

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS - EXTERNAL

1. Implication of merger

Why are we merging now?

In recent years Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls have been extending the scope of their collaboration to the benefit of pupils at both schools. The mergers with Sherborne Prep in 2021 and Hanford in 2023 have created further exciting opportunities for all four schools to work together. We believe that the most effective way of harnessing these opportunities is through the creation of a single, overarching governance structure to facilitate and support cooperation between the schools. Thus, whilst Sherborne School, Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep School and Hanford School will continue as discrete entities with their own identities and ethos, the merger of the charitable trusts will allow us most effectively to explore and harness many more exciting possibilities for pupils and staff to work together and to share facilities and resources.

When will the merger officially come into effect?

On 1 July 2024, the two charitable trusts that own the Sherborne School group and the Sherborne Girls group will be formally merged into one charity called the Sherborne Schools Group.

What is the Sherborne Schools Group?

The Sherborne Schools Group will be formed from the Sherborne School group and Sherborne Girls group. The Sherborne School group is comprised of Sherborne School, Sherborne Prep and Sherborne International; and the Sherborne Girls group consists of Sherborne Girls and Hanford. The merged Group will also include Sherborne Schools Worldwide (SSW), a joint venture set up by Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls in 2017 to establish Sherborne-branded schools around the world, as well as several wholly-owned trading companies.

Is the plan for Sherborne Girls and Sherborne School to merge or become co-educational?

While the charitable trusts that own Sherborne Girls and Sherborne School are merging, there are no plans for the schools to merge or become co-ed. We are proud of our unique Separate yet Together offering, which we believe to provide the best of both worlds. Our joint offering enables us to focus on the needs of the boys and girls in the classroom and boarding houses, while offering many of the advantages of a co-educational experience through our joint academic enrichment, co-curricular and social programmes.



Is the plan to merge Hanford and Sherborne Prep?

There are no plans to merge Hanford and Sherborne Prep into one school. They currently offer different educational experiences for their pupils and provide choice to parents. They will therefore maintain their own separate names, identity and ethos and separate Department for Education registration.

Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep and Hanford all accept girls in Year 7 and 8; will this change?

Sherborne Girls' main entry point will continue to be Year 9 (Lower Fifth) when approximately 70 new girls join the year group. For many years, Sherborne Girls has offered a small number of places in Year 7 and Year 8, targeted at schools which finish at Year 6. Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep and Hanford currently offer different educational experiences for their pupils in Years 7 and 8 and provide choice to parents.

Will any of the schools be closed?

There are no plans to close any of the schools.

Will a long-term plan of future changes be provided?

A priority for the new Board of Governors will be to review the strategies of all schools in the Group and ensure that the future direction is clear and aligned for the benefit of all. As strategic changes are identified, they will be communicated to all stakeholders.

2. Leadership and management

Who will be in charge?

Each school will retain control of its operations through its own Head and Senior Management/ Senior Leadership Team. There will be one Group Board of Governors overseeing all of the schools and led by an Executive Chair to whom the Heads of Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls and Group Chief Operating Officer will report.

Recruitment is underway for the Executive Chair. Should the appointment process for the Executive Chair not be completed by 1 July, the new Board will be co-chaired by the current Chairs – Louise Hall and David Leakey – as an interim measure.



Nine Governors have been selected from each of the existing Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls' Boards, along with one Governor who already sits on both schools' Governing bodies. They are: Juliet Blanch, Sally Craig-McFeely, Canon Nicki Edwards, Louise Hall, Amanda Harris, Amanda Hughes, Nick Isaac, Nigel Jones, Angela Lane, Robin Leach, David Leakey, Martin Lee, George Marsh, Jo Massey, Anthony Pralle, Mark Spearing, Matthew Taylor, Dr Paul Williams, Michael Wilson. This creates a Group Board of twenty including the Executive Chair.

Is the merger going to cost the schools any money or divert resources?

Following the initial set-up costs, the merger will drive efficiencies and deliver cost savings through the economy of scale across the schools whilst enhancing the educational, pastoral and co-curricular offering across the Group.

Are the schools financially secure?

The existing schools' groups are financially secure, and this is one reason why it makes sense for the merger to take place now, from a position of strength. Despite the robustness of each school, we have considered the impact of market shifts, economic forces and political developments. The merger will strengthen the position of the schools, ensuring we can better withstand the financial and political headwinds and continue to thrive long into the future whilst investing for the benefit of our pupils.

Through the creation of a strong, resilient and well-resourced group of schools, we will continue to deliver a world-class education and ensure we are a compelling option in an increasingly competitive and challenging market.

