



Prospectus



**THE LADDER
SCHOOL**

Redefining alternative provision



The Mercian Trust

Increasing opportunities, improving outcomes

The Mercian Trust is a family of schools, committed to each other. We are diverse in nature but united in a common purpose to increase opportunity and improve outcomes for children and young people in Walsall and the surrounding areas.

Our Trust's name is rooted in history and expresses a geographical identity and ambition. The ancient kingdom of Mercia encompassed much of what we now call the West Midlands.

It was in Mercia that St Chad established an association of small monasteries which fostered unity through bonds of kinship. History records that St Chad located his association of monasteries (as learning communities) on the major trading routes of the day in order to bring together business traders, military officers and community leaders to work together to solve the problems people faced. Now, a thousand years later, we are committed to demonstrating the same spirit in our approach to a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT).

Students in The Ladder School will be part of a family of schools forming an educational community. As schools we are stronger together. Our MAT is shaping the educational landscape in exciting ways; every student in the Trust is part of that story.

As a result of our commitment to each other, both staff and students will be physically and mentally healthy. We will demonstrate resilience, adaptability and values required to make good life choices and build successful personal and professional relationships.

Our Mission

The Mercian Trust exists to equip our students to live life to the full. Our purpose is to increase opportunities and improve outcomes to enable our students to (1) realise their potential (2) thrive in the world of work and (3) make a positive contribution to the local, national and international community.

Our commitment to social mobility and social justice means we prioritise our efforts to support disadvantaged and vulnerable children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. We bring together different schools, catering for a wide range of individual needs into one Multi Academy Trust, in order to enrich the strengths of our schools. Students are able to access the advantages and opportunities that each school brings – in teaching, leadership, breadth of curriculum, facilities, enrichment activities and community engagement.

For more information on the Mercian Trust please contact info@merciantrust.org.uk

About The Ladder School

Education in the United Kingdom is currently very prescriptive for young people. Young people often have to conform to a particular way of doing things, follow a particular curriculum and study subjects in a set way. At The Ladder School we understand that this does not suit everyone.

Schools are under enormous amounts of pressure to ensure that young people hit milestones and achieve particular grades. This can sometimes mean students are left behind, or students rebel against these measures. Secondary schools don't always have the resources and abilities to see the bigger picture for students. At The Ladder School we invest a lot of time to foster positive relationships and see what is going on for our students.

At The Ladder School we know that;

- ▶ Every student is different
- ▶ What works for one student, doesn't work for all students
- ▶ Sometime students have had negative experiences at school
- ▶ We don't know everything about our students straight away

Our key goal is to work with students and their families to help them reach their next destination in their education, wherever that might be.

Partnerships

We are proud of our partnerships with other organisations, from around the West Midlands. One of our partners is Ladder for the Black Country. Ladder for the Black Country works with employers to develop apprenticeship opportunities for young people. This link holds the clue for how we got our name!

Safeguarding

The Ladder School has a vital role to play in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and ensuring that the school is a safe, well-ordered and caring environment for learning. We are committed to safeguarding children and young people and expect everyone in our school to share this commitment. Everyone working in, or for our school, takes all welfare concerns seriously and encourages children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them.



The Ladder School

Redefining alternative provision

The Ladder School has access to the town centre of Walsall, created to cater for the needs of young people within the local community; to offer something different educationally. The Ladder School will support young people at risk of exclusion from mainstream provision, primarily because of behavioural difficulties or because their needs cannot be met in a mainstream setting.

The Ladder School is a free school that is part of the Mercian Trust and is part of the diverse family of schools. Students who attend The Ladder School will be dual-rolled with their 'home' school, to offer a wraparound alternative education provision. This will ensure students can succeed and enable them to make a positive contribution to their families, the local community and wider society.

100%
of parents feel that
The Ladder School
wants the best for
their child.



A Warm Welcome from the Principal

I welcome you on behalf of staff, students, governors and our Trust to The Ladder School.

We are an Alternative Provision Free School located in Walsall occupying a brand new, fabulous building. We are becoming the "go to place" for Alternative Provision in the borough.

