

Application checklist

Task to complete	Yes	No
1. Have you established a company by limited guarantee?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you provided information on all of the following areas (where appropriate)?		
Section A: Applicant details	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section B: Outline of the school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section C: Education vision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section D: Education plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section E: Evidence of need	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section F: Capacity and capability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section G: Budget planning and affordability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section H: Premises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is the information in A4 format, using Arial 12 point font, and includes page numbers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Have you fully completed the appropriate budget plan(s) where necessary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you included CVs in the appendices for all relevant individuals in the template provided and in line with the requirements set out in the criteria?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Independent schools only* : Have you provided a copy of the last two years' audited financial statements or equivalent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Independent schools only* : Have you provided a link to your school's most recent inspection report and completed an externally validated self-assessment and governance assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Independent schools only* : Have you provided the documents set out in the criteria document specifically around your current site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Re-applications only : Have you changed you application in response to the written feedback you received, if you are re-applying after being unsuccessful in a previous wave, as set out in Section 4.4 of this guide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Have you sent an email (of no more than 9 MB in size**), titled: Free School Application - School Name: [insert] with all relevant information relating to Sections A to H of your application to: FS.applications@education.gsi.gov.uk before the advertised deadline?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Have you sent two hard copies of the application by a guaranteed delivery method such as 'Recorded Signed for' to the address below? Free Schools Applications Team, Department for Education, 3 rd Floor Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Independent schools include existing alternative provision and special school institutions that are privately run.

** If your application is larger than 9MB please split the documents and send two emails.

Section I of your application	Yes	No
12. Have you sent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a copy of Section A (tab 1 of the Excel template); and • copies of the Section I Personal Information form for each member, director, and principal designate who has not submitted one of these forms within the past 365 days; and • a list of those lead applicants, members, directors, and principals designate who have submitted Section I forms within the past 365 days by emailing scanned copies of Section I forms to due.diligence@education.gsi.gov.uk stating the name of the school in the subject title, including a full list of members, trustees, and the principal designate (if appointed); and a copy of Section A? (See guidance for dates and deadlines)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section C – vision

Section C – a credible proposal to deliver a high-quality free school and a clear rationale for establishing it in this area

Introduction

'The Ladder' is an alternative provision free school proposed by Walsall Studio School that will provide students an effective 'step up' for those for whom mainstream schooling has been challenging and ineffective. Our proposed school focuses primarily on meeting the needs of Walsall students with the potential to serve the wider Black Country.

This new, much needed provision derives its name from the Royal led, 'Ladder Apprenticeship campaign', overseen by Walsall Studio School's [REDACTED]. The campaign's partnership consists of print media organisations, employers, public and third sectors, who have each agreed to support the creation of the Ladder school, as a fitting tribute to the campaign, that has thus far, created over 2000 apprenticeship jobs, across London, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and the Black Country.

This strong, established branding, underpinned by the partnership of Walsall Studio School, (an alliance of The Vine Trust Walsall, -a social enterprise, and Queen Mary's Grammar School), will ensure that this school is recognised as an effective, high quality, safe, valued and trusted provision free from 'stigma' and prejudice.

By year 3, it will cater for up to 80 full-time students (aged 13-16) and 32 young people (aged 16-18). Ladder Free School (LFS) will be in an excellent physical hub, with satellite venues, where the learning environment will be facilitated by dynamic teaching, practical hands-on learning, collaborative working, and vocational links with employers.

This facility combined with our approach, and partnership will provide all our students with the opportunities to succeed in education, make a positive contribution to their families and find fulfilment in employment.

Our Mission

The Ladder Free 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

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purpose is to support every student to develop their true potential, make a positive contribution to their families and find fulfilment in employment.

Our Aims

- To challenge every student to raise their aspirations and excel in both academic achievement and in developing vocational skill sets
- To nurture and develop in students the values and characteristics necessary to become successful, confident and responsible members of society
- 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
- To prepare students for employment in a world with ever-changing scientific, technical and global needs through problem solving workshops and work with employers
- Strong partnership relationships between students, home, school, community and local employers

Our Objectives

- Provide for the needs of secondary school students (specifically 13-16 year olds) who have disengaged from mainstream provision and who are high need but not necessarily have an education and healthcare plan (EHCP)
- Close the gap of under achievement
- Reduce the amount of students becoming NEET either at the end of Y11 or shortly afterwards before completing further education
- Provide a springboard to prepare students for post 16 learning, specifically apprenticeships with local employers
- Reduce the number of permanent and fixed term exclusions
- Support the re-integration of permanently excluded students returning from the PRU back into mainstream
- Reduce the risk of students offending and entering the youth justice system

Context & Rationale

Permanent Exclusions in Walsall are double the national average and rising (0.23 in 2013/14 and 0.26 in 2014/15 - National Average 0.12). There are currently no

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alternative provision schools in the local area. As of January 2015 there are 127 Walsall students engaged in Alternative Provision commissioned by the Local Authority (see section e). This includes 109 KS3 and KS4 students who have been permanently excluded and on roll at the New Leaf Centre (PRU) with an anticipated 150 excluded students by June 2017. There were 36 secondary school permanent exclusions in Walsall in the first term of the 2015-16 academic year.

- There are currently 11 Centres delivering training and education programmes; 2 schools offer high quality provision. The New Leaf Centre working with 55 students and Sheffield Satellite Centre (Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy) supporting 5 students within the mainstream school, to support a gradual re-integration for those young people who wish to return to mainstream school.
- Walsall College judged by Ofsted to be “Outstanding” supports 9 students in Functional Skills (Maths and English), Princes Trust, and Vocational courses such as Hairdressing, Construction, Motor-Vehicle and Childcare. In addition, the college delivers level 1 vocational programmes to key stage 4 students in Walsall, who in turn progress on to full-time level 2 programmes at the college.
- Four centres judged by Ofsted to be Good: the New Leaf Centre, Nova Training, Horizon Care and Sheffield Satellite Centre.
- 5 centres not registered as a school or with Ofsted, supporting 36 students in a range of programmes are not offering high quality alternative provision.
- The key issues are both quality of provision and availability. There is not enough good quality provision and it is often a ‘one size fits’ all model (eg Walsall College) or it is small and independent. The New Leaf Centre quality assures providers to make sure they give students quality outcomes.

The local FE college and training providers offer Entry Level and Level 1 vocational programmes to local commissioning schools, some with functional skills English and Maths, however, the **Ladder Free School will be the first Alternative Provision free school in the area and the only Alternative Provision provider to offer GCSE study to students.**

Local Authority data indicates that alternative provision for boys is a priority. Three year trends in Fixed Term and Permanent exclusions identify on average 80% are boys and 20% girls. With 81% in 2014/15 coming from the most deprived wards in Walsall. Places at the Ladder Free School will be commissioned by secondary schools and where appropriate, the Local Authority. We will establish an admissions panel to review prospective admissions to the free school which will include representation from local head teachers and will work closely with the Walsall Inclusion Partnership (WIP).

The WIP exists to help facilitate managed moves for students at risk of exclusion. Many schools, however, make local arrangements in pairs or small clusters to

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provide Managed Moves for students who would otherwise have been excluded. We therefore expect the actual numbers of Managed Moves to be significantly higher than the records held by the Local Authority. The available data from the LA, however, records that around two thirds of managed moves are unsuccessful. (181 of 294 Secondary Managed Moves were unsuccessful in 2012/13 and 99 of 147 Secondary Managed Moves were unsuccessful in 2013/14).

With very limited alternative provision choices for local secondary heads a number of Walsall schools seek to provide internal inclusion centres onsite, which result in timetables of significantly reduced hours being negotiated with parents and children. 91 secondary school children in Walsall were recorded in the autumn census as 'on reduced hours' in 2014/15 with 112 secondary school children recorded to date in 2015/16.

The Local Authority does not currently have SEND data categorised by areas of need, for excluded students or those at risk of exclusion. However, based on our dialogue with local secondary heads, and based on our team's previous experience of operating 14-19 academies, our school recognises it will need to be a centre for excellence in educating students within the **social, emotional and mental health difficulties** broad area of need. We also expect to provide an outstanding education for students who have minor learning difficulties (MLD) in **Cognition and Learning** and we will develop expertise in working with students with high-functioning Autism and Aspergers (**Communication and Interaction**). The experience of our team informs us that many students with these special educational needs will not have been fully assessed, not have a full diagnosis or have ever had a Statement or EHCP.

The Need to Develop Self Esteem & Confident Learners

We recognise that relationships with parents/carers, teachers/coaches and team mates can all affect an individual's self esteem. A positive self-esteem is key to psychological well-being. Young people who have a positive self-esteem are better able to cope with wins and losses in sport and life. Alongside our broad and balanced curriculum opportunities for all students to explore and participate in both creative / artistic and sport / exercise activities is an important feature of our proposed school.

Young people with a negative self-esteem are more likely to be vulnerable to being bullied, being depressed or have an eating disorder, lack confidence and may regularly engage in risky behaviour.

With a focus on sport and the creative arts within our curriculum we will see life time

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benefits in our young people for example; they will be less anxious and more confident, have a more optimistic outlook on life, a better body image, less likely to conform to social pressure and less likely to engage in risky behaviour such as drug abuse. **They will be better equipped and ready to learn.**

Self-esteem can be enhanced by positive experiences in both creative and sporting endeavours. Our commitment to students referred to our school is to work with them - the whole person.

The current strategies and procedures in place within Walsall do not always provide students with opportunities to make a fresh start through the use of managed moves (or other collaborative arrangements between schools). Furthermore, the association of secondary heads in Walsall (WASH) have recognised that if the managed move process has not re-engaged students by Year 9, disaffection becomes entrenched and a different approach is needed beyond the confines of the mainstream school.

One of the core purposes of our proposed free school is to develop a range of learning opportunities that allow early intervention, prevention and secure engagement in a more innovative way than that can currently be achieved.

By including KS3 students in our proposed school we are looking to actively develop opportunities for early assessment of need and provide appropriate learning programmes and interventions that will lead to successful progression routes onto further education including apprenticeships.

We plan to adopt the most successful working practices of providers in our neighbouring city, such as the successful Free Schools in the East Birmingham Network - building on tried and trusted methods but adapted to the needs of Walsall.

Delivering a High Quality Learning Experience at our Free School – the Non-negotiables

All students will study Maths, English, Science & IT (Digital) with access to a wide curriculum offer designed to promote individual engagement, attainment and achievement. Opportunities will also be provided in physical education for all students.

GCSEs (those with sufficient functionality to be included on apprenticeship frameworks as well as government performance tables) and high quality, accredited vocational courses will be delivered by our staff team alongside work-based learning opportunities.

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Students will benefit from extensive personal coaching and mentoring to motivate and inspire them to raise their aspirations and develop a sense of moral purpose contributing effectively to their family, local community and wider society. This critical intervention alongside the academic work of teachers and vocational skills development with our teachers and delivery partners will be focussed on removing barriers to learning and supporting the acquisition of life skills which include the student in sharing responsibility for their own behaviour, decisions and learning. We are committed to weekly staff CPD and also providing CPD training for our delivery partners, including local colleges and schools (see section D1).

The assessment of the students' needs will inform a 'Learning Passport / Individual Learning Plan' which will follow the students throughout their education. As the needs of students become increasingly apparent or change throughout their time at the school so will the programmes of learning, timetables and additional intervention. Our curriculum delivery will be designed and tailored specifically for individuals to allow for a 'roll on, roll off' model of delivery facilitating integration back into mainstream education, particularly in KS3.

During the first two years of our studio school we invested significantly in developing strong relationships and structures with street teams, targeted youth workers, neighbourhood police teams, local counselling services, medical/health professionals, housing associations and other external agencies. Our work in the studio school to keep students safe was recognised as outstanding by Ofsted in 2015. Our proposed free school will develop this approach even further to ensure that students benefit from the full spectrum of professional support and challenge available - and that no young person 'falls off the radar'.

The Ladder Free School will establish a study programme offer for students aged 16-18. We aim to prepare the majority of our students to reintegrate into Further Education at the end of Year 11; however, our commitment is to preparing children and young people for the world of work alongside local employers. Therefore, we will create a sixth form study programme (Year 12/13) to complete the preparation work and enable students to transition effectively and successfully into post-16 study in the workplace through apprenticeships. There is no other specialist alternative provision post-16 sixth form in Walsall and while our aim is to re-integrate students into mainstream Further Education, we recognise obligations of the 'raising participation age' to 18 and are committed to ensuring our students are ready for progression into employment or onto university/further training by the age of 18. Our commitment to our students does not end at the age of 16, we are committed to 'No NEETS'.

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Working with employers to meet the needs of our students is key, for example: Vine Social Enterprises (one of our key partners) currently places around 120 young people in national network of Ikea stores as part of a managed apprenticeship programme called Project 390. This programme illustrates the success of employers working with their local communities to engage young people who are often labelled 'hard to reach' or 'disengaged'. Ensuring our students are supported in their transition from school into training that directly links into employment is an important characteristic of our school. Our small sixth form will provide an internal progression route for students at the end of Y11 to continue to study GCSE Maths and English to secure good pass grades and will be focused on preparing young people to transition into employment with training in an apprenticeship.

In 2013 Walsall Studio School opened, the first and only studio school in the area. Our studio school continues to provide a different approach to education for students in Walsall, both academic (supported by our key educational partner Queen Marys Grammar School) and vocational (with real work-based projects and placements provided by employers). Nonetheless, our experience in setting up and leading the studio school successfully has provided us with a unique insight - beyond the analysis of the Local Authority data cited above - in identifying both the need for high quality, effective alternative provision and the limited options available to local schools.

We work very closely with our partner schools drawing on the expertise of a range of professionals. Indeed, Walsall Studio School is currently working to form a Multi Academy Trust with other successful local schools (see section F).

Our Trusts vision

We have explicitly identified five professional behaviours / cultures that staff and volunteers within the school must demonstrate. These behaviours form part of the staff performance management / appraisal process for all management, academic, pastoral and support members of staff:

- 1. Investing in the Economy of Together**
(an environment where people Live, Learn, Work and Play together)
- 2. Leading by Example – Core Values**
(peace, trust, friendship, justice, forgiveness and community)
- 3. Driving Improvement, progress, and innovation**
(just enough is never enough – supporting and challenging each other to improve)

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4. Delivering for each individual (student, staff member, customer)

(no student left behind, no one falling ‘under the radar’, all students, staff and customers valued as “the most important”)

5. Communicating our message with impact

(being “on message” and getting our message “out there” to prospective students, their parents, local employers and wider stakeholders)

We operate small schools which are committed to delivering a personalised education experience for all our students. We demand professional standards while nurturing a family environment where project-based learning and work experience opportunities provide students with a competitive advantage when entering the world of work.

*Our purpose is to support the **personal and professional development** of students in **readiness for the world of work**. To **build students’ confidence** through encouraging the development of an **entrepreneurial spirit** and understanding of the **positive difference** each individual can make on **our local community and wider society**.*

Our Ethos of “Perform and Applause”

*We actively design and **build opportunities** for young people in our schools to **present their ideas, demonstrate their achievements and receive recognition** from other students, staff and local employers. Our ethos of ‘perform and applause’ underpins our belief that everyone must have the opportunity to be heard and share their ideas, thoughts and opinions. Peer **acknowledgement, critique and celebration** are commonplace and prepare students for future employment appraisal as well as developing critical communication skills.*

Our schools will be known for...

1. Being small in number and unique in purpose
2. Having high expectations coupled to realistic opportunities
3. Having a broad outlook, visionary in spirit
4. Our partnerships with employers – making young people work-ready

Our students will be known for...

1. Being entrepreneurial and enterprising
2. Being professional and understanding work
3. Being vocationally inquisitive and eager to work
4. Contributing to the local community and wider society

Section D – education plan: part 1

	Current number of students (if applicable)	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Key Stage 3 (Y 7-9)		8	12	16	16	16	16	16
Key Stage 4 Year 10		16	24	32	32	32	32	32
Key Stage 4 Year 11		16	32	32	32	32	32	32
16-19: commissioner referred								
16-19: Y12 student applications		0	14	16	16	16	16	16
16-19: Y13		0	0	14	16	16	16	16
Totals		40	76	104	112	112	112	112

Section D – education plan: part 2

D1 – an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

Subject/other activity	Hours per week	Mandatory/ Voluntary	Comments
Reading / Comprehension	1	M	Minimum 1:1 programme 1 hour per week per students.
English	5	M	Work towards GCSE (inc. functional use of language)
Maths	5	M	
Science	2	M	
Tutorial Programme: British Values, Behaviours for Learning, PSHE, RS, SRE etc.	3	M	SMSC/Religious Studies/PSHE. Fundamental British Values
Creative/Digital Technologies	2	M	
Workskills / Employability	2	M	
PE / Sport & Fitness	2	M	
Vocational Selection	3	M	
Additional accelerated reading	3	Directed	
Enrichment	Up to 6	Directed	Access to employers (taking part in master classes and employer set project briefs). Additional sporting activities and additional art and music clubs. Homework clubs, providing access to digital technology (and resources on platforms including google classroom). Student performances / showcase events to parents, employers and the local community

Subject/other activity	Hours per week	Mandatory/ Voluntary	Comments
			(inc. staff and students in other schools within our proposed MAT).

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

Our Experience in Walsall Studio School

A large proportion of students in Walsall who are looking to move secondary schools (and join the Studio School) start Year 10 having made no progress at all in Key Stage 3. All too often their academic baseline at the end of KS3 is the same level as at the end of KS2. Too many students have had a disrupted education, and have established a pattern of poor attendance and poor attitudes to learning. Reading ages are almost always significantly below a students biological age and therefore the need to prioritise reading in order to ensure students are able to access all aspects of the curriculum is clear.

This direct experience of Walsall Studio School has informed the planning of the curriculum, approaches to teaching and models of curriculum delivery that will characterise our proposed Ladder Free School. (Details of specific approaches are included at the end of this section).

