



SHIRE OAK ACADEMY

TURNING POTENTIAL INTO EXCELLENCE



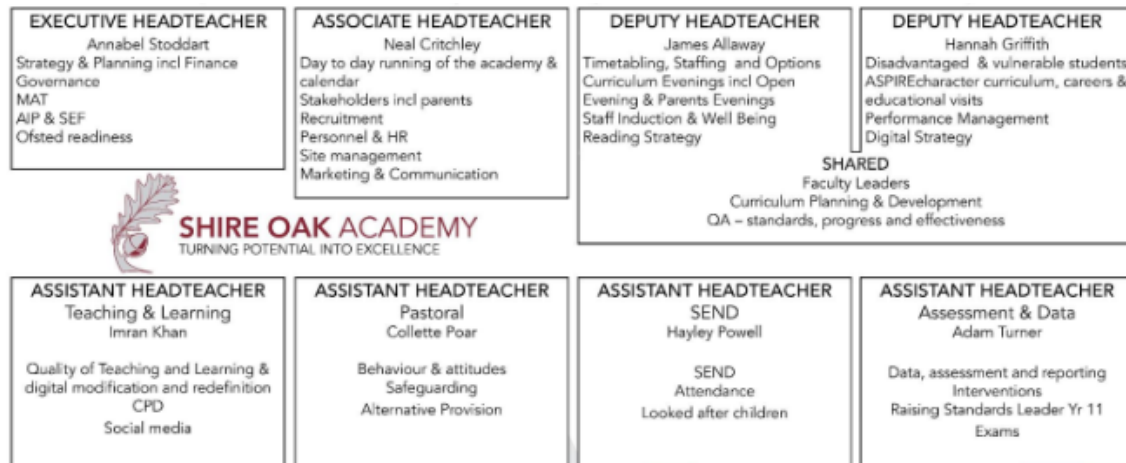
Executive Headteacher: Mrs A L Stoddart BA (Hons), NPQH, MBA

Welcome to Shire Oak Academy

Dear Applicant

I am delighted that you are interested in this post. Shire Oak Academy is a wonderful place to work. I took up post in September 2020 and joined an experienced SLT. Working alongside our other talented and experienced staff, the potential is here to make the Academy truly outstanding.

In September 2023 we reorganised our SLT, and recruited an additional Deputy Headteacher. Our current SLT structure is shown below:



The prior attainment of our students at key stage 2 is average and the potential to achieve good outcomes is palpable. We put a great deal of emphasis on ensuring that teachers can work in an environment where students want to learn. A strength of the Academy has always been its caring ethos and strong community links, and these remain. By introducing new systems around teaching and learning, assessment and marking, we are well on the way to transforming the Academy. Our Ofsted visit in April 2022 recognised the progress we have made together to impact positively on the quality of education, personal development and leadership and management. Much of the behaviour of our students was also positively received and we have amended our behaviour for learning policy and approaches to address issues related to social behaviour. However, our work in this area remains a key priority for us and for this reason we are expanding our senior leadership team to add capacity in our work around behaviour and attitudes.

We are looking for teachers and leaders who are passionate about their subject and area of responsibility, have excellent subject knowledge, and who are reflective practitioners, to help us to continue to improve outcomes. I think this is an incredible opportunity and hope you will too; you must be able to work in effective teams and demonstrate resilience, humour and enthusiasm. You must never settle for second best. I will guarantee you



our time and support and a fabulous place to come to work every day. If you feel a pre-application visit would be useful, please get in touch.

In your application, please focus on what makes you a great teacher and leader and why you love your subject. Make me feel like I am reading about you; try not to write a generic letter which ticks the right boxes but doesn't tell me about your values or what you are like as a teacher and colleague.

Good luck with your application.

Annabel Stoddart
Executive Headteacher



**ANNABEL
STODDART**

Executive Headteacher

It gives us great pleasure to introduce ourselves: Annabel Stoddart, the Executive Headteacher and Neal Critchley the Associate Headteacher. Together we are the driving force behind our Academy's mission; 'Turning Potential into Excellence'.

Shire Oak has always been a wonderful place to learn and work. We are determined that Shire Oak Academy builds on it's legacy and continues to flourish and maintain it's position at the heart of our community. Shire Oak is an exciting and vibrant learning community where students enjoy success in and outside of the classroom. We aim to provide an outstanding, positive learning environment and value the high quality of relationships that enable this to be true of all aspects of Academy life.



**NEAL
CRITCHLEY**

Associate Headteacher

Introduction



Shire Oak School, a comprehensive secondary school, was formed in 1970 by merging Shire Oak Grammar School, opened in 1961, with Walsall Wood Secondary Modern School, which had been moved to new buildings adjoining those of the grammar school in 1966. In September 2003 we received designation as a specialist science college. In April 2011, our school became an 11 to 18 comprehensive converter Academy. In October 2018, Shire Oak Academy alongside Aldridge School, Queen Mary's Grammar School, Queen Mary's High School and The Walsall Studio School formed The Mercian Academy Trust.



