

Ark Franklin Primary Academy

Harvist Road, London NW6 6HJ

Inspection dates	21–22 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Outstanding leadership and management have secured significant improvement throughout the school since it joined the Ark multi-academy trust three years ago. The headteacher's determined and clear leadership, combined with a strong sense of moral purpose, ensure that no time is wasted in improving pupils' outcomes.
- Strong provision in the early years gets children off to a good start with outcomes at the end of the Reception year having risen sharply.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 have risen to be above average from a very low starting point at the time when the school joined the trust.
- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 have been more resistant to improvement as a result of the legacy of poor teaching pupils experienced in the predecessor school. Pupils currently on roll are making strong progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are highly reflective about their practice and undertake regular training within and beyond the school.
- Governance provides exceptionally well-balanced support and challenge to school leaders. The trust's oversight of, and support for, the school has played a significant part in the rapid improvement seen in the quality of teaching and to pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They relate well to one another, with effective relationships between staff and pupils exemplifying the school's value of 'respect'.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. They share the school's confidence that standards are rising and that their children are well supported. Parents are overwhelmingly of the view that their children are safe in school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Inconsistencies in how well teachers assess pupils' understanding during lessons result in pupils not always making the progress of which they are capable.
- Attendance, although rising, is too low.
- In some year groups, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others is too wide.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the highly effective work to date of leaders and managers to ensure sustained improvement in pupils' outcomes, especially at the end of key stage 2.
- Ensure that all teachers make consistently effective use of information from assessment during lessons to enable pupils to make the best possible progress.
- Build on the strong practice which has resulted in improvements to the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in some year groups so that it has an equally effective impact throughout the school.
- Ensure that the effective systems used to monitor and promote good attendance result in a sustained reduction in absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The determination, skill and strong sense of moral purpose demonstrated by leaders and governors have been highly effective in raising aspirations. Leaders have made a notably positive impact on pupils' outcomes and behaviour since the school joined the Ark multi-academy trust. The school's profile in the local community has risen significantly, as has the community's appreciation of the school's rising academic standards.
- A detailed understanding of the effectiveness of the school's work allows leaders to identify accurately which areas need addressing. The school's improvement plan is clear and succinct, allocating responsibility for each focus area.
- Phase and senior leaders make regular visits to classrooms to check that their expectations of teachers' practice are being met. The regular identification of common themes for school improvement is supported by prompt training and is followed up quickly by further visits to classrooms. This urgent approach to bringing about school improvement ensures that teachers receive regular feedback about their practice and that no time is wasted.
- Leaders collect assessment information regularly, analysing it in detail. The conclusions they draw enable them to tailor support accurately for those pupils who are not making the progress expected. Leaders' and teachers' judgements about pupils' attainment are moderated by colleagues from other schools in the trust and by the local authority, and invariably found to be accurate.
- Leaders use numerous strategies to develop teachers' expertise. The school's culture is founded on continual improvement, including that of teachers' skills and expertise. Training provided by leaders at different levels, both within and beyond the school, has had a significant and positive impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers speak highly of the opportunities they have to develop their practice, including those who are new to the profession.
- Leaders have a reflective approach to the curriculum, reviewing its effectiveness and suitability frequently. Rightly, priority has been given to ensuring that pupils become proficient in their use of key English and mathematical skills. This has successfully addressed the legacy of previous underachievement caused by poor teaching in the predecessor school. Over time, the curriculum has broadened, offering numerous enrichment opportunities both within the curriculum and through a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs. Approximately three quarters of pupils attend one or more after-school clubs.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is strong. Pupils are keen to learn and are increasingly reflective. They are fascinated by the recently installed geodesic dome in the school grounds. Their respectful attitudes and politeness to visitors show clear impact of the effective strategies used to support the development of their social skills. During the inspection, the school choir rehearsed for its performance at the trust's forthcoming festival at London's Barbican Centre. The choir's enthusiastic and tuneful singing is testament to the sense of belonging and pride pupils have in their school.
- Effective use of the physical education and sports premium has seen an increase in the amount of competitive sport and an increase in the number of pupils participating in extra-curricular activities. Leaders have responded to pupils' request to develop provision by, for example, adding tennis and hockey clubs to the menu of sports available.
- Breakfast club provides a calm start to the day with a wide variety of food available. Places for disadvantaged pupils are subsidised through pupil premium funding.
- Parents speak highly of the school, its strengthened sense of community and the improvement in standards. They know that the school is well led and that leaders have a determined approach to bringing about school improvement.
- Support from the trust is well targeted and based on close evaluation of the school's performance. Although the trust retains a close eye on the school's practices and their effectiveness, it has, rightly, reduced the frequency of its monitoring visits in the light of the school's highly effective senior leadership.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance comprises elements at both trust and local level. While the trust's central board retains overall responsibility, aspects of governance are delegated to the local governing body. The two groups work highly effectively with each other, ensuring that continuing evaluation of the school's performance leads to carefully targeted improvement.