Overview – The Ladder Free School (LFS)

We anticipate the majority, as high as 75% - 80% of our students will be boys (based on the LA exclusion figures)

We anticipate the majority of our Y9 students will reintegrate back into mainstream with the help and support of our personal coaches and the work they undertake in-school, in-home and with referring schools.

The work of personal coaches in support of LFS students will enable reintegration back into mainstream through a supported transition period (usually 6-8 weeks). Too many 'managed moves' are unsuccessful in Walsall, in part due to the limited transition support provided between the sending and receiving schools.

We anticipate that the overwhelming majority of students who join us in Year 10 will complete their GCSE study at the Ladder Free School. While personal coaches will lead any transition back into mainstream as appropriate, our focus will be upon ensuring KS4 students 'step up' and 'catch up' with a clear roadmap for progression into (mainstream) apprenticeship, employment or Further Education

We will offer a small focussed 6th form for students who do not reintegrate into mainstream FE. We are committed to seeing no students leaving our school as NEET. This post-16 provision will be offered for internal progression students only and will complete the work started in KS4 in preparing students for employment. We plan to extend and build upon our KS5 success in our studio school where we have established a pathway for students who have 'dropped out' or have been 'kicked out' of college or school sixth form in Year 12. In 2015 the studio school published

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

inspirational case studies of students who had, through the support and expertise of our personal coaches and teachers, reengaged in education, completed their studies and progressed directly into employment or onto university. Each of these students achieved over 360 UCAS points and one was awarded the BTEC Outstanding Student of the Year for Creative and Media after reengaging in a different approach to education and demonstrating such a professional approach to work in his work experience placement that he secured a full time job at the end of sixth form.

Our employer partners will provide extensive work experience as part of our sixth form and provide students with a clear progression route into employment.

Post-16 students who excel in one or more academic areas will also have the opportunity to study Level 3/A level programmes in our sixth form. Walsall Studio School is a lead school for the delivery of L3 Core Maths pilot as well as A Level Maths and English. Through our proposed MAT LFS students will have access to these academic routes as well as vocational studies / work experience programmes

We will work closely with the 2 colleges in Walsall, both judged by Ofsted to be Outstanding at their last inspection, to provide vocational options for our students in KS4 and KS5. Our team of personal coaches will support student to succeed in this setting and our leadership staff will support and develop the skills in the staff in our partner colleges as part of our commitment to monthly CPD for staff in our partner organisations as well as our own internal team

The New Leaf Centre has the statutory duty to provide suitable education for excluded students at Key Stage 3 and 4. While the Ladder AP Free School will target students at 'risk' of exclusion, the New Leaf Centre will be a key strategic partner, and as a result of the lack of high quality alternative provision in Walsall, the Ladder AP Free School has taken a policy decision to recruit a discrete group of excluded students at KS 3 each academic year.

An ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan – meeting the needs of students

The Ladder Free School's mission is to provide a safe, well ordered and caring learning environment which will deliver high quality education to all its students. We will support students to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control through experiencing outstanding teaching, clear and consistent guidance and support.

The bespoke, personalised curriculum will provide access to a range of accredited qualifications as well as educational and social experiences, which will address the learning and emotional needs of our students. We will support every student to develop their true potential and make a positive contribution to their community, as

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

they progress towards adult life.

In the development of the Ladder Free School we would envisage a 3 phased development process over the next six years:

Phase 1 – People (Staff and Partners)

Within the first 3 years the principle focus will be to develop the school to ensure it delivers the stated outcomes. This will involve (1) recruiting and retaining high quality specialist staff that are skilled in enthusing the most disengaged students with a particular expertise in positive behaviour management, (2) establishing the operational effectiveness of staff and student peer mentors from our high performing partner schools (Queen Marys Foundation) and (3) establishing effective contributions from partner employers and industry professionals and (4) completing significant outreach work in local secondary schools to ensure students at risk of exclusion are supported and challenged and where reintegration of students (referred to LFS) back into mainstream, where appropriate, is realised. All staff will undertake weekly CPD in managing behaviour and engaging students with consistent and methodical approaches to learning – the “Ladder Way”.

Reading and Numeracy

Educationally, we plan to prioritise the core skills that have the most impact on learning in all curriculum areas. Improving reading (<http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/>) and numeracy skills (<http://www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk/>) will be a principal focus to ensure students can access all aspects of the curriculum while at the Ladder Free School and in their future studies / training and employment.

Programmes of Study

All students will follow a personalised programme of study which includes English, Mathematics, Science and Digital Technology (IT/Computing). All students will also take part in a comprehensive programme of PSHE / SMSC, Work Skills, a Creative Industries Subject and Sport / Health & Fitness. All students will receive weekly personal coaching focussed on developing positive behaviours for learning and personal development / preparation for life and employment. While all students will benefit from this coaching we recognise that some students will require the input from a specialist counsellor for a more intense, therapeutic approach than the coaching provided by our core team. Additional vocational qualifications will be delivered by accessing the expertise of local colleges or schools. Students will be released up to one day a week to travel to our partner colleges / schools.

Importantly, all students will undertake weekly lessons in developing the behaviour for learning skills which are required to access the academic and vocational

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curriculum.

Attendance Management

Our school will establish the very best approach to managing student attendance. We are fully aware that many of our students will have adopted an entrenched routine of persistent absence from school. Therefore, we will adopt a relentless and tenacious drive to ensure all students improve their attendance at school and develop the resilience required to secure good attendance at school and in their future employment. Parents of students who are absent from school will be contacted twice on their child's first day of absence (once by the business support/admin staff in the morning and then again after school by their son/daughter's personal tutor). Students will also have an employer style 'return to work interview' with their tutor and/or personal coach on their return to school.

Gifted and Talented / Stretching the Most Able

Our proposed Multi Academy Trust provides unique opportunities for students to receive high quality teaching and coaching bringing together a wide range of professionals not usually associated with alternative provision. Gifted and Talented students will receive additional coaching and will be the first to benefit from peer mentoring from the Studio School and our partner schools Queen Marys Grammar School and Queen Marys High School.

New Arrivals / EAL

Our specialist staff will be able to support all forms of learning needs not only those who have a track record of poor or dangerous behaviour and/or persistent absence from school but those that have additional barriers to learning such as English as a second language. We will be actively looking to recruit personal coaches who have second languages as a skill set and will also have the very best access to ESOL/EAL provision through our strategic partner Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC). Students will have one-to-one support on an intensive basis through their enrichment activities and also within their core curriculum time. Although not currently characteristic of Walsall, we do recognise that in some parts of the UK similar schools have faced challenges in supporting new arrivals (particularly from parts of Eastern Europe) in their cultural understanding of British values and communities. Our team of staff will be ready to support such students (and their families) in addressing any such cultural differences as well as language barriers should the need arise in the future. See section D4 for further detail.

Engagement with families and parents

Our experience makes us very aware that parents and families of our students will

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

themselves be often 'hard to reach'. We have secured the support of the local Adult and Community college (WACC) as well as Walsall Housing Group (WHG) to enable us to meet, build effective relationships with and engage families without expecting parents to attend the school. We recognise that doing so may itself be a barrier for engagement; therefore our personal coaches will meet with parents in their homes, or other appropriate locations including WACC or WHG sites. Our role will be one of raising the value and importance families place on education of their children. We are also designing creative ways of engaging with families and parents including the use of technology (including social media) and by establishing a school 'staff presence' in 'surgeries' similar to those offered by MPs and local councillors in areas identified once the addresses of the student cohort have been analysed.

Induction into the LFS (Expectations, Baseline and Delivery Plan)

While all students will have a learning passport (see page 10), the context, goals and details of this document will be established as the preliminary part of induction into the school. The first 2 meetings with a student being referred to the LFS will take place outside of the school. The first meeting will take place at the referring mainstream school and the second meeting will take place at the family home. In these preliminary induction meetings, the principal or nominated senior member of staff will establish the common language used by staff at the LFS and set high expectations before the first visit to the school building. Clarity of our approach to managing behaviour and securing regular attendance (through our approach to attendance management cited above) will be a key focus but also a 'progression map' for individual students which recognises where they are now but 'plots a pathway' into employment.

On the third contact the referred student will visit the LFS and will complete baseline tests in English and Maths ahead of the moderation panel. These test results will be externally verified by staff in our partner schools and moderated by external consultants to ensure we have a valid academic baseline from which to measure progress. A baseline of attitudes to behaviour / behaviour for learning will be constructed from three viewpoints: (1) The referring school at the first contact (2) Parents at the second contact and (3) The student's own reflection.

Curriculum Timetable

The school leadership will ensure sufficient flexibility in the curriculum timetable to accommodate linear GCSE courses, short courses, full and/or part-time blocks (block release from mainstream to access shared provision) and work based learning.

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

Phase 2 – Building on Strong Foundations

Between year 2 and year 5 Ladder Free School would look to build capacity further in delivering vocational qualifications other than those relating to the digital / creative industries (for example: Hair and Beauty, Hospitality & Catering, Motor Vehicle Studies etc.) If these subjects are required and appropriate in phase 1 they will need to be outsourced to other local providers with quality assurance from the school's leadership team.

We will seek to work with local primary schools to develop a work experience programme for our 'Ladder School students' where our students volunteer in local primary schools supporting teachers in the preparation of activities and supporting students in their learning. We aim for this to promote a more positive experience and understanding of school life and therefore improved attitudes to their own learning.

Additionally, by developing these specific courses this would allow the Ladder Free School to incubate a 'trading arm' with other local schools (with an offer that complemented, not conflicted with vocational courses offered by our college partners). As the school grows and additional staff employed, we would be able to generate full cost recovery / enterprise income as well reducing outsourcing non pay costs.

As the staff team grows we envisage personnel taking on additional supporting and leadership roles within our proposed Multi Academy Trust. We anticipate building a staff team of experts able to support school improvement across the MAT in managing behaviour, behaviour for learning and outreach support for students and families.

Phase 3 – National Profile

By year 5 or earlier if possible we would expect to be a nationally renowned Centre for Excellence in working with students with challenging behaviour and engaging them positively in education. Beginning in phase 1 we would now expect to be the first choice for education colleagues in brokering our services to other schools and in doing so generate additional income streams. This will include consultancy and outreach work on improving behaviour programmes.

Within the first 3 years of launching Walsall Studio School, in addition to an excellent Ofsted inspection outcome, we established a national profile through (1) becoming a lead school for the NCTL Teacher Specialist Subject Training for Maths – retraining teachers to be maths specialists (2) becoming a pilot school for the Level 3 Core Maths programme and (3) one of our students being awarded the BTEC Outstanding Student of the Year for Creative / Media at the House of Lords. Phase 3 for our

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proposed Ladder School is to establish a similar national profile in our work in Behaviour for Learning and success with students with challenging behaviour in school progressing successfully into the world of work.

School Term Dates

Schools terms and dates will be consistent with Walsall Education Authority, with other opportunities for extended learning during the traditional holidays in a similar way to our studio school sponsor. The term by term 'rhythm of the year' will be comparable to mainstream schools, however our proposed school will be resourced and staffed to ensure a positive input from teachers and coaches in maintained throughout the traditional school holidays. Out of term time students would typically engage with continued personal coaching activities, work experience placements and intervention / revision classes.

School Day

Students will receive their entitlement of a minimum of 25 hours a week. This will be bespoke to meet the individual needs of the students and will be a variety of educational experiences both onsite and in the wider community.

The academic teaching school day will start at 8.30am and finish at 2.30pm. Extended activities will take place in school until 4pm each day. Where students have a history of poor punctuality and attendance, personalised timetables and utilisation of the after school extended activities time to ensure academic catch up will be used.

Due to the need for flexibility in our curriculum delivery models not all students will have the same length of school day. For example some students engaged in offsite learning activities such as attending a mainstream school for vocational training may start and finish at later times but will still be accessing 25 hours per week. The timetable and staff team will ensure that all students have access to each areas of the school core curriculum.

Individual students will have a personalised timetable to support their particular needs, thus a flexible approach will be utilised to secure the full engagement of all young people.

The day will be structured into sessions designed to meet the differing needs of the young people and maximising the use of the buildings and staff skills and expertise. For example, morning sessions will be slightly longer in duration to afternoon sessions, and the teaching session in the middle of the day will include 30mins of supervised lunch break. The building will be sub-divided into zones with the ability to manage different year groups effectively and to theme rooms/spaces for different

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subject areas such as 'academic', 'creative/digital', and 'active/physical'.

Each student will be allocated a personal tutor to ensure they are able to access all areas of the curriculum and have full engagement with the learning process.

Students will be consulted in all matters related to their learning programme, developing individual responsibility for their learning and a collective responsibility for the school community. In addition to their personal tutor (who will be a teacher in the school) each student will be allocated a personal coach who will work more with students 1:1 or in pairs focused on attitudes and behaviours for learning and removing the barriers to progression.

The academic / vocational curriculum will consist of 52% core academic activities (English, Maths, Science, Accelerated Reading) and 48% preparation for life and work (Creative Digital IT, Vocational Studies, PE and Tutor Time). In addition to this curriculum offer 1.5 hours each day of extended activities, including enrichment will also be timetabled. The curriculum delivery will be based on group sizes of 8 (between 6 and 10) with two staff, one teacher and one support staff member within each session.

Some students will enter the school at the beginning of Year 9 and remain at The Ladder Free School until the end of Year 11. However, if a student joins at the start of Year 9 our first aim will be to work to secure reintegration into mainstream for the start of Year 10.

Other students will join the school through an in-year admission referral as directed by the schools admissions panel. The flexibility of the curriculum model and staff will ensure students are not disadvantaged by in-year admission.

Reintegration to mainstream

In Phase 1 of our proposed Ladder Free School development there will be opportunities for other students to spend shorter periods of intensive intervention prior to returning to mainstream education:

Permanently excluded students preparing to return to mainstream.

Students who have been out of education for more than two terms.

By Phase 3 this will be extended to include students accessing 'improving behaviour' courses. We fully recognise that students attending The Ladder Free School will be presenting behaviours that need to change if they are to succeed in education and in their future lives. We will achieve this through outreach work with parents and carers including activities and work in the family home for example to develop life skills and the use of creative skills we will promote the opportunity to help our students to cook dinner with / or even for Mum! Use of mobile technology in creative and digital

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disciplines will also be used by staff and students together to 'record, edit and present' audio and video content from home and around the community as part of research, development, and presentation of their work.

Learning Passports – A roadmap into employment

We will work to establish a period of comprehensive assessment which will inform students' learning passport on entry including any G+T and/or EAL needs as well as information relating to LAC / Student Premium / FSM / SEND etc. This assessment will be done in conjunction with the students, parents, previous schools and any other relevant external agencies and inform the support package provided for students.

Students new to the area will be assigned a personal tutor and coach who will carry out a similar programme of assessment to establish meaningful and effective learning passports. There will also be designated members of staff for LAC, SEND, G&T students and other appropriate groups as identified each year.

This initial assessment will inform an action plan with an identified exit strategy which will set out the curriculum design and support for the short, medium and long term. Regular reviews will measure success and inform any adjustments that need to be made to the personalised programme for any particular student. This will 'map out' the learning journey for every student to Post-16 and importantly into future employment.

The learning passport will identify the programme and record students' progress throughout their learning programme. The progress being measured here will be academic, vocational, personal attitudes, behaviours and attendance and employability skills. Regular reviews will take place with the personal tutors with input as appropriate from the SENDCO and local employer representatives. (The range of qualifications will include GCSE's in the core subjects with an emphasis on English, Maths and Science, accredited recognised qualifications such as BTEC's, Functional Skills, Prince's Trust XL, and a bespoke Preparation for Working Life).

All students will work towards Level 2 programmes (GCSEs) in core subjects.

The flexibility within the timetable will allow students to access courses which meet their different needs and interests. A wider range of courses will be accessed through the partnership with the network of schools, college, employers and other partners.

A broad and balanced curriculum offer will be achieved by working in collaboration with partners such as other partner / referring schools, FE and HE partners and local employers. Our personal coaching staff will ensure our students are supported and

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consistency is achieved in the behaviour management of students while accessing curriculum opportunities through our collaborative partnerships. Our local FE colleges will provide additional vocational skills opportunities and local schools will provide peer mentors and specialist teaching of subjects not taught by our proposed core teaching team (for example Chinese Mandarin as part of the UCL Confucius Classrooms initiative).

We are committed to preparing all students for the core qualifications, skills and attitudes that employers say are vital for successful future employment.

Intervention and Learning Checklists

The flexible curriculum as outlined above will be appropriate to the students because of small group sizes and a more personalised approach to teaching and learning. A clear process of establishing an academic and skills baseline will be in place along with baselining of attitudes and behaviours for learning. Personal Checklists within learning passports will ensure students are able to 'catch up' and 'step up' in addressing learning missed and work towards successful educational and personal development outcomes. The use of such checklists will match the requirements of exam boards and employers alike and will enable the school, parents and students themselves to monitor and review positive progress in each of these areas.

Tutor Time

Tutor time is our vehicle to ensure our extended PSHE programme is delivered at the core of our curriculum every day. This includes extensive work on British values and the attitudes and actions required to make a positive contribution in life. Further information about Tutor Time is included in section D4 of this application including information about:

- *Sex and Relationships Education*
- *British Values and the PREVENT agenda (to safeguard students from radicalisation)*
- *Healthy Choices, drugs awareness etc.*
- *Enrichment Programme – significant learning outside of the classroom*

Enrichment activities provide students with important access to employers – taking part in master classes and employer set project briefs. Additional sporting activities and additional art and music clubs will also be offered each week. The afternoon enrichment activities also provide teachers and coaches with opportunities to tailor very specific learning experiences for students. We believe that often the most significant learning experiences happen outside of the classroom. Our enrichment programme recognises the ingredients of significant learning experiences and our

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staff will work to engineer such opportunities for our students. These include:

- Outside of a traditional classroom setting (sometimes in a professional/culturally important environment)
- Small group or 1:1 guidance for an experienced adult (professional)
- Activities that really matter – that have a purpose and importance beyond schoolwork
- Homework clubs, providing access to digital technology (and resources on platforms including google classroom) will also be provided in the enrichment timetable.
- Student performances / showcase events will form a large part of our enrichment offer which will also provide opportunities for students to showcase their talents and accomplishments not only to parents, employers and the local community but also staff and students in other schools within our proposed MAT.