At The Ladder School we recognise that the mainstream school system does not suit all young people and we are here to offer a second chance. We believe that every student has potential and the staff work incredibly hard to ensure our students make the most of the opportunities available to them whilst they are with us. Unlike other alternative provisions, we offer a range of GCSE and vocational courses to ensure students receive a well-rounded education and have the best chances in their future. We have a strong careers program designed to support students to enable them to reach positive destinations after they leave The Ladder School.

We have an environment where praise and encouragement are used to help our students see things differently. Our set of aspirational values underpins everything we do. Our purpose-built school has specialist facilities for our students to thrive and grow into successful, contributing members of their community.

Students can continue their education with us after taking GCSEs as we have a small bespoke Sixth Form where students have the opportunity to resit English and maths GCSE to improve their grade and gain a Level 2 Btec qualification.

If you would like to see what we do, please contact Reception to arrange a visit.

Mrs Ruth Williams
Associate Principal



Student Voice

What our students say about The Ladder School



“Since I first joined The Ladder School, I’ve progressed a lot. Throughout my time at secondary school, I’ve had months and months off school which means I missed out on lots of work. When I joined The Ladder School, within the first week I was already catching up and feeling more comfortable with my work. I get on with all of the teachers, they support us with everything and no matter how many times we get something wrong they’ll go over and over it again.”



“The school is concerned about all students. They are supportive and show you a lot of attention. They are in your business, but in a good way.”

“The school is good and supports you.”

“The teachers are a lot more understanding compared to my old school.”

“The teachers try their best to help us, they look out for us.”

“It’s a better school than any other school. They are there to help you if you have a temper and they help you to calm down.”

“We have strong teachers that show they care.”

“Our teachers help us understand career options and get us ready for when we leave school”

“I know that all the staff will listen to me, this never happened at my other schools. The lessons are not all about writing things down, it’s about learning in different ways like lots of discussions.”

“When I started at The Ladder School I had the wrong mind set; about life, and school. I had a heavy weight on my shoulders.

I have now left the school as an independent young adult with a bright future ahead of me. I achieved this with the help of the staff, and most importantly the help I received from my Learning Coach.

The fun part of the school was the fact that we were all like family.

What our parents and carers say about The Ladder School...



“The Teachers are really nice and he feels he can work at his own pace.”

“Thank you for all the effort and support you give my child.”

“It’s a good school with helpful, kind, good, supportive teachers.”

96%

of parents feel that their child is taught well at The Ladder School.



Mission Statement

The Ladder School is a safe, well-ordered and caring environment for learning. It delivers high quality education to all its students and supports them in developing their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.

High quality, exceptional teaching, with clear and consistent guidance and support, facilitates students in succeeding in education. Our broad, balanced academic and vocational curriculum provides students with access to a wide range of accredited qualifications, as well as, educational and social experiences, that address their learning and emotional needs (including SEND and Mental Health support).

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

Don't limit your challenges, challenge your limits.

Pastoral Care

At The Ladder School, our aim is to deliver excellent Pastoral Care to all students. We have a dedicated Pastoral Team who focus on the social, emotional and personal needs of the students in addition to providing academic support. Every student is allocated a Learning Coach / Pastoral Support Officer who meets daily with them and also completes a weekly key work session. The Pastoral Team provides a consistent and regular link between school, students, parents and carers.

87%
of parents think
their child is happy
and safe at The
Ladder School



Values & Ethos

Values

1. Alternative Provision doesn't mean a dumping ground...it's mainstream with reasonable adjustments to succeed
2. High standards and high expectations are incredibly important and are the corner stones to a successful school
3. The Ladder School should become the go-to place for educators from across the country to see best practice
4. Good simply isn't good enough
5. Learning is about a journey and there is more than one way to reach the destination
6. Qualifications, manners, respect and opportunity should be the foundations for students that need a second chance



Ethos



High standards

Students are pushed to achieve beyond their potential, and staff work to ensure everything that we do is better than people expect.



Daring to Dream

Students at The Ladder School may have been in an educational setting where they lacked aspirations to be successful. At The Ladder School, we challenge students to reach their potential and go on to further education and employment.



Traditional Values

Some things often get forgotten in education; at The Ladder School, we pride ourselves on mutual respect, good manners, making a positive contribution, supporting one another and an orderly, litter free environment.



