



# Proposal to form West Midlands Academy Trust (WMAT)

This consultation document is jointly published by the Governing Bodies of Hall Green School, Kings Norton Girls' School, and Swanshurst School.

This consultation seeks views on our joint proposal to establish a new multi-academy trust (West Midlands Academy Trust, WMAT) and for all three schools to become academy schools within WMAT.

**The consultation closes on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Please share your views before then.**

The admissions process for student entry into Y7 or Y12 at each of the schools for September 2025 is unaffected by this proposal.

## Rationale for the proposal

Hall Green, Kings Norton and Swanshurst are each high-performing, popular and successful. We share high aspirations for our students, high expectations of staff and students, and cultures of excellence. This proposal is about our shared commitment to future improvement.

We are proposing to establish West Midlands Academy Trust (WMAT) because we believe that there are advantages for our students and staff:

1. Collaborating to improve curriculum, teaching and learning resources, and pedagogy to ensure that all students achieve as well as possible;
2. Opportunities to do things together that are difficult to address as individual schools – such as invest in mental health, early help, and inclusion – to improve the provision for students;
3. Develop career paths for teaching and support staff, including outstanding professional development, so helping us recruit, develop and retain the best staff;
4. Utilising the skills across the three schools (whether leadership, teaching and learning / pedagogy, business services, or governance) to improve the performance of all; and
5. 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.

If we are as successful as we intend to be, we believe that WMAT would be attractive to other schools who share our culture and ambitions. 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 the proposal

If WMAT is formed, we would:

- Retain our current school names;
- Retain our current age-ranges (Y7 – Y11 for Hall Green, Y7 – Y13 for Kings Norton and Swanshurst);
- Continue to be co-educational for all ages (Hall Green), or girls for Y7 to Y11 and co-educational for Sixth Form (Kings Norton and Swanshurst);
- Retain our current uniforms;
- Continue to set term dates within the context of local schools, and for each school to set their school day timings;
- Retain our current admissions criteria used to determine which children are offered places; and
- Retain our existing staff, who would transfer their employment to WMAT.

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

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

In order to become WMAT academies we must follow processes set out by the Department for Education:

- Swanshurst would convert from its current status as a local authority community school; and
- Hall Green and Kings Norton would each transfer from their existing single academy trust.

## What is an academy?

An academy is an independent state school, funded directly from central government. An academy has more legal freedoms and responsibilities than local authority schools. The more detailed Question and Answer document includes a table outlining differences and similarities between being a community school such as Swanshurst. Hall Green and Kings Norton Girls' are already academy schools.

Over 80% of secondary schools in England are now academies. Within Birmingham, over 80% of the secondary-phase schools are academies, and over 75% of these academies are within MATs. The 23 MATs that include Birmingham secondary schools range in size from 2 to nearly 40 schools.

## 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](#). 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.
- The consultation closes on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Please share your views before then.

## 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 all schools decide to proceed it is anticipated that the schools would transfer to WMAT early in 2025. If not all schools decide to proceed, each Governing Body would need to consider the most appropriate next steps.