More information relating to our planned enrichment programme is found in section D4 of this application.

Personal Coaches (PC's)

Personal Coaches (PC's) are a unique and important staff resource within our proposed school. We expect our PC's to see their role as a combination of pastoral skills (dealing with personal issues, listening, giving students the space to vent feelings) and coaching skills (asking the right kind of questions and helping the students implement their own solutions). As well as working in class where required, PCs will work with the students one-on-one to plan, set targets and tackle issues around emotional well-being. They will work closely with teachers to plan students' studies and to develop strategies to enable individual students to succeed.

Personal coaches – through being in class will observe students (and teachers) in lessons, helping to ensure the coaching is integrated. They will also act as a liaison point between the student, the school, home and the employer at work placements.

Staff within the personal coaching team will also provide careers support, working with the local providers of independent careers advice and guidance.

At KS3 and KS4 the personal coaching will be very structured, with the PC meeting students individually for between 30mins and an hour every two weeks as well as holding group sessions as appropriate in addition to un-planned / initial response coaching required on a day to day basis. At KS5 students will be encouraged to book their own personal coaching sessions, with a recommendation that they meet with their personal coach at least once every three weeks.

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

Organisation of Students

The pastoral care will be delivered through the tutorial system with every student assigned a personal tutor.

There will be a designated Safeguarding / LAC / Child Protection Officer who will be the Deputy Head Teacher who will oversee the work to ensure students are safe in school, while studying in other locations or out at their work experience placement.

Students will have 'tutor time' each day where they will be able to meet with their personal tutor.

All teaching and support staff will contribute to the tutorial system. Every group will have collective acts of worship which links to themed weeks in tutor time and provides opportunities for local churches and faith groups to discuss religious, moral and ethical views and challenges within life in modern Britain.

There will be a SENDCO, most likely one of the assistant heads, who will have specific roles and responsibilities outlined in their job description see D5 for an overview.

Teaching groups will be arranged into Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11. Within each year group students will be organised according to their ability and prior experience and teachers will differentiate accordingly. As the school grows and we establish a KS5 cohort (from students progressing internals from Y11 into Y12) we will organise post-16 students on bespoke programmes preparing them for employment on an apprenticeship programme.

Due to the 'stage rather than age' related programmes tutor groups will be organised in key stage but not necessarily year group. Tutor time will be an addition to the taught curriculum and will take place daily. It will provide opportunities to develop social and emotional aspects of learning, IAG including meetings with personal tutors/coaches, and opportunities to learn in differently structured environments.

Teaching groups will be structured to reflect the 'working at levels' of students in each subject area to ensure that personalising the teaching is a priority within a more finely differentiated group.

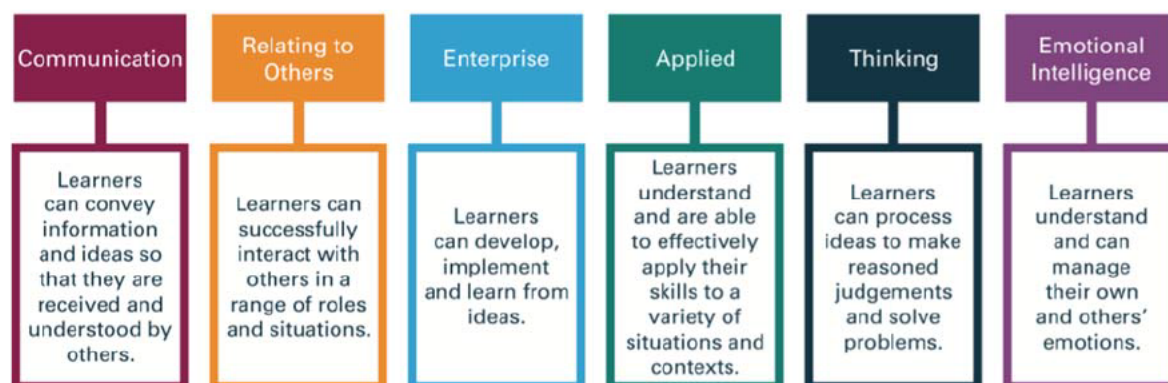
There will usually be up to 8 students per teaching group and in all cases there will be two adults present, a teacher and a support member of staff. Students will be monitored and supervised at all times.

CREATE Skills to enable Transition into FE/Employment

We will challenge and support our students to develop the skills required by

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

employers and mainstream FE colleges for apprenticeship training. Our work in setting up the Black Country's first and only studio school has enabled us to develop expertise in the six 'CREATE' skills that ensure transition into the workplace is successful.



What the school will look and feel like...?

School Environment / Culture

Key 'takeaway' from Walsall Studio School: *"A community we belong to not just a school we attend"*

Key difference to Walsall Studio School: The Importance of a quiet school. 'Quiet Control'. A simple, but consistently applied school uniform which consists of black shoes / trainers, black trousers and a Ladder School sweatshirt. Students supervised on their journey into school (from bus stops) and for the duration of time in school. No unsupervised breaks. Supervised Lunch 30mins as part of the middle teaching session of the day.

Classroom Culture & Common Core Language

All staff will take part in weekly CPD. Staff must know that the leadership and governors of the school are committed to investing in their professional development as a practitioner. This training will initially focus on a consistent approach to teaching, learning and improving learning behaviours. Ensuring a common core language in the staff team will be a principal objective from the very first day which will underpin consistency throughout the school in adults interacting with the students.

When addressing children and young people staff will use the following 'devices' which will be reinforced by displays in every classroom / learning environment and which will form part of the interview and induction process with every student and their parents.

D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

The following practical (student-facing) approaches to learning will be adopted by the Ladder School. These four approaches will be embedded in the practice and language of everyone in the school. Each of these approaches have been developed with and for students who are either in Alternative Provision schools or following an alternative timetable within our mainstream studio school.

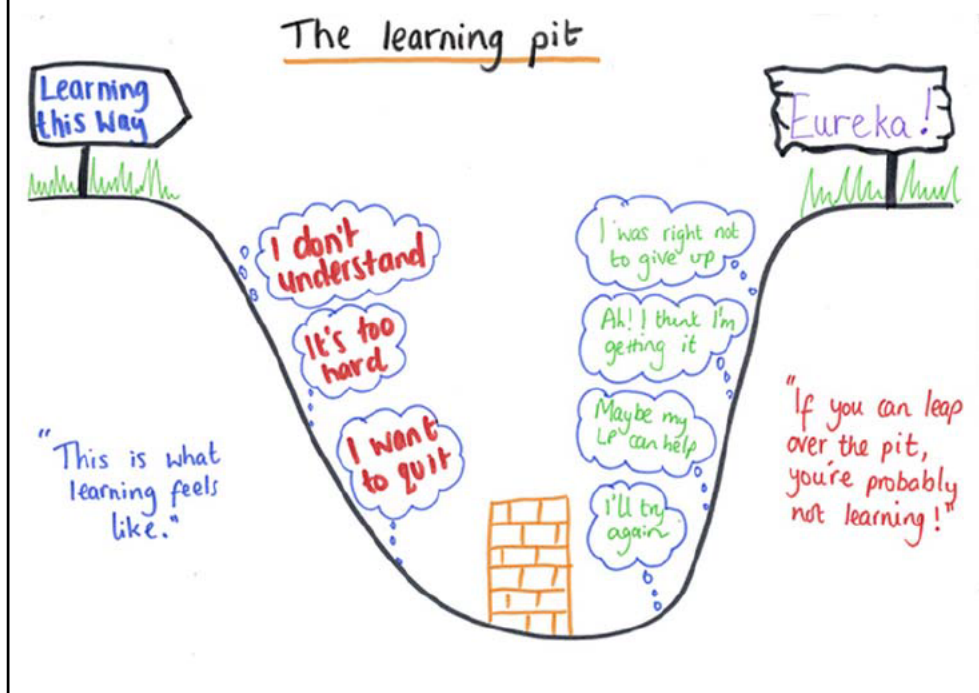
Be a STAR: (Sit up both feet on floor | Track the speaker, be attentive | Ask and Answer questions | Respect all adults and students in school)

The 6Bs to get un-stuck in lesson:

1. Be Brave, Have a go!
2. Be Still, Stop and have a think for 3 mins!
3. Backtrack - go back and check if you have done something similar before
4. Buddy - Ask the person next to you on the seating plan
5. Bits and Bobs: Use the resources around you on the table or displays in the room
6. Boss - Ask the teacher / coach in the room

Learning Pit: The process of learning anything!

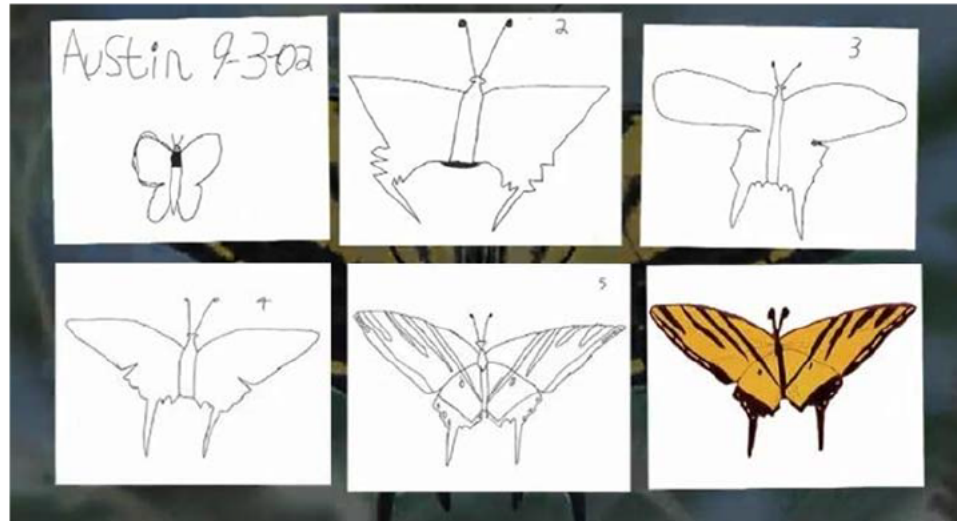
We know that students will have likely had a disrupted schooling before joining the Ladder Free School and as a result have developed a negative relationship with the process of learning. To combat this all staff will reinforce the model of 'The Learning Pit'.



D1 - an ambitious and deliverable curriculum plan which is consistent with the vision and student intake

Austin's Butterfly: Draft, draft and draft again.

Our experience shows that students all too often settle for less than their best. Less than their best work, less than their best attitude/approach. All staff will reinforce the family 'Austin's Butterfly' example of the importance of refining things and developing things in stages... never settling for something sub standard too early!



D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

Establishing a baseline of students' current level of attainment

All students will be baseline tested on referral to the LFS (a practice which we have established within Walsall Studio School). Our student performance and rewards online register system provides real time – live data – for coaches, tutors and leaders in the school to measure the key aspects of attendance, attitudes to learning, behaviour and learning in sessions on an hourly, daily and weekly basis (in addition to the traditional 6-week data drop approach in many mainstream schools). This approach, linked to our proposed rewards system, provides up-to-date information for personal coaches and tutors in their discussions with students, and enables school leaders to scrutinise the data in terms of groups (EAL, SEND, PP, Gender, Ethnicity etc.) as well as individual student and staff performance. Behaviour, attendance, attitudes towards learning and engagement with employers will also be measured at the same intervals through the use of our online tracking system.

The leadership team will meet weekly with a '1-item agenda meeting' focused on Student Development and Achievement. There will be other weekly school meetings involving all staff to support student progress and curriculum development.

A student council will be established to take account of students' voice and include students in all aspects of school life. A separate parent's council will be set up to positively engage parents in the life of the school, the education of their children and involvement in the wider community.

A website will be established with access for all key stakeholders of the school.

Outcomes will be identified on entry into the school and will be continually reviewed and modified when necessary.

Setting ambitious and realistic targets

- Providing students access to our broad curriculum will ensure that the following objectives are achieved:
- All students have achieved at least L1 English and Mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- 80% of students who spend two academic years at the LFS are entered for 4 GCSEs (inc. EN, MA and SCI) or equivalent as well as vocational qualifications in order to maximise progression routes in post-16
- All students will improve their attendance from their point of entry to the Ladder

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

AP Free School.

- Improvements in attendance up to 95% (term)
- Persistent absence to reduce below 10%
- All students make 3 levels of progress in English and Mathematics from the end of KS2 to the end of KS4 (informed by a diagnostic approach to closing the gaps in previous learning through accelerated progress).
- All students to achieve at minimum of equivalent to 2 levels of progress (we will establish a points scale for our schools) from their baseline at the start of KS4.
- All students progress from Year 11 onto further education, employment or training including apprenticeships (No NEETS) and we will monitor their retention after 12 weeks at their college, training provider or employer,
- Reduction in permanent exclusions in referring schools.
- 100% of students to realise destination highlighted within their learning passports
- 100% successful re-integration for students we identify their destination as re-integration into mainstream before the start of KS4
- All students achieve a vocational qualification.
- All students successfully achieve the targets set out in their learning passport / IEP
- All students complete a personal social development programme.
- All students progress from the Ladder Free School feeling positive about themselves and are well rounded individuals who will continue to make a positive contribution to society

* See D5 for further targets linked to attendance.

We fully recognise that these are aspirational targets and that in our first year of operation (2017/18) we are likely to receive referrals for the most vulnerable and challenging of students, however, we plan to achieve these objectives through a tenacious and relentless commitment to our students and the very highest standards in teaching, learning and assessment. We will learn from our experience in setting up our studio school and draw from the expertise of senior leaders, middle leaders and excellent practitioners from within our proposed MAT as well as partner agencies.

We will benchmark ourselves not only against the other Alternative Provision

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

providers in the UK but also the mainstream schools in our local area and the schools within our proposed MAT. For example we will benchmark the value added per cohort and per student against other local schools. We will also benchmark the KS4 performance of the LFS cohorts from their end of KS3 benchmark against the same externally validated end of KS3 benchmarks used by Walsall Studio School to measure progress in a 14-16 environment in addition to validation performed by an alternative provision free schools in the East Birmingham Network (EBN), Birmingham, City Gateway, London and the Venn Academy Trust, Hull.

Ensuring successful re-integration into mainstream schooling / FE/ Employment or Training

For students who are on short term programmes, their mainstream destination will be identified on entry so that a clear 'exit strategy' / reintegration will be put in place. These students will have their programme mapped to their destination school and support package put in place with a students personal coach to ensure successful re-integration. This will allow a seamless transition from the Ladder Free School to mainstream – including personal coaching input in the initial weeks back in mainstream.

For students who are full time, a comprehensive CEIAG plan will inform a personal support plan which prepares these students for further education, employment or training.

Improving the school performance - Monitoring and Evaluation

There will be a 1-year and 3-year school improvement plan developed by the leadership, agreed by governors and endorsed by our Trust Board. Monitoring by leaders, governors and improvement partners will take place to ensure targets are being met and if not what can be done/achieved to help the school to achieve the target in the future. This will include:

Quality of teaching and learning: this will include robust systems which carry out the following - lesson observation, work scrutiny (marking and written feedback in books), data analysis, regular monitoring of students learning passports, regular reports on students. All of these processes will be directly linked to the performance management of every staff member and inform their staff development. We will be condiment in our judgment of quality of T&L because of the comprehensive approach and the involvement of staff from our partner schools. Peer observations and coaching will be commonplace and governors from our school, senior leaders from different schools and external consultants will validate and moderate our judgments.

Student attendance and behaviour: Our MIS system will be used to provide daily

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

behaviour and attendance points. The monitoring of rewards and sanctions across the school will provide data to the Leadership Team which will be used during the performance management of staff. An integral aspect of the leader's role, the teacher's role and the personal coach's role is the responsibility to track individual student progress.

Student enjoyment of school: this will be measured through the pastoral system which will include questionnaires, regular interviews with personal coaches and regular dialogue and questionnaires with parents/carers. Lesson observation and work scrutiny will also provide information about students' enjoyment.

Finance monitoring: the Business/Finance Manager will provide a financial report half-termly to the Leadership Team and Governors.

Self -evaluation will be a rigorous, continual and on-going process which will inform plans for school improvement as well as providing information to all stakeholders. Where students are not making the relevant levels of progress they will be provided with 1:1 or smaller group tuition to target their specific needs

Quality Assurance

The quality of Teaching and Learning in our proposed Ladder Free School will be monitored using the systems we have successfully set up in Walsall Studio School (which were praised by the DFE Advisor during his monitoring visits and by Ofsted during our Section 5 Inspection).

The 4 Pillars of (Assuring) Effective Teaching and Learning: (1) Data (2) Observed Practice (3) Book/Folder Scrutiny and (4) Student Voice will be used to make judgements on the quality of our provision.

This framework will be used by school leaders, governors and others from within our proposed MAT which includes National Leaders of Education (NLEs) and experienced professionals from across a number of very high performing schools.

Accountability for Success

The Principal will be regularly held to account by the local governors and ultimately the trustees. All staff will have clear job descriptions which will outline their roles and responsibilities and how this will be monitored and evaluated. All staff will be accountable to the Principal.

Members of the Local Governing Body and the trustees will have responsibility for holding the principal and teaching team to account.

All staff will be appraised through a clear line management structure and held

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

accountable for the outcomes of students in their area of responsibility.

Every staff member will be expected to promote a safe, well ordered and caring learning environment, where high quality education is being delivered to all students. All staff will support students to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control through experiencing outstanding teaching, clear and consistent guidance and support.

