 7th June 2018, 4-5pm, at Walsall Studio School

Tuesday 19th June 2018, 6-7pm, at Walsall Studio School

Email or Write to us

You can email us at info@ladderschool.org OR write to:

Dan Parkes,
Project Lead
Ladder Free School,
C/O Walsall Studio School,
14A Lower Hall Lane,
Walsall,
WS1 1RL

2.5 Publicised meetings

The following meetings were communicated to stakeholders and carried out during the consultation period:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
7 June 18	4pm – 5pm	Stakeholder Consultation Meeting	Walsall Studio School
19 June 18	6pm – 7pm	Stakeholder Consultation Meeting	Walsall Studio School

Meetings were also held with Walsall Secondary Heads Association, the Local Authority and the Elected member, portfolio holder for Education at Walsall Council. Copies of the slides presented at the public meetings are in appendix 3.

3.4 Leaflets

Copies of the leaflets issued to stakeholders can be found in Appendix 4. These were distributed with all letters and to public buildings including Libraries, leisure centres, community centres and Colleges.

3.5 Email – info@ladderschool.co.uk

The email address was generated to enable anyone who wished to be able to post a question or a comment about the proposals. At the end of the consultation period these questions and comments were collected to be responded to as appropriate.

4. Overview of the Feedback received

All the questions, comments and feedback received from the various media used throughout the consultation period are answered in this consultation report. Numbers of participants in meetings and surveys are below.

4.1 Attendance at Consultation Meetings

Date	Event	Venue	Number in attendance
4 June 18	Walsall Local Authority Meeting	Walsall Council	4
7 June 18	Stakeholder Consultation Meeting	Walsall Studio School	4
13 June 18	Elected Representative Meeting	Walsall Studio School	2
18 June 18	WASH – Walsall Secondary Heads Association	St Thomas Moore Catholic School	15
19 June 18	Stakeholder Consultation Meeting	Walsall Studio School	3

4.2 Online Survey

We received 43 completed surveys online. Full detailed feedback is attached in appendix 5 and a summary of key points highlighted below:

1. Please tick the box which best describes the type of stakeholder you are?

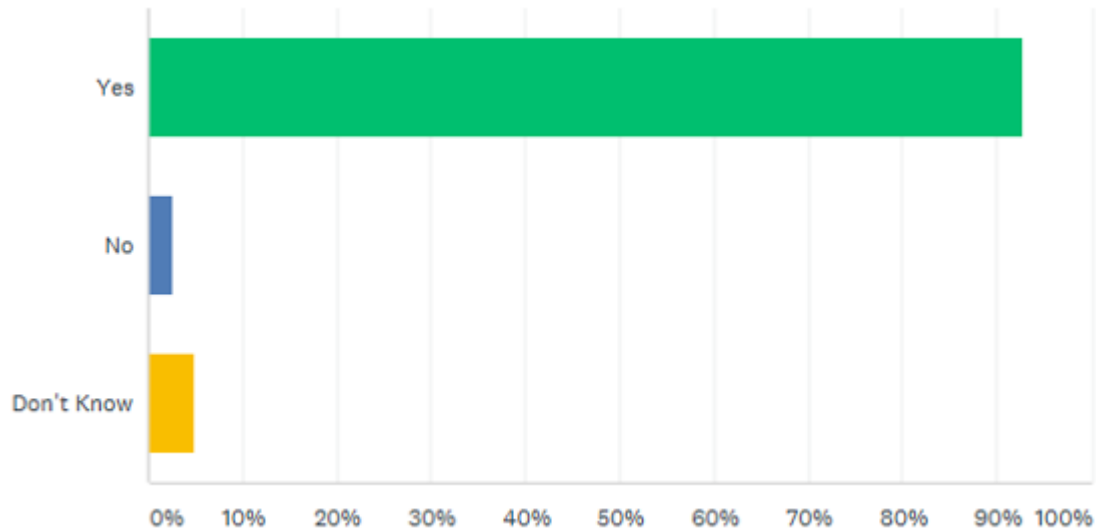
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Student (under 18)	2.38% 1
Employer	2.38% 1
Parent	14.29% 6
School staff member	57.14% 24
School Governor	2.38% 1
LA representative	0.00% 0
Community member	21.43% 9
TOTAL	42

