

Inspection of Ark Putney Academy

Pullman Gardens, Putney, London SW15 3DG

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have established a calm, inclusive and safe school environment. Very clear routines and systems mean that pupils benefit from high levels of consistency in their lessons and around the school. Pupils follow a carefully thought-out curriculum, which is designed to help them to remember important content. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) for whom provision is particularly strong.

Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. Bullying is very rare and is dealt with effectively when it does happen. Diversity is celebrated around the school, and is reflected in curriculum choices, including the reading books that teachers choose for pupils.

Leaders have made sure that pupils' broader development is prioritised. This means that pupils, including those in the sixth form, are taught important skills for life, including how to keep themselves safe. Leaders make sure that pupils from different backgrounds and abilities access the same range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. A structured programme of careers education and advice helps to prepare pupils for the next steps in their education, training, or employment.

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

Leaders have put in place an ambitious and broad curriculum that has been designed to build on previous learning. Subject content is sequenced carefully, and important knowledge is regularly revisited to help pupils remember more. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are skilled in checking pupils' understanding. Students in the sixth form benefit from a similarly ambitious curriculum, delivered well by enthusiastic teachers.

Pupils and teachers benefit from the very tight organisation of lessons. Lessons follow a clear routine across subjects and year groups. This leads to high levels of consistency. It ensures that pupils across different classes study the same intended curriculum. On occasions, however, these very tight routines mean that pupils are not able to fully develop their own thinking or explore more complex content.

There is high ambition for pupils with SEND. Teachers know these pupils and their needs well. They make appropriate adaptations, so that all pupils can follow the same curriculum. A small number of pupils with more complex needs are taught in small groups and achieve well.

Leaders recognise the importance of reading and ensure that it is prioritised across the school. This includes regular dedicated reading time for all pupils. Pupils who need extra help to catch up with their reading receive a carefully tailored programme.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A very clear behaviour system helps ensure that learning is not disrupted. Pupils know that any unkind or discriminatory language is not tolerated. Bullying is rare, and pupils are confident that it is dealt with when they report it to teachers. Leaders are committed to ensuring that levels of attendance are high. They have employed additional staff to work with families who need more support to send their children to school regularly.

The provision for pupils' wider development is carefully mapped out across the school, including for students in the sixth form. This includes a well-thought-out programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), which covers topics, such as healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way. Leaders adapt this programme regularly and listen to the views of pupils, so that content is relevant. Pupils join a wide variety of clubs and activities at lunchtime or after school, including a range of sports and performing arts clubs. A significant number of pupils are proud to be house leaders.

Pupils and sixth-form students are supported when making choices about their next steps in education, training and employment. Pupils learn about careers from Year 7. A diverse range of guest speakers talk to pupils about different pathways, including apprenticeships, employment, and further education. However, too many students in the sixth form do not complete their intended programme of study and choose to move to other providers during Year 12.

Staff are well supported by leaders and value the opportunities they have for ongoing training. Those teachers who are new to the profession are very well supported. The academy trust and the governing body know the school well and share leaders' vision to provide an inclusive and ambitious education for all.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is prioritised across the school. Staff are trained and regularly updated on important safeguarding issues. They are alert to signs that pupils may be at risk of harm and know to report any concerns quickly.

Leaders record concerns accurately and put a range of strategies to help vulnerable pupils in place. This includes working with other agencies to secure the most appropriate help. Leaders demonstrate tenacity in making sure this support is forthcoming.

Pupils feel safe in school and know that they can report any concerns to members of staff. Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the requirement for teaching to be consistent prevents pupils from extending their learning to understand more complex ideas. This means that some pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge of which they are capable. Leaders should ensure that teaching activities allow pupils to develop their thinking, so that they can gain a greater understanding of subject content.
- Some students enrolled in the sixth form struggle with their courses. This means that too many sixth-form students do not complete their programmes of study. Leaders should ensure that students are on appropriate pathways at the start of Year 12, so that more students successfully complete their chosen courses in the sixth form.

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 Ofsted 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.

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	138681
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10228326
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	944
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	218
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Marshall
Principal	Alison Downey
Website	http://arkputney.org/
Date of previous inspection	29 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- On occasions, the school makes use of registered alternative provision for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical educational qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, geography, and art and design. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils. Inspectors also visited a range of lessons in other subjects and looked at pupils' work and curriculum documents.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, and with members of staff, as well as a range of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for SEND, the sixth form, careers education, reading, behaviour and attendance, and pupils' wider development.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the local governing body. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the academy trust.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Allott	Ofsted Inspector
Debra Lebrecht	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Conway	His Majesty's Inspector

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