

Why are the two Schools creating Pembroke Education?

The creation of Pembroke Education will provide a strategic opportunity to strengthen each school individually as educational provisions and businesses by working together to enhance the school experience for all pupils while maintaining their distinctive characters. Both schools share a similar ethos, values, and high aspirations. Combining strengths, expertise, and resources positions the group to deliver an exceptional, future-ready education, underpinned by sustainable, long-term financial resilience.

What will the relationship between the Pembroke Education schools be?

Each school will retain its own identity, character and traditions while benefiting from collaboration where it adds value. Clifton High School and the Downs Preparatory School are the founding schools that will benefit from new opportunities that their close physical locations present. Initially, this will include joint activities, particularly in sport and outdoor education, with more shared initiatives developing over time.

Is this a takeover?

No. Legally it is a charity merger, not a purchase or takeover.

Will the school names change?

No. Both schools will continue to be known as Clifton High School and The Downs Preparatory School. Berties Nursery, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Downs Preparatory School will also retain its own name. The joint group name that they all proudly belong to will be **Pembroke Education**, reflecting the shared heritage of the founding schools linked to Pembroke Road, Bristol. Further context on the name can be found in the Our History section of the Pembroke Education website.

Why Clifton High School?

The two schools are aligned in ethos, values, and educational vision. Clifton High is a sought-after school in the Bristol market that can provide a natural progression route for Year 9 pupils, acknowledging the strength of the prep model. They can provide complementary opportunities in facilities and the community. They also align with our ambitions for a group, ensuring that our unique characteristics and provision are championed and strengthened further through collaboration. Clifton High recognises the unique opportunity the Downs real estate presents to co-develop state of the art sports facilities and other exciting outdoor education and adventure opportunities that the merger presents.

Will Senior Leadership change in Pembroke Education Schools?

Current Heads will remain in roles at Clifton High School, the Downs Preparatory School and Berties Nursery. They are supported by their existing Senior Leadership Teams, maintaining each school's independence.

A single Council of Governors will be formed to serve over each group school. The Chair of Governors will be Dr Peter Bodkin formerly the Chair of Clifton High, The Vice Chair of Governors will be Mr Jason Collard, formerly the Chair of the Downs.

A new group executive team will be formed and led by Mr Will Phelan, Head of Clifton High School, as Head of Pembroke Education and Mrs Debbie Isaachsen, Head of the Downs Preparatory School and Deputy of Pembroke Education.

The full team can be found in the Our Team section of the Pembroke Education website.

What impact will Pembroke Education have on staffing structures?

There will be no immediate changes to staffing structures. A small group executive team will guide strategic development, while each school's senior leadership continues daily operations. These roles can be found on the Pembroke Education website.

Will there be redundancies?

No redundancies are planned as a result of the formation of this group.

How will the group benefit the children?

For Downs Preparatory pupils:

- Investment in sports facilities and increased sporting opportunities
- Bespoke Outdoor Education curriculum for all year groups – The Pembroke Award
- Future access to specialism including: Food & Nutrition, Design and Technology and Career advice
- A guaranteed pathway to Clifton High School at Year 9, for those families wanting it, recognising and preserving the valued prep school model

For Clifton High pupils:

- Access to expanded facilities in a country setting
- Enhanced sporting opportunities with increased access to facilities
- Access to a bespoke outdoor education programme – The Pembroke Award

Will pupils need to travel between sites?

Some travel will take place for sport, outdoor education or access to specialist facilities. Transport will be provided during the school day as part of the school offer.

Will the curriculum change?

Each school's curriculum will remain in place. Both schools continually develop their provision, and future collaboration may create further opportunities, especially in outdoor education, sport and co-curricular. Expected Department for Education changes for 2028 will also inform any updates, and consultation with relevant staff will be undertaken.

Will any other aspects of the Downs Provision change?

Very few. Class sizes remain the same, our pastoral system, code of conduct, and timetables all remain the same and are unique to our school. Each school has its own Safeguarding Teams, DSL and processes. There may be some more joint opportunities in Sport, Outdoor Education and Co-Curricular. We will also be looking to make use of some of the more Senior School facilities at Clifton High, such as Laboratories, Food Technology and Design rooms. These opportunities will fit in with our current offering and structures.

Will term dates or school days change?

No immediate changes are planned. Term dates may be aligned over time.

Will school uniforms change?

No. Both schools are proud of their current uniforms and form an important part of their independent identities.

How will this impact Bertie's Nursery & Pre-School?

Bertie's Nursery & Pre-School will become part of Pembroke Education and continue to offer a nurturing, inspiring environment where each child can flourish.

Will other schools join Pembroke Education?

Not immediately, though the group intends to welcome additional schools that share similar values in future.

When is Pembroke Education launched?

The legal charity merger of the founding schools is scheduled to take effect on 1st September 2026. However, the work of planning and developing the group and its collaborative opportunities has already begun.

Where can I direct questions?

Via the School Office email address; office@thedowns.avon.sch.uk