Mission Statement

Turning Potential into Excellence



Vision Statement

We exist to equip our students to live life to the full

Values

We believe that establishing a set of core values will engender the true community spirit of our Academy.

At Shire Oak Academy it is our aim to raise standards and improve behaviour and conduct by promoting a school ethos which is underpinned by core values. These values support the development of the whole child as a reflective learner within a calm, caring, happy and purposeful atmosphere. Our shared set of values will promote a positive environment in which students can make progress academically, socially and emotionally. We want to encourage students to consider these values, and thereby to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to develop as reflective learners and grow to be stable, educated and civil adults.

Our core values at Shire Oak Academy are:

Aspirational - Inspire all of our students to dream big dreams which extend their horizons beyond their expectations.

Success - Learning from failure, challenging expectations and driving for success.

Participation - To be fully involved in school life. Take an active part in lessons and take full advantage of the extra curricular opportunities provided.

Integrity - Promoting the qualities of selflessness, courage, honesty, respect, commitment and doing the right thing.

Responsibility - To enable each student to develop confidence, self esteem and responsibility in all areas of school life.

Excellence - Striving for excellence and high achievement in everything we do.



Employer

We have a staff body of over 200. We value our staff and staff surveys recognise this. All teaching staff are provided with a laptop. In addition there is a full and responsive CPD programme including through the Mercian Trust.

Facilities

At Shire Oak Academy we take great pride in ensuring that we have the best available resources and facilities for our students to take advantage of during their educational journey. Our facilities include: rock climbing wall and revolutionary rotating walls, functional gym and group spinning room, modern 28 station fitness suite, 10 well equipped science labs, sixth form independent study block, 6 tennis courts including astro turf, new external servery and dining space, the Loakal cafe, large sixth form common room, recently refurbished



sports hall, library with over 10,000 books, music and Performing Arts block with individual practice rooms, outdoor gym area with robust and versatile equipment, modern teaching facilities with interactive technology, school hall, large playing field with football, rugby, cricket, rounders and athletics facilities.

Embracing Technology

Every classroom is equipped with a teaching computer and a state of the art, large screen interactive whiteboard. Students have access to a number of fully equipped IT suites and several sets of portable books are situated across the Academy site. Following our Trust wide move a new platform, staff were all issued with new laptops in January 2023. We are at the beginning of our journey towards a digital transformation – one of the Mercian Trust's Big Moves. Currently students in three of our year groups are loaned a laptop for their time at Shire Oak Academy.

Curriculum

Shire Oak Academy's ethos and 6 core values (embedded in ASPIRE) drive our vision for curriculum provision and delivery. We have an outstanding and diverse curriculum which responds to the local and national agenda both intelligently and creatively in order to ensure all our students receive a high quality learning experience at all times.

Our curriculum is the vehicle to allow our students to become:

- Confident and successful individuals who enjoy learning, develop resilience, make ambitious progress and achieve high quality and meaningful qualifications.
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society including their local community and the wider international world in which they exist.

As an Academy, the statutory guidance and requirements of the National Curriculum do not have to be followed. However, the Academy feels that the National Curriculum provides a sound basis for a broad and balanced curriculum.



We believe wholeheartedly that to access a broad and balanced curriculum, all students need to be confident and proficient in the basics of reading, writing, communication and mathematics and these are always given the highest priority.

We believe it is critical that to deliver a high quality 11-18 programme we must appreciate fully the primary curriculum to ensure ambitious progression takes place upon transition and that a high level of appropriate pace is established from the start of Year 7.



Finally, we consider it critical that equal opportunities and fundamental British Values are promoted and realised at all levels of curriculum provision. Whilst we provide individual and small group withdrawal support where necessary our curriculum is one which celebrates inclusion and tolerance at all times, and we passionately believe that our diversity as a school ultimately enriches and enhances our curriculum for the benefit of all.

Teaching and Learning

Our vision for outstanding Teaching and Learning at Shire Oak Academy is characterised by engaging lessons that challenge and inspire all students; innovative use of technology to enhance and transform learning opportunities; active learning that provides opportunities for deeper learning experiences.



Our lessons provide an effective framework for delivering this. To support our goal of delivering consistently great lessons, we have created the SOA Teaching and Learning Framework for Excellence (FfE). This articulates the ingredients of great lessons.

