

Inspection of Ark Bolingbroke Academy

Wakehurst Road, London SW11 6BF

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The principal of this school is Claire Edis. The 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 (CEO), Lucy Heller, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tina Alexandrou. There is also a regional director, Siân Maddrell, who has responsibility for the school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and students in the sixth form, are exceptionally well supported to succeed at Ark Bolingbroke Academy. The shared ambition for pupils to approach school with 'courage, compassion, community and excellence' at its core is fully realised.

Staff have very high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. As a result, pupils develop secure subject knowledge, which results in very strong examination results in a wide range of GCSE and A level subjects.

Pupils' behaviour and conduct is exemplary. Pupils are polite and courteous. They have highly positive attitudes and behave well in lessons. Pupils are happy and kept safe in school.

The school provides a wide range of opportunities to develop pupils' character. These include fundraising activities, the Duke of Edinburgh award, acting as pupil ambassadors and being representatives in the student senate. Students in the sixth form quickly develop as independent learners. They are encouraged to take on leadership responsibilities and to act as role models, for example, by acting as mentors for younger pupils and volunteering in the local community.

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

Subject leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum content and the order in which it is taught. They are clear about what they want pupils to know and remember. The curriculum demonstrates high ambition for all pupils and is designed to build on knowledge progressively over time. Pupils frequently revisit prior learning at the start of the lesson. This helps them to remember important knowledge. Pupils are highly proficient in recalling what they have previously learned.

Consistently high-quality teaching from staff who are experts in their subjects means pupils develop a deep understanding of the subject content. Teachers carefully check pupils' understanding of what has been taught, picking up on and addressing misconceptions. They use their expertise to introduce and model new knowledge and techniques. Pupils practise using this new knowledge. Pupils use the feedback and guidance that teachers provide to further improve their work.

Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. They achieve highly because their teachers know their individual needs and apply effective strategies to support them. When necessary, they adapt tasks skilfully, so that all pupils produce high-quality work.

The school understands the vital importance of reading. Pupils benefit from a well-stocked library that is an inspiring and welcoming space. Staff regularly check how well pupils can read. When pupils need additional help to read well, they receive effective support. This helps them become fluent and accurate readers.

High-quality careers guidance is provided throughout the school, ensuring pupils are well informed about their next steps. Students in the sixth form receive appropriate support with university and degree apprenticeship applications. Sixth-form students are proud role models and make a highly positive contribution to the school and local community.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Routines and expectations are in place which lead to a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils are supportive and considerate of each other. They are taught how to show respect for different opinions and listen to the views of others. Pupils are focused, engaged and participate well in lessons. Attendance is high and leaders are focused on improving this still further. Pupils are punctual and persistent absence is low. The school ensures that pupils know why it is important to attend school every day.

The wider personal development of pupils is a considerable strength of the school. Pupils study a carefully crafted curriculum that prepares them well for life in modern Britain. They learn about tolerance and diversity in their morning 'civitas' sessions. Assemblies and external speakers support this. Pupils can choose from a high-quality range of enrichment opportunities, such as chess, choir, cross-fit and a selection of sporting clubs. These are very well attended by pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

Staff benefit from high-quality professional development. Early careers teachers receive excellent support. All staff are well informed about appropriate safeguarding procedures and systems for reporting concerns are well understood. Pupils learn about physical and online safety and the school has a proactive approach to mental health.

Trustees, governors and leaders are highly skilled and knowledgeable in their roles. They share the same clear strategic vision. Leaders work proactively with staff to ensure they are supported in their workload and well-being. Staff are extremely positive about this support. Parents are effusive about the school.

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	138267
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10323383
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
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	770
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	180
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tina Alexandrou
CEO of the trust	Lucy Heller
Principal	Claire Edis
Website	http://arkbolingbrokeacademy.org/
Dates of previous inspection	24 and 25 May 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Ark Schools trust.
- The school makes use of three registered and one unregistered alternative provider.
- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science and history. 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 discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- 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 held meetings with staff and with pupils. Behaviour was observed both in lessons and around the school. The views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's surveys.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders about the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the local governing body, as well as with representatives of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

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