

Inspection of a good school: Ark Oval Primary Academy

98 Cherry Orchard Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 6BA

Inspection dates:

4–5 March 2020

Outcome

Ark Oval Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. This is because teachers are kind and make learning fun. Pupils are proud of their school and they are keen to take on responsibility. Every class has a class captain who wears a gold tie and welcomes visitors to the classroom. These class captains were very proud that their classmates elected them.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils in the school. From the day pupils arrive, in Reception or later, reading is a key priority. Teachers focus on the teaching of phonics at the appropriate stage and they create a love of reading in the pupils. Leaders make sure this is the case for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that bullying rarely happened. Pupils have learned about being kind to one another. They know to report bullying to a member of staff and they are confident that staff will resolve it quickly. Pupils behave well in and outside of lessons. Staff use clear and consistent strategies to manage behaviour and as a result there is rarely any low-level disruption.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils in the school. They know what they want pupils to learn by the time they finish school. Pupils study a wide range of subjects. Leaders make sure that these subjects are well planned and teachers deliver the plans in a way that is interesting for pupils. Pupils' work in their books is of a good quality and shows that pupils are learning what teachers intend.

The new principal and his team have a very clear vision for learning in the school. Their work has already made an impact on improving the outcomes for children in the early years. Pupils do well in phonics because leaders prioritise the teaching of phonics from day one. Teachers focus on any pupils who are falling behind and make sure they catch up. Every teacher focuses on helping their pupils to become fluent readers. However, the

impact of the changes made by leaders on outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has not yet been realised. This is because of a high turnover of staff over time, which also meant the learning was not as well planned in the past.

Pupils in the school come from a wide range of backgrounds and they join the school at different times. Leaders are aware of this and have planned the things pupils need to know very carefully. This planning goes beyond the classroom and includes the wide variety of trips, breakfast, after-school and lunchtime clubs available to the pupils. Pupils in Year 2 were very excited about their upcoming trip to see London's landmarks as part of their learning in geography. In Reception I saw pupils proudly writing with their parents and carers as well as sharing their World Book Day creations.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are excited to learn new things. They work well with one another in pairs and groups and they also work well alone. As a result, there is rarely any disruption to the learning in class. Pupils learn how to debate with one another in an appropriate way and this has reduced disagreements between pupils.

Leaders have a desire for all pupils to have an equal opportunity to learn, including those with SEND. This begins in Reception and continues throughout school. The outdoor area in Reception has been planned to be interesting, to reflect the learning in the classroom and to give children the opportunity to play and learn outside. If pupils fall behind, teachers intervene quickly to help pupils catch up through, for example, 'close the gap' activities.

Staff are very appreciative of the support they receive from leaders in the school. Leaders listen to staff and respond to their needs. Staff have access to a wide variety of training from the school, the Ark network and from outside agencies. Leaders consider the well-being of staff and have introduced new ideas to reduce workload. Teachers like the flexibility they have in their planning and preparation time.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders conduct all the relevant pre-employment checks on staff working at the school and they keep accurate records of these.

Leaders ensure that policies are up to date and that all staff have received the required training. Staff are clear about their responsibilities regarding keeping children safe. They know how to report concerns. Staff are aware of the context of their local area and the problems the pupils may face.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both physically and online. Pupils know that they can speak to staff if they have concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Published outcomes at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 are not as strong as they could be. This means that in the past some pupils were not well prepared for their next stage of education. Leaders must continue to implement their planned curriculum consistently across all subjects and year groups so that published outcomes improve as they have in the early years foundation stage and in phonics.
- Leaders have found it difficult to maintain a stable staff team in the past. This led to poor outcomes for pupils. The new principal has built a committed and stable staff team. He must now continue to develop their skills in delivering an ambitious curriculum that leads to better outcomes.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 5 December 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, ['disadvantaged pupils'](#) refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	137114
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10134707
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	597
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Marshall
Principal	Toby Martlew
Website	www.arkovalprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2012

Information about this school

- The principal has been in post since September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- I carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- I met with senior leaders, the executive headteacher, members of the local governing body and a representative from the trust.
- I did deep dives in the following subjects: reading, geography and mathematics. I visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and met with pupils to discuss their learning. I met with subject leaders and teachers. I listened to pupils read, discussed their reading with them and looked at their library reading records.
- Through discussions with leaders, governors, pupils, staff and parents, I considered how effectively pupils are safeguarded. I also looked at records related to safeguarding, including records of pre-employment checks carried out before staff are appointed.

- I met with groups of pupils and spoke to pupils during lesson visits. I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and in the corridors. I spoke to staff about behaviour and about their workload in school. I looked at 24 staff responses to Ofsted's surveys.
- I spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. I also considered the 22 responses to Ofsted's survey for parents, including written comments.

Inspection team

Mark Smith, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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