

BJS Federation of Schools

Becoming Paragon Academy Community Trust

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Issued: Tuesday 1st September 2026

Proposed conversion date: 1 September 2027



Introduction

BJS Federation of Schools is beginning an important new stage in its development. Subject to the necessary consultation, legal processes and Department for Education approval, Bonneville Primary School, Jessop Primary School and Stockwell Primary School are expected to convert to academy status and, together, establish a new multi-academy trust called **Paragon Academy Community Trust (PACT)**.

The formal conversion work will begin from **1 September 2026**, with the current planned conversion date being **1 September 2027**.

The creation of PACT is intended to build upon the successful partnership already established across the three schools. BJS Federation's commitment to school improvement through working together, sharing expertise, supporting staff and ensuring that no school is left behind will continue to be central to the new trust.

We recognise that parents will have questions about what the change may mean for their families. This FAQ provides answers based on the information currently available. It will be updated as the conversion process progresses and more detailed decisions are made.

1. What is changing?

Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell Primary Schools are currently local-authority-maintained schools operating together as the BJS Federation of Schools.

Under the proposal, each school will convert to academy status and become part of a new multi-academy trust called **Paragon Academy Community Trust, or PACT**.

PACT will be a charitable company responsible for overseeing the schools. It will enter into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and will receive its core funding directly from the Department for Education.

2. Will PACT be funded by private investors?

No. There will be no private investment in the Trust. As an academy trust, PACT will be a charitable company limited by guarantee and will operate on a not-for-profit basis.

Public funding received by PACT will be used to provide education and support the schools, pupils and communities within the Trust.

The purpose of establishing PACT is to give our schools greater collective autonomy and control over their future while protecting their individual identities and ensuring that resources remain focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for children.

3. What is a multi-academy trust?

A multi-academy trust is a charitable organisation that is responsible for operating two or more academy schools.

The trust has a board of trustees that is legally accountable for matters including:

- educational standards;
- safeguarding;
- staffing and employment;
- financial management;
- school buildings and assets;
- compliance with education and charity law; and
- the strategic development of the schools.

Although the trust has overall legal responsibility, individual schools can retain their own identity, leadership and important connections with their local communities.

4. Why is the Federation becoming a multi-academy trust?

The creation of PACT is intended to support the continued development and long-term sustainability of the three schools.

It will provide an opportunity to:

- protect and strengthen the partnership already established through BJS Federation;
- retain local control over the future direction of the schools;
- share expertise, resources and good practice more effectively;
- provide wider development and career opportunities for staff;
- develop more resilient central services and leadership arrangements;
- make more effective use of collective purchasing and economies of scale;
- support consistently high standards across all three schools; and
- create a strong platform from which the partnership can develop in the future.

This is an evolution of the existing partnership rather than a departure from its established values.

5. Why has the name Paragon Academy Community Trust (PACT) been chosen?

The name **Paragon** was chosen because it means a *model of excellence* and reflects our ambition to provide the highest quality education for every child. It represents our commitment to continuous improvement, collaboration and high standards across our family of schools. As the founding schools of the Trust, Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell share a common vision of striving for **Excellence Every Day, Everywhere, for Everyone**.

The name also reflects our longer-term vision to support school improvement more widely by working in partnership with other schools, sharing expertise and developing strong, sustainable collaborations that enable more children and communities to benefit from high-quality education. Through PACT, we are making a lasting commitment, a '**PACT**', to the children, families and communities we serve: to work together, continually improve and create opportunities that enable every child and every school to thrive.



6. When will the change happen?

The main conversion work is expected to begin from **1 September 2026**.

The current target date for Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell to become academies within PACT is **1 September 2027**.

This date is subject to:

- Department for Education approval;
 - completion of consultation;
 - completion of legal and financial due diligence;
 - agreement of the trust's governance arrangements;
 - transfer of staff, assets, land and contracts; and
 - completion of the funding agreements.
- Autumn 2026
- Spring/ Summer 2027

Staff will be informed promptly if the proposed timetable changes.

7. What work will take place during the conversion process?

The process is expected to include:

1. submitting or completing the academy conversion applications;
2. obtaining academy orders from the Department for Education;
3. establishing PACT as a charitable company;
4. appointing the trust's members and trustees;
5. agreeing the trust's governance and leadership arrangements;
6. consulting staff, parents, carers and other interested parties;
7. carrying out legal, financial, property and organisational due diligence;
8. agreeing the transfer of land, assets, contracts and responsibilities;
9. undertaking the formal staff information and consultation process;
10. putting new financial, payroll, HR and administrative arrangements in place;
11. agreeing and signing the academy funding agreements; and
12. completing final preparations for the schools to open as academies.