Why were parents not consulted about the merger?

Given the complexity and confidential nature of the merger, it was not possible to consult with all stakeholders in advance. Consideration was, however, given to the different constituent groups across all member schools. All decisions were made in the best interest of the schools and their current and future pupils, parents and staff.

Will the schools be marketed as one group or separate schools?

The marketing plan will be developed to make sure that the unique offering of each school is communicated clearly whilst acknowledging the benefits of being part of a larger and successful educational group. The joint senior schools' marketing campaign – initially promoting the schools'



‘Separate Yet Together’ offering and more recently introducing the tagline ‘Coeducation but not as you know it’ – has been well received by current and prospective parents over the years.

Will the term dates be aligned across all four schools along with key events?

We will seek to ensure that all our term dates and major events, such as carol services and commemoration/end of year celebrations, are coordinated and scheduled from 2025 onwards in a way that makes life as straightforward as possible for parents, including those who have children at more than one of our schools.

3. Educational provision

Will my child become part of one school and will the educational approach and distinctive character in my child’s school change?

Each school will remain on its current site and retain its individual identity and ethos, as well as its own rules, procedures and protocols. Expertise and experience will be shared across the Group with enhancements being made where it is practical and beneficial to the pupils, and in pursuit of each school’s commitment to offer the best educational experience possible. Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls are already aligned in many of these areas and have been increasingly collaborating in recent years, which is another reason why the merger makes perfect sense.

What are the benefits of the merger to my child’s school and the schools as a Group?

Closer working between Sherborne School, Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep and Hanford will allow each school to benefit from experience and expertise of teaching and support staff from the other schools. The sharing of resources, knowledge and information will allow us to provide an even richer educational experience whilst also allowing greater financial agility, resilience and adaptability to help future-proof the schools.

For the senior schools, closer collaboration will result in greater opportunities for the pupils through joint academic enrichment, co-curricular, pastoral and social links such as participation in UCAS/Higher Education and careers activity, joint trips, and coordinated sports, activities, clubs, societies, leadership opportunities and social programmes.

The prep schools will have the opportunity to collaborate, share and learn from each other, as well as the senior schools. Where practical and beneficial, the schools will share facilities and resources to enhance the pupils’ educational experience.



How will my child's education be affected?

Sherborne School, Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep and Hanford are all committed to enhancing the educational opportunities for their pupils in supportive environments where pastoral excellence is at the heart of each school. Sherborne School will remain an all-boys' senior day and boarding school; Sherborne Girls will remain an all-girls' senior day and boarding school; Sherborne Prep will remain a co-ed day and boarding prep school; and Hanford will remain an all-girls' day and boarding prep school. Boarding will remain at the heart of the schools.

We do not envisage any fundamental changes to the educational provision or structure, although the schools will be able to work together to ensure that the education we provide remains relevant and appropriately embraces relevant technological and pedagogical advances. Your child will continue to receive a first-class education delivered by the dedicated staff at their respective school.

Removing the duplication of some administrative tasks through closer working will allow teachers and the boarding team more time to focus on teaching and pastoral care. Through greater collaboration, the pupils will benefit from greater access to shared expertise, resources and facilities, as well as increased opportunities across the academic enrichment, co-curricular and social programmes for the senior schools.

At Sixth Form level, the two senior schools will continue to look at ways to enhance their provision as they already do, for example by jointly offering subjects where demand tends to be low as well as increased opportunities for academic enrichment and Higher Education and Careers support.

Which facilities will the schools share? Will there be further access for Sherborne Prep and Hanford to the senior schools' facilities?

Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls will continue to seek opportunities to share their resources and facilities for the benefit of the pupils and to maximise efficiencies across the schools, for example, using each other's sports pitches and astro. Where practical and beneficial, Sherborne Prep and Hanford will also share the senior schools' facilities, as well as each other's, for example, children at Sherborne Prep benefitting from the riding facilities at Hanford.

Will my child benefit from expertise that might be available at another school, for example sports coaching or UCAS / Oxbridge preparation?

The academic enrichment, co-curricular and social programmes will be a key area of focus for greater collaboration between the two senior schools, along with Higher Education and Careers advice. The two senior schools already collaborate on Oxbridge preparation, along with pupils from The Gryphon School in Sherborne.



Will pupils from Sherborne Girls and Sherborne School combine more in sports and activities?

Boys and girls from the two schools already come together to participate in a range of sports and activities, such as drama, music, DofE and CCF, the range of joint activities having increased significantly in recent years. We fully intend to continue expanding the scope of our joint programme whilst ensuring that each school continues to run its own separate sports and activities programme specifically tailored to the interests of its pupils.

