

Ark John Keats Academy

Bell Lane, London, EN3 5PA

Inspection dates 28–29 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The exemplary leadership and high aspirations of the Principal and head of the primary school have contributed to the academy establishing outstanding teaching practices.
- All leaders including governors, and the Ark Schools board and central team, provide excellent support and challenge.
- Behaviour and the academy's work to keep pupils safety are outstanding. Pupils respect staff, and have deep, trusting working relationships with them.
- Children and pupils succeed very well. They and their parents believe in the academy's values (KEATS)¹, and as a result, children and pupils have very good self-discipline.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers are highly effective in using what the academy defines as the 'key pillars' of teaching. For example, there is emphasis on depth before breadth to develop pupils' mastery of skills.
- The academy's systems for assessing and monitoring attainment and progress are exemplary.
- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils attain skills and standards that are at least in line with those typically found for their age or key stages, with the majority exceeding them.
- Provision in early years is outstanding and children make rapid progress. Very strong leadership of early years and close teamwork reflect the academy's aim of high expectations.
- Provision for the disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is highly effective. Pupils receiving support through additional funding achieve as well their peers in the academy, with better outcomes in literacy.
- The achievement of the most able exceeds expectations for their respective age group in most areas of their learning. Those in Year 1 and Year 7 are suitably challenged to make rapid progress.
- Excellent partnership with parents contributes to them working closely with the academy to accelerate their children's progress.
- The curriculum is exceptional. It is varied and takes into consideration pupils' learning over time. The promotion of pupils' learning of British values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

¹ KEATS represent the academy's values: Kindness, Effort, Aspiration, and Tenacity brings Success.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, 12 of them jointly with members of the senior leadership team in both the primary and secondary phase. Observations of teaching included short visits to lessons in the primary phase.
- Meetings were held with the Principal and head of primary school, other senior and middle managers. A joint meeting was also held with the local Chair of the Governing Body, two groups of pupils and the Director for Primary Schools and a representative from Ark multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors considered 51 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. A meeting was held with a few parents who wanted to share their views about the academy’s work. The inspectors also took account of 30 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors observed the academy’s work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the academy’s self-evaluation and development plan and records of attainment of children in Reception and of pupils in Year 1 and Year 7. Other documents reviewed included minutes of the local governing body’s meetings, monitoring and evaluation of teachers’ work, and the provision for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs. Inspectors also considered a range of policies on, for example, behaviour, safeguarding, equality and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Carmen Rodney, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Lynton Karmock-Golds