[Comments \(2\)](#)

42 answered and 1 skipped the question

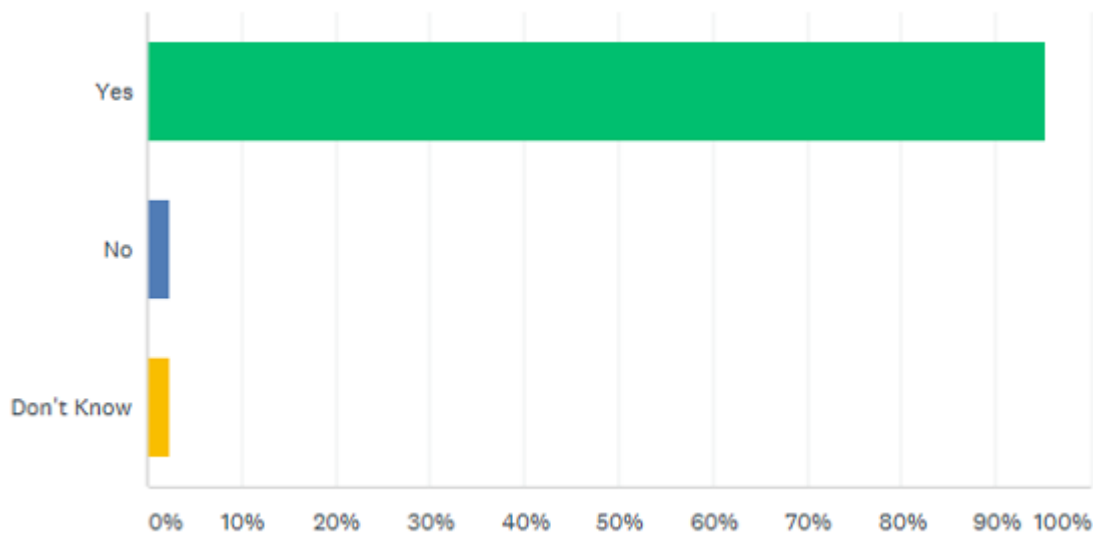
2. Do you agree with our admissions policy?
3. Do you agree with our safeguarding policy?
4. Do you agree with our SEN policy?

Yes	38
No	1
Don't Know	2
Skipped Question	2



5. Is the curriculum offer engaging for the students who may attend the school?

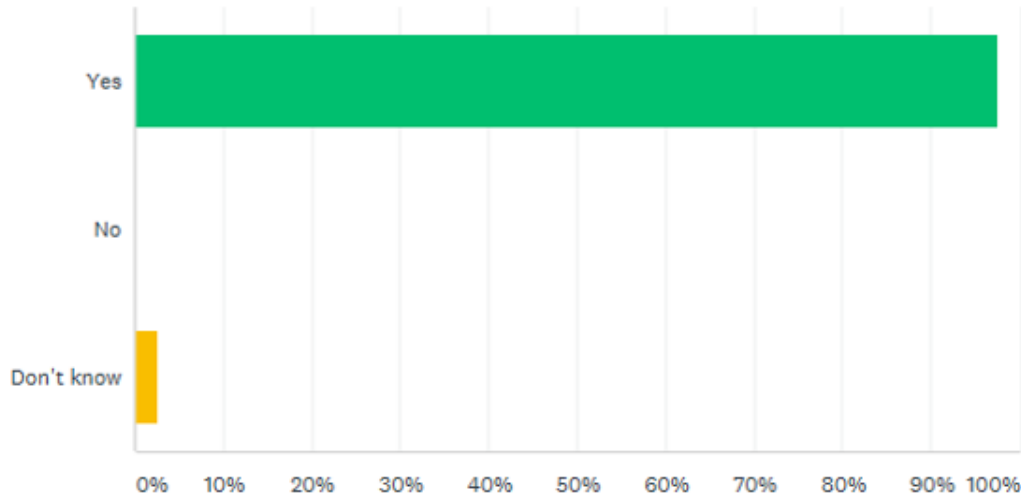
Yes	40
No	1
Don't Know	1
Skipped Question	1



6. Do you agree it is a good idea for students to have additional input from employers to prepare them for future work/employment opportunities?