Department for Education guidance sets out these stages and requires formal consultation to be completed before the academy funding agreement is signed.

8. Will the schools still be called Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell?

There is no requirement for the schools to change their individual names simply because they become academies.

The schools are expected to continue to be known as:

- Bonneville Primary School;
- Jessop Primary School; and
- Stockwell Primary School.

They will also be identified as members of Paragon Academy Community Trust.

9. Will the character and ethos of our school's change?

The purpose of PACT is to protect and build upon the strengths, values and ethos of the existing schools.

Each school will continue to serve its local community, and the cultural diversity and individual character of each school will remain important. The trust will build on the Federation's existing vision of working together to secure the best possible outcomes for children, retaining the curriculum, teaching approach, school day, uniform and individual school identity.

Conversion does not, by itself, require these changes.

10. Will anything change before 1 September 2027?

Most of the work before the proposed conversion date will involve planning, consultation, legal work and the establishment of the trust's systems and governance arrangements.

Some preparatory changes may be introduced before conversion where this is necessary or beneficial.

Until conversion takes place, the schools will remain maintained schools within BJS Federation.

11. Will the schools continue to work with the local authority?

Academy conversion changes the formal legal relationship with the local authority, but it does not mean that the schools will stop working with Lambeth Council or other local partners.

PACT may continue to purchase or access appropriate services from the local authority and will continue to work collaboratively on matters such as:

- safeguarding;
- special educational needs and disabilities;
- admissions;
- attendance;
- community support; and
- services for children and families.

The exact service arrangements will be reviewed as part of the conversion process.

12. Will we still be able to access the services and support currently provided by the Local Authority?

It is important to clarify that many of the services our schools currently receive from the Local Authority are not provided free of charge. As maintained schools, we already purchase a range of services from Lambeth, and becoming an academy trust does not prevent us from continuing to purchase these services where they provide good value and meet the needs of our schools.

Services we currently purchase or commission include areas such as:

- Educational Psychology services
- Speech and Language Therapy
- HR and employment support
- Payroll and pensions administration
- Occupational Health
- Legal advice and support
- Health and Safety services
- Governor support and training
- School improvement and specialist education support

As PACT, we will have greater freedom to decide which services we purchase.

There are also important responsibilities that remain with the Local Authority regardless of whether a school is maintained or an academy. These include statutory responsibilities relating to:

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), including responsibility for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and statutory SEND processes
- Assessing children and young people for EHCPs and securing the provision specified within them
- Children's social care and safeguarding responsibilities
- Early Help and wider statutory children's services
- Ensuring sufficient school places across the borough
- Coordinating certain aspects of admissions, including the local authority's statutory admissions functions
- Attendance and Children Missing Education responsibilities
- Home-to-school transport for eligible pupils
- Alternative provision and responsibilities relating to pupils who are unable to access mainstream education
- Statutory responsibilities for vulnerable children, including children in care

Becoming PACT therefore does **not** mean that our schools or families become disconnected from Lambeth. We will continue to work closely with the Local Authority, particularly where it retains statutory responsibilities for our children and families. The key difference is that, for services we currently purchase, PACT will have greater choice and control over how and from whom those services are commissioned.

13. Will becoming a MAT affect teaching and learning?

There is no intention for conversion to disrupt teaching and learning.

The focus will remain on:

- delivering high-quality education;
- supporting children's wellbeing;
- maintaining ambitious expectations;
- providing a broad and balanced curriculum;
- sharing effective practice; and
- securing the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

Any future curriculum development will be driven by the educational needs of the children rather than simply by the legal change to academy status.

14. Could PACT include other schools in the future?

PACT is initially being established for Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell Primary Schools.

The trust may, in the future, consider working with or welcoming other schools where this supports its vision and values. Any such decision would require careful due diligence and approval through the trust's governance arrangements.

The establishment of PACT does not mean that other schools will automatically join.

15. Stakeholder engagement and accessibility

The stakeholder meeting being held at Bonneville is not a meeting specifically for Bonneville parents. It is a Federation-wide meeting for parents, carers and other stakeholders from Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell.

While no single location will be equally convenient for all families across the Federation, Bonneville was selected as the most practical and accessible venue. It has the closest access to Underground transport and, as the largest of the three schools by pupil numbers, serves the greatest number of families. It also has the capacity to accommodate a Federation-wide meeting involving stakeholders from all three school communities.

To provide greater accessibility and flexibility for families who may be unable to attend in person, we will also host a virtual stakeholder meeting on the same day, from **7:00pm to 8:00pm**. This will provide an additional opportunity for parents and carers across all three schools to hear about the proposal, ask questions and contribute their views as part of the consultation process.