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy opened in September 2013, with 27 pupils starting in Reception. The first cohort now includes 57 pupils in Year 1, 60 in Reception and 138 pupils in Year 7. In September 2015, the academy will open a 50-place nursery and the primary phase will increase to three forms of entry. The academy will add new year groups each year until it enrolls all year groups from nursery through to the sixth form.
- The academy provides full-time provision for 127 children in Reception.
- Children in Reception and primary attend the academy from 8.30am to 4.00pm, and pupils in the secondary phase attend from 8.30am to 4.30pm.
- The school serves a diverse community. The largest ethnic groups are pupils from White British heritage, other Black African heritage, Turkish heritage, Caribbean heritage, White Eastern European heritage, and White and Black African heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the additional government funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority is high. A high proportion of pupils are known to speak English as an additional language.
- The academy is built on the site of two previous schools and is currently undergoing extensive refurbishment. The academy has a phased building programme; the primary phase is completed and a small section of specialist rooms is used in the secondary building. The refurbishment is expected to be completed in August 2015.
- The academy is sponsored by Ark (Absolute Return for Kids) and was opened because of the shortage of primary school places in the local community and the expected shortage of secondary places at secondary level in future years.
- All key appointments to senior positions have been made. Further appointments will be made to the senior team and other teaching and non-teaching staff as the number of pupils on roll increases.
- As a new academy with the first cohorts at the beginning of Key Stages 1 and 3, it is too early to report on the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in the national tests and GCSE examinations.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the academy's vision of high aspirations and cultural literacy is sustained as the academy expands by:
 - developing consistently the leadership and management skills of staff at all levels
 - ensuring that all learners continue to make rapid and sustained progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal and other senior leaders, including the governors, have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They know the community very well and have a very good understanding of fulfilling the academy's vision.
- Leaders, under the direction of the Principal, have kept up the momentum of high aspirations by creating and communicating this clear vision for improving the quality of education. The values and characteristics of the academy are very well developed and contribute strongly to all accepting the 'can-do' ethos. The Academy Pledge is repeated and used daily by pupils: 'I believe that I can...learn and improve; I am committed to working hard...I treat others with respect, and KEATS brings success.'
- Senior leaders ensure that the academy runs smoothly. They have created a culture where staff are committed to the Ark vision and values; children and pupils behave extremely well and want to succeed.
- One of the academy's outstanding strengths is the quality of provision to develop high aspirations. Careers education, advice and support, as well as leadership skills, are very well promoted. Pupils have responded well to this guidance; they are highly ambitious and the most-able pupils have started to map out their pathway to the best universities in the country. For example, they competed successfully against much older students in a regional Ark schools debate on 'radicalisation in the media', to achieve third prize.
- Middle leaders and teachers know they can succeed in the academy. A particular strength of their work lies in the teamwork of teachers and support staff monitoring each other's work. For example, training and the monitoring of lessons contribute to them knowing the main strengths and where cross-curricular links need to be made. Training is continuous and works efficiently as internal, local and national priorities are kept under review.
- Senior leaders ensure that middle leaders and teachers new to the profession continuously spread the benefits of their training widely. Middle leaders use the opportunities offered, such as the instructional leadership programme, to build their capacity in preparation for the bigger tasks ahead as the academy expands.
- The leadership of teaching and procedures for monitoring teachers' work are robust. Senior and middle leaders use weekly monitoring to drive improvement. This provides clear guidance on how staff can improve their work. As a result, staff are reflective and know that only the best is expected.
- Performance management is thorough. Leaders review pupils' progress and additional staff responsibilities regularly. Effective monitoring ensures that feedback is consistent. Staff are, therefore, reflective and know that a financial reward is not given unless pupils make rapid progress.
- Systems for recording and monitoring the progress of children and pupils are exemplary. Leaders and all staff use the test results very well to help pupils realise there are no excuses or short cuts to high academic achievement.
- A relentless focus on improving performance through standardised tests in all subjects means that staff analyse results regularly and closely. Leaders interpret the information thoroughly to ensure that all groups have equal opportunity to achieve well. The Equality Act 2010 is therefore implemented well and linked to all policies. Regular tests across all phases ensure that leaders are unrelenting in reviewing outcomes and planning for improvement.
- The academy has developed successfully a rigorous and effective approach to assessing the rates of progress children and pupils make.
- The curriculum is exceptional; it extends to the holidays and weekends and the extensive range of enrichment activities. More time to learn is a contributory factor to children and pupils making very rapid progress. Pupils are continually introduced to new ideas beyond their experiences. The value of 'depth before breadth' is evident, as the teachers seek to deepen pupils' thinking. This helps them develop the educational skills needed to compete against the best in the country and world. The experiences provided, such as ballet, French, religion, philosophy and ethics, and swimming, are having a positive impact on their development.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is the promotion of British values. These are very well integrated into the values and CHARACTER² or personal

² CHARACTER: curiosity, honesty, altruism, reflectiveness, adaptability, courage, tenacity, empathy, responsibility.

development programme. Across all phases, there is emphasis on pupils developing respect, altruism, empathy, and responsibility. They learn about the importance of tolerance for others and respecting other cultures and values. Through the curriculum, they learn about British values, traditions, institutions and literature, while being exposed to, for example, other musical traditions and genres. For instance, in music they know about the samba and calypso, as well as the compositions of great composers such as Bach. The ethnic and religious diversity of the intake means that children and pupils know and learn about each other's cultural heritage. The curriculum also provides further insight into a wider range of cultures and traditions.