- Performance information is scrutinised thoroughly by the Ark central team. ‘High expectations’, one of the trust’s ‘six pillars’, exemplifies the trust’s no-excuses approach to pupils achieving all that they are capable of. School leaders are held closely to account for pupils’ progress and attainment, among other areas of the school’s performance.
- Governors monitor the school’s finances carefully, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and that money is spent to benefit pupils’ learning.
- Members of the local governing body are well qualified for their roles, being selected on the basis of their skills and expertise. Their broad range of experience and interests enables them to provide the support and challenge needed to promote rapid school improvement.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff have a thorough understanding of how to report their concerns and of the importance of doing so immediately. They know that they have a statutory duty to report concerns relating to female genital mutilation and extremism to the appropriate authorities. Training for staff is updated as required, through training provided by the local authority, by the trust and through the dissemination of knowledge gained by staff attending external training courses. A good understanding of the predominant local issues informs leaders’ priorities for training. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies and refer their concerns promptly. They are persistent in seeking responses when other services are slow to reply. Records are well organised, tracking the chronology of events relating to referrals in appropriate detail.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have been successful in improving the quality of teaching. Teachers know that there is no time to lose in ensuring that pupils’ outcomes match their potential. Lessons start promptly and teachers take opportunities to engage in conversation with pupils about their learning during less formal times too.
- The emphasis given to pupils developing their speaking and listening skills has played a significant part in the improvement in pupils’ writing. Additional adults, referred to in school as co-teachers, are well trained to support those pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teaching ensures that these pupils develop an understanding of the vocabulary they are likely to encounter in everyday speech as well as the technical vocabulary specific to different subjects.
- Pupils’ conceptual understanding in mathematics is well supported by the use of models and images. Lessons and sequences of lessons are well planned, allowing pupils to acquire, practise and consolidate skills in mathematics.
- In the majority of classes, most-able pupils are well challenged through probing questioning, thought-provoking tasks and close monitoring of their progress during lessons. However, in some cases, their proficiency is not picked up quickly enough, leading to them completing too much work of a similar level of difficulty.
- Challenging questions, including those asked during Spanish lessons, require pupils to think deeply. Teaching routinely requires pupils to reflect on their learning. Teachers support pupils to identify where and why errors have been made. For example, during a lesson in which pupils interpreted timetables, the teacher was able to point out the benefits of using a ruler to prevent becoming confused by the times shown in different rows.
- Phonics is taught well, as indicated by the high proportions of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Teachers engage pupils well during phonics teaching and have an accurate understanding of how well individuals are doing.
- Effective liaison between teachers and co-teachers results in a shared understanding of pupils’ individual needs. This enables the right support to be provided so that pupils who may have had difficulty understanding a particular concept are quickly helped to catch up.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils present themselves confidently as a result of the numerous opportunities provided to speak and perform to audiences both within and beyond school. For example, 'stretch' projects, undertaken both in school and as homework, culminate in pupils presenting topics of interest to their peers. It is also worthy of note that the school's debating team recently won the Ark Trust's debating competition.
- On arrival at school, pupils greet staff with a handshake and waste no time in making their way to their classroom for a prompt start to the day. The school's focus on developing pupils' social skills contributes very well to their preparation for secondary school and beyond.
- Leaders have not shied away from tackling sensitive issues related to pupils' welfare. For example, the community police officer has led assemblies about knife crime, gangs and anti-social behaviour. Pupils have a thorough understanding of how to keep themselves safe online. Older pupils understand that their passwords should be kept securely and that opening attachments in unsolicited emails may leave the user vulnerable to computer viruses.
- Leaders understand pupils' needs well, especially those of pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Appropriate arrangements are made to support those with medical needs, with care plans in place to record the agreed arrangements for the administration of medication.
- The school has been highly successful in raising pupils' aspirations. Pupils speak confidently about their ambitions to pursue careers in medicine and in engineering, among others. Pupils value their education and appreciate the link between working hard and achieving their goals.
- The school goes the extra mile in supporting vulnerable families, through the provision of therapeutic support beyond the school. This has provided much-needed and effective support where waiting lists for more formal services present an unacceptable delay. This is indicative of the urgency with which the school acts in the interests of pupils and their families.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school has been successful in redefining what constitutes acceptable behaviour. The effective use of exclusion has supported a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Although numerous pupils have been excluded during the last three years, none has required sanctions of this severity in recent months.
- Attendance has been below average, but is improving steadily as a result of the effective measures taken to address absence. Leaders take a robust stance on absence and poor punctuality, liaising effectively with parents, and external agencies when necessary, to bring about improvement. Pupils are rewarded for regular attendance, the names of pupils with full attendance each half term being entered in a draw.
- Pupils are closely supervised at playtimes, with staff easily identifiable and engaged in leading or promoting activity. Zoned areas in the playground ensure that there is sufficient space allocated to each activity. A wide range of equipment is available, from balls and scoops to an area in which pupils choreograph and practise their own dances. Pupils respond quickly to the bell which indicates the end of playtime and line up without fuss.
- Although pupils report that playground disputes occur from time to time and that some of their lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour, no incidents of poor behaviour were observed during the inspection. Pupils report that bullying and name-calling of any kind are extremely rare, but that they would be comfortable seeking support from any of the school's staff. Parents are overwhelmingly in agreement that the school makes sure that the pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes at the end of the Reception year have increased significantly since the school joined the Ark multi-academy trust. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development, having been less than half in 2014, was well above average in 2015, and the school's assessment information indicates that it will rise again in 2016.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been above the national average for the last two years. School records indicate that the upward trend will