Where performance of staff is unsatisfactory and is not allowing the school to achieve its principle aims, those staff will be provided with targets and a support plan to improve. This will be reviewed within a specific time period and if performance does not improve then the appropriate capabilities procedures will be initiated by the principal.

Community and Employer Engagement

The school will be one in which strong links will be established with the local and wider community. Our aim is that the school lies at the heart of the community and that the school and the community work together in partnership for the benefit of all. Numerous opportunities will be built in to encourage the community to come into the school and the young people play an active role in the local and wider community. It is important to the Ladder AP Free School that it is viewed in a positive light amongst the community. Every opportunity will be made to ensure that students contribute to the community in a positive manner.

Aims:

Ensure that all parties are aware of the numerous opportunities that have been established for links between school and the community

Build on and extend the opportunities for the school and the local and wider community to work in Partnership

Enable the community to feel that they are welcome into our school and that our school will play an active role in the community

To provide a range of activities and meetings on a wide range of issues where the community comes into school and our school community supports local community activities

To consult the local community and listen to their views when drawing up specific important documentation relating to the school's role in the community

How:

The Ladder AP Free School will form an active partnership with successful

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

alternative provision schools (for example, City Gateway College, Tower Hamlets, Whitehouse AP School (Venn), Hull, EBN, Birmingham). We will share best practice in both approaches to Teaching and Learning and in managing behaviour, attendance and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our students. The Ladder AP Free School will proven strategies for Learning in the alternative provision context i.e. The Learning Pit and the 6 Bs as described above.

Links will be developed with local businesses in order to provide routes to training and employment and work experience placements.

In order to enhance the experience of the students we will liaise and access the support of groups such as: amateur and professional sporting partnerships, local arts societies, local emergency services, local community organisations and other professionals.

Fund raising and charitable events will be organised through the creation of a parent and stakeholders group – and by linking with stakeholder bodies in our partner schools (MAT).

Encouraging students to take a wider view of their place within the global community such as charitable fund raising, links with schools in the Western and developing world.

Ladder Partners - There are already established links within the network with a series of businesses ranging from Blue Chip (for example IKEA and Warburtons) to local SME's (for example Express & Star and Strand Hardware) that play an active role in providing work relating learning opportunities linked to a range of curriculum subjects.

Purpose of Family Learning at the Ladder AP Free School

We recognise the work required with families as well as students in our school. This relationship begins with induction and will continue into more structured and regular activity. Following induction families will build relationships with our school and our staff through coffee mornings and after school 'showcases' of student work. These sessions are designed to promote opportunities for students to show their work and for their families, alongside school, staff and partner employers to recognise and applaud their work.

Our broader challenge with parents and other family members is however to raise standards of literacy and numeracy which we will do in partnership with WACC, to reduce significantly the numbers of individuals and their families at the Ladder AP Free School who struggle with their reading, writing and maths; to help improve skills, prospects and quality of life; Basic Skills Strategy.

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

Family learning, particularly family literacy and numeracy will raise educational attainment for students and parents

Family learning is effective in encouraging parents/carers who have not been involved in education since leaving school, or had a poor experience of school themselves, to return to learning for themselves.

Family involvement will also motivate students to become lifelong learners.

Family learning will strengthen families and contribute to building capacity in communities.

Participation in Family Learning schemes will contribute to raising the percentage of Walsall's population accessing basic skills training.

Strategic Objectives

1. To enable more adults to contribute to the school improvement agenda by:

- a) involving more parents in activities with their child and the child's teacher
- b) helping parents to feel more confident about supporting their children's education
- c) assisting parents to know more about what their children are learning and to develop skills to be their co-educators

2. To strengthen family relationships by:

- a) making more opportunities available for family members to learn together
- b) provide opportunities for parents to explore their role as parents

3. To contribute to the adult basic skills targets for Walsall Adult Community College by:

- a) increasing the number of adults addressing their basic skills needs through family learning opportunities
- b) assisting all adults in family literacy/ numeracy programmes to improve their performance and achieve accreditation where possible

4. To contribute to a greater use of ICT for access to learning by:

- a) increasing the use of computers on family literacy and numeracy programmes
- b) exploring available resources

5. To enable more parents with no or few qualifications to progress from family learning to learning opportunities for themselves by:

- a) offering progression routes through provision at WACC and their 70 centres within

D2 – measuring student performance effectively and setting challenging targets

Walsall

b) ensuring good quality advice and guidance at appropriate points of their learning pathway

6. To widen participation in family learning by:

a) establishing programmes that offer bilingual approaches to family learning (our Eastern European students)

7. To offer a broader curriculum range for family learning activities at the Ladder AP Free School for Parents/carers by:

a) offering increased opportunities for ICT learning

b) establishing opportunities for family arts, languages and sport

D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels

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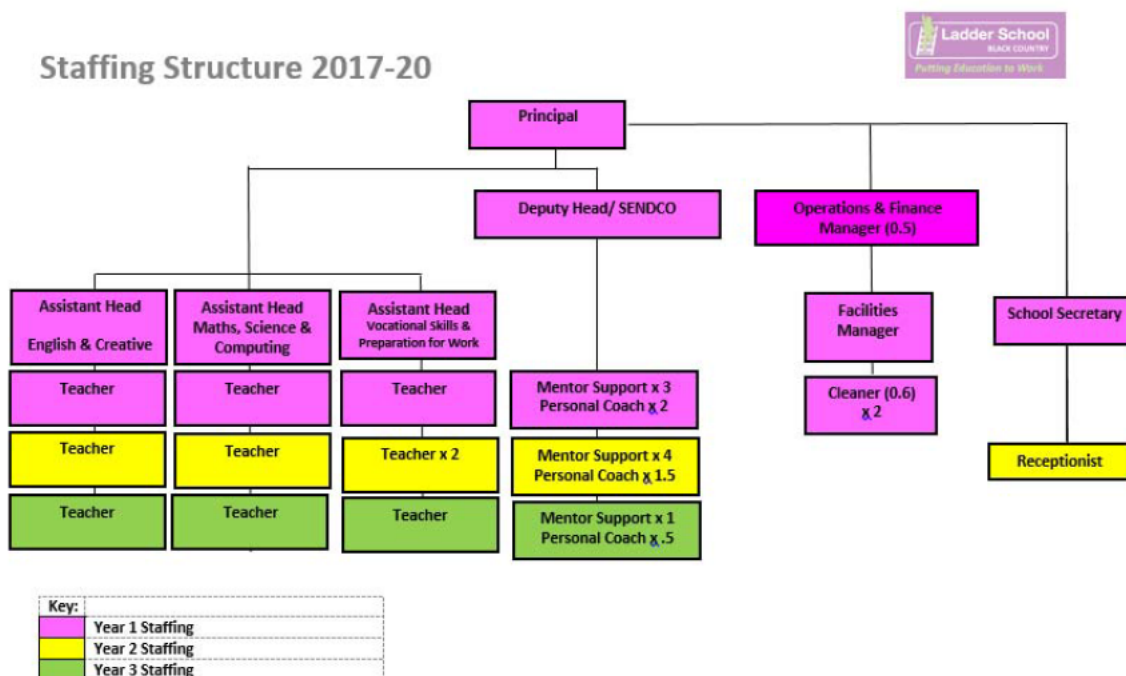
Our proposed staffing structure during the opening years is highlighted on the next page. The structure is affordable and flexible enough to meet the needs of the curriculum plan whether we achieve 100% or 70% occupancy year on year. Our financial model in section G ensures we can deliver in years 1, 2 and 3 but importantly that the model is sustainable going forward.

The structure is efficient but also adaptable to meet the needs of the changing cohorts, it ensures our vision and curriculum are deliverable on day one, making the best use of resources available.

Our staffing costs are extremely cost effective using a complementary skillset of teaching/non teaching staff and outsourced work through service level agreements in areas such as cleaning, HR, finance and marketing as well as the opportunity to share posts and costs with our studio school.

A staffing plan at full capacity which is affordable, supports the early years of growth and delivers the curriculum

See organagram below.



The organisational chart shows our proposed staffing structure for the Ladder Free School from year 1-3 before the structure is complete. We expect to appoint most of

D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels

the key FT/PT posts which includes core subject areas, behaviour specialists and the leadership team in year 1 (with one of the three Assistant Head posts reserved for growth in year 2). Recruitment of teaching staff, coaching staff and business support staff will be staggered then as the school grows. This approach will ensure full leadership and management support for staff from the outset as well as prioritising support arrangements for each student from the opening of the school. A schedule of staff recruitment in year 1 will be as follows:

Post	Recruitment Timing	In Post
Principal Designate	Aug – Oct 2016	January 2017
Deputy Head Teacher	Jan – March 2017	September 2017
Assistant Principals	Jan – March 2017	September 2017
Teachers	Feb – April 2017	September 2017
Mentor support and Personal Coaches	March – May 2017	September 2017
Operations & Finance Manager	March – May 2017	August 2017
Facilities Manager	March – May 2017	August 2017
Cleaners	June – July 2017	September 2017
School Secretary	May – June 2017	August 2017

The Deputy Headteacher or one of the Assistant Headteachers will be the school's designated lead for Looked After Children and Child Protection in recognition of the importance of this group of students and their specialist needs and the other will be the staff member allocated the duties and responsibilities of the SENDCO.

The need for all staff to be flexible is paramount in our proposed school with individual staff often fulfilling a range of duties that would traditionally be more than one post in a mainstream school. We know this clearly through our work of opening the Studio School in 2013 with limited previous experience of doing so at that point.

We are anticipating that staffing costs will amount to approximately 72% (excluding external sessional staff) of overall spend when the Ladder Free School is full which enables appropriate funds to secure outsourcing arrangements for additional vocational qualifications and our collaborative projects / enrichment programme. It is our understanding through talking with colleagues who lead alternative provision

D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels

settings that overall staff costs are often much higher than those in mainstream in order to attract the very highest quality of staff member and because of the intensive support our young people may require.

We will seek to expand our in-house curriculum offer in year two with an additional focus on science and the creative and digital skills required for the real world of work. In all phases of staff recruitment we will look to recruit high quality, qualified teaching staff with experience and confidence in teaching more than one subject area (something that has proven essential within our experience of setting up and establishing our Studio School). We will also actively encourage applications for personal coaching roles from people with degrees in non-core subjects (e.g. Arts, Music, Sport) who may support the curriculum delivery in these areas under the guidance and support of a qualified teacher.

All staff will be required to deliver our enrichment programme and in this extended learning areas we expect staff and students to flourish in the less prescriptive approach to preparing students for the real work and enjoy living life to the full in the process! This means exploring applicants' confidence and enthusiasm over and beyond, for example, their core subject teaching experience. For example, we may indeed find a very capable English teacher with previous experience working in youth justice with a passion for cooking – having appeared on the TV programme 'Come Dine With Me' - who would enthusiastically approach work in our school in English, literacy, behaviour management and development and enrichment with supporting student to cook a meal at their home for their family!

The role of Personal Coaches (PC's)

Personal Coaches (PC's) are a unique and important staff resource within our proposed school. We expect our PC's to see their role as a combination of pastoral skills (dealing with personal issues, listening, giving students the space to vent feelings) and coaching skills (asking the right kind of questions and helping the students implement their own solutions). As well as working in class where required, PCs will work with the students one-on-one to plan, set targets and tackle issues around emotional well-being. They will work closely with teachers to plan students' studies and to develop strategies to enable individual students to succeed.

Through our work with Vine Access Centres (part of the wider Vine Trust Group providing personal coaches for other schools within the trust) our proposed personal coaching staff resource can be 'scaled up' as the Ladder School grows in a more flexible way that making only FT appointments.

How the staffing plan will remain flexible if the school is less than full capacity and our approach to shared staffing to create required efficiencies.

D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels

To rationalise spending during the phased growth of the school the most significant adjustments will be made to the teaching staff directly employed by the school. We recognise that the breadth of vocational and extended curriculum opportunities will be more restricted during this phase compared to when the school is at full capacity. For example; we may not be in a position to recruit a third Assistant Principal if numbers are lower than anticipated. Through careful recruitment and identifying employees within LFS and across the Trust with a variety of skills we would be able to cover roles if necessary. If required there will be elements of posts that can be shared between employees in the MA including posts such as exams and data management as well as teaching posts.

Walsall Studio School and our partner schools including Queen Mary's and Walsall Adult and Community College will all contribute additional capacity and support should it be required. We will look for opportunities to have shared posts on our respective structures to ensure we are as effective and efficient as possible from day one of operation.

However, regardless of opportunities to outsource curriculum delivery with our partner colleges or to share teaching staff within our proposed MAT, we intend to be 'self sufficient' in the teaching of English and Maths from the outset. As such our recruitment priorities prior to opening will focus on these core curriculum areas to ensure that literacy and numeracy support for all students is in place in addition to the core GCSE curriculum delivery and behavioural specialists we will require.

Recruiting Staff

When recruiting our staff team we will make appointments based on candidates qualifications, experience and commitment to our values and ethos. Our guiding principles for our staffing strategy is:

Preparing students for the real world

Our ability to deliver the subjects and qualifications that enable our students to progress in life. This includes access to GCSE subjects and high quality vocational programmes recognised by employers and colleges/universities. This includes GCSE Maths, English and Science as well as Creative Digital Technology. With this in mind we recognise the importance of recruiting high quality teachers and coaches challenged and supported by a leadership team (who themselves are excellent teachers) consisting of Assistant Heads (as well as Deputy Head and SENDCO).

Facilitating positive relationships in the family and the community

Our ability to break down the barriers to learning for our students, not just in school but also in the family and community. We will look to recruit staff who are confident

D3 – a staffing structure that will deliver the planned curriculum within the expected income levels

and competent in developing and maintaining strong relationships with parents and community leaders and with our referring schools. To achieve this our team of personal coaches will review and develop the learning passports of each student to ensure a positive relationships are fostered and that students make a positive contribution to their families and communities. The Principal, Deputy Head/SENDCO and personal coaches will begin this work at each individual student induction and it will be continued throughout each students' journey at the Ladder School.

Applying a personalised approach

Our ability to tailor our teaching delivery to the needs and interests of students to ensure their engagement and progress is at the heart of our pedagogy and approach.

██████████ stated: *A teacher's job is to recognise the uniqueness of each learner and to work in ways that will help that individual achieve his/her learning objective.* The commitment of all our staff to work from and input into each student's learning passport is crucial to the effectiveness of our staff team. Where required we are committed to employing additional professionals to work alongside the SENDCO and Personal Coaches (Speech and Language Therapists / Educational Psychologists etc.)

Transforming attitudes and behaviours for learning

Our ability to maintain and develop a strong behaviour code through effective personal coaching and restorative methodology. Our ability to support this approach with our staff team in the delivery of our extensive enrichment programme each day and see effective relationships developed while engaging in a range of in school and out of school activities designed to develop students understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including demonstrating a thorough understanding of British values.

These guiding principles complement our CREATE skills framework which is referenced in section D1.

D4 – the school will be welcoming to students of all faiths/world views and none

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LFS will be welcoming to students, families and staff of all faiths/world views and none. The restorative practice of our staff (led by our personal coaches in particular) will drive a culture of mutual respect within our school – for students of all faiths and none. Through our broad and balanced curriculum students will be encouraged to explore and understand in the context of a strong Social Moral Spiritual Cultural (SMSC) provision so that learning, citizenship (including the teaching of fundamental British values) and the understanding of the needs of others are the cultural norm. In our tutor time curriculum we will teach the underlying principles and teachings of Christianity, Islam and other world religions.

Our school calendar and curriculum overview for the year will be aligned with a 'cultural calendar' enabling us to use religions festivals to engage students interest and understanding of how faith is linked to culture, community and identity. Through this our students will develop a broad knowledge of their locality and acquire an appreciation for their own culture and that of others so that tolerance and harmony is embedded. Ensuring we include cultural and religious festivals in our year calendar also ensures our staff are sensitive to periods of fasting for students when planning lessons and setting assessments etc.

SMSC and PSHE themes will also be planned and addressed into themed weeks throughout the academic year. Staff will deliver tutor/combined classes / assembly presentations as well as facilitating these themes into creative project work in core curriculum time and in additional activities in enrichment time.

In addition to Tutor Time we will promote British Values of democracy through the creation of a school council, we will promote the rule of law through our restorative approaches and by the termly review of a student charter that students will co-author with their tutors and coaches.

We will study different faiths and world view points through religious studies, the use of digital and media technologies and creatively through the arts by exploring design, fashion, makeup etc. and its meaning, historical and cultural relevance.

We will work to enable students from different backgrounds to feel they are co-architects of our school community. We will learn together about different cultures in our school and local community through looking at media and music popular culture and references and through volunteering opportunities in different cultural settings.

Our food in school (lunches provided by an external supplier) will meet the requirements of all our students, including those who have specific dietary requirements due to religious observation. In the same way we will explore the influences of different faiths and cultures on music, fashion and media throughout the year we will also provide special menus and 'food festivals' in our lunch periods.

D4 – the school will be welcoming to students of all faiths/world views and none

Ownership, moral purpose and commitment to our community

We are committed to take responsibility for all our students, thereby encouraging lifelong learning and good citizenship. When local schools refer students to us and families commit their children to our 'Ladder way' the sphere of influence of the school as a learning community will widen. The school can become a more effective agency of change within the community for learning, for health and for safeguarding (in its widest, most comprehensive sense). We will facilitate students developing a commitment to our school and surrounding community (seeing the Ladder Free school as a community they belong to not just a school they attend) and in doing so we will promote a thorough understanding of the culture and backgrounds of each of our students. Our approach in this way will protect minorities and take every opportunity to explore people's faith as an underpinning moral compass as well as the ethical values held by people who have faith and those who have no faith.

Practically, this will be achieved primarily through the tutor time programme delivered every day. SMSC, PSHE including SRE and Religious Education will be delivered in part by tutors in the designated time but also delivered to smaller groups of students by personal coaches and visiting professionals (e.g. Street Teams, Barnardo's and visitors from the Walsall multi faith forum.)