Importantly, attendance at the meeting is only one part of the consultation. Parents and carers are also able to participate through the consultation survey, submit questions directly to the school or Governing Board, and contribute to the evolving FAQ document. The FAQ is being updated regularly as new questions and themes arise through our discussions with stakeholders.

16. Strategic and financial viability

The proposal to establish PACT is not a response to falling roll or educational underperformance.

The Governing Board has considered the longer-term future of all three schools over a significant period. This includes educational and financial sustainability, changing demographics, the national direction of education, greater autonomy over decisions affecting our schools, opportunities to share expertise and resources, and protecting and developing the successful partnership already established through The BJS Federation.

The proposal comes from a position of sustained educational strength. Over a significant number of years, outcomes across Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell have been consistently strong and significantly above national and local outcomes, both at the expected standard and at greater depth/higher standard. The Federation has developed a proven model of school improvement.

This sustained performance across three different school communities is important. It demonstrates that the Federation has developed an established and effective model of school improvement, underpinned by strong leadership, high expectations, a shared approach to curriculum and teaching, and the ability to deploy expertise effectively across schools.

Our ambition extends beyond maintaining the success of Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell. We believe strongly in supporting a self-improving school system, where successful schools have the capacity and responsibility to contribute to improvement beyond their own boundaries. PACT would provide a structure through which we could share our expertise more widely, develop partnerships with other schools and create further professional and leadership opportunities for our staff.

This is an important part of the Governing Board's strategic thinking. We are considering not only how we protect the future of our three schools, but also how a successful Federation with a proven track record of sustained success, expertise, and how school-improvement capacity developed across The BJS Federation, can be used to strengthen education more widely.

No school, whether maintained or an academy, can absolutely guarantee future pupil numbers or levels of pupil-led funding. Establishing PACT does not remove the demographic challenges facing schools locally and nationally. What it does provide is an opportunity for our schools to have greater influence over strategic decisions affecting their future and sustainability.

The Federation also has a long-standing and extensive relationship with Lambeth Education Authority, and has contributed to, and led on school improvement and borough-wide initiatives for many years. We would expect this constructive relationship to continue.

Much of the collaborative infrastructure required for PACT is already in place, with many functions already centrally led across Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell. PACT is therefore best understood as an evolution of our successful Federation model rather than starting again with a completely new structure.

The Local Authority is aware of our proposed direction and has expressed support for our application. We fully intend to maintain a constructive relationship with Lambeth following conversion.

17. Would becoming an Academy reduce the funding opportunities for our schools?

Becoming an academy does not prevent a school or its PTA from accessing grants, charitable funding, community fundraising or other external funding opportunities. As is currently the case, eligibility for future funding will depend on the specific criteria of each individual scheme.

PACT would itself be established as a charitable organisation, specifically an exempt charity and company limited by guarantee. This means that, in addition to the core public funding received for the education of pupils, the Trust would be able to explore charitable grants, donations, partnerships, fundraising and other external funding opportunities for which it meets the relevant eligibility criteria.

Rather than our schools being dependent solely upon opportunities available through the Local Authority, PACT would be able to develop its own strategic approach to fundraising and income generation across the Trust, that supports the educational and wider community objectives of our schools.

This could include opportunities to fund educational initiatives, community projects, enrichment, facilities and other developments that directly benefit pupils and families.

Academy conversion does not, therefore, mean that our schools would cease to be able to access external or community funding. Instead, the establishment of PACT as a charitable organisation provides another platform through which we can actively seek and develop funding opportunities.

Another example of the opportunities available through academy status is the Department for Education's Condition Improvement Fund (CIF).

CIF provides capital funding to eligible academies and smaller Multi-Academy Trusts to address significant building condition needs, including projects relating to health and safety, compliance and keeping school buildings safe and in good working order. It can also support a limited number of expansion projects.

Under our current maintained-school arrangements, capital condition funding is allocated to the Local Authority, which is responsible for determining priorities across the schools for which it is responsible. As a smaller Multi-Academy Trust, subject to the eligibility criteria applying at the time, PACT would instead be able to bid directly to the Department for Education for CIF funding for projects across our schools.

This would not guarantee that every application would be successful, as CIF is a competitive funding process. However, it provides an example of how establishing PACT could give the Trust greater responsibility for identifying its own estate priorities, developing bids and seeking significant capital investment directly for Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell.

This is part of the wider opportunity presented by PACT: greater responsibility for our resources and assets, alongside the ability to pursue funding opportunities that directly support the priorities we identify for our schools.

