

# Inspection of a good school: Ark Walworth Academy

Shorncliffe Road, London SE1 5UJ

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 November 2023

## **Outcome**

Ark Walworth Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Jessica West. This school is part of Ark Schools 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 Sir Paul Marshall.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to Ark Walworth Academy. The school community is friendly and welcoming. Pupils' behaviour is calm and caring. This is in keeping with the motto they devised themselves. Pupils are considerate and respectful of all members of the school community. They value and celebrate diversity.

Pupils trust the staff and appreciate their dedication and support. They know that the adults listen to them. This gives them the confidence to express themselves and to articulate their views. Sixth-form students explain how their interactions with staff and younger pupils have helped improve behaviour and relationships. Bullying is extremely rare and is dealt with effectively if it happens. As a result, pupils and students feel safe and are kept safe here.

All pupils, and the students in the expanding sixth form, know the school expects the very best of them academically as well as socially. They are keen to learn, work hard and achieve well. The curriculum is ambitious. Pupils and students are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. A high percentage of sixth-form students go on to university.

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

The curriculum matches the breadth and ambition of what is expected nationally. Leaders have thought carefully about what pupils need to learn and when. Subject content is well sequenced so that pupils build on what they have learned before and build a deep body of knowledge in different subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is typically strong, and explanations of important concepts are usually clear and precise.

Assessment is generally used effectively to check what pupils have learned and to consider pupils' next steps. Occasionally, however, assessment is not used as well. In these instances, some pupils are not as well supported to deepen their understanding of important concepts or to connect different ideas.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are swiftly identified. Leaders work closely with external agencies to secure the advice and guidance they need to meet pupils' different needs. This information is well communicated to staff. As a result, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers, wherever possible. They achieve well and are fully included in all aspects of school life.

The school has prioritised pupils' reading so that they can access the ambitious curriculum. Pupils read regularly in tutor time and through accessing the library, and sixth-form students act as reading buddies for younger pupils. There is a phonics programme for those at the earliest stages of learning to read. Pupils enjoy the books they are reading in tutor time and talk enthusiastically about these.

Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning. They try hard and take pride in their work. The work in most books and folders is of a high standard. Rates of attendance at the school have improved markedly. This includes in the sixth form. The high levels of attendance and punctuality help ensure pupils learn well.

Ark Walworth Academy's personal development programme helps pupils to learn how to be responsible citizens and develop healthy relationships. This includes learning how to stay safe, including when online and out in the local area. Pupils, including pupils with SEND, appreciate the additional activities available to them. These include a range of sports, world cinema, journalism and crochet. There is a programme of school visits, including to the theatre, field trips and residential visits to the Isle of Wight and international destinations. Leaders ensure that all pupils benefit from the wealth of cultural and educational experiences London offers.

Trustees, leaders and governors fulfil their statutory duties. They communicate effectively with all stakeholders, including school staff. Leaders are aware of, and sensitive to, staff workload and well-being. Staff feel well supported and are proud to work at this school. All teachers, including those new to the profession, value the high-quality training and guidance offered by the school and the wider trust network.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- On occasion, assessment is not used consistently in lessons to check what pupils have learned. In these instances, pupils' misconceptions are not identified or addressed

swiftly enough. This limits the depth of understanding these pupils secure. The school should ensure that assessment is used consistently to check pupils' learning and address any errors or gaps in their learning.

## 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 October 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135315
<b>Local authority</b>	Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290152
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<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>	1,010
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Sir Paul Marshall
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Lucy Heller
<b>Principal</b>	Jessica West
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://walworthacademy.org">https://walworthacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This school is part of the Ark Schools multi-academy trust.
- Leaders make use of three registered alternative providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

- 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and other senior leaders. They also met the director of secondary education and the regional director from the Ark Schools multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, music and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussion as well as through their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Anne Hudson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Charlotte Robinson

Ofsted Inspector

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