Our duty to safeguard students (far beyond child protection matters and children participating in unsafe activities such as substance abuse) will enable them to live their lives safely and in a way that contributes to our community and their families. Our work to prevent radicalisation as well as our work to safeguard children at risk of sexual exploitation will be embedded into everything we do. All staff will have additional safeguarding training (CSE and Prevent) in addition to the general L1/L2/L3 Safeguarding Training delivered by Walsall LA / Walsall Safeguarding Children Board. Also, staff will hold weekly staff safeguarding meetings where all our students are reviewed from the unique perspective of each of our staff team (SENDCO, Personal Coach, Teacher etc.) to continuously assess risk and ensure we do not miss any early warning signs. The shared information in these meetings also provides useful 'intelligence' for form tutors and personal coaches to ensure all students feel cared for, welcome and part of our school community.

Volunteering is a key part of our enrichment programme which is important in embedding the practical understanding of many of the SMSC / PSHE themes. Community Action activities for students to volunteer their time and energies into will help develop a cultural and social awareness of the community around us and provide the framework to practically 'live out' the British values we teach. These opportunities include voluntary work placements at the local Food Bank, charity shops and work for the Local Council in painting street furniture etc. to enable us all

D4 – the school will be welcoming to students of all faiths/world views and none

to take pride in our community and its appearance.

Our Trust also has very strong links with partner schools in France and other part of Europe. Exchange students will visit the school each year as part of an ongoing cultural exchange and opportunity for European students to practice their English language and explore the cultural context of Britain – and in particular the cultural context of Walsall.

An holistic approach will be the foundation to this provision, indeed a key factor in breaking the link between social disadvantage and underachievement will be high quality provision from the start. Our staff will provide cohesive and incremental approaches to developing core skills in numeracy and literacy regardless of faith, world views or none. Needs will be identified on admission and this will be the foundation to ensure all students make good, or better, progress hence raising standards throughout the school.

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

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Meeting the needs of our students

LFS works with students at risk of exclusion that will include those with social, emotional and mental difficulties – broad area of need. Additionally we will provide outstanding education for students who have minor difficulties (MLD) in Cognition and Learning and we will develop expertise in working with students with high functioning Autism and Asperger's (Communication and Interaction).

We will meet these needs in the following ways:

- Employing high quality staff with mix of skills and attributes
- Through delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum which is personalised to each student
- By taking advice and guidance from the parent/carer and any agencies involved in the referral
- Creating a stimulating learning environment which will include different sizes of space, different colour themes (as it is recognised specific colours can cause issues in the classroom linked to behaviour for example)
- Providing relevant facilities for example a dedicated calm room or a space which utilises specific furniture and technology which may support learning better
- Ensuring a smooth transition to our school through the admissions / referral process
- Communicating regularly, effectively and consistently with the student, family and where appropriate agency partners
- Maintaining up to date accurate records and data on progress, attendance, behaviour etc

Ensuring Good Behaviour and Attendance – meeting the needs of each student

Attendance Management (see section D1)

Our school will establish the very best approach to managing student attendance. We are fully aware that many of our students will have adopted an entrenched routine of persistent absence from school. Therefore, we will adopt a relentless and

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

tenacious drive to ensure all students improve their attendance at school and develop the resilience required to secure good attendance at school and in their future employment. Parents of students who are absent from school will be contacted twice on their child's first day of absence (once by the business support/admin staff in the morning and then again after school by their son/daughter's personal tutor). Students will also have an employer style 'return to work interview' with their tutor and/or personal coach on their return to school. For students who are persistently absent, or a refusing to attend school we will work with the LA and all external agencies to ensure students are supported and parents are challenged as appropriate. Strategies include:

- Home visits from personal coaches to implement personalised timetables of attendance
- Liaison with CAMHS professionals and other counselling services
- Fixed Penalty Notices for Parents
- Legal monitoring and court action against parents

The Ladder AP Free School will have zero tolerance for poor attendance; however we must be realistic that many of the students who join us will have had poor attendance records prior to their starting point at LFS. We will agree targets to measure progress and these will be recorded in the Learning Passport referred to in D1 with parents/carers and agency partners made aware of the targets.

The initiatives used by the school to encourage attendance will be partly dictated by a number of factors including the age of students, parental interest, geographical location and social and economic circumstances.

Strategies for improving attendance will include:

- an attendance policy in place
- making use of electronic (online) registration both in school and at off-site centres with a hand held device linked to our MIS.
- using the correct and appropriate attendance codes
- making use of historical data on the student by setting baseline targets and live data on the MIS system dashboard to monitor daily attendance trends
- have a first day contact system in place
- raising the profile of attendance through displaying attendance league tables throughout the school linked to our reward system

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

- involving parents immediately of non-attendance and poor punctuality
- reports and consequences for both the student and parent/carer if attendance is below the agreed targets
- targeted support working with personal coaches
- using rewards and incentives to encourage attendance and punctuality
- positively reintegrating absentees
- visits to the home
- making use of attendance checks
- incorporating attendance into transition planning at the point of admission to the school and when re-integrating back into mainstream

The needs of each student will be assessed on referral, on arrival and throughout their learning journey with us. We recognise that for some of our students any improvement in attendance from a low starting point will be acknowledged and this will be seen as positive progress. Our personal tutors during their 1:1 meetings will review individual progress in all areas of their learning (both inside and outside of school) but also look to evidence examples of improvement by setting tangible targets, for example on arrival a target of 50% attendance in the first week may grow to 75% in week two. Reward and recognition will be given to the students; we will celebrate the successes inside school and with their families encouraging positive attitudes to learning at all levels.

Maintaining High Levels of Attendance

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. For a student to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Walsall attendance targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

The school will have an attendance policy which will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets. This will include strategies such as:

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

- Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.30am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes.
- Clear guidance on how the school will respond to first day absence and third day absence.
- Continuing absence will result in formal letters being sent to families and after 10 days this will be reported to the EWS service.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absence, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s/ carers.

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students.

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their students receive their education. The Home/School agreement will be used in this way.

Holidays during term time will not be allowed. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a student's potential achievement.

The school will use the points system to reward students who have good or improving attendance in the same way as reward good behaviours for learning.

Behaviour and Attendance Policies will be reviewed annually by Governors following consultation with staff, students, parents and carers.

Behaviour and attendance are inextricably linked on impact to each other. In order that high attendance and good behaviour are maintained the schools Anti- Bullying, Teaching and Learning Policy and other statutory policies will be linked to the Behaviour and Attendance policies to ensure compatibility.

Staff will be expected to be good positive role models to all students. Promotion of good behaviour and attendance will be the responsibility of all staff. Everyone will be held accountable. This will be monitored through the line management structure and ultimate via the Principal to the Governing Body. This will be reported to parents/carers termly.

All parents/carers will be provided with a handbook on Code of Conduct. There will also be advice and guidance provided to parents on how inappropriate behaviour is managed. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to access positive behaviour management classes/parenting classes through the work of our personal coaches and our partnership with Walsall Adult and Community College. In addition all

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

parents will be regularly reminded that good attendance and punctuality is vital if their son or daughter is to achieve the targets set within their learning passport.

Personal tutors will carry out home visits where necessary to support parents and carers of students who are refusing to attend. Our attendance policy will be built on the very best practice to include phone calls from both business support (admin) staff and form tutors on day one of a student's absence. A second day of absence without satisfactory reason (validated if required) will trigger an early intervention home visit to secure attendance. We will be relentless in our aim to ensure we achieve the highest possible attendance for all our students.

Managing Behaviour

The Ladder AP Free School's Behaviour and Attendance Policies will include the following:

A) Promoting excellent behaviour, positive relationships and exceptional attitudes to learning.

Our aim is to encourage all students within the school to:

- Learn to develop an understanding of the ways their behaviour affects other people.
- Learn to respect the reasonable needs, wishes and feelings of others.
- Learn to control and take responsibility for their behaviour.
- Learn to develop a responsible, supportive and caring attitude towards other people.
- Learn to develop a respect for property and for their environment.
- Consider the impact that their behaviour has upon learning.
- Understand that a partnership between home and school exists in order to promote acceptable behaviour in school.

Within the Behaviour Policy clear guidance will be provided on the following areas:

A) Appropriate and Inappropriate Behaviour

To help the young people to achieve these aims, guidance will be given about which behaviours are supportive and helpful and make the school a better place to be and to outline which behaviours are not acceptable. These will be grouped into four target areas:

- Respect for people
- Respect for property

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

- Engaging in all curriculum tasks
- Remaining in appropriate curriculum areas

B) Encouraging Appropriate Behaviour

To encourage students to develop an awareness of their own behaviour and its effects on others and to help them develop mature and thoughtful self-control, all staff will use a variety of strategies based on the following beliefs:

That appropriate and supportive behaviour should always be acknowledged, valued and rewarded.

That student's self-esteem should be enhanced. This will include developing the social and emotional aspects of every student.

That inappropriate behaviour will be challenged.

The principle strategy that we will use to value and regard appropriate and supportive behaviour will be a daily points system. Bonus points totalled during each day go towards providing a reward at the end of the day and each term. Rewards will be awarded on a hierarchical basis and each student will be clear on what they have already achieved and what their next targets are. This will be recorded in each student's learning passport and be regularly discussed with their personal coaches.

The school will regularly use informal rewards to acknowledge the value of appropriate positive behaviour and these will include:

- Verbal praise from staff
- Certificates
- Praise letters sent home to parents
- Specific individual praise from the staff in assemblies
- Informal rewards – additional bonus points

The school environment itself will also be designed to promote good behaviour with careful consideration given to room layout, use of CCTV etc.

C) Discouraging Unacceptable Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour will need to be challenged within an understanding, caring and supportive context, but equally recognise that at times the acting-out behaviours of the students can be extreme enough that the challenge will need to be very structured and very direct.

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

This would involve students being given an initial warning; however, if the student continued to misbehave they would have to be removed from the learning environment so as not to disrupt the learning of the others. Any student who has to be removed from a lesson would be accompanied to a cool down zone with a personal tutor where they will be taught in isolation.

All staff will be thoroughly trained on positive behaviour management. They will be encouraged to use a range of strategies which are supportive and helpful to the student in enabling them to recognise the gravity of the difficulties that their unacceptable behaviours present in order that they should develop an understanding as to why their behaviour may well be viewed as inappropriate.

Strategies in order to achieve this might include:

- Verbal challenge and reprimand from staff.
- Isolation and detention.
- Discussion of incidents with a senior member of staff.
- The recording of the incident on the School Incident Sheets.
- Discussion of the difficulty with individual parents and carers.
- Using behaviour contract.
- Debating bonus points in order to pay for deliberate damage.

D) Serious Incidents

Behaviour of a serious or criminal nature, such as physical assault on another person, major damage to property, or other matters that could be construed as criminal acts, may be reported to outside agencies, including the police. Behaviours such as those highlighted may also result in students requiring physical intervention. All staff will be trained on how to carry this out in an appropriate manner. This will be underpinned by a clear positive physical intervention policy and externally monitored by the Local Authority safeguarding team.

Demonstrating that our strategies will meet the needs of our students and represent best practice

There will be a designated Safeguarding / Child Protection Officer who will be the Deputy Principal and/or Assistant Principal (the other been the SENDCO) who will oversee the work to ensure students are safe in school, while studying in other

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

locations or out at their work experience placement.

Staff will be qualified to a minimum L3 standard across the board and will have continual access to training and professional development on a weekly basis. Where appropriate we will work across the Trust schools and have whole school or subject specific staff development and training.

Not only will all school staff be DBS checked but our lead Placement contact and those who may regularly line manage a placement will also be DBS checked. Protocols of engagement will be drafted and an employer partnership agreement will be signed between the employer and school with an individual agreement between the student and employer at the point the placement is agreed. Preparation activities prior to the placement would be supported by the school examples of this would include; a dummy run to find your placement, preparation of a placement guide that records data in advance, during and after the placement providing evidence of the impact this opportunity has had on our students.

We will maintain the single central record which will also include the DBS details for visiting staff and also staff from our partner schools and colleges. For partner schools and colleges this detail will be provided by annual letters of assurance that will be filed within the single central record. We will complete the DBS checks for employers offering work placements via the Walsall Council service.

Our personal coaches and leadership team staff will complete both scheduled visits to employers and college partners and unscheduled 'spot checks' to confirm the accuracy of the online attendance registers, consistency of safeguarding practice and the quality of our students' educational experiences.

Our Assistant Principal - Vocational lead alongside our school secretary will secure the placements whether for a day, a week or a regular day a week placement, conduct the risk assessments as well as monitor all students on placement and be the central point of contact. We will work with a local partner PTP who will also support us in insuring all the necessary health and safety, insurance and compliance issues are addressed and in place prior to placements taking place. PTP will also quality assure placements alongside staff colleagues.

Engaging with other agencies to support student development

The Ladder AP Free School will be part of the Walsall family of secondary schools which includes those under Local Authority control and academies (see letters of support from schools in annex B).

There are established partnerships between Sandwell Local Authority and South Staffordshire Local Education authority due to their shared geographical border and

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

the high volume of students (over 1500) with Walsall post codes attending Sandwell and South Staffordshire secondary schools. LFS alongside the LA's and schools who commission places will be supporting the development of the students. They will work alongside the school to monitor and evaluate provision / the impact on the student and the quality of the overall experience. Learning from this will be feedback in to the admissions and assessment processes ensuring we strive for continuous improvement and to achieve the best for our students.

We recognise that there will be a number of students who have fallen out of education provision due to; permanent exclusion, newly arrived to the area, looked after students, missing from education, involvement in youth offending team, return from being in custody and other vulnerable students. A number of external agencies who identify these students will work with the Ladder Free School in partnership to provide access to the programmes of support necessary. Amongst these agencies will be social services, EWS, health services, youth services, educational psychologists and CAHMS. In response to the ideal of the government's BIG Society agenda the school will engage with other voluntary organisations and services that operate locally. We have clear protocols and good established relationships in place with street teams, sexual health nurses, local counselling services, the neighbourhood police team, targeted youth and external agencies that work in Walsall.

Local businesses, charities, and other third sector organisations who share our mission and values will support the curriculum and extra-curriculum programmes in preparing our students for the world of work.

Supporting those students with SEND

Our proposed school is committed to inclusion and working effectively for students in each of the areas of need identified in the new SEND code of practice.

Specifically, our school expects to become a centre for excellence in educating students within the Social, emotional and mental health difficulties broad area of need. We also expect to provide an outstanding education for students who have minor learning difficulties (MLD) in Cognition and Learning and we will develop expertise in working with students with high-functioning Autism and Aspergers (Communication and Interaction).

We will work tenaciously to break down barriers to learning that students have which may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development or may relate to factors in their environment, including the learning environment they experience in school. We will work closely with families in the home, external agencies and expertise within our partner school and the

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

proposed MAT (see section F).

Students requiring equipment due to impairment will be assessed in order to gain the support that they require.

We recognise that students learn at different rates and that there are many factors affecting achievement, including ability, emotional state, age and maturity. We believe that many students, at some time in their school career, may experience difficulties which affect their learning and we recognise that these may be long or short term.

We aim to identify these needs as they arise and provide teaching and learning contexts that enable every student to achieve to his or her full potential.

We see the inclusion of students identified as having special educational needs as an equal opportunities issue, and we will also aim to model inclusion in our staffing policies, relationships with parents/carers and the community.

The role of the SENDCO

The SENDCO in the LFS will not be an isolated professional; they will be considered the lead professional who brings together the teams of teachers and personal coaches with the common purpose of each individual student. They will be a senior leader in the school and will have the associated qualifications and experience of working in an alternative provision environment. As such, the SENDCO will inform, scrutinise, challenge and 'sign off' each student learning passport at induction and at each review. They will liaise with agency partners, SENDCO's at referring schools, staff and families.

Our SENDCO will be someone who:

is inspirational and a highly effective teacher

is confident in their understanding of the learning and teaching process

has a sound understanding of strategies for removing barriers to learning and is able to demonstrate these in practice in the classroom

is able to contribute to, and work as part of a team

has leadership and management skills and ideally managerial experience

is fully up to date with the SEND Code of Practice and holds the National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators or has a desire to undertake this

is a professional role model

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

has experience, skills and knowledge about SEND and inclusion

has excellent communication and organisational skills.

The role will include:

- strategic overview of inclusion and SEND provision in the school
- responsibility for those with identified SEND
- responsibility for ‘narrowing the gap’ for underachieving groups including: SEND, Student Premium (FSM), EAL and any other students who are at risk of under-achieving
- working with staff to plan, set up and monitor interventions, including their impact
- liaison with many outside agencies
- establishing relationships with parents of students with SEND
- direct work with students to assess and support their needs
- critically, working closely with the SENDCO of referring schools – not only with understanding the successes and failures of previous strategies – but also in working together to secure EHCPs where required.

The Ladder AP Free School will:

- Ensure the SEN and Disability Act and relevant Codes of Practice and guidance are implemented effectively.
- Ensure equality of opportunity for, and to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against students with special educational needs.
- Continually monitor the progress of all students, to identify needs as they arise and to provide support as early as possible.
- Provide full access to a personalised curriculum through differentiated planning by class teachers, SENDCO, and support staff as appropriate.
- Provide specific input, matched to individual needs, in addition to differentiated classroom provision, for those students recorded as having SEND at School Action, School Action Plus and EHCPs.
- Ensure that students with SEND are perceived positively by all members of the school community, and that SEND and inclusive provision is positively valued and accessed by staff and parents/carers.

D5 – the particular needs of the children coming to the school have been carefully considered and will be met appropriately

- Involve parents/carers at every stage in plans to meet their child's additional needs
- Involve the students themselves in planning and in any decision making that affects them.
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

We will work with all health professionals specifically CAMHS to improve the service offered to our students and some families. We will also build on our good relationships with local counselling services and other external agencies to ensure the work we undertake with these students is not limited to teachers and personal coaches only.