18. Financial implications and rebranding

There is not a proposal to rebrand Bonneville, Jessop or Stockwell as PACT.

Each school will retain its existing name, identity and uniform. PACT will be the name of the overarching Multi-Academy Trust rather than a replacement identity for the individual schools.

Parents will therefore not be expected to purchase new uniforms, school bags or other branded items as a consequence of academy conversion.

There will, of course, be costs associated with establishing the Trust and completing the legal and administrative conversion process. These are being considered as part of the financial planning and due diligence associated with the proposal.

Our approach will be proportionate. We do not intend to unnecessarily replace signage, websites or other materials simply because PACT has been established. Where administrative changes are required, these will be planned and managed appropriately.

19. Parental involvement and reassurance

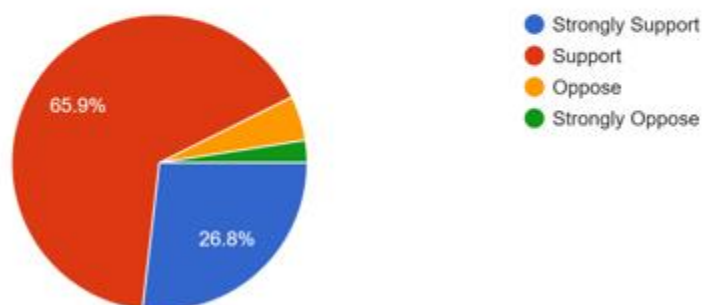
Parental and community engagement would not disappear if our schools became academies. Quite the opposite: one of our priorities is that our schools remain firmly rooted in and responsive to the communities they serve.

The creation of PACT would change the legal structure within which our schools operate; it would not change our belief that strong schools are built through relationships with their children, families and communities.

20. Staff views so far *

The pie chart below presents the views of 37% of staff from across The BJS Federation who have responded to the consultation so far. Of those who responded, 92.7% are in support, 4.9% opposed and 2.4% strongly opposed.

31. Taking everything you currently know into account, what is your overall view of the proposal for BJS Federation's three schools to establish Paragon Academy Community Trust?



21. If the schools are already successful, why do we need to change? *

Our schools are successful, and the proposal to establish PACT is about protecting and sustaining that success for the future, rather than changing what is already working well.

The educational and financial landscape in which schools operate is changing. Resources are increasingly stretched, pupil demographics are changing, and schools need to be able to respond quickly and strategically to emerging challenges. Without sufficient autonomy and control over the decisions that affect our schools, there is a risk that diminishing resources and external pressures could gradually impact the provision, opportunities and capacity we have worked hard to establish.

Our experience as a Federation has shown us the value of being able to share expertise, deploy resources effectively and make decisions according to the needs of our individual schools and communities. Establishing PACT would give us greater strategic autonomy to protect these strengths, respond to future challenges and determine how our resources are used.

Put simply, to preserve what we have built, we need to be in the strongest possible position to protect it. PACT is about looking ahead and creating the conditions that will enable Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell to continue to thrive, while retaining the individual identities, values and successful practices that make each of our schools special.

22. What additional central charges or ‘top slice’ would the schools pay as part of PACT? *

Our schools already collectively fund the shared capacity and expertise that supports all three schools across The BJS Federation. This is an established part of the way Bonneville, Jessop and Stockwell work together and would continue under PACT. We are therefore not proposing to create an additional layer of cost simply because the schools become a MAT.

Currently, as maintained schools, a proportion of funding is retained or charged by the Local Authority for particular functions and services. As academies, elements of this funding would instead be retained within PACT, giving our schools greater control over how this money is used and enabling resources to be directed according to the needs and priorities of our schools.

PACT would also provide further opportunities to achieve economies of scale. While our three schools already work closely together, as maintained schools within a Federation they are not currently recognised as a single legal entity for procurement and contracting purposes, which can limit our ability to fully maximise our collective purchasing power. As PACT, the schools would operate within one Trust, providing greater opportunities to purchase services, contracts and resources collectively, negotiate from a stronger position and secure better value for money. This would enable us to make more effective use of our combined resources and ensure that funding goes further for our schools and children.

Any Trust contribution or ‘top slice’ would therefore largely support arrangements and expertise that our schools already fund, rather than representing a wholly new cost. Importantly, funding that would otherwise be retained or charged by the Local Authority could remain within PACT, alongside opportunities to generate further efficiencies through collective purchasing. Our aim is to ensure that as much funding as possible directly benefits our schools and children.

Final reassurance

The proposal for PACT is ultimately about looking ahead and considering what will best serve our schools in the years to come. We will continue to approach this important decision carefully and thoughtfully, with the long-term success of our children and school communities at the heart of our considerations.