Will pupils from Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls combine more in the academic enrichment/super-curricular programme?

As with our co-curricular programme, the merger offers exciting possibilities for our pupils of all ages to collaborate on a wider range of academic pursuits. This is likely to include boys and girls working together as well as older pupils mentoring and inspiring those in the younger years and at the two prep schools.

4. Admissions & fees

Will there be an expectation that my child goes on to the senior schools, from Hanford/Sherborne Prep?

Sherborne Prep and Hanford will continue to prepare their pupils for entry and scholarship to a wide range of senior schools as they have done since they were founded. The Heads will ensure that pupils and their parents are well advised about the senior school options which would best suit their particular needs and make sure they are well placed and prepared to apply to a range of both single-sex and co-educational schools.

Will the merger give applicants from Hanford or Sherborne Prep an advantage over applicants to Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls from other schools?

Pupils from Sherborne Prep and Hanford will follow the same admissions process to Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls as pupils applying from other schools.

Will the admissions process to the schools change?

Sherborne School and Sherborne Girls will continue to operate the same admissions processes as already exist. This will be reviewed annually to ensure we continue to provide an engaging and interactive experience for applicants, as well as obtain robust data that gives a rounded picture of



each applicant in terms of their academic ability, individual interests, strengths and aspirations. The admissions teams across the schools work closely to ensure the best possible experience for prospective families.

Will there be any effect upon fees at any of the four schools?

The merger itself will not affect or change the fees set for the academic year 2024-2025. In line with all schools, the fees at Sherborne School, Sherborne Girls, Sherborne Prep and Hanford will be reviewed annually.

Will fee remission for siblings be across all four schools or be dealt with separately?

Sibling remission will continue with the current arrangements for the 2024/25 year. The new Group structure may afford some new opportunities to review the arrangements for the future.

Will there be any change to existing scholarships and bursaries provisions at the schools?

All scholarship and bursary provision will continue as planned for the 2024/25 year. The Scholarships provision is continually reviewed, and the new Group structure may afford some new opportunities. Bursaries are reviewed annually and will continue to be reviewed in this way.

5. Commercial & enterprise

Will external providers now deal with one commercial entity?

The schools currently work with many external providers. The formation of the new Group will provide the opportunity to look at each area and assess the best ways of working. There will certainly be some circumstances where a single large contract will be much more cost effective than multiple small ones. The experience for the pupils will always be at the forefront of the decision making.

Will holiday camps be run across the Sherborne Schools Group?

The new Group structure will provide a number of opportunities to enhance the commercial enterprises including the way in which holiday activities are organised.



6. Sherborne International and Sherborne Schools World (SSW)

Where does Sherborne School Newell Grange fit into these changes?

The Newell Grange site (aka Sherborne International) is already a fantastic asset for the Sherborne School Group and will continue to be so, and potentially more, for the new Group. As well as being the location for a variety of commercial endeavours it is also home for both the Easter and Summer Sherborne International Short Course programmes which continue to grow.

Where do Sherborne Qatar and SSW fit in; what is the hierarchy and structure?

The Sherborne Qatar schools are operated by a separate company, under contract to Sherborne School. SSW has recently signed an agreement with the same company that operates the Qatari schools to open, through franchise, a number of additional schools throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The interests of the schools in ensuring the education standards and integrity of these overseas schools will continue to be exercised through the Governing body of the new Group.

7. History & heritage

How will you protect the history and heritage of the individual schools?

Each school will remain on its current site and retain its individual identity and ethos. We recognise that the heritage and traditions of each school are hugely important to our alumni, and these will be carefully preserved along with each school's archives and the artefacts and documents that relate to the history of the schools.

We are committed to maintaining the traditions that are important to our respective school communities and also look forward to creating new ones together as part of a larger group.

Will there be a joint alumni association going forward?

Each senior school will retain its individual alumni associations and ensure that future generations of alumni continue to have access to the same excellent networks and resources. The alumni teams across the schools will collaborate to build on the programme of events, careers and networking opportunities for the benefit of the alumni and current pupils across the schools.



Will the senior schools' Foundations be merged going forward?

The Sherborne School Foundation and Sherborne Girls Foundation exist to stimulate philanthropy to support the growth and development of each school. Consideration will be given to the exact make-up of the two Charities and their Boards going forward; however, the individual interests of each school will continue to be promoted and protected.

The schools' development teams will also explore opportunities to work together to streamline processes, maximise efficiencies and achieve greater impact for the benefit of current and future pupils, parents and staff at an individual school and group-wide level.