Safeguarding

In addition to our statutory requirements (e.g. safer recruitment etc.) we will ensure the work we do to keep students safe is the very best it can be. We will use a range of vehicles to ensure our students understand how to keep safe themselves including a comprehensive programme for student induction and ongoing Tutor Time. Tutor time is our key vehicle for the delivery of SMSC and PSHE and will be delivered by our own staff and visitors from local agencies. These sessions we build upon key safeguarding themes initially addressed in induction including;

Being safe and keeping safe online

CSE

Prevent (Radicalisation)

Substance misuse

Criminal justice

In addition to induction and tutor time opportunities to engage students deeply and creatively with safeguarding themes will be embedded into the curriculum within the teaching of both core and vocational subjects. Students will create projects, presentations, digital content and mobile apps in response to these key themes.

Section E – evidence of need

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

Introduction

Walsall is a large industrial town in the West Midlands of England. It is located 8 miles north-west of the City of Birmingham and 6 miles east of the City of Wolverhampton. It is one of the four Black Country Towns/ Cities and its surrounding borders include Wolverhampton, South Staffordshire, Sandwell and Birmingham.

Walsall is now the 33rd most deprived Local Authority (out of 326). This puts it just outside the most deprived 10% in England and is an improvement in ranking of 3 places since 2010. Just over 20% of its neighbourhoods are in the most deprived decile; this is double the proportion that would be expected if deprivation was evenly distributed across all local authorities in England. Walsall performs poorest on income deprivation, ranking 18th for average Lower-layer Super Output Area (LSOA) score and 11th based on the proportion of highly deprived neighbourhoods in the borough. Employment deprivation is also an issue, with an average score rank of 30. However, the borough performs the worst on the education, skills and training deprivation domain, with an average score that ranks it as the 12th most deprived Local Authority in England. Together these three domains account for 58.5% of the IMD score, contributing to Walsall's low Multiple Deprivation (IMD) rank.

There are pockets of extreme deprivation in some areas and a fifth of neighbourhoods (34 of 167) are amongst the most deprived 10% in England. However, this is an improvement from 2010 when 41 LSOAs were highly deprived, and similar to 2007 when there were 33. These highly deprived LSOAs are located primarily in [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] also have very widespread multiple deprivation.

However, 12 areas (over 5% of the total) are within the least deprived 10% nationally, representing an improvement over time from 9 LSOAs in 2010 and 7 in 2007. These areas of relatively low deprivation are predominantly located in the east of the borough, in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Annex E1: *Deprivation in Walsall – Summary Report September 2015* (Elizabeth Connolly Economic Intelligence Manager Strategic Regeneration, Walsall Council).

Walsall is a small Local Authority with 119 schools and approximately 49,000 students. Seven of the schools are special schools and provide education for children and young people with a wide range of additional needs. Walsall has eight nursery schools, 72 primary schools and a further 14 primary academies. None of the 119 schools are secondary Alternative Provision providers.

At secondary level, there are 30 schools with approximately 16,338 students (33.4%): 4 Local Authority maintained schools and a further 14 secondary academies, two of

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

which are selective grammar schools, 7 Independent schools not registered with Ofsted, 4 Special Schools and Walsall Studio School that serves students aged 14-19 years. Walsall has a large further education college that caters for around 7,500 post-16 students and the University of Wolverhampton Walsall campus has three major schools that offer music, dance, sport, education, health, events management tourism and hospitality.

Of the 23 secondary schools inspected by Ofsted, 5 are Outstanding (21.7%), 12 are Good (52.2%), 4 Require Improvement (17.4%) and 2 are Inadequate (8.7%). *Ref: DFE School and colleges performance table: (<http://www.education.gov.uk/cgi-bin/schools/performance/group.pl?qtype=LA&superview=sec&view=ofsted&sort=&ord=&no=335&pg=1>)*

In 2014/15 there was a 2% improvement in 5+ A*-C including English and mathematics with Walsall's average increasing to 51% from 49%. The gap to National average of 54% has closed from 4% in 2014 to 3% in 2015. The Walsall ranking has improved by 12 places.

The amount of students making the expected 3 Levels of progress has also improved in English and maths by 1% and 3% respectively. While 64% of Walsall students achieved three levels of progression for English, the gap is 6% to the national average of 72%. Similarly for Maths at 59%, the gap is 12% compared to the national average of 71%. **Annex E2: Walsall Data Summary: SFA, published on the 13/10/15.**

Methods

The evidence contained in this report was generated by key managers at Walsall Education Authority (LEA), via a range of meetings and reviewing various DfE reports. The staff consulted were as follows:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Letters of demand from commissioning schools were sent to partner schools to identify those supporting the application, demand for a high quality alternative provision in Walsall from Walsall, Sandwell and South Staffordshire schools and signed confirmation that they were informed and consented to the funding methodology in year three.

[REDACTED] at the Inclusion Centre (New Leaf) – Alternative provision for excluded students in Walsall.

[REDACTED] and a [REDACTED] -Youth Support Connexions;

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

Student Destination and NEETs

[REDACTED] Academic Achievement and Attendance Data.

[REDACTED]: Walsall School Improvement Strategy 2015 – 2020

Evidence that there is a shortage of high quality places for students with these needs in the Local Authority or neighbouring authorities

Within Walsall Local Education Authority (LEA) there is a distinct lack of high quality alternative provision and availability. There is not enough good quality provision when required and is often a one size fits all model (eg Walsall College is an outstanding college but all students are offered the same programme with a level 1 vocational programme) or it is small and independent provision, which in most cases is not monitored by Ofsted.

There is clearly a need for better alternative provision, which is managed by parties which have a vested interest in ensuring that children and young people have a better solution than Permanent Exclusion. At the point of writing this bid the demand for Alternative Provision in Walsall is at 511 students (**Annex E3: Alternative Provision Data – January 2016**: the data is collected locally from schools and extracted from the Capita One system. Historic exclusion figures pre 2014/15 are official figures published by the DfE), and the New Leaf Centre currently have 109 students who are both permanently excluded or at risk of exclusion.

The New Leaf Centre has a statutory duty to provide a suitable provision for excluded students. The New Leaf Centre is a KS3/4 Student Referral Unit based in Walsall and students referred to the Centre are students who have exhibited challenging behaviour in mainstream education and need to maintain or engage with a positive learning pathway. In consultation with the head teacher at the New Leaf Centre we identified that there are currently 109 students registered at the centre with a combination of excluded and fixed term excluded students. (**Annex E4 - New Leaf Centre - Alternative Provision Centre for Walsall Students – January 2015**).

Profile of Alternative Provision in Walsall

There are currently 11 centres delivering training and education programmes; 2 schools offer high quality provision. The New Leaf Centre is working with 55 of the 109 students with Shelfield Satellite Centre (Ormiston Shelfield Community Academy)

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

supporting 5 students within the mainstream school, to support a gradual re-integration for those young people who wish to return to mainstream school.

Walsall College judged by Ofsted to be “Outstanding” supports 9 students in Functional Skills (Maths and English), Princes Trust, and Vocational courses such as Hairdressing, Construction, Motor-Vehicle and Childcare. In addition, the college delivers level 1 vocational programmes to over 300 key stage 4 students in Walsall, who in turn progress on to full-time level 2 programmes at the college.

Four centres judged by Ofsted to be Good: the New Leaf Centre (55 students), Nova Training (2 students), Horizon Care (2 students) and Sheffield Satellite Centre (5 students).

5 centres not registered as a school or with Ofsted, supporting 36 students in a range of programmes are not offering high quality alternative provision.

The key issues are both quality of provision and availability. There is not enough good quality provision and it is often a ‘one size fits’ all model (eg Walsall College) or it is small and independent. The New Leaf Centre works hard to Quality Assure providers to make sure they give them quality outcomes.

On this basis, the Ladder AP School will be a high quality alternative school that targets students at risk of exclusion that will include students with social, emotional and mental difficulties – broad area of need. Additionally we will provide outstanding education for students who have minor difficulties (MLD) in Cognition and Learning and we will develop expertise in working with students with high functioning Autism and Asperger’s (Communication and Interaction).

While each secondary school in Walsall will have a school improvement plan and localised strategies for alternative provision, it would appear, due to lack of high quality alternative provision in Walsall, that most of the referrals are directed to the New Leaf Centre.

The current demand (511 students; **see annex E3 – Alternative Provision Data Booklet**) for a high quality alternative provision school in Walsall suggests we would need an additional four or five Ladder AP schools. However, the New Leaf Centre will continue to cater primarily for excluded students; the four Special schools (Ofsted grade Good to Outstanding) will cater for students who have statements of special educational needs; the Shepwell Centre continue to cater for young people in the Borough of Walsall, who are unable to attend their mainstream schools because of medical, Social and emotional needs; and the Horizon Centre will provide high quality Specialist education for children with a range of complex needs, social and emotional and mental health difficulties.

Commitment in writing from commissioners

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

The project team has been actively in consultation with commissioning schools, local authorities and key stakeholders.

Following a presentation to Walsall Secondary Heads (see annex E5) the sample letter on the NSN website was sent out to all partner secondary schools in Walsall and following conversations with individual schools was also sent to partner schools in Sandwell and South Staffordshire. Head teachers' have highlighted their support for LFS by signing and returning the letter to support this application, confirming how many students they will refer to the school from September 2017 and the base rate being paid from their budgets in addition to the top-up fee. There have been various presentations to partner schools and there are further meetings planned to consult with partner schools on the curriculum, location and referral process during the summer term.

The Ladder AP Free School projected 40 students (FTEs) to be recruited in year 1 and 76 students (FTEs) in year 2.

Demand from Commissioning Schools

The demand for places at the Ladder AP Free School from commissioning schools exceeds our target recruitment for year 1 and 2.

In year 1, the demand for places is 282.5% (113 students against a target of 40 students), and in year 2, 186.8% (142 places against a target of 76 students).

Commissioners	2017/18			2018/19		
	Target	Commissioned	%	Target	Commissioned	%
Schools	40	113	282.5%	76	142	186.8%

Twelve commissioning schools returned their signed letter of support and demand confirming their firm intention to commission 113 places in year 1 against a target of 40 students and 142 places in year 2 against a target of 142 students. In addition each commissioning school stated their firm intention to pay a top-up fee of [REDACTED] per FTE. See Annex B – Letters from commissioning schools. The exact cost may differ depending on the specific needs of the child/student and this will be discussed with trust on a case-by-case basis.

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

The table below lists the commissioning schools.

Evidence of Demand from Partner Schools			
School	Ofsted	2017/18	2018/19
The Streetly Academy	Outstanding	3	3
New Leaf Centre	Good	60	60
Aldridge School - A Science School	Good	5	10
Joseph Leckie Academy	Good	8	8
Ormiston Sheffield Community Academy	Good	5	5
Shire Oak School	Good	4	4
Walsall Academy	Good	5	5
Walsall Studio School	Good	5	5
Grace Academy	Requires Improvement	3	3
Willenhall E-ACT Academy	Requires Improvement	8	8
Ladder AP Free School - Internal progression			20
<i>Sandwell</i>			
Wood Green Academy	Outstanding	4	6
<i>South Staffordshire</i>			
Cheslyn Hay High School	Good	3	5
Total students		113	142
Target students		40	76
%		282.5%	186.8%

In addition the project team has been working closely with Walsall LEA and the Regional Schools Commissioner to assess the feasibility and viability of the Ladder Free School as well as the location of the school.

Within Walsall we have consulted with Walsall Adult and Community College (WACC) and Walsall College. Both institutions have been graded “Outstanding” by Ofsted in their recent inspections.

Building on the strengths of WACC and the need for a high quality alternative provision school in Walsall, WACC has agreed in principle to:

- Assess the capability and capacity of their “learner” support team to support the students
- Invest in two (FTEs) outstanding specialist Maths and English teachers with experience of working with this client group to deliver GCSE/Functional Skills Maths and English
- Provide vocational training at Level 1 and 2 for key stage 4 and 5 students in Catering, Health & Social Care, Early Years, Beauty, Painting and Decorating

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

and Computing.

- Facilitate progression to WACC at post 16 where appropriate for learners
- To provide support for students and families whose first language is not English
- Jointly develop a “Family Learning” strategy to identify and overcome the barriers that impact the Ladder AP School students living in some of the most deprived areas in Walsall/England, to help them successfully achieve the level 2 criteria, particularly in Maths and English.

Similarly with Walsall College, discussions have commenced for the college to provide vocational training at level 1 and 2 within their “world class” vocational learning facilities.

The strategic priorities to improve achievement at Key Stage 4, such as Progress 8 and the changes to GCSEs will continue to place great emphasis on English and maths. GCSEs will be designed for two years of study; they will no longer be divided into different modules and students will take all their exams in one period at the end of their course. Unless schools in Walsall can rise to this challenge, the achievement gap will only get wider. On further analysis of the **Walsall Data Summary 2015 – see annex E2**, at Key stage 1, 2 and 4, the performance of Walsall schools over the last three years show a need for improvement if we are to close the gap to the national average and, indeed, exceed it. However, on further scrutiny of the performance in Maths and English, the gap to the national average has widened, especially over the last two years.

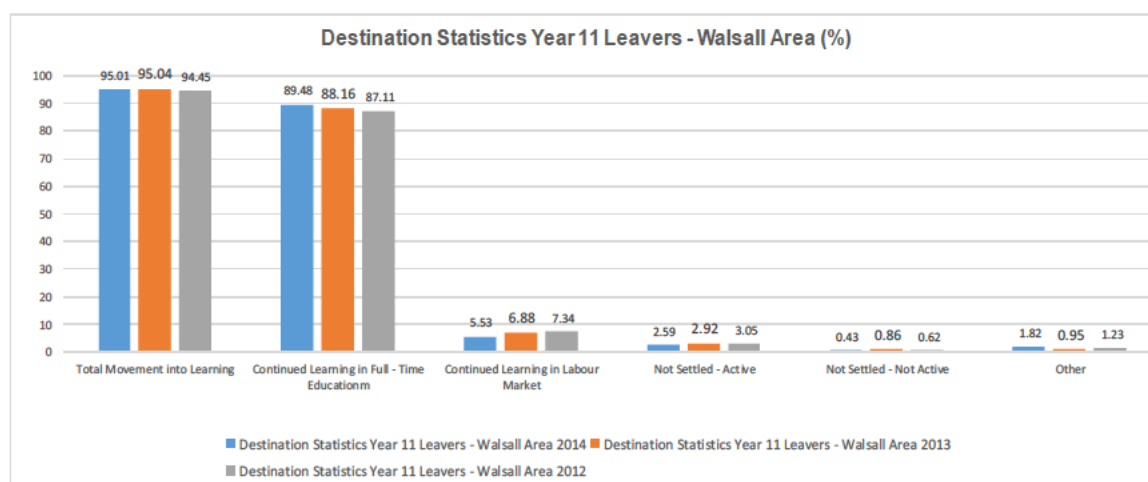
In response to the report *Educational inequalities in England and Wales*, published in January 2016 by the Social Market Foundation, we analysed the GCSE achievement in 2015 at a school level and compared the performance of students from deprived post codes with others. Students from deprived postcodes in a 100% of all Walsall secondary schools did not perform as well. If Walsall is to have a step change in performance we need to understand why this is the case and how best to improve performance in Maths and English, particularly for those students who will be attending the Ladder Free School. **Annex E6: Areas of Deprivation compared to Ofsted Grade and GCSE performance.**

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

Destination Data Walsall

The Destination Statistics for Year 11 Leavers over the last three years has remained consistent at 95% with the majority of students progressing into full-time Education.

Annex E7a/7b/7c: Prospects Destination/NEETs Statistics 2012-2014.



This information has been produced by Prospects Services Ltd

The 5% gap relates to all destinations for year 11 - 13 and are now required to 'lapse' by the DFE at the end of July. For example young people who are on a 2 year A level course will become 'not known' over the Summer period until we are able to reconfirm their destination, usually September /October time when schools send their data to the Local Authority. This increases 'not knowns' significantly and also accounts for why the DFE no longer use statistics between July – September as a reliable indicator.

The Ladder Free School will recruit 40 and 76 Key stage 3 and 4 students in year 1 & 2 and 16 KS5 students by September 2019 before moving to full capacity by 2020, subject to the pending demand from commissioning schools. (Please see Student Recruitment table in section D1).

Conclusion

- Clearly the report, along with the data, demonstrates the need for more than one high quality Ladder Free School that targets students at risk of exclusion. This report highlights the need for an Alternative Provision strategy to be aligned to the Government's drive to improve the quality of schools and achievement at key stage 4 nationally and within Walsall.
- The research to date suggests a need for an Alternative Provision school specialising in Behaviour Management, supporting students at risk of permanent

E1 – provide valid evidence that there is a need for this school in the area

exclusion.

- This report has also highlighted the need for a Centre of Excellence in Maths and English in Walsall. There is clearly good practice in Walsall that we need to disseminate to other schools as well as the Ladder AP Free School.
- The Ladder AP Free School would like to work in collaboration with the University of Wolverhampton School of Education Research (see annex B - letters of support) team to develop a successful strategy, which will enable more students in alternative provision to improve their achievements in Maths and English. We want to identify the barriers that impact on alternative provision students and learn how best to overcome them.

Please tick to confirm that you have provided evidence as annexes:

**E2 – clear plans to manage referrals****Admission Referral Process (Annex E8 - The Ladder AP Free School Assessment and Referral Guide)**

The Ladder Free School will be a high quality intervention resource for academies and schools to support re-engagement, as well as nurture and develop students in their learning within a mainstream setting.

The majority of intervention placements within the Ladder Free School will cover KS3 and 4 academic years and short term periods according to the need of the student. Students receiving part-time/full-time support will remain on their current school register and therefore will be dual registered, with the exception of year 11 students who we anticipate will all be on roll.