Our programme of staff training and development is built around the SOA FfE. We believe in further developing the skills of our teachers as the best route to raising outcomes amongst our students. Training for our teachers consists of inset days, together with our Workshop Wednesdays. Workshop Wednesdays is an exciting opportunity for the Academy that enables us to deliver 70 hours of training across an academic year. We aim to combine essential all-staff training, with an individualised approach which develops a colleague, whatever their experience or starting point. Students finish early each Wednesday (but still have 5 lessons) to enable training to start at 2:15 pm. Workshop Wednesdays are split into three pillars -

- Whole Academy - this is our core provision focusing on whole Academy priorities.
- Faculty/Department - focusing on faculty priorities.
- Personal Pathways - this enables staff members to have dedicated time on their own professional development, this is broken into facilitated and self-directed sessions.

Every Wednesday afternoon we dedicate 2 hours of directed time for staff to engage in one of the three key areas of development on a rolling cycle.

Our system of classroom observation is designed to be supportive and developmental. As well as the Performance Management observations, Leaders undertake drop-ins, learning walks and work scrutiny



exercises. These have a specific focus (e.g. questioning) and allow us as a school to identify examples of good practice and areas to focus our CPD on in the future.



Pastoral support

We have a well-resourced Pastoral team led by our Assistant Headteacher Collette Poar. She works in tandem with Hayley Powell, also an Assistant Headteacher with a focus on SEND and Attendance. This new post will build capacity within our Pastoral team by consolidating leadership of safeguarding, wellbeing and attendance into one role.

Our aim is to identify any concerns or issues at the earliest possible opportunity and remove any barriers to learning which may be preventing our students from reaching their potential. We pride ourselves in knowing our young people well and by working alongside the teaching and support staff we aim to develop positive relationships with them and their families. We respond as quickly as possible to any issues and ensure that difficulties are discussed and resolved in the best possible way.

The pastoral system is the responsibility of the Collette Poar who oversees all staff working in this context with our young people. The Form Tutor is always the first point of contact for parents/carers regarding any concerns or issues.

The Pastoral Team is made up of additional staff: an Assistant Pastoral Manager who is also one of our Deputy Safeguarding leads, our Attendance Manager, five Heads of Year, an Aspire centre manager, three assistant heads of year, a first aider and a team of inclusion workers in our Success Centre. This team has many years of combined experience working with young people and providing academic and emotional support in a variety of ways. We are currently reviewing the capacity of the team to ensure it is meeting the varied needs of our Academy.

Our team is based in the Pastoral Hub, with interventions taking place in our success centre. Students who need some time away from lessons work in the Aspire Centre, under the direction of our Aspire Manager.

Sixth Form

In Key Stage 5 our curriculum offer is for two-year courses, either GCE Advanced Level or Vocational subjects (BTEC or Cambridge Nationals). By working as part of the Mercian Trust, we can offer a full range of subject options, whatever students' academic interest and aptitude may be. Across the MAT schools we offer a range of subjects which may not normally be on offer through our MAT block. We are able to offer access to 35+ A Level courses and a range of specialist technical and vocational programmes.



The Mercian Trust

The Mercian Trust

Life to the full in the business of education



The Mercian Trust is a group of schools working together under a common banner and an over-arching structure of governance, but retaining their autonomy as custodians of their unique heritage, distinct identity and successful operation. Our Trust's name is both rooted in history and expresses a geographical identity and ambition. Mercia was an ancient kingdom comprising Cheshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and, crucially for us, what we now call the Black Country.



It was in Mercia that St Chad established an association of small monasteries which fostered unity through bonds of kinship. We intend, a thousand years later, to adopt the same spirit in our approach to a Multi-Academy Trust. Pupils in the Mercian Trust will be part of a family of schools forming an educational community. We are convinced that we are stronger together. The MAT is already shaping the educational landscape in exciting ways; every pupil in the Trust will be part of that story.



Schools within the Mercian Trust

Aldridge School
Queen Mary's Grammar School
Queen Mary's High School
Shire Oak Academy
Walsall Studio School
The Ladder School
Q3 Academy Great Barr
Q3 Academy Langley
Q3 Academy Tipton



Our Mission

To provide the best education and life chances for the children and young people of Walsall.

The Mercian Trust brings together different schools catering for a wide range of individual needs into one Multi-Academy Trust in order to offer the broadest and best education to all pupils regardless of their socio-economic, cultural or ethnic background. Leveraging the strengths of the participating schools, Mercian Trust pupils will be able to access the advantages and opportunities that each school brings – in teaching, leadership, breadth of curriculum, facilities, enrichment activities and community engagement.