continue in 2016. All of the pupils who retook the check in Year 2, having not reached the expected standard the previous year, were successful.

- In 2015, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level at the end of Year 2 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion attaining at a higher level than average was above that seen nationally in mathematics but below it in reading and writing. This represents a significant improvement on the 2014 results. Progress of pupils currently in key stage 1 is strong, with the school's assessment records indicating that a high proportion will reach age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. This represents significant progress from their very low starting points.
- In 2015, the proportion of key stage 2 pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was below average. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level by the end of Year 6 was below average. However, the rate of their progress improved significantly from the point at which the school joined the Ark multi-academy trust. Pupils currently in Year 6 have made rapid progress in the past three years from very low starting points, with greater proportions now attaining age-related outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics.
- As a result of good teaching, pupils currently on roll are making good progress. During the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining at, and above, the level expected for their age has increased significantly. Similarly, the proportion of pupils making expected, or more than expected, progress has increased significantly.
- Expectations of pupils who have special educational needs or disability have risen markedly. The proportion judged to be making expected progress has doubled in the past three years as a result of provision tailored to individuals' needs.
- In 2015, there were small gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others at the end of key stage 1. The gap between these two groups' performance was larger at the end of key stage 2, with disadvantaged pupils attaining less well. Of the pupils currently on roll, the performance of disadvantaged pupils is variable. In some year groups, disadvantaged pupils' performance is similar to, or better, than that of others. In other cases, the gap between the two groups' performance is too wide.
- The proportion of pupils achieving beyond age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics in each year group has risen significantly over the past three years.

Early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is good, with senior leaders having a clear understanding of what constitutes effective teaching. Leaders make accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and identify pertinent areas for teachers' development. Visits to the children's homes before they start in Nursery provide staff with useful information, allowing provision to be tailored to children's needs and interests from the outset. This is indicative of the urgent approach to promoting children's learning taken throughout the school.
- Starting in Nursery, speaking and listening skills are given a high priority, addressing well the needs of children with little experience of English.
- In common with pupils in the rest of the school, children in the early years work and play together harmoniously regardless of their background or gender. Children are looked after well and kept safe through the implementation of effective systems and caring staff. Parents appreciate the effective communication with teachers and leaders. They value the successful focus on ensuring that key basic skills are taught thoroughly and the increasing use made of the outdoor learning areas.
- The teaching of phonics is effective, preparing children well for their subsequent learning in Year 1. Where teaching is most effective, teachers make helpful links so that learning is relevant to children's interests and level of understanding. For example, children in a Reception class were challenged to consider whether the weather was 'bright' during a phonics lesson focusing on the 'igh' sound.
- The school's records of children's progress demonstrate the significant improvement children make from their entry to the time they leave to start Year 1. In common with the approach taken in the other key stages, children's progress and attainment in the early years are tracked rigorously, allowing leaders and teachers to keep a close eye on children's development across all areas of learning.
- Children arrive at school with smiles on their faces and they settle quickly. Routines are well established so that no time is wasted moving between activities. This is due to teachers' high expectations and the emphasis on children making progress right from the start. The rapid progress they make ensures that children are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	139830
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10011705

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	632
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonah Grunsell
Headteacher	Janine Ryan
Telephone number	020 8969 3846
Website	www.arkfranklinprimary.org
Email address	info@arkfranklinprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school became part of the Ark multi-academy trust in September 2013. Its predecessor school, Kensal Rise Primary School, was judged to be inadequate in November 2012.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The school runs a breakfast club each weekday morning before school.
- Fewer pupils are identified as having special educational needs or disability than average.
- Significantly more pupils than seen nationally speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited each class, some visits being performed jointly with senior leaders, to observe teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with the principal, senior leaders, middle leaders and a group of staff comprising teachers and co-teachers. Meetings were also held with three governors, including a representative from the Ark multi-academy trust, and the chair of the local governing body.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's own evaluation of its work and records relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils at play during break- and lunchtimes and made short visits to the breakfast club and to a rehearsal of the school choir. They spoke with pupils both formally and informally, scrutinised a selection of pupils' work books, and listened to some pupils reading.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Jeremy Loukes, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christopher Birtles	Ofsted Inspector
Edison David	Ofsted Inspector
Evelyn Riley	Ofsted Inspector

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