

Inspection of Ark King Solomon Academy

Penfold Street, London NW1 6RX

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Max Haimendorf. This school is part of Ark Schools 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.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since May 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school successfully enables pupils to achieve highly. Leaders set high expectations, and pupils exceed these. Pupils' achievements are reflected in the school's exceptional published academic outcomes. Alongside this, the school strongly encourages pupils to be kind and to help others. All aspects of the school's work are delivered with high levels of consistency.

The school has very clear behaviour expectations. Pupils rise to meet these. They receive rewards for their excellent conduct and, when needed, fair sanctions and intensive and highly effective support for those who need help to improve their behaviour. This enables pupils to learn in calm and focused classrooms, where respect is fostered and pupils are polite to one another. Pupils are safe.

The school prepares pupils for success beyond academia. All pupils have opportunities to take on leadership roles. In the primary phase, classroom ambassadors are responsible for welcoming visitors. Pupils in the secondary phase read with younger pupils, and prefects in the sixth form act as role models within the school and address the whole school in assembly. All pupils learn to play a stringed instrument in an orchestra as part of a very ambitious music programme. The careers programme provides pupils throughout the school with well-planned university and business experiences.

Pupils regularly attend clubs, including coding, crafts and drama. Pupils visit museums, theatres and historical houses. All pupils in Year 10 travel to Belgium to visit First World War memorials.

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

Over many years, the school has designed and refined a curriculum of exceptional quality. Leaders have designed a curriculum that deliberately and carefully builds pupils' knowledge and skills over the 15 years that the pupils attend, from age two years to 18. For example, in geography, pupils study Antarctica in Year 1. They build on this when they learn about the ocean and ecosystems in Year 9. Finally, students studying geography A level build on this further when they learn about global systems and governance in Year 13. In science, when pupils in the secondary phase learn about nutrition, they build on their knowledge of the digestive system, first introduced when they were in Year 2.

Subject leaders have thought in much detail how best to build pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils know, remember and can do more than what is expected by the national curriculum across several subjects. For example, in mathematics, by Year 9, pupils study 3D trigonometry and solve complex problems involving simultaneous equations and probability.

The school provides excellent training and guidance for teachers. This supports teachers to become experts, and they deliver the curriculum with precision and skill

from the early years to the sixth form. In Reception, for example, staff extend and expand children's language when in conversation. In the sixth form, teachers break down information in ways that make advanced concepts easy to understand and remember. Teachers regularly check that pupils have the prior knowledge they need before beginning new learning. Teachers constantly check that pupils remember and understand any new information, addressing any misunderstandings as soon as they arise.

The school is very ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff know the needs of pupils with SEND and adapt their teaching where necessary. This enables pupils with SEND to work towards the same academic goals as their peers. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They routinely take part in different extra-curricular opportunities.

Reading is treated as a priority across the entire school. In the Nursery, children gain the learning behaviours that they need to concentrate on their learning. In Reception, pupils are taught to read systematically and intensively so that they can read accurately. Leaders regularly check that pupils build reading fluency and provide support for any pupils who may need it. All staff ensure that pupils learn the subject-specific vocabulary that they need to speak and write as subject experts.

The quality of ongoing training for teachers is very high. Leaders ensure that all new staff receive rigorous support when they begin at the school. Leaders have high expectations of the staff at the school, and they ensure that teachers' workload and well-being are taken into account. Those responsible for governance challenge leaders appropriately. The trust also draws on its wide network of expertise to support senior and subject leaders where necessary.

Pupils are consistently engaged in learning. This is because leaders ensure that children learn good habits from the beginning of the early years. Pupils follow clear routines established for every part of the school day. These provide a sense of purpose for everything that pupils do while at school and increase the time that pupils spend learning. Teachers support them to work independently and discuss ideas with their peers. These strong routines encourage pupils to respect one another. From Year 5 onwards, pupils eat lunch in small groups each day, like a family, serving and clearing away their own food.

The school works hard to improve pupils' attendance rates. Leaders use their strong professional relationships with parents and carers, which often begin in Nursery, to support families to get their children to school every day.

The personal development curriculum has been designed with the same detail and thought as the school's academic curriculum. Every activity that pupils experience has been deliberately planned and builds on previous experiences that pupils have had at the school. Activities are tailored to the needs of pupils and the community that the school serves. Many extra-curricular opportunities take place during the extended school day, which ensures that all pupils have an equal opportunity to take

part. By the end of the sixth form, pupils have played a range of sports, visited a range of top universities, and experienced living and working on a farm.

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	135242
Local authority	Westminster
Inspection number	10293263
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,311
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	139
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Paul Marshall
Principal	Max Haimendorf
Website	www.kingsolomonacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	13 May 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act, 2005

Information about this school

- The school uses two 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.
- The school is situated across two sites, less than one kilometre apart. Pupils in the Nursery to Year 4 attend the younger-years site at Compton Street, W2 1ND. Pupils in Years 5 to 13 attend the older-years site at Penfold Street, NW1 6RX.
- In September 2016, the school merged with Ark Paddington Green Primary, which is now the school's younger-years site.
- The sixth form is new since the last inspection.

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.
- 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 held meetings with the principal and other senior leaders. Inspectors met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, personal, social and health education, behaviour and attendance, early reading, pupils' wider development, early years and sixth form.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages.
- For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about 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.
- Inspectors considered the respective responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Guy Forbat, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Debbie Lebrett	Ofsted Inspector
Laurence King	Ofsted Inspector
David Hatchett	Ofsted Inspector
Jamie Hallums	Ofsted Inspector
Pia Longman	Ofsted Inspector

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