The criteria for KS5 (post 16) recruitment will be a fair, objective and transparent process for year 11 students who the moderation panel decide would not comfortably make the successful transition to another post 16 provider but would continue to thrive within the Ladder AP Free School. In addition to the students achieving their academic targets/qualification we will support the students to become independent learners as they make the transition from childhood to adulthood.,

Learners will be supported by a Personal Coach, who will liaise with the community academy/school, parents/carers and the Ladder Free School.

The admission of children and young people on to an alternative provision Support Programme/Placement will be through a stringent referral process that is:

- Simple and succinct and agreed by all parties
- Evidence based and accurate

E2 – clear plans to manage referrals

- Transparent and clear

Following referral and an offer to the Ladder Free School placement or outreach support for a student, a partnership agreement will be sought from all parties. This ensures clarity of roles and responsibilities identifies clear expectations and demonstrates commitment.

Baseline assessments and testing (**see annex E8**) will be completed along with the family/carers views and the learner's views will inform the development of a personalised learning programme. The personalised learning programme will be shared with all stakeholders and reviewed regularly.

There is an expectation that some learners will return to mainstream based education and therefore following the review process and with agreement a Reintegration Planning Meeting will take place to support a successful pathway back into mainstream provision. This will be done together with commissioning schools, parents/carers, supporting agencies and the students to ensure a successful reintegration and the continued monitoring of the students progress will be tracked. (see D2 for further detail)

Criteria for Ladder Free School Support and/or Placement

Where assessments and supporting evidence clearly demonstrates the child/young person:

- Is at risk of exclusion or are excluded from mainstream academies or schools;
- Has one or more areas of significant concern where disaffection with mainstream education is evident (habitual school refusers, non-attendance as the result of school phobia, they have emotional and behavioural difficulties that have seriously impeded school attendance);
- Where evidence suggests early intervention can have immediate impact and child/ young person is back on track (outreach/short/part time placement is deemed appropriate);
- Where evidence suggests appropriate Behaviour Strategies and Plans are not having a positive impact and there is evidence of acceleration in the nature and/or frequency of the incidences of inappropriate behaviour;
- Where the child/young person has a statement of Special Educational Needs or a Statutory Education, Health and Care Plan which names the Free School;

Where referral and evidence is moderated at being below agreed criteria:

E2 – clear plans to manage referrals

- The Moderation Panel will provide a written response on the outcome and offer advice and guidance and identify possible Continuing Professional Development needs for the SENDCO and or other staff members who may not be sufficiently meeting the learning requirements of the learners.

Initiating a Referral

The Ladder Free School will welcome an initial phone call should a commissioning school wish to seek advice and guidance prior to initiating a referral.

While all students will have a learning passport (see page 10), the context, goals and details of this document will be established as the preliminary part of induction into the school. The first 2 meetings with a student being referred to the LFS will take place outside of the school. The first meeting will take place at the referring mainstream school and the second meeting will take place at the family home. In these preliminary induction meetings, the principal or nominated senior member of staff will establish the common language used by staff at the LFS and set high expectations before the first visit to the school building. Clarity of our approach to managing behaviour and securing regular attendance (through our approach to attendance management cited above) will be a key focus but also a 'progression map' for individual students which recognises where they are now but 'plots a pathway' into employment.

Referral Pathway:

The importance of the referral process cannot be emphasised enough and it is vitally important we have the right individuals on the panel at all times.

Referrals may be made at any time throughout the academic year; however the referral and moderation panel will sit fortnightly to agree provision/ placements.

The Moderation Panel will consist of:

- Principal/Head of the Ladder School
- SENDCO
- Representation from Education Advisory Board – Walsall LEA the governing body (rotational)
- Camhs representative
- Head teacher(s) from commissioning school
- Post 16 representatives from a College or Training Provider for KS5

E2 – clear plans to manage referrals

progression.

This will include the following information:

- Completion of the Ladder Free School Referral document which will capture basic information including that of the student, family and academy / school
- Standardised Assessment and Analysis indication of widening of attainment gap and/or inappropriate behaviour is impacting on learning and progress
- Copies of Behaviour Plans, IEP's/EHC Plans and their impact and/or progress
- Completed learner's profile including strengths and areas of concern
- Outcomes of the previous two visits by the Principal/Head or nominee from the Ladder AP Free School.

It is anticipated that the referral process can be completed using existing data management systems i.e. the MIS. The exporting of data and student information will facilitate a simple and quick referral process which reduces duplication.

Completing a Referral

The referral process is designed to be 'paperless' and does not require the repetition or duplication of information already held by an academy or school.

The Ladder Free School will have a school secretary in which all referrals will be sent to following the guidance below.

It will be a secure portal and in addition to the information held on individual students the following is also required;

- Details of interventions and programmes/plans already put in place and a brief account of impact / outcomes
- Indicate the nature and level of support requested i.e outreach support, advice and guidance, Ladder AP Free School Placement – see section D 1 & 2 for further detail
- A brief report/pen portrait of the learner including strengths, areas of concerns any additional information or reports appropriate to the referral including safeguarding
- Any medical reports, official diagnosis, social care or professional assessments

The above requested information will be attached to the online form to provide a

E2 – clear plans to manage referrals

comprehensive profile of the learner.

All referrals will be made to this single central secured portal. A brief check will be made to ensure the referral is complete and notification will be via an email. It is important that you include the preferred contact details, name, designation, telephone number and email address. This will be the email address used for correspondence.

For The Free Ladder School support to be effective partnership working is crucial and therefore parental/carer approval and consent to the referral must be achieved. Parents/carers need to fully engage with this process and can request a visit prior to initiating a referral.

Step By Step Process

Referrals are to be made electronically via the secured portal. The process is as follows:

- The academy/school will complete the online referral form, a link with a secure password will be sent via the school secretary
- All fields on the form will need to be completed before the link will send back to the school secretary. All relevant documents will need to be attached e.g. Pen portraits, behaviour database, 1:1 notes, criminal record, list of evidence and Common Transfer File (CTF) to the school MIS
- Once received the school secretary will be notified and will access the secure portal and check the validity of the data before sending to the Moderation panel
- The academy/school will be then notified that that the referral has been forwarded on to the moderation panel and they will have a decision within 10 working days
- The moderation panel will meet once a fortnight
- An outcome letter via email will be sent to the academy/school and details of the appeals process will be included in the letter
- Once the place has been offered to the academy/school the CTF goes to Pre Admission status on the MIS then will be transferred on role to the Ladder Free School

Over Subscription Criteria

The Ladder School provision aims to be flexible in its approach to referral requests

E2 – clear plans to manage referrals

and will therefore strive to offer support, i.e. outreach provision, part time placements etc. In the case of over subscription the following criteria will be applied:

- Special Educational Needs on a Statutory Education, Health and Care Plan
- Looked After children or children who were previously looked after
- Where there are specific medical and/or social circumstances that can only be met by the child attending the Ladder School – written evidence required

In the event that there is more than one application for a place where both applications satisfy the same criteria geographical location will be taken in to consideration.

Appeals Process

Commissioners have the right of appeal against the refusal of a place to the Ladder Free School. Commissioners wishing to appeal must follow the procedure contained within the appeals procedure – **see annex E8**, which will be available from the Ladder Free School website or by request.

The commissioner of any child who is refused a place at the Ladder Free School has a right of appeal to an independent appeals panel. The commissioner must make an appeal in writing to the Moderation Panel, clearly setting out the nature of the appeal. Upon receipt the Ladder School will then formally log it and within 10 working days a formal Appeal Meeting will be convened.

The Appeal Panel will consist of three members, one of whom will be fully independent of the management and running of the Ladder Free School.

The panel will consider the circumstances of the case put before them. Both the Ladder School and the commissioner must abide by the decision that the panel makes.

Further objections will be referred to the EFA but the decision of the Independent Appeals Panel will be binding for the Ladder School and the commissioner until the EFA have reached a decision. At that point the EFA decision will be binding on both Ladder Free School and Commissioner.

Section F – capacity and capability
F1 (a) Skills and experience of your team

Name	Where they live (town/city)	Role(s) (pre-opening team, member, trustee, principal designate, local governor, once the school is open)	Summary of relevant expertise Please refer to the relevant section of the assessment criteria booklet to check what detail you need to give	Available Time (hours per week)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Core team	[REDACTED]	8 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Core team [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	4 hrs per week

Name	Where they live (town/city)	Role(s) (pre-opening team, member, trustee, principal designate, local governor, once the school is open)	Summary of relevant expertise Please refer to the relevant section of the assessment criteria booklet to check what detail you need to give	Available Time (hours per week)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Core team [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	8 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Core team	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]	3 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	1.5 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED]	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	1.5 hrs per week

Name	Where they live (town/city)	Role(s) (pre-opening team, member, trustee, principal designate, local governor, once the school is open)	Summary of relevant expertise Please refer to the relevant section of the assessment criteria booklet to check what detail you need to give	Available Time (hours per week)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	1.5 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening Team – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Core team	[REDACTED]	4 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Core Team * [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	8 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	Pre-opening team – [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	2 hrs per

Name	Where they live (town/city)	Role(s) (pre-opening team, member, trustee, principal designate, local governor, once the school is open)	Summary of relevant expertise Please refer to the relevant section of the assessment criteria booklet to check what detail you need to give	Available Time (hours per week)
		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Core Team</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	<p>Core pre-opening team</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	4 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	<p>Pre-opening team -</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	1.5 hrs per week
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	<p>Pre-opening team -</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Core team</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	3 hrs per week

F1 (a) Skills and experience of your team

During the pre-opening phase we envisage the core team/Shadow Governing Body and accessed support highlighted above, will deliver the school through to opening in 2017. The group has all the necessary skills and attributes to deliver a successful alternative provision school for the borough – between them they lead 6 good or outstanding schools, are all academies and have experience of opening new schools.

At present the team is envisaging we will go to open recruitment for the appointment of our Principal Designate (**see annex C for a copy of the Job Description**). We are looking for a leader who is passionate about making a difference to the lives of children and young people. They will have drive and determination and be experienced in managing a school setting with a particular emphasis on behaviour management, leadership and employer engagement. They will need to be adaptable moving from developing relationships with employers to preparing curriculum and timetables as well as bespoke policy and procedures where necessary.

Draft timeline for appointment of our Principal Designate (PD):

Task	Person responsible	Duration / Deadline
Draft job description/ person specification and application pack	[REDACTED] / [REDACTED]	27.6.16 – 8.7.16
Agreement of the application pack / timeline / process / advertising media and salary / interview panel	Shadow Governing Body and/or Project Steering Group	22.7.16
Advertisements placed	[REDACTED]	5.9.16 – 19.9.16
Short listing	[REDACTED]	21.9.16
Interviews	[REDACTED]	27.9 – 28.9.16
Candidate offered post	[REDACTED]	28.9.16
Candidate in post	[REDACTED]	1.1.17

We believe the core team has an excellent knowledge of opening new schools successfully following the good Ofsted of our studio school, which opened in 2013. Our

F1 (a) Skills and experience of your team

Education team also has experience of opening one alternative provision school (City Gateway London) and two further alternative provision schools are in development. Our [REDACTED] has also managed the opening of 7 new Free or Studio Schools and all our [REDACTED] are running a mix of schools (which are all academies) that run from Primary Special to Secondary alternative provision to mainstream primary and secondary. The team recognises the challenges of opening a new school and can build on its experiences to inform the provision and ensure its success from day one.

We will develop a robust overarching project plan with clear roles and responsibilities and deadlines, which will be monitored through our pre-opening project steering group (PSG). The PSG will be a representative group of the core team and experts will be invited to specific meetings on a needs basis, colleagues from the EFA and DfE would also be invited to the PSG's. We recognise that our learning and experience from the schools we have opened can be transferred to LFS and the PD as it develops through pre-opening. For the purposes of the financial data this application is also assuming the PD would be in post a minimum of two terms before the school opens.

Our team is also highly regarded in the borough for example [REDACTED] is [REDACTED]

A full breakdown of the **team members CV's can be found in annex A.**

Future plans / capacity:

It is envisaged, that the Ladder Free School will be part of the 'Mercian Trust' a forthcoming Multi Academy Trust, (MAT) developed by the members of Walsall Studio School Trust and The Queen Mary's Grammar Schools Foundation. (currently going through consultation - **see annex D**)

The governance at Ladder Free School builds on these existing relationships, and the cross sector / community partnerships that helped establish and govern the 'Ofsted Good' Walsall Studio School, and the wider Ladder for the Black Country Apprenticeship campaign.

Very specific Alternative Provision experience has been sought through [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and added to this innovative partnership to ensure that there will be professional, aspirational, robust and thorough challenge to the leadership of the school.

During the pre –opening phase and with support from Trust partners at Queen Marys (QM) Grammar Schools, Walsall Studio School will operate as the MAT with some members of the Ladder Free School core team operating as a shadow Local Governing Body alongside education partners from QM under the governance of Walsall Studio

F1 (a) Skills and experience of your team

School Trust.

This process will ensure the harmonization period into the new Mercian MAT will be successful, both for the Ladder Free School and its sister school Walsall Studio School. Following a positive meeting with the [REDACTED] it is envisaged that the ultimate funding agreement will therefore be signed by the members of the forthcoming 'Mercian Trust', subject to a successful consultation and RSC approval of the MAT. If for any reason the Mercian Trust, is delayed, or not achieved, the partners are committed to support the Ladder Free School in the Walsall Studio School Trust as outlined in figure 1 of F2.

F1 (b) Skills gap analysis

Skills/experience missing	Where is the gap? ie pre-opening team, trustees, local governing body	How and when do you plan to fill the gap
n/a		

F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school

F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school

It is essential governors and the MAT play a part in the life of the school to gain that understanding of this innovative model of learning and how they can inform the effectiveness ensuring the school becomes outstanding from day one.

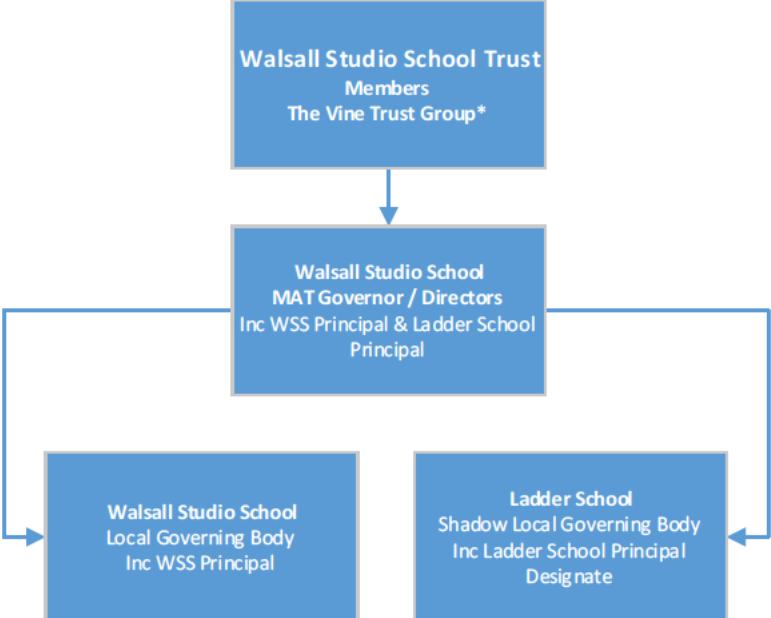


Fig 1.

Our proposed governance model initially as Walsall Studio School (pre –opening -fig 1.) , and then as Mercian (opening -fig. 2 see next page)

F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school

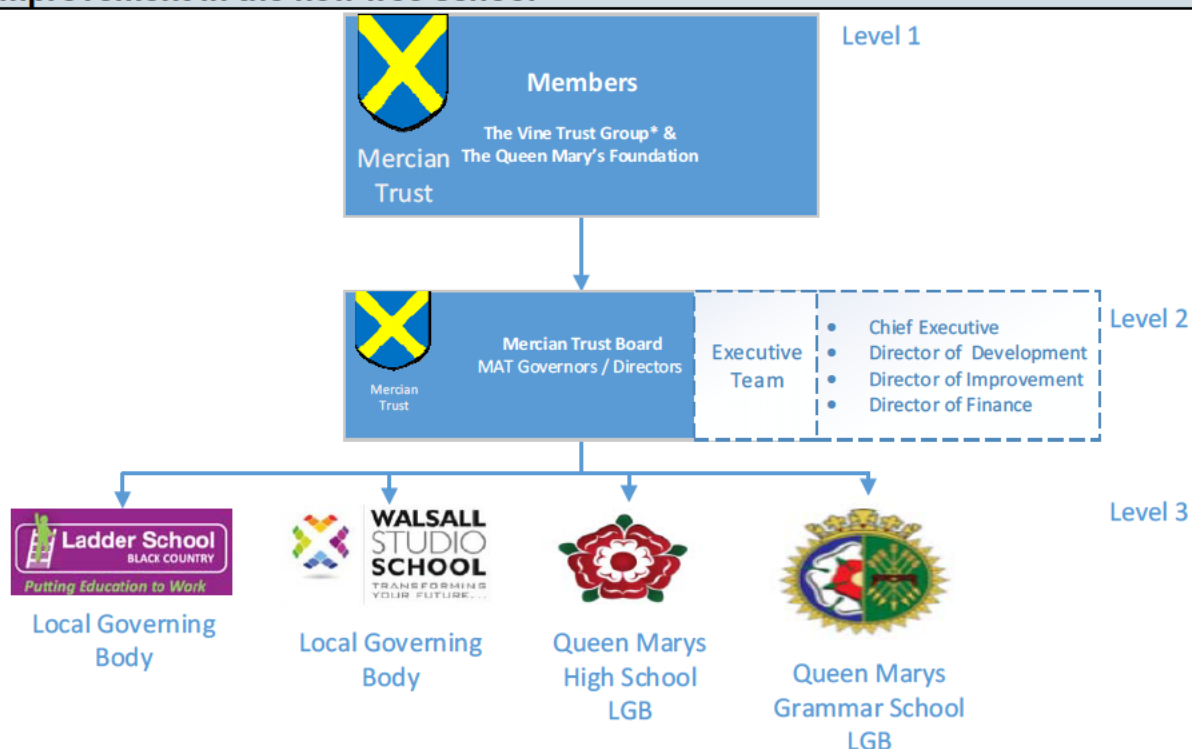


Fig 2.

