



New King's Road, London SW6  
T: 020 7736 2318 E: [info@academy.thomas-s.co.uk](mailto:info@academy.thomas-s.co.uk)

6th May 2025

Dear Community,

We are writing to tell you about a positive, exciting and significant potential development for our school.

For some time we have been carefully exploring the possibility of joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT). Our reasons for doing so are, above all, to enhance the educational opportunities for our pupils. In addition, we believe that a partnership with the right MAT will enable us to provide wide-ranging support for our teachers, to strengthen our school's ethos and culture, and to ensure that we continue to offer the high quality education which we all expect for our pupils.

After thorough consideration and discussions with several MATs, we have developed our discussions with the Quality First Education Trust (Q1E). These are now at an advanced stage and we are delighted to take this opportunity to share our proposal with you and to start a formal consultation with our school community.

The Members, Trustees, Head Teacher and Senior Leaders of Thomas's Academy propose that our school will join Quality First Education in time for the new academic year this September 2025.

In brief, the [Quality First Education Trust](#) is an established, successful, primary multi-academy trust, with four south London primary schools. It is an outward-looking trust which believes in improving primary schools and in learning from the best, whether locally, nationally or internationally. Our educational aims, vision and values are closely aligned, and successive discussions have confirmed our opinion that joining Quality First Education would bring significant benefits to our pupils, our teachers and to our school.

We attach a 'Q&A' which we hope will answer your most immediate questions. In addition, we will now enter a consultation process to gather your feedback over the course of the next few weeks, until Friday 6th June.

During this consultation, we will:

- Provide further information about Q1E and the potential benefits of joining their trust
- Answer your questions and listen to your feedback



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- Hold meetings and make further information available

We will hold a face to face meeting for all parents at the school at **9am this Thursday 8th May** and another at **5pm on Wednesday 21st May**. At these meetings, you will have an opportunity to hear the proposal, to meet senior staff from Quality First Education and to have your questions answered.

In addition, you can submit written comments and questions by using [this short questionnaire](#). We will take careful note of your comments and questions and use them to guide our consultation.

Please take time to read through the detailed information which follows. We encourage you to engage in the consultation if you are able to, either by attending one of the meetings if you can, or by submitting any questions you may have, if they are not answered below.

We assure you that we will listen very carefully to your feedback and that, as ever, any final decision we take will be made in the best interests of our pupils and our school.

Thank you, as always, for your support.

Yours sincerely,

*Sam Merullo*

**Sam Merullo**  
Chair of Trustees

*Suzanne Kelly*

**Suzanne Kelly**  
Head Teacher



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## Q&A

### ***What are you proposing and why?***

The Members, Trustees, Head Teacher and Senior Leaders of Thomas's Academy propose that our school will join Quality First Education, an established, successful, primary multi-academy trust, in time for the new academic year this September 2025.

Thomas's Academy is currently a Single Academy Trust (SAT). For some time, we have believed that we will be able to enhance educational opportunities for our pupils and strengthen our school by joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

### ***What is a Multi Academy Trust?***

A Multi Academy Trust is a charitable company which is responsible for overseeing the running of a number of schools. It has three layers of governance: the Members; the Directors; and the Local Governing Bodies.

MATs are made up of a number of academy schools. Some, such as Quality First Education, are made up only of primary schools. Others include secondary schools and some will have Special Schools too. There isn't a set number of schools that makes a MAT. The partnership established between all schools in the MAT ensures that the schools can share skills and best practice and make optimum use of resources, ensuring best value for money for each school.

### ***How many MATs have you spoken to?***

We researched a range of MATs and shortlisted five with whom we entered discussions. One of these MATs, Quality First Education, became a frontrunner and we have since undergone extensive due diligence with one another.

### ***Who are Quality First Education?***

The [Quality First Education Trust](#) is an established, successful, primary multi-academy trust, with four south London primary schools - [Belleville Primary School](#), a large school with over 1,000 children on two sites in Battersea and which is rated Outstanding, [Belleville Wix Academy](#) in Battersea, [The Alton Primary School](#) in Roehampton, and [Churchfields Primary School](#) in Beckenham. It is an outward-looking trust which believes in improving primary schools and in learning from the best, whether locally, nationally or internationally.

