



Proposal to bring together Helenswood Academy and William Parker Academy

Additional Frequently Asked Questions

These are additional questions that were raised at consultation meetings between 2 – 30 October, and which are not already covered in the FAQ document

Will the Villiers Park programme stay in place?

This is something that we will be looking at in more detail if the proposal to bring the two schools together is approved.

Where will the drama lessons at William Parker take place?

We are still looking in detail at the plans for the site but we would like to refurbish the dance studio at William Parker – with drama then taking place in the theatre.

Would dance be offered to Y11 boys?

Dance would be offered as an enrichment opportunity to the current Year 11 boys – not as a GCSE option. This is because we can't change GCSE options at this stage for those taking exams this year.

Will it be a school policy for boys to sit next to girls in class?

We are not planning to adopt a policy that boys will always sit next to girls in lessons. Instead, teachers will set seating plans for each of their individual classes to ensure that students are grouped in a configuration that supports effective learning.

How will you support the children who need extra support if their teachers leave?

Children that have additional needs will be fully supported. If the proposal is approved we will ensure that we have a staffing structure that provides effective support for all children.

Will Duke of Edinburgh be offered in the co-educational school?

Yes – both schools already offer the Duke of Edinburgh award and this would continue.

Will you be promoting creative arts as well as the performing arts – i.e. photography/animation etc?

Yes – we already offer photography and we want to utilise the expertise in the local area to offer enrichment opportunities.

Would we have Head Girl and Head Boy – or just one person?

It is our anticipation that we would have a Head Girl and a Head Boy.

If the schools join together would there be more people choosing Philosophy and Ethics so that we can run it as a GCSE?

As with any GCSE course – we would need to consider pupil numbers before confirming that we are able to offer a GCSE class.

Why have student numbers declined since the schools joined the Ark network?

We recognise that student numbers at William Parker and Helenswood have declined and we are committed to building on both the increases in numbers, and the improvement in results, that we have seen recently.

There is currently excess capacity in Hastings (which this proposal would help to address) and William Parker and Helenswood have borne the brunt of it. Part of the reason for this is that the schools are in old buildings, spread over three separate sites, all of which need significant investment - as compared to new buildings and facilities at other Hastings schools. They are also single sex at a time when this seems to be increasingly less attractive to students and parents.

Will the two year contracts for Teach First teachers be honoured?

We can't pre-empt the outcome of the consultation but if the proposals we will enter into a full and transparent consultation process on any changes to the staffing structure.

What will set the proposed co-educational school apart from the other schools in the town?

We aim to create an excellent school which is sustainable into the future and builds upon the strengths of Helenswood and William Parker. The co-educational school will specialise in the sports and the arts. We want to work more closely with primary schools to strengthen the transition process between primary and secondary school - and we want to develop the breadth of opportunities available to our students by building links in the community to create enrichment opportunities.

Which year groups are currently being taught on the Helenswood upper school site?

Currently the Year 11 girls are being taught at the Helenswood upper school site.

Helenswood has faculties and William Parker has departments – how would that work if the schools come together?

We will look at the organisation of subject teams if and when the proposal is approved.

When was it decided that this consultation would be announced?

It was decided during the summer holidays that we would begin the consultation in September.

Doesn't William Parker get additional funding from the Diocese?

No. William Parker was a Voluntary Controlled school before it joined Ark. This means that the school didn't, and doesn't, receive funding from the Diocese in the same way that a Voluntary Aided school would.

If there is a delay in the DfE decision – what is the cut off point for saying that this won't be implemented for September 2019?

We are not anticipating a delay but we would need to receive a decision by the end of January.

Are there any other names in the mix?

The students have made some suggestions and we want to listen to what they are saying. All suggestions are welcome from students, staff, parents and the local community.

Will teachers be required to work over the summer holidays in order to prepare for the co-educational school?

No.

How do staff arrange to come and visit the 'other' school during the school day?

Staff are welcome to visit either of the schools at any time that is convenient for them.

If staff are already looking for jobs would that go against us during the restructure?

No.