

Inspection of Ark Little Ridge Primary Academy

Little Ridge Avenue, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN37 7LR

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

The principal of this school is Kate Woolley. This school is part of Ark Schools, a multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lucy Heller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Marshall. There is also a regional director, Lorraine Clarke, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are overwhelmingly proud of their school. They really value how staff treat them as individuals. There are warm, supportive relationships between staff and pupils across the school. As a result, pupils flourish and are aspirational in all aspects of their learning. As one pupil stated, 'We all want to be the best we can be.'

Behaviour is impeccable. All staff have high expectations, and pupils rise to meet these exceptionally well. They contribute to 'The Little Ridge Way' by consistently being 'at right place, doing the right thing at the right time'.

Pupils constantly strive to be a role model for their peers. Staff maximise every opportunity for pupils to take responsibility through leadership roles. These include becoming prefects, playtime buddies, well-being warriors or members of the school council. Pupils also respectfully share their thoughts and opinions with their peers and celebrate each other's differences. In the words of one pupil, 'The world would be boring if everyone was the same.'

A diverse club offer ensures that pupils' talents and interests are carefully considered. Pupils enjoy football, netball, multisports, gymnastics, violin and guitar clubs. Staff are diligent in ensuring that all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, never miss out.

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

The school's academic curriculum is underpinned by a thoughtful wider development programme that provides exceptional learning opportunities for all. Pupils benefit from a variety of stimulating experiences that are carefully considered. These include a range of exciting activities linked to their learning, such as theatre visits and museum trips. The curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. It is well planned and organised to ensure that pupils learn key vocabulary and build their knowledge over time. Learning is broken down into manageable steps, and teachers model the skills that they want pupils to learn. There is a regular recap of what pupils have recently learned. This ensures that pupils commit learning to their long-term memory. Consequently, pupils achieve highly, based on their individual starting points.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are expertly supported to learn the same curriculum as their peers. Staff are highly effective at adapting work to meet the needs of all pupils. In the 'Chester' class, adults give personalised support that meets pupils' individual needs. Teachers build a detailed picture of every pupil, ensuring that the correct provision is in place as soon as pupils start at the school. This in turn ensures that effective learning begins immediately. This continues throughout pupils' time at school. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Reading is at the heart of the school's provision. The bespoke reading programme ensures that pupils explore interesting and diverse texts that further support their learning in different subjects. Through this, pupils develop a love of reading. Phonics lessons in early years help children to become confident and fluent readers quickly. Staff model sounds precisely and lead activities that enable children to practise regularly what they have learned. Early years staff use stories to help children acquire a wide vocabulary. If any pupils find learning to read more difficult, staff waste no time in giving them effective extra support. This ensures that these pupils gain the reading skills they need in order to learn effectively across the whole curriculum.

Right from Reception, children are eager to learn. In subjects such as mathematics, teachers skilfully help to develop pupils' confidence in using number and problem-solving. In other subjects, such as science and physical education, the curriculum enhances pupils' knowledge and skills. Pupils keenly draw links between what they learn, such as exploring their understanding of the digestive system alongside knowledge of healthy diets and exercise. The high achievement of pupils is reflected in the high-quality work pupils produce and their ability to recall quickly and apply the interesting knowledge they have learned.

The behaviour of pupils is excellent. Pupils eagerly come to school each day, and attendance is high. Staff are determined to give pupils and their families bespoke support to ensure that every pupil consistently benefits from the high-quality education on offer.

The school's carefully considered personal development programme helps pupils to explore concepts such as diversity and acceptance. The 'All About Me' project at the start of early years gives every child the chance to celebrate the similarities and differences between themselves and their classmates. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the provision on offer and the support from the school, with one parent reflecting, 'Little Ridge is a beacon for the community, where every child is at the heart of decision-making.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141022
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10288042
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	429
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Marshall
CEO of the trust	Lucy Heller
Principal	Kate Woolley
Website	www.arklittleridgeprimary.org
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 July 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school became a member of Ark Schools, a multi-academy trust, in September 2014.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with an education, health and care plan relating to speech and/or language difficulties. There are currently 14 pupils enrolled in the specially resourced provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, inclusion leader, teachers and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors, a representative from the board of trustees and other leaders from the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, science and physical education. For each subject, inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to adults. Other aspects of the school's curriculum were also considered.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspection team took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and minutes of governors' and trustees' meetings.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Nuamera Anwar, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Hylands	Ofsted Inspector
Luisa Gould	Ofsted Inspector

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