



Proposal to form Ascent Multi Academy Trust



This consultation seeks views on the proposed establishment of a new multi-academy trust (Ascent Multi Academy Trust, Ascent) and for The Brier School and Woodsetton School to each become academy schools within Ascent. This consultation document is jointly published by the two Governing Bodies.

The consultation closes on Friday 14th February 2025. Please share your views before then.

Rationale for the proposal

Brier and Woodsetton have been working in close partnership, with Mr Stanton as the Executive Headteacher of both schools, since 2022. That partnership has benefited staff and pupils at both schools:

- Collaborating to improve curriculum, teaching and learning resources, and pedagogy to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as possible;
- Shared resources across school to improve the pupil, opportunities outcomes and personal development;
- Shared practice and expertise across schools;
- Develop career paths for teaching and support staff, including outstanding professional development, so helping us recruit, develop and retain the best staff;
- Exploring joint appointments to make us as attractive as possible when recruiting staff, including in areas where an individual school may not require a full-time member of staff.

This proposal is about formalising this partnership for the future. By establishing a multi academy trust we are creating a trust that other schools could join in the future. Well managed growth would allow us to extend the advantages outlined above, in particular regarding curriculum collaboration and developing career paths for teaching and support staff so helping us recruit, develop and retain the best staff.

Implications of forming Ascent Multi Academy Trust

If Ascent is formed, each school would:

- Retain its current school name;
- Retain its current age-range (Reception to Y11 for Brier, Reception to Y6 for Woodsetton);
- Continue to be schools for boys and girls;
- Retain its existing SEND designations and specialisms;
- Retain its current uniform;
- Continue to set term dates within the context of local schools, and retain the existing timings of the school day; and
- Retain our existing staff, who would transfer their employment to Ascent.

Our culture, ethos and values already emphasise high aspirations and expectations and these would continue.

If the proposal is implemented, Ascent would be established as a charitable company. A Board of Trustees would lead and be accountable for Ascent and all of the schools within it, and each school would have a Local Advisory Board for local governance.

What is an academy?

An academy is an independent state school, which has a Funding Agreement with the Department for Education. An academy has more legal freedoms and responsibilities than local authority schools. The more detailed Question and Answer document includes further information about these differences.

Almost half of special schools in England are now academies, including special schools in Birmingham, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Sandwell.

Where can I find further information? How can I have my say?

- A more detailed Question and Answer document has been distributed and is available on the website of each school or from the main office of each school.
- You can have your say by completing the online questionnaire that is available [here](https://forms.office.com/e/rk90ceGTgi) (<https://forms.office.com/e/rk90ceGTgi>). Paper copies are available from the office at each school.
- Meetings have been set up for staff and parents at each school as part of the consultation.

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What happens next?

Governors of each school will each consider all responses to the consultation before each governing body makes an independent decision about whether to proceed. If both schools decide to proceed it is anticipated that the schools would transfer to Ascent during summer 2025. If either school decides not to proceed, each Governing Body would need to consider the most appropriate next steps.