



Proposal to amalgamate Ark Chamberlain Primary Academy and Perry Beeches V/Ark Victoria Academy

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the proposal?

The proposal is to amalgamate PBV (Ark Victoria) with ark Chamberlain to create a four form entry all through school from September 2018.

2. Why is Ark proposing to join together Ark Chamberlain Primary Academy with Perry Beeches V/Ark Victoria Academy?

There are currently too many primary school places in the Small Heath area and this is affecting some of our neighbouring primary schools where pupil numbers have been falling.

As you know, Perry Beeches V will be joining the Ark network on 1st March and will be called Ark Victoria Academy. We believe that we have a unique opportunity to bring these two schools together to create an excellent all-through school for the families of Small Heath. At the same time, amalgamating the two schools will help the local authority and our neighbouring primary schools by addressing the overprovision of places in the area.

3. What would happen if the schools aren't joined together?

If the two schools continue to operate independently we would still need to work with our neighbouring schools to address the overprovision of primary places in the area. The most likely scenario is that Chamberlain would become a 2 form entry (60 places per year group) primary school, and we would reduce the primary places at Ark Victoria to 2 form entry (60 places per year group) at the same time.

We know that there are many benefits of having an all-through education and by bringing these two schools together we will be maximising these benefits for more children and families in Small Heath.

4. What is an all-through school?

An all-through school is a school which combines at least two stages of a child's education. In this case we are proposing to create an all-through school from Reception to Year 13. It means that once a child joins the school in Reception they stay at that school until the end of their education in Year 11 or Year 13 – unless their parents decide to move schools.

5. What are the benefits of an all-through school?

There are many benefits of an all-through education. We know that consistency in education improves a child's performance, and we know that many children find the transition between Y6 and 7 incredibly difficult. Children in an all-through school have a seamless educational experience from Reception to Y11. It also allows staff to get to know the children and their families incredibly well on an individual level throughout their education as they are with us for 12 years.

Both schools are already working with the same families – this amalgamation will maximise that and become a real hub for the local community.

There are also many benefits for staff working in an all-through school including increased leadership opportunities and working with pupils across the key stages.

6. When will the two schools come together?

It is our intention to amalgamate these schools from September 2018.

7. PBV/Ark Victoria is already an all-through school – why does it need to amalgamate with Chamberlain?

Due to the overprovision of primary places in the area, if PBV doesn't amalgamate with Chamberlain the number of primary places available at PBV would need to reduce from the current figure of 100 per year group down to 60 per year group (two form entry) from September 2018. At the same time, Chamberlain would be reconfigured to become a two form entry primary school.

We believe that the better solution is to bring the two schools together to create one all-through school with four forms of entry (120 places per year group)

8. What would the all-through school be called?

The all-through school will be called Ark Victoria Academy.

9. Why can't Ark Chamberlain become the all-through school?

Regulations outlined by the Department for Education state only those schools rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted should apply to increase their age range. Because Ark Chamberlain is currently rated Requires Improvement it is unlikely that we would be granted approval to expand to create the all-through school. As Perry Beeches V is already an all-through school there would be no change to the age range.

10. Will my child need a new uniform?

All children currently on roll at Ark Chamberlain will be provided with a new uniform, free of charge, in September 2018. The pupils at PBV will be provided with Ark Victoria uniforms when the school joins Ark on the 1st March.

11. Has this amalgamation been confirmed?

No, this is a consultation which will last for four weeks. Following the consultation, we will need to apply to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) to grant us approval for the amalgamation. The RSC will take into account the consultation responses as part of the decision making process.

12. Who would be the Headteacher/s of the all-through school?

Following the consultation on the amalgamation, we will then begin a consultation with staff on a proposed staffing structure. The structure of the senior leadership team, including the Headteacher/s will be determined as part of this process.

13. Will there be staff redundancies as a result of the amalgamation?

If the amalgamation is agreed, we will begin a consultation with staff on a proposed staffing structure for the all-through school. It is our intention to begin this consultation on the 5th March and we would hope to conclude before the Easter break. It is possible that there may be redundancies but we would work closely with the unions and endeavour to keep any redundancy to a minimum.

We have carefully considered the impact on staff of amalgamating the two schools, versus reconfiguring Chamberlain as a 2FE primary school, and reducing the primary intake to 2FE at PBV. We believe that amalgamating the two schools will considerably reduce the risk of redundancy.

14. What is the process for the transfer of staff into the amalgamated school?

Staff would transfer under Ark's Managing Change policy and a full consultation on a proposed staff structure for the all-through school would take place before the Easter break.

15. Where will the pupils be taught?

We are currently undertaking feasibility studies to look at how best to use the Chamberlain and PBV buildings and we will keep parents and staff updated on these plans as they progress.