- Good attention is given to using the pupil premium funding to improve literacy and mathematical skills, and cultural visits to raise aspirations. Current tracking information confirms that measures are appropriate and are accelerating the achievement of this group of pupils. The primary sport funding is also used effectively to provide specialist coaching in physical education.
- Partnership work with parents is excellent. Parents are involved very well in the academy's work and their children's learning. They welcome the consistency of the academy's commitment to their children. Parents place a high value on the curriculum workshops. They value greatly the time taken by senior leaders to visit them in their homes to assess their children's skills before they join the academy.
- Effective work with agencies, such as the local welfare officer, has led to the more regular attendance of children who had been missing education.
- Measures to protect the well-being and safety of children and pupils are robust. Checks on staff ensure that no one who is barred works with children. Parents spoke about handing over their 'most treasured possession' to staff because trust has been created. This is linked to the visibility of staff throughout the school day and the excellent communication between the academy and parents. Risk assessments are thorough, as are incident records.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local governing body is astute and highly effective in working with the senior leaders, the Ark Schools board and the central team. Together, they have made an excellent contribution to the academy's rapid development in a short time.
 - Governors hold the senior leaders to account very well through challenging and reviewing their work regularly. As a result, they have a thorough knowledge of interpreting data to analyse the rates of progress for different groups of pupils. They set the targets and challenge senior leaders and their staff to achieve them. For example, governors have a very good understanding of the use and impact of the funding to accelerate the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Similarly, they have very good links with subject departments and receive reports regularly from middle managers and presentations from pupils. As a result, they probe provision and outcomes for groups such as pupils with special educational needs and the most able.
 - Governors are relentless in driving improvement and are well informed about the quality of teaching and the impact on achievement. They make sure that rewards for teachers' appraisal are justified and based on high-quality performance.
 - The Ark Schools board, as the legal governing body, ensures the academy fulfils statutory requirements in all safeguarding matters. Governors are attentive to keeping abreast of child protection training as well as to the local and national priorities, such as safer recruitment, female genital mutilation and radicalisation.
 - Governors plan with precision and focus relentlessly on the quality of teaching. They keep financial spending under review and maintain a sharp focus on the academy's growth.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of children and pupils is outstanding. They are self-disciplined and show maturity not typical for their age groups. From Reception, and in Years 1 and 7, they concentrate very well for long periods. They show a zest for learning and are highly motivated throughout the long school day.
- Children and pupils are extremely responsive to the disciplined academy environment. This is a major contributory factor to them making rapid progress. They move calmly around the building and arrive to lessons well equipped and ready to begin working. Parents commented positively about this disciplined approach; they said that their children are happy, and their positive attitudes to learning extend to the home environment. This is because they are nurtured very well and inspired to achieve

their best.

- The learning environment throughout the academy is extremely calm. Despite having limited outdoor facilities, due to extensive refurbishment, children and pupils behave sensibly and are responsive to the high expectations of behaviour. Spontaneous responses show that exemplary behaviour is the norm. As a result, behaviour management is not an issue and no child has been permanently excluded. Fixed-term exclusions are rare.
- Children and pupils are very proud about their academy. They see it as a community where children and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds work together very well. They have a very good understanding of developing the characteristics needed to become well-rounded individuals. From Reception through to Year 7, pupils work as excellent ambassadors for their academy. Similarly, participation in the service programme increases their understanding of belonging to a community, as does 'family dining' when they eat together at lunch time.
- Attendance is above average and parents are positively responsive to the academy's drive to improve the attendance of potential persistent absentees.

Safety

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The academy works hard to keep children and pupils safe and well cared for.
- Children and pupils develop trusting relationships with the staff, and know they can turn to them if they have any concerns. A range of security measures, the visibility of staff throughout the school day and the presence of older pupils greeting them at the entrance, reassure them that they are walking into a safe environment.
- Children and pupils are clear that bullying is rare and, if it occurs, staff deal with it effectively. They are knowledgeable about different types of bullying and say that unkind behaviour is not tolerated. As part of their learning on living and working with others, they know that it is important to treat others with respect, and to show kindness. This is reflected in the emphasis on pupils earning merits to show that they practise to the academy's guidelines for keeping safe and achieving well.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is highly effective and, over time, all pupils make rapid progress. The sharp focus on the Teachers' Standards provides a very clear message that high quality teaching is the expected norm. This unwavering stance at senior level means that all appointees, regardless of their experience, are expected to refine and develop their practice so that their teaching is consistently outstanding.
- Teachers are very knowledgeable and, along with teaching assistants, they understand the learning needs of their children and pupils. They use assessment information very well to analyse how to group children and pupils and meet their needs through targeted resources and support; this promotes the achievement of different groups very well.
- Teachers emphasise literacy and numeracy skills across subjects; in particular, language skills are enhanced well. Teachers are consistent in requiring children and pupils to speak formal English. This leads to them developing and using a reasonably wide vocabulary accurately because teachers do not shy away from using and explaining complex words. Equally, children and pupils are taught how to listen to a range of people before giving a response. Much of this work is linked to the academy's values and approach to 'cultural and social literacy'.
- Careful scrutiny of pupils' work and observation of teaching during the inspection helped to highlight how high quality teaching is consistently leading to pupils making rapid progress. Effective and probing questions encourage pupils and children to use language for exploring and explaining ideas, or describing their observations and experiences. Teachers are adept at demonstrating the standard of work they require before asking pupils to show their understanding.
- Learning is rapid and moves at a good pace because pupils arrive ready to begin working. Effective use of the whiteboard and a wide range of well-selected resources contribute to children and pupils grasping concepts quickly.
- Teaching assistants are very well deployed and provide excellent support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. Individualised support enables these pupils to keep up with their peers.
- Teachers provide thorough and helpful feedback. Books are marked regularly and include constructive comments to help pupils improve their work. Learning develops very well because pupils are taught

