

# Inspection of a good school: Ark Bolingbroke Academy

Wakehurst Road, London SW11 6BF

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Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2023

## **Outcome**

Ark Bolingbroke Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a harmonious school that pupils and staff are proud to be part of. Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They promote the school's values consistently. For instance, staff encourage pupils to be compassionate and to work together. Leaders make sure that they develop strong professional partnerships with families. Staff encourage all pupils to be successful. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Pupils are eager to learn and hardworking, including students in the sixth form. They enjoy a rich curriculum which is thoughtfully planned. Teachers deliver lessons skilfully. Pupils gain a deep body of knowledge and produce a high standard of work across subjects. Teachers plan opportunities carefully that enhance pupils' learning. Leaders encourage pupils' wider personal and social development strongly. They enjoy a range of outings and enrichment activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme.

Leaders have exceptionally high expectations. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around school. Working relationships between adults and pupils are warm and polite. Staff help pupils to feel happy, be safe and achieve excellent outcomes.

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

Leaders' curricular thinking across many subjects is highly developed. Pupils study a range of subjects, including history, art, music and languages. Leaders have thought carefully about how learning is sequenced over time. Staff are subject experts. They adapt learning so that they meet the needs of all pupils closely, including students in the sixth form. Leaders have established a culture of very high standards where everyone is expected to work hard and to achieve their potential. Students are mature and motivated to aspire for the best. They valued the guidance they receive from staff.

Leaders make sure that teachers' subject knowledge is highly developed. This helps teachers to check and build on pupils' prior learning with precision. For example, in mathematics, teachers re-visit pupils' previous learning in algebra regularly. This helps pupils to understand and tackle complex mathematical problems. Teachers use assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding skilfully. They check and address any misconceptions in pupils' learning swiftly.

Teachers use resources extremely effectively to help deepen pupils' understanding. They work systematically to review, adapt and tailor the next steps in each pupil's education. In the sixth form, staff challenge and extend students' thinking. They encourage students to work independently and extend their studies through targeted wider reading opportunities.

Leaders identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND in detail. They work closely with external professionals to support pupils to achieve their potential. Staff support pupils with SEND skilfully. As a result, pupils with SEND receive excellent support and guidance.

Leaders develop and promote pupils' wider reading positively throughout the school. Staff provide very effective support for pupils who struggle with reading. This helps pupils to develop their reading confidence quickly.

The school is a welcoming, calm and friendly community. This helps pupils to settle quickly, focus on learning and make the most of all the opportunities provided. Leaders have established effective behaviour systems, and staff follow the school's behaviour policies consistently. Pupils are expected to behave exceptionally well, and they do. During social times, pupils manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviours extremely well. If pupils struggle to meet leaders' expectations, the school provides compassionate and timely support that helps pupils' behaviour to improve. Attendance levels are high across all year groups, including in the sixth form.

Leaders have placed significant importance on pupils' wider development. Staff know pupils very well. They prioritise building pupils' character development throughout the school. Teachers help pupils to understand the importance of healthy relationships and financial decision-making. They encourage pupils to respect differences and teach pupils about topics including consent and radicalisation. Leaders make sure that pupils have access to a comprehensive careers education curriculum. They help pupils, including those in the sixth form, to be very well prepared for their next steps.

Staff are very positive about the work leaders have done to reduce workload. Leaders place staff well-being at the forefront of their work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' safety and well-being. They have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders follow up on any concerns about pupils thoroughly. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and are knowledgeable about potential risks.

Leaders think carefully about the support they provide to families. They ensure that they work with external agencies to provide timely help when required. Staff help pupils to feel safe in and outside school. For example, pupils can raise any concerns they may have. Staff respond quickly and sensitively.

## 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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	138267
<b>Local authority</b>	Wandsworth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290204
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	798
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	168
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sir Paul Marshall
<b>Principal</b>	Claire Edis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.arkbolingbrokeacademy.org">www.arkbolingbrokeacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Ark Schools multi-academy trust.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.

## 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, subject leaders and groups of staff. Discussions were also had with a representative of the alternative provider used by the school, as well as representatives of the governing body and from the trust.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in mathematics, music and science. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke to teachers and spoke to some pupils about their learning. Inspectors considered other subjects as part of this inspection.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements. They also looked at safeguarding records, including pre-employment checks for staff.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Sophie Cavanagh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Juliette Claro

Ofsted Inspector

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