Belleville Primary School became a single Academy Trust in 2011, converting to a Multi-Academy Trust in April 2017 with the new name of Quality First Education Trust (Q1E). The other three schools in the Trust joined Q1E the same year.

Thomas's Academy places the safeguarding of children's welfare as our very highest priority. If you have any concerns about a child's safety or welfare, inside or outside school, please contact one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads or call us on the number above.



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Belleville was part of the first ever cohort of designated Teaching Schools. As a designated National Support School, Teaching School and Maths Hub, Belleville has a long history of excellence and supporting and improving schools. The schools in Q1E all serve different communities and have their own individual character, and all have improved since joining the Trust.

### ***Why have you selected them?***

It quickly became clear to us that, first and foremost, the [aims of the trust](#), their vision of education and their values are closely aligned with those of our school.

Their aims are clear and well established. They are that all children and adults:

- are safe
- are excellent learners
- have excellent social and emotional skills
- achieve and succeed

As we engaged in more detailed discussions, it became clear that Q1E will respect the individual ethos of our school, whilst also offering ways to enhance educational opportunities for our pupils.

The Q1E Trust believes that “the quality of a school cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” (McKinsey) and they have a strong commitment to staff training, professional development, and wellbeing. For example, there are well established, clear, policies and schemes, which allow teachers to share ideas and best practice, reducing administrative workload and allowing teachers to focus on learning that works best for their pupils.

The schools in the Trust have a focus on positive learning behaviour and high expectations for all children. A diverse variety of languages, cultures and backgrounds are represented at the schools, and two of the schools – The Alton and Churchfields – have specialist bases for children with SEND.

Further visits to Belleville confirmed our shared commitment to providing an excellent, broad and balanced curriculum whilst ensuring high standards in the core subjects. The growth in pupil numbers over time reflects the excellent quality of education provided.



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In addition to the support of our teachers, Q1E will also be able to support our school with strong and stable finances, school improvement plans and helping us to increase our admissions.

In short, we believe there is very strong alignment of aims, vision and values between Thomas's Academy and Q1E. By joining a small multi-academy Trust, our school will benefit from the support and resources this can bring, but it will also enable us to keep our roots in our community. As a one-form entry school, we are excited to see what this collaboration could bring.

### ***What does Thomas's London Day Schools think about this proposal?***

The Principals of Thomas's London Day Schools fully support this proposal. Thomas's London Day Schools is proud to have partnered with the Academy over the course of the last decade and to have included the Academy within the Thomas's family of schools. Thomas's London Day Schools also remain fully committed to supporting the Academy over the course of the next two years as we make this proposed transition. At the same time, the Principals of Thomas's have been involved in these discussions from the outset and, having met the senior leaders of Q1E and visited Belleville Primary School, they recognise the opportunities that this proposal will bring and endorse it wholeheartedly.

### ***What changes will happen - and when?***

Our proposal is that our school will formally join Q1E in time for the new academic year this September 2025. In practice, whilst staff will start working with Q1E from September, there will be very few immediate changes for pupils and parents and the school will still feel the same as it does now.

### ***What does this mean for my child's education? Why is this better?***

Joining the Q1E Trust will give us access to an enriched curriculum for your children which has been rated Outstanding by Ofsted, with support from a strong pedagogical team. We are particularly excited about this opportunity for our teachers to learn and develop as part of a larger professional network.

While this can be hard for a single-form entry, standalone school, Q1E has systems in place to ensure that there are regular opportunities for teachers who are teaching the same year groups to meet across the schools, to share ideas and best practice. Q1E has a proven track record of achieving school improvement and growing its pupil rolls in this way. This access to a wider network of professional colleagues will lead to enhanced educational opportunities for our pupils.



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***Will the ethos of the school change?***

The ethos of Q1E is very closely aligned with our own. We are confident that this proposal will only strengthen the ethos of our school.

***Will the teachers change?***

All members of staff are involved in this consultation. All of our teachers will have a legal right to stay with our school and it is our hope and expectation that they will do so.

***Will the school change its name?***

Not immediately, though it is our expectation that the school will change its name during the course of the next academic year.

***What about the uniform?***

Any changes to our school uniform will be phased over time. We are very mindful of the need not to create any unnecessary expenditure for our families.