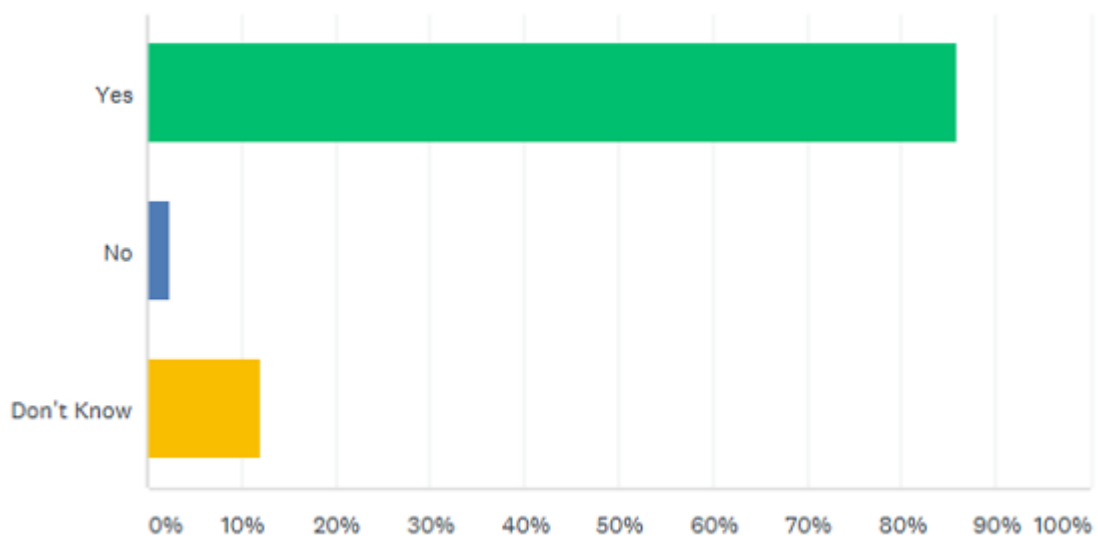
Yes	40
No	0

Don't Know	1
Skipped Question	2



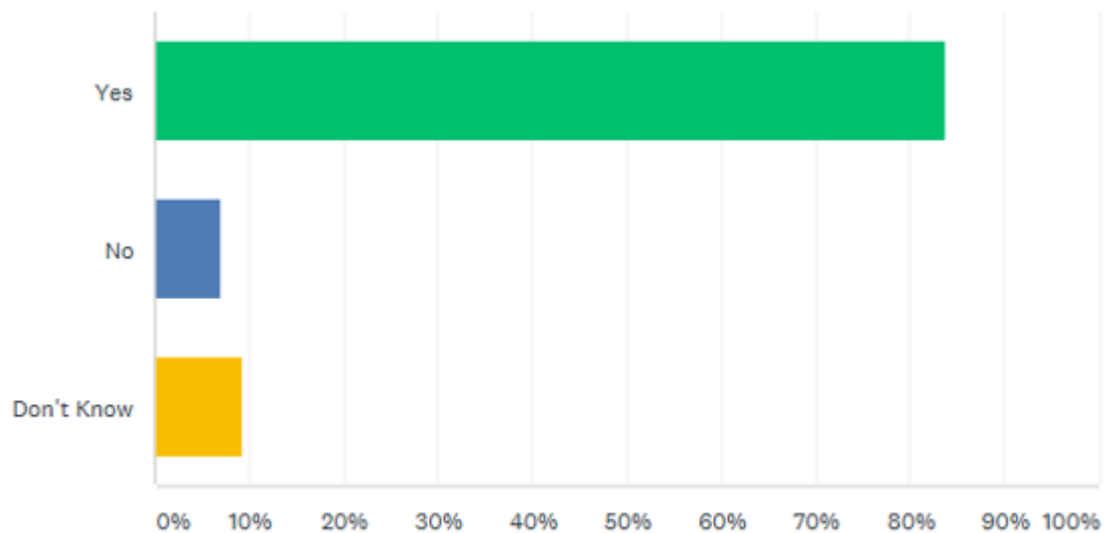
7. Our proposed permanent site is situated in the St Matthews Quarter in the town centre and will be easily accessible for pupils travelling on public transport. Do you agree this is an appropriate location?

