



SHIRE OAK ACADEMY

TURNING POTENTIAL INTO EXCELLENCE



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

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.

Although our recent outcomes are below average, the prior attainment of our students at key stage 2 is average and the potential to achieve good outcomes is palpable. Student behaviour is excellent, and 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.

I am looking for teachers and leaders who are passionate about their subject, 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. Normally I would advise you to visit but I'm sorry that on this occasion, visits won't be possible.

In your application, please focus on what makes you a great teacher 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



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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

To provide a safe, secure, caring and supportive environment in which all students may take advantage of the opportunities we provide to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to prepare them for taking up an adult place in 21st Century society as responsible, responsive and enterprising citizens who become effective lifelong learners and make a positive contribution to society.

Values

Sets of values underpin any group of people, from a family unit through to a whole nation and these values give members of a group common ideals to follow and aspire to. 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 Chromebook. 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.

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 in order 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 given the highest priority at all times.

We believe it is critical that to deliver a high quality 11-18 programme we must appreciate fully the primary curriculum in order 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 firmly believe that our diversity as a school ultimately enriches and enhances our curriculum for the benefit of all.

Teaching and Learning

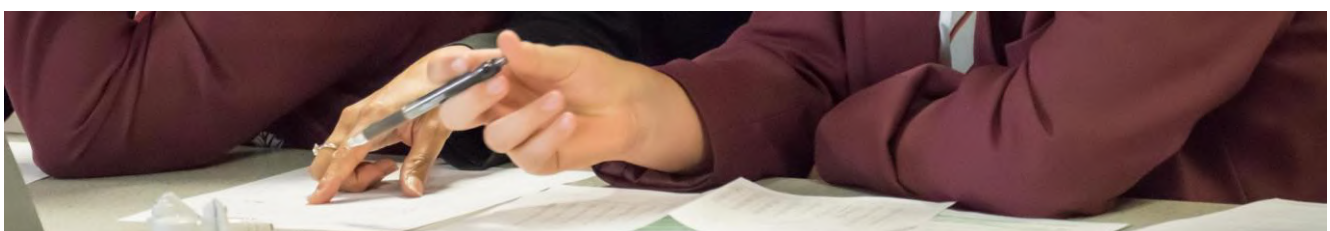
Our vision for outstanding Teaching and Learning at Shire Oak Academy is characterised by engaging lessons that challenge and inspire all students; innovative use of technology to enhance and transform learning opportunities; active learning that provides opportunities for deeper learning experiences.

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 firmly 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, twilight training, whole-school training and external training. Our Teaching and Learning Communities have also been a key mechanism for delivering high quality staff CPD.

All teachers belong to a Teaching and Learning Community. Teachers meet for 75 minutes once per month and reflect on their practice, discuss new teaching methods and commit to improve aspects of their practice. Teachers then take part in peer observations of each other as part of the observing and sharing of good practice.

Our system of classroom observation is designed to be supportive and developmental. As well as the Performance Management observations, members of the SLT 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.





We have a well resourced Pastoral team led by Deputy Headteacher Chris Smith.

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 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 Deputy Headteacher 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 consists of an assistant Pastoral Manager, Deputy Safeguarding lead, five Heads of year and their assistants, a first aider and a team of support 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.





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.





Our Leadership Team

SLT				
Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher	Deputy Headteacher	Assistant Headteacher	Assistant Headteacher
				
Annabel Stoddart	Neal Critchley	Chris Smith	Imran Khan	From January 2021
Vision & Strategic Leadership	Strategic Leadership of Curriculum	Strategic Leadership of Pastoral Care	Strategic Leadership of Teaching and Learning	School Performance data
Financial and capital planning	Staffing, options & timetable	Designated Safeguarding Lead	CPD	Year 11 Raising outcomes
Overall Effectiveness	Academy Self Review (QA)	Attendance	Social Media	Standards and progress
Human Resources	E-Learning	Admissions & Transition		
Governance	EVC Lead	Parent / Community engagement		

Senior Leads			
Sarah Baker	Pupil Premium	Max Cunningham	Y11 RSL
Maria Carter	CIAG, House system	Gavin Jones	Director of Sixth Form
Corinne Cheesmond	Standards: T&L, curriculum	Sarah Williams	SEND
Emma Collis	NQTs, NQTs+1, ITTs, SPTSA		



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



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.