Success

Success can come in many virtues; at The Ladder School, we celebrate the small steps every day and tell students when they are doing well. We ensure that students can have a successful future.



Personalised Support

All students at The Ladder School have a Learning Coach / Pastoral Support Officer who guides them, sets them bespoke targets and supports them in making social and academic progress.

Principles of great learning



High Standards

Assessments that plan for students' next steps

The ability to challenge, ask questions and be inquisitive



Daring to Dream

Learning from professionals

Learning in other environments



Traditional Values

Learning by doing or 'having a go'

Learning from experiences



Success

Breaking big problems down into solvable problems

Celebrating when unplanned learning happens



Personal Support

Adapting teaching to suit the needs of learners

Social and emotional learning

"Pupils join The Ladder School after a tricky and difficult educational journey. Many have lost faith in school, struggle to manage their behaviour and see little point in attending. Staff address this head-on. They work alongside each pupil with kindness, consideration and determination."

Ofsted, July 2023

Parents and Carers

We realise that regular communication with parents/carers is vital in ensuring the success of our students. As a school, we use SIMS to hold all of our data and information regarding our students. SIMS holds all our information about students in school. We use this information to keep parents/carers up to date in relation to their child. Parents/carers will be informed termly in writing about their child's progress in school. Parents/carers will be invited to meetings throughout the course of the year.

In our experience, parents/carers having information about their child's attendance, behaviour and progress means that parents/carers have the ability to discuss this with their child and school regularly.

Attendance

It is expected that parents/carers will ensure their child attends regularly, aspiring to have 100% attendance. They will also ensure their child is punctual and they do not have time off during term time for holidays. Attendance will be monitored daily by school staff.

Students who are late to school will attend an intervention session each day. Students who make a mistake during the day attend a re-do session, at the end of the day.

96%

of parents feel they receive information about their child regularly so that they are informed.

SEND

The Ladder School is committed to providing appropriate and high-quality education for all our students. We believe that all students, including those identified as having disabilities and special educational needs, have a common entitlement to a broad and balanced academic and social curriculum, which is accessible to them. All students will be fully included in all aspects of school life. We aim to model inclusion on the removal of barriers to learning. We believe that all students should be equally valued at The Ladder School and we strive to eliminate prejudice and discrimination and to develop an environment where all students can flourish and feel safe.

We aim to engender a sense of community and belonging and to offer new opportunities to students who experience difficulties. This does not mean that we will treat all students in the same way, but that we will respond to students in ways which take account of their varied life experiences and needs by ensuring an appropriate curriculum; appropriate support and challenge, and a commitment to academic and personal success.

Curriculum

At The Ladder School we offer a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the young people we serve. We aim to ensure students get the most out of their time with us. Students that arrive in Year 9 will get the chance to participate in some qualifications in preparation for GCSE's. As students progress into Year 10 and 11, they will study a mix of academic and vocational courses. Our Sixth Form offers personalised pathways, to support students become young professionals.

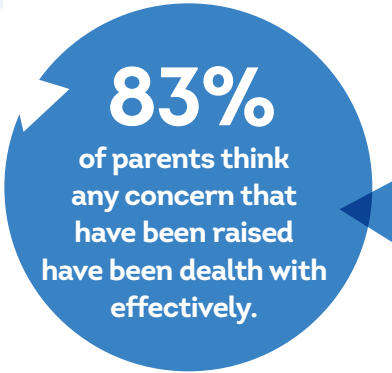
Below are the number of hours studied in each subject.

Year Group	English	Maths	Science	Skills	Humanities	PE	Catering	Animal Care	Spanish	Personal Development	Art	Futures
9	4.5	4.5	3.75	2	0.75	1.5	1.5	0.75	0.75	1.5	1.5	0.75

Year Group	English	Maths	Science	Skills/PSHE	PE	BTEC Option	BTEC Option
10	6	3.75	5.25	2	0.75	3	3
11	6	3.75	5.25	2	0.75	3	3

Year Group	English	Maths	Skills/PSHE	Futures	BTEC Option
12	3.75	3.75	2.5	1.5	7.5
13	3.75	3.75	2.5	1.5	7.5

Sixth Formers can participate in a work placement 1 day each week.