Level 1: The Members

The Academy Trust will have two members. The Queen Marys Foundation and the Vine Trust. Both organisations bring over 4 years of educational collaboration, culminating in the creation of Walsall Studio School, and the proposed Mercian Trust.

The Vine Trust brings mainstream and vocational alternative provision experience, as well as strong links with the local community, employers, the media and the public sector.

The Queen Mary's Foundation brings, good reputation, a long history of high quality education, and a strong pedagogy based on academic excellence in both primary and secondary.

Trust members will be responsible for:

- Overseeing the achievement of the objects of the company
- Taking part in annual and extraordinary general meetings
- Appointing trustees and some of the governors
- Power to amend the Articles of the company (only if a majority agree and there is approval of the secretary of state) and, ultimately, to remove the trustees if required
- Holding the land and buildings in trust

F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school

Level 2: The MAT Board

The MAT Board will consist of up to 13 trustees.

The MAT Board will have strategic oversight of the MAT and its local governing bodies, and will consist of [REDACTED] of the existing schools, and the [REDACTED] who will form the trust executive, which will also include the [REDACTED].

The MAT board will:

- Agree performance measures and targets with the executive leadership and monitor / evaluate impact termly
- Manage the Academy Trust's finances and estate
- Signing off the company's financial accounts and annual report
- Ensure a high quality of educational provision
- Manage the Executive Team through annual appraisal and review
- Exercise reasonable skill and care in carrying out their duties
- Ensure that the Academy Trust complies with charity and company law
- Operate the academy in accordance with the Funding Agreement that has been signed with the Secretary of State

This is a board of trustees made up of executive and non-executive Trustees of the MAT who will lead the strategy of the whole Trust. The people on this Board will be the ones responsible for controlling its management and administration, and ensuring that it was solvent, well run, and delivering the Trust's charitable and educational objects.

Level 3: LFS Local Governing Body (LGB)

Each MAT school will have its own Governing Body answerable to the MAT board in the case of the Ladder Free School it's envisaged it will have up to 11 LGB Governors (x2 parents / x1 Principal / x1 staff member / x2 employers / x4 MAT appointed governors / x1 Headteacher representative from Walsall Association of Secondary Heads providing education challenge).

In conjunction with the MAT board, Local Governors will:

F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school

- Attend one of two committees to support the work of LFS, the first, finance and general purposes and the second, curriculum and standards, each governor will sit on one of the committees which will meet half termly for the first two years of opening (timing will be reviewed in year 2).
- Appoint link governors to key roles such as; Teaching & Learning/Progress, SEND, Safeguarding and Child Protection as well as Student Premium. They will work alongside the staff at LFS to ensure they have a detailed understanding of the work taking place but also best practice at a national and local level. This will be achieved by attending regular training sessions and termly visits to LFS which culminate in updates been provided to governors and a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities.
- Ensure a high quality of educational provision
- Monitor the commissioning of places and the impact on young people
- Agree the school development plan and monitor performance against it
- Challenge and monitor the performance of the school with a particular emphasis on behaviour and attendance
- Review student data ensuring examples of progress are evident and communicated. For example student A who is a school refuser may have progressed from nil or minimal attendance on arrival at LFS to 50% over a half term.
- Agree performance measures and targets with the leadership and monitor / evaluate impact termly
- Ensure school policies and procedures are compliant and fit for purpose in an alternative provision setting
- Manage the schools finances and estate
- Contribute to the Head Teacher / Principal annual appraisal and review
- Exercise reasonable skill and care in carrying out their duties

Level 4 The Principal and Ladder School leadership team (fig 3 on the next page) will:

- Be responsible for the day to day running of the school including management of the implementation of the schools development plan, behaviour and attendance and safeguarding policy and procedures

F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school

- Line manage senior leaders at the school
- Liaise with local secondary schools who will be commissioning places, ensuring high quality provision and that impact is evaluated
- Report openly, honestly and in a timely manner to the governors
- Prepare accurate data and supporting paperwork to ensure young people who attend LFS are making progress
- Ensure the school is outstanding from day one

Staffing Structure 2017-20

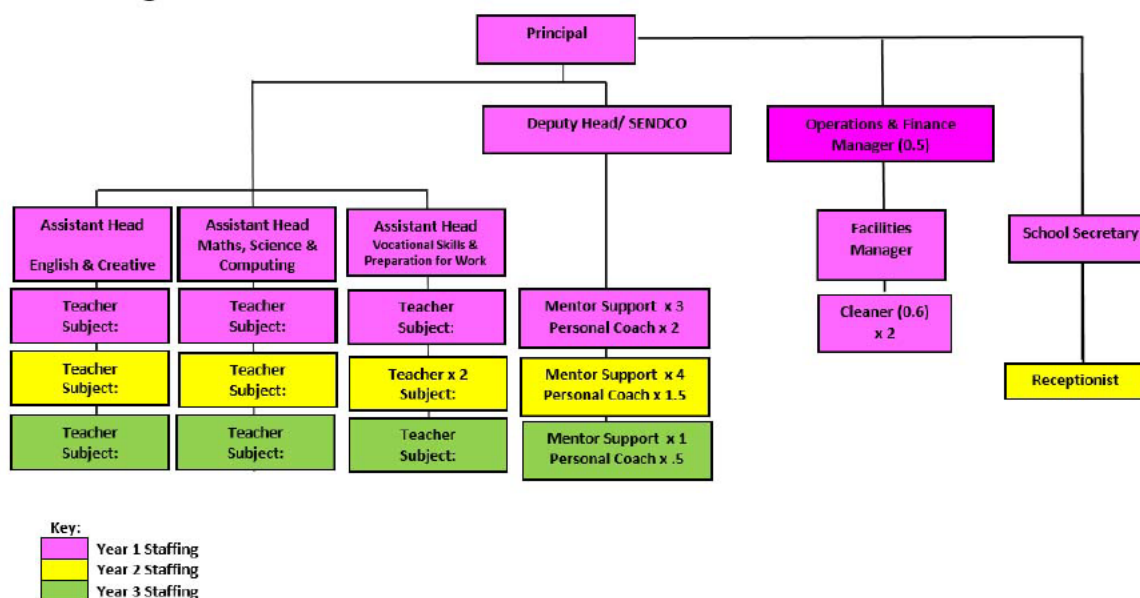


Fig:3

Should the school need intervention quickly, capacity initially would come from within the MAT. However external partnerships with other alternative provision providers are evolving and it is hoped that further challenge and intervention where required could be provided by these partners. A copy of Figure 3 can be found in **Annex F – Staffing Structure 2017-20**.

Managing conflict of interest

The governance structure and membership proposed we believe will avoid and minimise any conflict of interest. There will be independence at the Trust and

F2 – a governance structure, and roles and responsibilities that will ensure accountability and effective decision making in this academy trust and drive improvement in the new free school

Governing Body level, minutes of meetings will be publicly available but most importantly structure will be in place prior to opening to cover areas such as; declarations of interest, procurement and financial planning. The Trust and governors would also seek to have independent challenge through its membership as well as the purchasing of high quality school improvement support where required.

Currently related party transactions for Walsall Studio School exist through our purchasing of some back office services, however for LFS this would need to be determined through the pre opening phase and transition to the MAT and will be compliant with procurement rules and the academies financial handbook guidelines.

Section G – budget planning and affordability

G1 – budget planning and affordability

The Ladder Free School will be a safe, well ordered and caring environment for learning. In order to deliver high quality education to all its students, and support them to develop their individual potential for growth, a significant number of the spend areas and averages therein differ significantly from the typical secondary school in the West Midlands. We also wish to ensure we secure high quality to support the multiple needs of these young people as well as an 8:2 student to staff ratio in the classroom.

Income

We have been realistic concerning the scale up of student numbers over the first 3 years and have made the following assumptions:

- The average top-up fee per FTE place has been arrived at in consultation with commissioning parties, and the fee offers better value for money and a more improved standard of education and outcomes than other alternative providers in the area. They are based upon what is required in order to deliver the ambitious yet deliverable curriculum plan.

Analysis of alternative local providers

Alternative Provision Providers	Ofsted Inspection Grade		Capacity	Commissioners Cost per student per annum (excluding base funding)	5 GCSEs including English and Maths	Vocational
		Date of Inspection				
New Leaf Centre	Grade 2	29-30 January 2015	55 (Onsite)	██████████	Yes	Key Stage 3 Students at KS3 are given the opportunity to attain qualifications in English, Mathematics at functional skills level and a wider range of qualifications in other areas. Key Stage 4 All KS4 students follow accredited courses, which lead to a range of Certification including; Entry Level certificates, and BTEC among others.
Walsall College	Grade 1	11-15 February 2013	9	██████████	No	GCSE Maths and English Functional Skills English, Maths and ICT Princess Trust Vocational courses such as Hairdressing, Construction, Motor-Vehicle and Childcare.
Nova Training	Grade 2	2-6 December 2015	2	Not disclosed	No	Motor vehicle Entry 3 to Level 1 Construction Multi-skills Entry 3 to Level 1 Functional Skills English and Maths
Electric Palace*	Not registered		8 new leaf students (PT)	Not disclosed	No	ASDAN, COPE, Functional Skills and employability
EBN Birmingham	Grade 2	7 – 8 May 2014	66	██████████ undisclosed subscription for schools in the network	Yes	Key Stage 4 All KS4 students follow accredited courses, which can lead to 5 GCSE qualifications including English, and Maths

- No 'high needs students' have been included in the income as there is no

G1 – budget planning and affordability

realistic means by which to predict this, therefore we have been prudent with the assumption, and ruled it out in the initial forecast.

- 57.3% of excluded students in Walsall are eligible for student premium based upon Local Authority data for the Walsall Area. This is felt to be quite low however as our current educational provision Walsall Studio School has a 60% statistic. In this forecast budget however we have been prudent with regards to income.
- One of the partners in the bid Walsall Adult Community College (WACC) has agreed to supply a 0.5 Maths and 0.5 English teacher in year 1
- Due to the fact that Post 16 places will be filled by year 11 progression from within the school, no commissioner led places have been factored in to the income.

Expenditure

This deviation from the norm can be seen in several areas of the expenditure:

- Payroll

This item falls outside the expected norm of 70% of total income allocated to payroll, this is due to the high staff to student ratio (2 staff for every 8 students) in order to achieve small group sizes and a more personalised approach to teaching and learning. This is coupled with the need to deliver a broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum plan, therefore the School will be recruiting and retaining high quality specialist staff, skilled at enthusing the most disengaged students. In order to achieve this it is proposed to pay a higher scaled salary than would normally be expected for a school with this number of students for the teaching and SLT staff. The recruitment of the correct Senior staff in particular is key to the success of phase 1 of the development process, and indeed this shows in the Financial summary as in year 1, 48% of the staffing budget is allocated to the SLT, however this does stabilise once full capacity is reached. These staff will be highly experienced, subject specialists capable of meeting the diverse academic and emotional requirements of the student cohort.

Personal Coaches, support staff and mentors also add to the payroll costs and are vital to motivate and inspire the students, to raise aspirations and develop a sense of moral purpose, working in conjunction with the more academic work and vocational work carried out by the teachers. Their pay has been set using the existing staff cost of the outsourced service currently provided to Walsall Studio School by Vine Access Centre, which have equivalents on the teachers pay scale as indicated on the spreadsheet.

G1 – budget planning and affordability

It should be pointed out that in the Ladder School model there is a high degree of external trainers, teachers and specialists in both the academic subjects and the vocational / industrial based subjects. The costs associated with this, (in a more standard school model this may be classified as payroll), will actually be expended in 'Educational resources' and will account for approximately 50% of the expenditure against 'Learning resources – not ICT' and 'Vocational Activities'. Once this is considered with the pay costs (including the pay rise costs) it would be 76% of total income, by year 4 when capacity is reached and post opening grant funding has ended, rather than the 70% (shown in the summary which does not take pay rises into account) if just the staff salaries section is taken into account.

*Please note that in Section D3 it refers to 72% this includes the pay rise element which is not taken into account in the summary spreadsheet of the financial template.

- Premises

In order to achieve, maintain and create a safe, stimulating learning environment, and due to the nature of the students, both cleaning and buildings maintenance costs have been significantly increased (in some cases doubled) from the percentage expected in the West Midlands. It is felt that a clean well maintained learning environment will reinforce a positive learning experience, and assist with teaching around self discipline and respect, as well as providing a positive impression to both visitors, teachers and students who will react positively to well-maintained clean, bright working, learning environments.

The building will be put on a 3 year full decorating cycle as per the existing establishments after which the repairs and maintenance line will drop back down to a more standard if not slightly higher rate per student for a typical secondary school in the West Midlands.

All the other premises costs have been based on an existing school property operated by Walsall Studio School, which enabled a direct comparison with an existing premises used for the same purpose.

- Educational Resources

This area of expenditure is more than double the expected 5% of income or ██████ per student in the Walsall Area, once the fully staffed, fully occupied level is reached. A key part of the Ladder School model is to provide a broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum, and relevant tools, resources and industry professionals are required in order to achieve this, therefore educational resources are required in order to achieve this. The practical hands-on learning, and vocational partnership costs with employers, which form

G1 – budget planning and affordability

a key element to the educational plan will form part of this budget category. They replace what would be additional payroll costs in a stand school, however as each learner will have an individual learning journey the educational resources and staff required to achieve this will be tailored, and therefore do not fit into the standard school finance model / benchmarks.

Administrative Supplies costs are significantly lower than expected, this budget category is only used for office staff stationery, any supplies used by the students are coded to learning resources.

- Professional Services

This area is higher than expected due to the anticipated requirement of outsourced counselling and Educational Psychology services in order to ensure the students benefit from the full spectrum of professional support and challenge available. It will be with the assistance of the attendance officer, counsellors and Educational Psychologist as well as other external agencies that ensures the work we undertake with these students is not limited to teachers and personal coaches only.

- Other

Contingency – Has been calculated at 1% as per the current guidelines.

Depreciation – This has been calculated by assuming [REDACTED] of capital asset being purchased in year 1, this will then be depreciated using the straight line method over 5 years. It should be noted that Year 1 is at 50% of rate as assets probably not in place day 1, and will probably be purchased throughout the year, or the years thereafter as occurred with Walsall Studio School. This can be worked out more accurately once any Capital Funds are secured and categorised, and more is known about the property details.

Catering – This has been calculated on an outsourced cost of [REDACTED] per student per meal for pre – 16's only, as there is currently very little take-up from existing post 16 students due to the range of options available in the immediate vicinity.

Trusts Central Costs - This is for the support services including personnel, finance, audit, legal, governance, and H and Safety support, as well as possible MAT related charges.

Several of the above lines of expenditure may result in related party transactions these may include catering, personal coaching, and trusts central costs. These will be carried out in line with The EFA financial handbook and the trusts own internal procurement procedures. In line with current requirements all related party transactions are reviewed each year by none related parties and the findings and review are recorded in the minutes of the governing board that has reviewed them. The contracts are

G1 – budget planning and affordability

individually reviewed by external auditors and the 'At cost' aspect of the service and the fairness of the apportionments value is verified. This then enables the statement of assurance from that organisation to the trust confirming that their charges do not exceed the cost of the goods or services. This is part of the open book policy that exists allowing the related party to demonstrate clearly, if requested, that their charges do not exceed the cost of supply and that there is no element of profit.

Financial Resilience

If the student recruitment is in line with the current plan then the above financial plan will allow for small annual surpluses, even with a contingency, however if this does not occur the proposed staffing structure is affordable and flexible enough to meet the needs of the curriculum plan whether we achieve 100% or 70% occupancy year on year.

Should only 70% occupancy occur the following reductions would be made in order to make the [REDACTED] savings required:

Recruitment – The Deputy Head, 1 Assistant Head, 1 teacher, 1 personal Coach, 1 Support staff / mentor, 1 Data Manager would not be recruited and facilities manager would be a part time post. This would reduce staff costs by [REDACTED]

Other Staff Costs – As a result of the above recruitment and training costs would be significantly reduced by [REDACTED]

Premises – This is a difficult area to reduce effectively as a property still needs to be statutorily compliant and in good repair whether it is £100% occupied or 70% occupied. However small savings could be made under buildings and maintenance and cleaning and caretaking, which would add up to an additional [REDACTED].

Educational resources – Due to the reduced number of students the relevant % decreases can be made in student related spend of [REDACTED]. If further cuts were required the learning resources and vocational activates lines could be reduced by [REDACTED] per student, which would still leave the spend [REDACTED] above average, but would make educational resource savings of [REDACTED], as well as the [REDACTED]

Professional Fees – An area difficult to reduce however [REDACTED] could be saved in the Educational Psychologist / Counselling line.

Other – The contingency would be utilised in full which reduces expenditure by [REDACTED]. Depreciation would be reduced as few assets would initially be purchased in the lower than expected occupancy scenario saving a further [REDACTED]. The Trusts central costs would also be reduced due to lower income by [REDACTED]

The above savings would cover 100% of the expenditure cuts required should only 70% estimated enrolment occur, and further savings could be made if required, this is

G1 – budget planning and affordability

due to the overall structures efficiency but also adaptable to meet the needs of the changing cohorts, it ensures the vision and curriculum are deliverable on day one, making the best use of resources available.

The forecast budget herein, at this planning stage show a financially viable free school, even when the financial resilience test is applied. This is not dependant on any borrowing, and is based only minimal amounts of additional income. This budget has been based on 'known factors' and the current school operation.