

Inspection of a good school: Ark Swift Primary Academy

Australia Road, London, W12 7PT

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 May 2021

Outcome

Ark Swift Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where everyone knows each other. Leaders have built a close-knit community. All staff work together to help pupils get the most from their time at school. Expectations of all pupils are high.

Pupils like coming to school. They enjoy their learning and playing with their friends. Everyone knows the three simple school rules: 'Ready, respectful and safe'. Pupils understand why these are important and try hard to follow them. Teachers and staff use the same approach to deal with any poor behaviour. Pupils behave well inside lessons and around the school.

Staff know their pupils well. Pupils know that staff will help them if they are upset or anxious. Teachers and pastoral staff make sure that pupils have the time and space to talk about any problems. 'Restorative sessions' help to mend friendship issues and sort out occasional incidents of bullying.

Parents and carers are happy with the school. Typically, they describe it as 'a really great school'. Parents like feeling included in events such as the recent Eid party. They recognise and value that staff go above and beyond to help pupils and their families.

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

School leaders, governors and staff work together well. The planned curriculum reflects their ambition for pupils. It matches the breadth and scope of the national curriculum.

Curriculum plans are carefully sequenced. Teachers know the purpose of each lesson and how to build on what pupils have already learned. Teachers only move on when pupils are ready. They are quick to spot if anyone has fallen behind or has not understood. This is most evident in English and mathematics. Teachers identify which 'step' in the learning needs to be re-taught.

When pupils returned after the national lockdowns, teachers checked what pupils had forgotten. For example, teachers noted that Year 6 pupils struggled with long division. Teachers broke this concept down into small steps. This reinforced earlier learning, such as rounding up and inverse multiplication.

Leaders and staff try and adapt learning so that pupils can get the most out of lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get individual support. Yet pupils with complex needs find it hard to access the full curriculum. In subjects such as history and geography, they need more help. They cannot cope with the high level of reading texts and subject knowledge.

Teachers check that pupils remember subject knowledge. Questions at the start and end of lessons help to embed key facts and concepts. Pupils understand and can describe what they have learned. For example, Year 3 pupils wrote an essay to show all their learning on the Amazon rainforests.

The teaching of early reading starts in Nursery. Early years staff are expert phonics teachers. They share this expertise so that everyone follows the same approach. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are fluent readers. Weaker readers get lots of extra help. They use their phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words.

Staff foster a real love of reading. Pupils like talking about the books they have read. Reading rewards are very popular. In early years, children love spinning 'The Wheel of Fortune' to choose their next book. Older pupils read a broad range of texts suited to their age.

Some aspects of the curriculum are not fully developed. A new programme of study for computing started this year. Staff have often used computing lessons to develop pupils' writing or research skills. However, pupils have not learned much about computing. In French, pupils have limited knowledge. This is because leaders have not planned exactly what pupils need to know and remember.

Pupils get to widen their learning beyond the classroom. They have a variety of after-school clubs to choose from. Leaders look beyond the school to extend all pupils' wider development. For example, pupils have opportunities to work with West London Zone and Queens Park Rangers Football Club.

Lessons are calm and not disrupted. Pupils learn to be respectful and tolerant. In 'circle time', pupils discuss issues such as name-calling or homophobic bullying. They know behaviour like this is wrong.

Many curriculum leaders are new in post. Experienced leaders support them well. Staff have a wide range of training. This supports teachers' development and their individual subject knowledge.

Staff well-being is at the forefront of leaders' minds. Staff appreciate the small gestures from leaders to remind them that they are valued. Leaders do not overburden staff with unnecessary workloads.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know the safeguarding issues their pupils may face. Members of the pastoral team work closely with pupils and their families. They know their needs well and what action to take when there are concerns.

Leaders do not shy away from discussing difficult situations with pupils. They do this in an age-appropriate way. For example, Year 6 pupils have workshops to learn about knife crime and county lines. Remote learning helped to promote the school's work on online safety.

Pupils and their families have access to an on-site counselling service. The pastoral team also provides mental health support to pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils with complex needs have difficulty accessing the full curriculum. In some areas, such as history and geography, subject-specific content and reading texts are too challenging. Leaders need to further adapt the curriculum so that all pupils, including those with complex needs, can access it fully.
- The curriculum is not implemented as effectively as it could be in computing and French. Pupils have not learned essential subject knowledge and skills. Leaders need to be clear about what they want pupils to know and remember. Lesson times should be used effectively so that pupils can develop the disciplinary knowledge and skills that they need.

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 outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 5 and 6 May 2016.

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 information from Parent View 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 [here](#).

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	139820
Local authority	Hammersmith & Fulham
Inspection number	10192539
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	221
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Lucy Heller
Headteacher	Daniel Upfield
Website	www.arkswift.org
Date of previous inspection	5 – 6 May 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Ark Swift Primary Academy is a smaller than average sized school.
- The school operates as a one-form entry school except in Year 6, which has two classes. The early years provision currently comprises a Nursery class and Reception class.
- Since the previous inspection, the staffing team, including the leadership team, has undergone significant changes. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Various meetings were held with the headteacher and members of the leadership team. The inspector also met with the chair of governors and the trust regional director.

- Deep dives were carried out in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. These involved discussions with curriculum leaders, lesson visits, reviews of pupils' work and meetings with pupils and teachers. The inspector listened to pupils reading in Years 1 to 3. All other subjects were considered as well.
- The single central register and safeguarding documentation were reviewed. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and the pastoral manager. Safeguarding procedures and records and referrals were discussed and reviewed. The inspector also looked at bullying and behaviour logs and other documentation presented by leaders.
- The inspector met with a large group of teaching and non-teaching staff and talked to parents at the school gate. The survey responses from parents and staff were reviewed. The inspector talked with different groups of pupils and spoke with some in the playground.

Inspection team

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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