

PRESS RELEASE – embargoed until 18th November 2024

Monday 18th November, 2024

Consultation on the proposed merger of The Sherburn, Tadcaster and Rural Multi Academy Trust (STAR) and South York Multi Academy Trust (SYMAT).

Sherburn, Tadcaster and Rural Multi Academy Trust (STAR) and South York Multi Academy Trust (SYMAT) are delighted to announce a proposed merger to create a single Multi-Academy Trust spanning the York and North Yorkshire region.

SYMAT and STAR have individually achieved great success since their formation in 2018. Both Trusts are proud of their schools which are rooted in our local communities. They provide a nurturing environment where children and young people can grow to become their best selves as well as benefit from excellent academic standards.

“We are always driving for improvement. We are never complacent; we know that there is always more that can be done to increase the opportunities available to our children and young people and staff. This is why we are now exploring the possibility of merging into a combined Trust with an organisation that shares our values and aspirations”, Ian Dolben, Chair SYMAT.

Both STAR and SYMAT are value-led Trusts - they value the individuality of their schools, their heritage and where appropriate, their church distinctiveness.

Ian Yapp, CEO of STAR and Steve Lewis, CEO of SYMAT said:

“Together, we believe we can build on this to the benefit of all our schools and the wider communities we serve.

“Our geographical proximity within a Trust structure supports collaboration and close partnership working. Along with enhanced training, staff development opportunities and extensive school improvement work we will be able to share best practice to sustain and extend excellent educational provision to all children and young people in our communities.

“We are excited about the opportunities a merger can bring to both Trusts and their local and wider communities. As part of the process of merger we have now entered a period of engagement where we would love to hear the thoughts and questions of interested parties.”

Nick Sheppard, Chair STAR commented:

“We firmly believe that this potential merger gives us a real opportunity to further our ambitions – to deliver high-quality, value-added services and professional development, allowing our schools to concentrate on their core purpose of educating and supporting children and young people, so that in turn they can truly flourish.



Each school, equal partners in a combined Trust, will continue to have its own local governors. Governors will continue to play a key role in the Trust's processes for supporting schools and holding the school leadership to account".

Both Trusts recognise the risks of expansion and are considering them carefully as part of this exploratory work. However, in an increasingly challenging educational landscape both believe that these risks that may be mitigated by collaboration and sharing expertise across a joint footprint.

Any combined Trust would be an inclusive, welcoming body that supports and nurtures all children encouraging them to take advantage of every opportunity to achieve their full potential, regardless of background or ability.

The engagement will run from 18th November until 18th December 2024.

Please see individual Trust and school websites for information as to how contributions can be made to this process.

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