

Behind the Scenes at Ark Putney Academy: a parent's view

'Behind the Scenes at Ark Putney Academy' is a series of blog posts written by Sarah Sterne, a parent and governor at our school. Sarah writes from a parent's perspective about the challenges in selecting a Secondary School, getting past the jargon of new progress measures and finding the right learning community environment to suit a child's individual needs

Post 6: National Offer Day- 1st March

If you submitted your school admissions application online, then you will be emailed the outcome of your application in the evening of March 1st. If you applied using a paper form, the outcome letter will be sent by first class post on 1st March.

So, 1st of March or soon after is when you will know whether your son or daughter will be offered a place in your first preference school. If it has not been possible for you to be offered your first preference school, the notification letter will provide detailed information about your application and what to do next.

Congratulations if you have been offered a place at Ark Putney Academy. I hope you will accept the offer. Please click [here](#) for more information about how to accept it. Otherwise, please do contact the school if you would like to visit again before making the decision to accept the offer. However, the acceptance deadline is 14th March.

You can still apply for Ark Putney Academy

It is important to note that your son or daughter can still apply for Ark Putney Academy after March 1st, even if it wasn't one of your original choices. Every school has a waiting list and any good head teacher (or senior staff team member) will be available to meet prospective parents and give them a tour of the school during March. Bear in mind, that there is typically a lot of movement on waiting lists from the second week of March onwards and that is why it is very important that you contact the school if you are now interested in visiting. Last year, seven pupils were added to APA's waiting list during March and they are all now students in the school. APA has an open door policy, you can call the school at any time to make an appointment for a tour on 020 8788 3421. Senior staff will be genuinely interested meeting you and finding out whether the school will suit your child's needs.

Reasons why you may now be interested in APA

- 1) You didn't know about APA when you originally applied for Secondary school admission.

- 2) You have recently moved into the local area, including Wandsworth and Merton.
- 3) You have seen the school advertised in Wimbledon or on buses and are now interested.
- 4) Your son or daughter has been allocated to a single sex school but you would prefer a mixed (co-educational) setting.
- 5) You have been allocated your first preference of school but you have now changed your mind.
- 6) You didn't know that you could apply to APA without doing the Wandsworth Test.
- 7) You live outside of the borough of Wandsworth and you didn't know that you could cross boroughs and apply to a Wandsworth school.

10 Reasons to apply to APA:

- 1) Ark Putney Academy has achieved an impressive 'value-added' score as measured by 'Progress 8'; which is arguably the best measure of the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools.
- 2) APA will now be extending its languages department and will be offering Spanish from September 2017 in addition to French.
- 3) From September 2017, older students at APA will be given the responsibility of becoming 'travel ambassadors' on local buses in the mornings, including the 93 to and from central Wimbledon. The travel ambassadors will be present at bus stops and available to answer questions and assist younger pupils. Senior staff always accompany the students after school to local bus stops, supervising them crossing the road and boarding buses.
- 4) If your son or daughter has a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD or ASD, you may have found it hard to find the right learning environment. Even if your child does not have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), then you can make an appointment to meet with APA's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to discuss his or her learning needs before making an application to APA. APA is an inclusive school and welcomes children with SpLDs. Reasonable adjustments to help pupils achieve their potential can be made and the school has a supportive ethos.
- 5) High attainers are challenged by the provision of aspirational targets and further opportunities for enhancing their learning such as debating.
- 6) Students are put into sets rather than streams for subject learning. This enables learning to be tailored to individual need and suits pupils who may be strong in one subject area e.g. mathematics but developing in another e.g. English. The sets are frequently reviewed and can be adjusted to ensure that every pupil is in the appropriate set for every curriculum area.

- 7) APA is a developing school which is responsive to feedback from parents. For example, the introduction of Spanish is in response to feedback from current and prospective families.
- 8) APA has a very broad intake making it an ideal environment for friendship groups to form. This is aided by the involvement of students in extra-curricular clubs which enables them to meet others with common interests. School trips provide further opportunities to make friends and have wider experiences.
- 9) APA is a culturally diverse school which gives the students the opportunity to get to know a wide range of peers from different backgrounds. In my view, it is a unique learning environment which is respectful of differences and promotes a community ethos.
- 10) You do not need to sit the Wandsworth test to apply for APA.

How do students travel to APA?



The nearest bus stop to APA is the Green Man bus garage. Children come from within Wandsworth and other neighbouring boroughs to the Green Man and walk to school in groups. The bus from Wimbledon is the 93, which leaves from outside Morrisons, Next, opposite Wimbledon Library and from Wimbledon Village. It is an easy journey and takes around 15-20 minutes to go down Parkside and arrive at The Green Man. Other pupils travel from Raynes Park by getting a bus to Wimbledon Village. Others come by bus from Kingston and Hammersmith and Fulham.

In summary, if for any reason you are unhappy with the offer of a secondary school place which you have received, do not despair! Your son or daughter can still apply for a place at APA now. Do not hesitate to contact the school to arrange a tour and consider joining the waiting list.