Yes	36
No	1
Don't Know	5
Skipped Question	1



8. Should the Trust enter into a Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State to open Ladder Free School?

Yes	36
No	3
Don't Know	4
Skipped Question	0



9. If you would like to receive a copy of the final report and findings and/or would like a response to any question asked whilst completing this survey please complete the details below before submitting your form

11 people requested a response to a query or a copy of the final report and recommendations.

A summary of all the responses, themes and the messages contained therein, is provided below in section 4.3.

4.3 Themes and Key Messages

Overall feedback was generally extremely positive about the new school proposals stakeholders are most interested in:

4.3.1 Curriculum content

A variety of stakeholders were complimentary about the curriculum proposals with one student who responded feeling it was not a broad enough offer. Respondents generally could see a balance of GCSE and vocational pathways that can lead on to employment / further education prospects.

4.3.2 Employer engagement

The students who attend this school need to be work ready. This school provides an alternative pathway that leads into engaging with employers and was well received by those who responded.

4.3.3 Proposed site

No questions were raised about the proposed site, many saw it has beneficial it was to be a central location making it easier for students to attend by public transport. One respondent raised concerns about a potential conflict with students from schools nearby.

4.3.4 Funding Agreement

There was overwhelming support to the secretary of state entering into a Funding Agreement with the Mercian Trust to enable Ladder School to open. This was clear via online feedback, within meetings and amongst secondary heads in the borough. However, it should be noted that some respondents felt they were unable to answer the question as they didn't have enough detail about the mechanics of such an agreement and/or that perhaps there were already enough places available in the Borough.

5. Trust response to the consultation feedback

The Mercian Trust have reviewed the feedback provided as part of the consultation and are delighted with the level of response and contribution. As a result of the feedback received the Trust will be ensuring that:

- Our communications plan is updated to reflect people's feedback
- The final report is shared with those who requested a copy. This will also be published on the School and Trust websites and shared with the Department for Education
- Stakeholders are kept informed about progress of the new school
- Links with employers are genuine and from day one
- Employers and parents are represented on the governing body
- The curriculum is developed alongside professional specialists in Alternative Provision and tailored to individual needs
- Information is provided in the press and via social media networks to keep stakeholders informed of progress and plans for the new school.
- School policies and procedures will minimise risk of potential conflict with nearby school pupils for example we will look for a different school day and the implementation of the behaviour policy will be overseen by the senior leadership.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion throughout the 6 weeks consultation we have concluded that there is still very much a need for The Ladder School and that there is support and commitment from a variety of stakeholders across the Borough.

The Trust believes it should enter in to a Funding Agreement for the new school and plans to continue with the proposal to open in temporary accommodation in January 2019. There is a lot of work to do and with the appointment of a new Principal now concluded we can move forward in the next stage of planning.

Recommendations for the Trust and school can be seen in section 5.

7. List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Direct Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents/community members• School staff and Trades Unions• Local schools, colleges and training providers• Local Authorities (Black Country)
Appendix 2	Press Releases	Press Release 1 - May 2018 Press Release 2 – July 2018
Appendix 3	Consultation Presentation	
Appendix 4	Leaflets	
Appendix 5	Online Survey	