The School Day



- Students are expected to be on site from 8:35am.
- Students go straight to lessons.
- All lessons commence at 8:45am.
- Students will not be allowed electronic equipment or contraband, such as cigarettes, sweets or drinks other than water. These items must be handed to the members of staff on duty before students enter the building.
- On dismissal, students will collect their personal belongings as they leave school. Staff are not responsible for anything that is handed in by the students and only students can collect their belongings.
- Students are reminded they represent The Ladder School while travelling to and from school and their conduct whilst wearing their school uniform can be managed jointly between home and school.

Break and Lunchtime

- Students have supervised breaks and lunches – all staff and students eat together.
- Toast and fruit are provided in the morning.
- Everyone eats a hot lunch – no packed lunches are allowed. Students can bring snacks to eat on the way to and from school.
- There is no cost to parents/carers. The Ladder School subsidises the cost of breaks and lunches as these times are important learning opportunities and develop soft skills.



Uniform

What students must wear

TLS Jumper
TLS Trousers/Skirt
TLS Tie
White Shirt
Black Leather Shoes

PE Kit

Plain black top/bottoms
Trainers

Optional Items

Pair of earrings
Ring
Watch

Supplier information

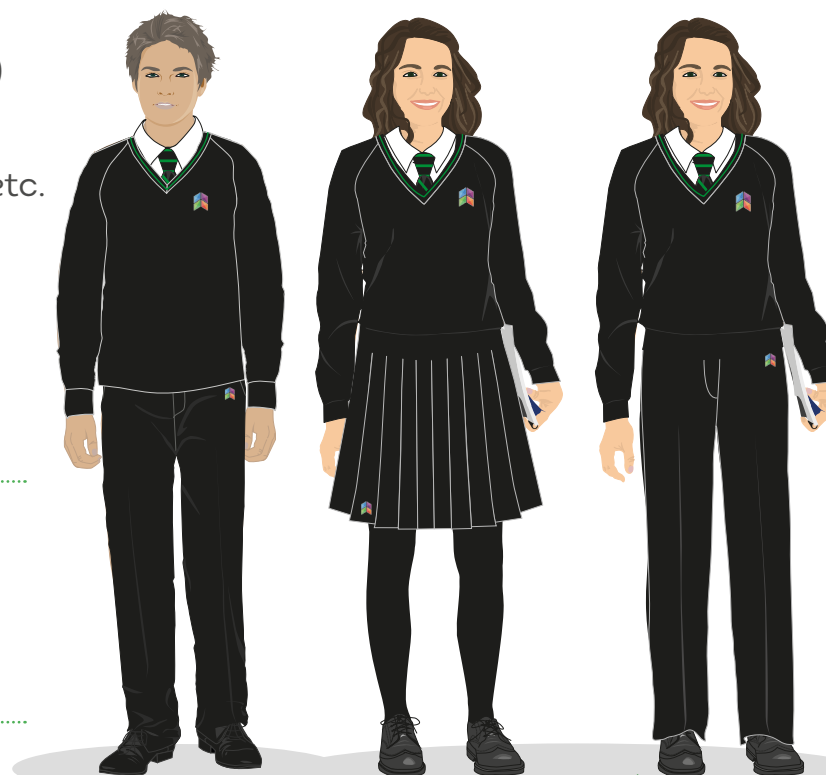
Clive Mark

Saddlers Centre, 1 Park Street, Walsall, WS1 1YS

What is not acceptable

No facial piercings (including spacers)
No visible tattoos
No trainers/Converse/Vans/Kickers etc.
No coat or hoodie inside the building
No headwear (hats or caps)
Unless for religious reasons
No extreme haircuts/colour

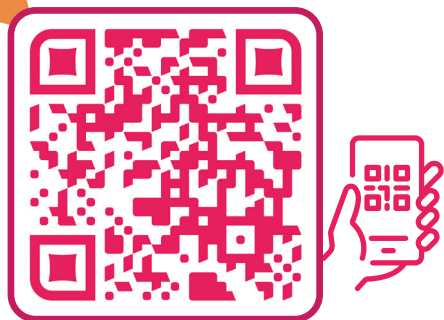
Sixth Formers will wear a different uniform that reflects the needs of their courses.



Interested in
commissioning a place? Visit
www.theladderschool.org.uk
for more details



Ofsted
Good
Provider



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