



# Talbot Specialist School

**Consultation with Mercia Learning Trust**

# How we investigated partnerships. What happens next?



- ❖ During 2021-22 governors undertook a very detailed analysis of Sheffield MATs.
- ❖ After careful consideration we selected MLT for much more detailed scrutiny.
- ❖ All the Mercia Learning Trust Schools were visited during the usual working day by our leadership team and governors during the summer & autumn terms.
- ❖ Discussion took place with senior leaders, trustees, governors, staff and students.
- ❖ The findings of the visits were overwhelmingly positive.
- ❖ The ethos, inclusive approach and proximity of Mercia Learning Trust seems to provide a strong match for our school.
- ❖ Mercia think we are a good match for their trust. This is a two-way process.
- ❖ Consultation ends on February 19<sup>th</sup>. The governing body will then respond to stakeholder feedback and compile a report on the consultation and will then make a decision.

# Consultation Process



Phase	Activity
Phase 1 Informal engagement	Identify stakeholder groups, prepare consultation documents, plan engagement activities.
Phase 2 Formal consultation	Contact stakeholder groups, engage in formal engagement activities, undertake formal discussions.
Phase 3 Governing Body response	Review consultation feedback, respond to consultation, communicate decision of governing body
Phase 4 Consolidation	Agree next steps

# Stakeholders



- ❖ Parents/carers
- ❖ Staff
- ❖ Local Authorities, Sheffield, Derbyshire, Barnsley
- ❖ Learn Sheffield
- ❖ Local councillors/MP
- ❖ Sheffield schools
- ❖ Local organisations & places of worship
- ❖ Therapeutic professionals
- ❖ External agencies
- ❖ Key suppliers
- ❖ Transport Services
- ❖ Trade Union Representatives
- ❖ DFE

# Consultation timeline



Date	Activity / event
3rd January 2023	Staff meeting
9th January 2023	Formal consultation begins. Contact made with all stakeholders
18th January 2023	Stakeholder meeting
24th and 25th January 2023	Parent / carer meetings
19th February 2023	Consultation ends
From 20th February 2023	All consultation responses collated. Governing Body share responses. Governing Body & MLT trust board make decision.

# Talbot Specialist School



- ❖ A 'Good' School (Ofsted June 2022)
- ❖ We are a growing, diverse and inclusive school serving the whole of Sheffield and beyond, with a high demand for places.
- ❖ 219 pupils on roll. 50% FSM. 24% EAL
- ❖ Talbot is a special place where children and young people and their parents are supported to live their most happy and productive lives.
- ❖ Parents are welcomed and we believe in working in partnership with them.
- ❖ Relationships with students and personalisation of the learning programme is a strength of the school.
- ❖ We invest in our staff development and there are clear progression pathways available.
- ❖ Talbot has always been outward facing through its Fusion SEND Hub, which provides expertise, staff training, and support to schools in the city and region.
- ❖ We have a history of collaboration with other special and maintained schools both locally and nationally.

# Current situation



- ❖ Diminishing support from the LA (school improvement, finance & central services)
- ❖ Professional isolation at a time when leading a school is more complex.
- ❖ Uncertain funding climate.
- ❖ Recruitment challenges.
- ❖ Local and national direction of travel.



# Benefits of MAT partnership



- ❖ Build on our current strength and move from being a good to an outstanding school. Partnership / working intensively with other schools, leaders and staff from a high performing trust will help us get there (curriculum / teaching and learning).
- ❖ Recruit, develop and retain great staff and leaders.
- ❖ Manage all aspects of our school more effectively (finance, staff, estates, IT etc) so that we are more efficient, and leaders can focus on school improvement / students.
- ❖ Protection from funding uncertainty and increase investment in our buildings, IT and staff.
- ❖ Place Fusion within the framework of a larger organisation.
- ❖ Greater influence in the education sector.



# Why do we want to join Mercia Learning Trust ?



- ❖ Strong local and regional reputation for leading effective schools.
- ❖ The ethos, vision and principles align closely with our own. Students are always first and foremost with a focus on the most vulnerable / SEN.
- ❖ Strong leadership and governance driven by moral purpose.
- ❖ Aligned autonomy approach and can evidence that schools have kept their own distinct personalities whilst operating within the trust. Decisions clearly rest with Headteachers and Governing Bodies
- ❖ Well-run and well-resourced Trust with six 'Good' or 'Outstanding' over-subscribed schools in our local area. Track record for developing curriculum, teaching, improving outcomes and life chances for pupils.
- ❖ Co-location with Newfield Secondary which will improve site management and use of shared facilities.
- ❖ Reputation for working collaboratively as a group of schools to achieve the best possible student outcomes.
- ❖ Excellent training and development opportunities for our staff team.