

Inspection of Ark Elvin Academy

Cecil Avenue, Wembley, London HA9 7DU

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Sixth-form provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils value all that this school offers them. They understand that all staff have their best interests at heart. Everything that leaders do is predicated on the highest ambitions and expectations. They put in place the right provision to support all pupils to succeed. Their success in translating their vision into reality is exceptional, especially through the aspirational curriculum. Pupils are happy. They behave extremely well and thrive in this warm, purposeful and safe community. Their academic achievements are very high.

Leaders are fully committed to equality and inclusion. Many pupils join the school with little or no knowledge of English. There are an increasing number of pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) on roll. Staff give well-considered extra help to these pupils. This enables pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers. This commitment is replicated in the ambition of the new sixth form's curriculum. Students benefit from a bespoke offer that meets their needs and aspirations. For example, those who join Year 12 with limited experience of education in this country are especially well supported to gain the qualifications they need to continue their studies, including at university.

Before, during and after school, pupils can choose to participate in some of the sixty enrichment activities on offer. Everyone who wants to can nurture and develop their talents and interests.

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

Leaders have established a highly ambitious curriculum. This is reflected in pupils' exceptional achievement across the subjects studied. The 2022 GCSE results were very high. Last year was the first cohort to complete their sixth-form vocational qualifications. Almost all students were offered university places.

Subject leaders and teachers benefit from quality professional development. They also share and learn from effective practices with colleagues in other schools. For example, staff draw on the expertise available from trust-wide subject networks and play a leading role in strengthening practice in areas such as geography and English. Teachers new to the profession are also extremely well supported. Subject teams meet weekly to share ideas. They reflect together and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. This means that high levels of continuous thought go into the planning and teaching of all subjects.

Teachers break knowledge down into well-sequenced parts. Pupils build up their knowledge step by step. Established routines enable pupils to recap prior learning. This practice embeds knowledge in their long-term memories. Teachers make effective use of resources. If needed, staff make suitable adaptations to these resources, focusing on meeting the needs of pupils with SEND and those who are new to speaking English as an additional language. Teachers and subject leaders check pupils' knowledge often. They use the assessment information they gather to

good effect. For example, through the 'know your class' approach, all teachers are clear about exactly how they will support any pupil identified as falling behind. They keep these bespoke strategies under regular review.

A high number of pupils enter the school still struggling to read fluently. Leaders, therefore, make the explicit teaching of reading a high priority. For example, expert staff teach pupils new to English and those with significantly weak reading skills using a well-sequenced phonics programme. This includes students in the sixth form. Reading is encouraged and supported across the subjects. The curriculum incorporates a very strong drive to expand pupils' vocabulary and comprehension. Success is recognised, such as at the phonics graduation celebration. As a result, pupils catch up quickly. They become confident and fluent readers. They also increase their vocabulary rapidly, giving them access to learning across the subjects.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. A purposeful atmosphere permeates the school, supported by well-established routines. Pupils are inducted into and are repeatedly taught about the school's values and expectations for behaviour. Pupils who occasionally struggle with their behaviour are well supported by the pastoral team. Staff help them to reflect on the impact of their choices and coach them to make changes for the better. Low-level disruption in class is a rarity. Pupils and sixth-form students display a strong desire to succeed. They work with great diligence.

Pupils are encouraged to respect all people, including those with protected characteristics. Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument. Scholarships are available for budding musicians. Staff teach pupils about how to form healthy relationships and about consent. Pupils are also taught about a range of risks and how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Year 9 classes compete in raising the most funds for each class's chosen charity. Sixth-form students worked with a local food bank to prepare and serve food in a weekly community kitchen hosted in the school canteen. Students also help teachers and pupils in the lower years, such as during sports and games.

The school's careers guidance programme is extensive. Students have many opportunities to visit inspirational higher education and industry settings. These help to shape their career interests and passions.

Staff said that leaders are 'approachable' and 'caring'. For example, staff have access to yoga sessions and to counselling for their well-being. They feel that workload expectations are reasonable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are highly trained and vigilant to any signs that a pupil might be at risk or need help. There is a 'it can happen here' attitude and staff are quick to report concerns, even if they appear to be minor. There is strong collaboration between the large teams for safeguarding, SEND, pastoral care, and culture and behaviour. Through

this, leaders and staff act quickly to provide support for pupils internally. If needed, these teams draw on the wide network of external agencies they have cultivated to ensure that pupils' welfare needs are fully supported. There are also robust vetting procedures in place to check that job applicants are suitable for working with pupils.

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	141019
Local authority	Brent
Inspection number	10268350
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy sponsor-led
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	1,276
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	254
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Marshall
Principal	Rebecca Curtis
Website	https://arkelvinacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has re-established a sixth-form provision. This opened in September 2020.
- The school makes use of three registered alternative provisions for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education 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 these subjects: English, science, geography, physical education and performing arts. Inspectors held discussions with leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and held discussions with pupils. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors also met with the regional director from the multi-academy trust and the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including information related to safeguarding and the checks carried out before the appointment of staff. Inspectors looked at records of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors had formal meetings with staff and with pupils. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Anne Hudson	Ofsted Inspector
Karim Ismail	His Majesty's Inspector
Peter Stumpf	Ofsted Inspector

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