how to extend their thinking; they are encouraged to assess their work and say how well they think they have done.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children and pupils make rapid progress from their starting points. This is because of excellent teaching over time, the outstanding curriculum, high quality individualised support for individual children and groups, and increased time for learning.
- The high level of attention given to supporting children in Reception means that they were very well challenged to make rapid progress. Current assessment information in Reception indicates that most children are on target to reach a good level of development, with a minority exceeding expectations in most areas of learning.
- Assessment information indicates that the majority of the first cohort of Year 1 pupils entered the year group with skills typical for their age group. They make rapid progress in their learning. Current tracking information indicates that, in reading, writing and mathematics, all have made the progress expected before the end of the school year, with the majority exceeding the progress expected for the age group. Pupils read regularly and their reading of simple texts and use of phonic skills (the sound letters make) helps them with reading unfamiliar words and establishing meaning. Work seen in pupils' books confirms that the academy's assessment information is accurate and that pupils are making rapid progress.
- The achievement of the most-able Year 1 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is excellent. This group of pupils is at least one year ahead of expectations. For example, in writing, those who sought election to the learning council used paragraphs to organise their letters with a cursive style and a wide vocabulary.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and, in particular, those who are at the early stage of learning the language make outstanding progress and attain as well as their peers in the academy.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs in all year groups is excellent. Work with the support staff and specialist help from providers such as the speech therapist contribute to them making rapid progress.
- Staff from outstanding Ark partner schools and from the local authority work with the academy to moderate the quality of marking and recording of pupils' progress. Inspectors agree that tracking, marking and assessment information are accurate and reliable.
- The achievement of Year 7 pupils is also outstanding. Standards on entry are broadly average; however, internal baseline tests indicate that a minority of pupils have low literacy and numeracy skills. Nevertheless, pupils make rapid progress across the curriculum. This is because high quality support, and the use of banding and enrichment activities contribute to them being appropriately challenged. A well-established assessment cycle means that progress is tracked and monitored rigorously, and any identified weaknesses are quickly identified and dealt with.
- Teachers ensure that pupils work with tenacity and apply themselves consistently. As a result, there is no significant difference in the performance of pupils with special educational needs. The most able pupils make rapid progress, as do disadvantaged pupils in all subjects. In some subjects, disadvantaged pupils perform slightly better than their peers.

The early years provision is outstanding

- The diaries and folders of children in early years provide a wide range of information that exemplifies the rapid rates of progress made during their time in Reception. The academy prepares children extremely well for the next stage of their learning. Their readiness for school is exemplary as children make the transition to Year 1 without breaking their interest and excitement in learning.
- Routines are well established and, although classrooms are a hive of activities, children quickly concentrate on their learning. This is because the learning experiences are stimulating and all activities are conducted in a calm environment.
- The majority of the first cohort entered with skills that were not well developed for three-year-olds in mathematics, personal and social education and physical development. Boys had a particularly low level of skills, as did children who spoke English as an additional language and those who were disadvantaged.

- By the end of Reception, the proportion reaching a good level of development was above the national average. The development of children eligible for support through the additional funding was above average compared with similar groups nationally, as were boys, while girls matched national average.
- Meticulous planning, excellent use of resources, and energetic teaching ensure that all children are in line or are achieving beyond the goals expected for this age. They are organised in bands that reflect their starting points when learning skills in language and numeracy. This works very well, particularly as targeted teaching linked to their needs helps them to make rapid progress and develop a thirst for learning.
- The achievement of the most-able children is outstanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Writing skills are advanced and they make very good use of taught complex vocabulary. They use basic sentence structures correctly, often venturing to use connectives to begin writing compound sentences. Simple and some complex words are usually spelt accurately and letter formation is clear.
- Strong emphasis on reading means that children read regularly and often. They can recall familiar stories confidently and make predictions.
- Engagement with parents is strong. Parents confirmed that they are kept very well informed about their children's progress, for example through the curriculum workshops and extra support on Saturdays.
- Outstanding leadership of the primary phase and rigorous systems to track children's progress ensure that teachers match work to meet the needs of individuals. Staff are highly effective in supporting children to develop a disciplined approach to meet the more rigorous demands of learning before they enter Key Stage 1.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139815
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	450298

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linsey Cole
Principal	Jerry Collins
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
Telephone number	020 8443 3113
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