

Ark Alexandra Academy

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the vision for Ark Alexandra Academy?

Ark Alexandra Academy will preserve and build on the legacy of both William Parker and Helenswood.

Ark Alexandra Academy will be a co-educational Church of England school with strong universal Christian values that firmly inform our ethos and culture.

Our inclusive vision, ethos and curriculum will give clarity of purpose for each student and provide them with the highest life currency in order that every student can go to university or into the career of their choice.

At Ark Alexandra Academy, we believe that an excellent education will enable all our young people to:

- achieve the highest academic results that provide the best opportunities for their future success.
- develop the attributes and skills to be both highly employable and to be positive contributors to their community.
- be creative, emotionally intelligent and physically active young adults in order that they can lead a happy and healthy lifestyle.
- We will be relentless in our drive for excellent standards and the highest academic outcomes, without exception.

Who chose the name of the school and why was Ark Alexandra chosen?

The name of the school was chosen by the joint Student Council of Helenswood and William Parker. The students wanted a name which was reflective of the locality of both schools, and which represents the local community and history of the area. Alexandra Park was opened in 1882 and two lime trees were planted in the park to represent a new beginning and local growth. The students felt that this is symbolic of the new journey and the fresh start for the school.

Students were also keen to honour the legacy of the current school names and therefore they will be retained as site names i.e. the lower school will be the Helenswood site and the upper school will be the William Parker site.

We are also looking at 'house' names in the new pastoral structure which will represent people who were born or who resided in Hastings and whose work has been influential and highly regarded locally, nationally and internationally.

Will the sixth form also change name?

Yes – the sixth form will be called Ark Alexandra Academy Sixth Form.

Who will be the Headteacher?

Ms Powell, the current Executive Principal (EP) will continue as EP of Ark Alexandra Academy. Ms Newman, the current Principal of William Parker, will remain as Principal.

Who will be on the governing body?

We are currently in discussion with the local governing bodies at both schools about how we bring them together as one local governing body (LGB). It has been confirmed that the current Chair of William Parker, Clifford Smith, will become Chair of the new LGB, with David Hinton, current Chair of Helenswood, becoming Vice-Chair.

How will the church school status be reflected in the curriculum/school day?

Ark Alexandra will be a Church of England school. The school will have an inclusive Christian ethos based on the universal values of faith, excellence and kindness alongside high expectations and an ambition for every child to succeed. All students will study RE and personal development through the Character programme. RE GCSE will also be available as an option.

All English schools are required to offer social, moral and religious education. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and from acts of collective worship if they choose. This applies equally to faith and non-faith based schools.

William Parker has a long history as a Church school with an admissions policy that has welcomed, without preference, students of all faiths and none. This inclusive policy will continue at Ark Alexandra.

How will the new school preserve the traditions of William Parker and Helenswood?
The Student Councils are meeting regularly with school leaders to discuss how the traditions of the two schools will be preserved. The first decision that has been taken is the current school names will be retained as site names i.e. the lower school will be the Helenswood site and the upper school will be the William Parker site.

The legacy of the House System is important to the students and the community and this will be retained. The House names will represent people who were born or who lived in Hastings and whose work has been influential and highly regarded locally, nationally and internationally.

Will the 400th anniversary of the founding of the William Parker school still be celebrated?

Yes. We have already been in discussion with the William Parker Foundation to plan the 400th anniversary of the founding of the original William Parker school. This work is continuing and will culminate in a series of events in July that celebrates the 400th anniversary and also marks the beginning of a new chapter for the school. Students and staff from both schools will be involved in this.

What curriculum with the new school offer?

The new school will have a rigorous academic curriculum with a strong emphasis on the performing arts and sports.

Lower school

In the lower school (Years 7 and 8) there will be a strong academic curriculum with a focus on Maths, English, Science, the humanities and a foreign language. All students will study RE and personal development through the Character programme. Students will also engage in a rich and varied curriculum of arts and sports through lessons in Art & Design, Drama, Dance and PE.

Upper school

In the upper school (Years 9-11), students will engage in a three year GCSE programme with academic excellence at the core. Students will continue their RE and personal development studies through their weekly Character lesson and will be able to choose up to 4 GCSE options. All students will continue to study their choice of History or Geography, alongside a wide variety of academic options (Triple Science, Geography, History, Spanish, RE, French) and those based around students' skills and interests (Art and Design, Catering, Enterprise, Health and Social Care, Drama, Product Design, Photography, Dance, and PE).

Sixth Form

The sixth form (Years 11 and 12) will continue to offer a wide range of A level options (English, Maths, Further Maths, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Economics, Spanish, Psychology, and Sociology), as well as the Business Studies professional pathway, and level 2 professional pathway, with a new addition of the Applied Science professional pathway for those students aiming for a career in the sciences. All sixth form students will continue their study of RE and personal development in their weekly Character session and engage in sports every week.

What enrichment activities will be available?

All students will have the opportunity to pursue their interests through the enrichment programme. Students will be able to participate in a broad range of activities particularly in the sports and the arts. We aim to work closely with the successful and diverse range of local clubs and associations in order that our students have exposure to new, creative and exciting enrichment experiences.

Will the coeducational school have a House System? If so, what will the Houses be called?

Yes – Ark Alexandra will have a House System. The legacy of the House Systems is important to the students and the community and the House names will represent people who were born or who lived in Hastings and whose work has been influential and highly regarded locally, nationally and internationally.

Will staff and students have to travel between the two sites?

Teaching staff will only be required to travel between sites in any one day on very rare occasions. Some operations staff may be required to travel between sites during the day.

It is possible that some student travel may be required for particular events or to access facilities such as the running track, but in general the students will remain on one school site.

How will the SEND provision be handled? Will there be special needs facilities'?

We will continue to provide the necessary support and personalised interventions for our SEND students - and will work closely with SEND staff at Helenswood and William Parker to support pupils through the transition.

What will the behaviour policy be?

We are in the process of finalising the behaviour policy. Both schools currently operate a very similar behaviour policy and therefore the policy for the new school will reflect what is currently in place.

The Student Councils are also formulating a Respect Code that will detail how the boys and the girls will be expected to treat each other and to care for each other. Once drafted, there will be opportunities for all students to engage with the code and to share their understanding and interpretation of it.

Will Place2Be remain?

We will continue to provide a counselling service for students on both sites.

What building works are planned? Will the new/refurbished facilities be ready for September 2019?

There is a large programme of works being planned across the two sites including:

- Dining hall expansions at both sites
- Additional toilets and coeducational changing facilities
- Significant redecoration, repurposing and refurbishment of classrooms
- Dance studio refurbishment at William Parker
- Electrical upgrades
- Roofing and window replacement

Many of these works will be completed by September 2019 with some continuing into the Autumn term.

Which site will students be based at?

The 'lower school' for Year 7 and 8 students will be based on the Helenswood Lower site, and the 'upper school' and sixth form (Years 9 to 13) will be based on the William Parker site.

Will the toilets be unisex?

There will be a combination of unisex, boys' and girls' toilets.

Will there be Open Days and taster sessions for new pupils joining in 2019?

Yes. There will be a number of meetings held for parents and opportunities to visit the school.