Plans for the future

We are currently at the midpoint of our 2020- 25 strategic plan with the following 5 areas:

1. Leading students on a transformational journey empowering social mobility and delivering social justice.
 - 1.1. Develop and deliver an ambitious, relevant and responsive curriculum inside and outside the classroom (academic, vocational, enrichment and cultural)
 - 1.2. Enhance aspirational, inspirational, evidence based teaching and experiential learning c. Support students' physical safety, mental wellbeing and character development including student leadership in the community
2. Establishing systems and structures to enable successful schools.
 - 2.1. Develop effective MAT central teams and systems (finance/HR/Estates and more) to support schools with clear SLAs that demonstrate commitment and drive improvement
 - 2.2. Recruit, develop and maintain effective leadership and governance at all levels while succession planning for the future
 - 2.3. Strengthen leaders' commitment to the students and staff in more than one school through collaboration and system leadership
3. Driving the digital transformation.



- 3.1. Upskill teachers to become experts in remote/hybrid education (personalising high-quality content and interaction with students)
- 3.2. Reduce staff workload and discover new efficiencies through collaboration, automated operations (AI/IoT), innovation and influence beyond one school
- 3.3. Optimise evidence-based decision making through data analytics
4. Becoming an employer of choice.
 - 4.1. Further develop a well-trained, professionally skilled and motivated workforce (through opportunities and CPD beyond one school)
 - 4.2. Deliver consistent, harmonised pay and conditions of service as one employer committed to fairness across uniquely diverse schools
 - 4.3. Introduce staff rewards and recognition and increase retention and internal progression (promotion within the trust) for staff in all schools
5. Growing the Trust in size and influence.
 - 5.1. Demonstrate Trust capacity through improvements in existing schools (performance tables) and through securing good and better Ofsted judgements that are recognised by parents, external stakeholders, future partners and the DfE
 - 5.2. Increase student numbers from c5k to c10k through increasing PAN, recruitment/retention in post 16 and through additional schools joining the Trust
 - 5.3. Realise expansion projects and building programmes

Areas of focus for our Trust board include:

1. Successful Growth - The Trust is consolidating a period of successful growth in size and influence including, new schools (and new school buildings) and increases in PAN and sixth form numbers. Ensuring this growth enables us to develop and refine our structures, systems and staff to be even more successful for our schools and the communities we serve. We are well-positioned to make a significant contribution to a Trust-led education sector.
2. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) The Trust is passionate about its commitment to social mobility, social justice and inclusion in three significant areas.
 - 2.1. Students - Closing the gaps in opportunity, attainment and progress for disadvantaged students, students with SEND, vulnerable students and others with protected characteristics that may mean they are more likely to face discrimination and prejudice.
 - 2.2. Staff – Developing and nurturing opportunities for staff (including leadership development) particularly for those who are more likely to face discrimination and prejudice.
 - 2.3. Governance - Increasing numbers of non-executive leaders and governors from underrepresented groups.
3. Digital Transformation Delivering the digital transformation of how we teach, learn, lead and operate. The Trust is establishing a single consolidated digital ecosystem / infrastructure that facilitates 'economies of scale' and 'network effect' of being part of one charitable trust.



Trust ethos & values

Our name is rooted in history and expresses a geographical identity and ambition. The ancient kingdom of Mercia encompassed much of what we now recognise as the West Midlands – and crucially for us it included what we now call the Black Country. It was in Mercia that St Chad established an association of small monasteries which fostered unity through bonds of kinship. Now, a thousand years later, we look to demonstrate the same spirit in our approach.

We are a family of schools committed to each other – diverse in nature, proud custodians of our history and success, but together, one charitable trust with a common purpose. Our Trust exists to equip our students to:

- Realise their potential
- Thrive in the world of work
- Make a positive contribution to the local, national and international community.

Our mission is **increasing opportunities** and **improving outcomes**. Our mantra is Life to the full in pursuit of what is good, right and true.



Our offer to you

- A fabulous staff team committed to doing their absolute best for all in our Academy community.
 - Support from our Trust central teams and other schools in our Trust to ensure you have the tools to deliver success (our schools are all located close to one another, and we work better when we are working together).
 - A wealth of support for your ongoing continuing professional development, including a Trust-wide programme for leaders drawing on expertise from across the Mercian Trust and external professional coaches.
 - A comprehensive employee assistance and staff benefits package including Simplyhealth (cash-back health plan and 24:7 video call and telephone access to GP and counselling), salary sacrifice schemes including our new Electric Car scheme, and discounts portal (ranging from gym membership to discount cards and vouchers for online and high street retailers).
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Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment

- Shire Oak Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people as required under the Education Act and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- You are required to uphold all relevant policies in respect of child protection and safeguarding, which are based on KCSIE (2023) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).
- You are required to demonstrate and model the Nolan Principles (The Seven Principles of Public Life): Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>



- You should demonstrate your commitment to our equality policy and all our related work to promote diversity, inclusion and belonging.

The Mercian Trust is committed to equal opportunities, safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of children and young adults. We expect all staff to share this commitment. As this post involves working in regulated activity unsupervised with children all post-holders are subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks including an online search check, Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check