Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents

1. Which schools will be part of the newly merged Trust?

Under the proposal, the merged Trust would encompass 11 primary schools and 5 secondary schools. All of these schools are located in and around the Somerset area. Their close geographical proximity will be a major strength for the Trust, enabling us to deliver exceptional educational opportunities to approximately 7,000 pupils in the county, while employing around 1,600 dedicated teaching and support staff.

A list of our schools is shown below.

Trust	Primary	Secondary
Quantock Education Trust	Spaxton Church of England Primary School Stogursey C of E Primary School Ashlands C of E Primary School Haslebury Plucknett C of E Primary School Merriott Primary School St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School	Haygrove School Sexey's School
Bridgwater and Taunton College Trust	Bridgwater College Academy (Primary Phase) Hamp Academy Otterhampton Primary School Maiden Beech Primary Academy Brookside Academy	Bridgwater College Academy (Secondary Phase) Brymore Academy Stanchester Academy

Further information about each school can be found at https://www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables.

2. What will happen to West Somerset College as part of the proposed merger?

As part of the proposed merger, we are exploring options for the future governance of West Somerset College, including the potential for the academy to join another Trust to support a regional strategy for the structure of the education system in the West Somerset area. These

discussions are at an early stage and are subject to approval by the Department for Education. Until any formal decisions are made, West Somerset College remains part of BTC Trust and will continue to operate as normal. There will be a separate FAQ documents for parents from West Somerset College. The focus remains on securing strong leadership, curriculum continuity and the best possible outcomes for pupils and staff.

3. What will the benefits be?

We understand that choosing the right school and Trust for your child is an important decision. We want to reassure you that this merger is about creating more opportunities and delivering the best possible education for all our pupils. At the heart of this merger is your child's education and experience in school. By bringing together the strength of both Trusts we aim to:

For pupils:

- Offer the highest quality curriculum, bringing together great practice from each Trust
- Establish a 'cradle to career' local progression pathway for pupils from nursery through to degree level study
- Provide a greater sense of safety and belonging through enhanced transitions, with many children able to stay within the Trust from age 3 to 18
- Deliver an excellent teaching and learning experience, with lessons continuing to be delivered by expert staff who engage in evidence-informed, subject specific training and development
- Provide enhanced access to technology facilities/infrastructure
- Develop widespread enrichment opportunities building on existing strengths, such as QET's Chinese exchange programme and links with the Yew Wah Foundation, its strength in Character Education, and BTC Trust's college/vocational links, as well as establishing new opportunities for pupils to represent their school at larger scale events
- Forge a new partnership with University Centre Somerset college group (UCS) to strengthen pathways into further education and careers by creating meaningful connections and ongoing support for pupils' future aspirations

For staff:

We know that a well-supported and highly skilled teaching team is key to providing the best education for your child.

Any merger must add value to staff, to encourage our most valuable resource to be able to develop a full and rewarding career with their Trust. Staff will have the opportunity to develop their expertise to become the best practitioners possible through:

- Higher quality professional development opportunities, with access to inhouse support and training opportunities, shared Trust wide inset days and expert input from a range of national/regional experts, as well an opportunity to expand professional development programmes, and shared professional learning communities

- Increased opportunities to leverage expertise, leading for example on curriculum development, our inclusion strategy and in quality assurance processes across a larger organisation
- A commitment to research and evidence-informed approaches to support sustainable and impactful change, including strong links with the Somerset Research School and the Education Endowment Foundation.
- Opportunities for career progression, knowledge exchange and secondments across schools within the Trust, enhancing practice through teaching in different contexts without needing to leave the Trust

For families and communities:

Both QET and BTC Trust are committed to working locally, serving children and families in the Somerset area. Many of our schools are closely geographically located and there are good links between schools, Somerset County Council and other Trusts locally.

With a Somerset-based MAT, families will benefit from:

- A Somerset all-through school offer, as all schools in the Trust will provide a similar high-quality education for their children
- A consistent experience from 3 – 18 years for their children, through staying in a trust with a clear identity and agreed approaches
- Greater trust in education, built up over a longer period of time, with more likelihood for their children to continue in education and transform their life choices

4. What would a merger mean for my child's school?

While there may be some changes to governance and shared central services for the new Trust, what makes your child's school special will remain the same. Each school will retain its unique ethos, identity and commitment to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the young people and families it serves.

5. What would this mean for the current day-to-day experience of my child?

Currently, there are no plans to change any aspect of the day to day running of any of our schools.

6. Will the name of the Trust change?

Yes, although none of the school names will change, we would like to establish a new Trust identity. We have not yet made any decisions about what the new name would be. If you have any ideas for names, please do let us know in the feedback form below.

7. Will there be a change to SEND provision?

SEND provision will continue as it is in each school, however there will be more opportunities for best practice to be shared as part of the continuous improvement of provision for all our young people, including those with additional needs.

8. Will the admission criteria change for my child's school under the merged Trust?

All schools across both Trusts will continue to fully adhere to the national Admissions Code of Practice. Further information on the school admissions code is available on the Department of Education website and each school's admission policy can be found on the school website.

9. What changes will be made to Governance as a result of the merger?

With the merger of the two Trusts, we will need to identify new Members and Trustees. The majority will be drawn from our existing Boards where we are fortunate to have dedicated volunteers with a wide range of outstanding skills, experience and expertise.

The Board of Trustees provides strategic oversight while decision-making for certain functions will continue be delegated to each school's Local Governing Committees. This ensures that each school can continue to meet the unique needs of its community while benefiting from the strength and support of the wider Trust. We believe this balance of local autonomy and collective collaboration is key to ensuring the best outcomes for our children and young people.

A key focus will be to maintain and strengthen governance, both at the Trust level and within each individual school. By ensuring strong and supportive leadership at all levels, we can continue to provide the best possible education and opportunities for our children and young people.

10. What changes will be made to leadership as a result of the merger?

Leadership in individual schools will remain unchanged. Leadership at a Trust level will bring together staff from both Trust teams, and we will be working with the Trust Board to carefully manage this transition.

11. What financial considerations are being considered as part of the merger planning, and how might it support greater alignment or efficiency in shared services such as HR, finance, and school improvement?

At this stage, the financial position and consideration of the merger are being carefully reviewed as part of the due diligence process. Trust funding contributes to a central services arrangement, which provides essential functions such as school improvement, payroll, HR, finance, ICT, legal and compliance. These are services every school requires. Delivering these through a coordinated central team reduces cost and duplication and ensures compliance.

One of the aims of the Trust model is to ensure that schools are well led, financially efficient, and able to focus resources on improving outcomes for pupils. Each school retains responsibility for managing its own budget in line with its priorities and context. As the merged Trust develops, opportunities for improved service delivery and operational alignment will continue to be explored.

12. Quantock Education Trust has some Church schools; how will this affect other schools?

The new Trust will be home to a diverse range of schools, including those with a Christian ethos. We believe in celebrating this diversity and we are committed to maintaining the unique character of each school. Each school within the Trust is committed to our common and shared values, making us a unique collective.

13. How will parents, guardians and communities be kept informed during the merger process?

We will keep you updated regularly through our usual channels, ensuring you have all the information you need.

14. What are the timescales for the merger?

Subject to feedback and approval, by the Department for Education and agreement from both Trust Boards, the earliest any merger will take place is 1st September 2026.

15. How do I ask questions or provide feedback?

We are seeking the feedback of parents, staff, governors, and other stakeholders on these proposals and would encourage you to submit any questions or comments using this form - STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FORM – Fill in form