

Ark Alexandra Academy

Address: Park Avenue, William Parker Campus, Park Avenue, HASTINGS, East Sussex, TN34 2PG

Unique reference number (URN): 139821

Inspection report: 16 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Pupils achieve very well in all of their subjects. Any gaps that pupils have in key skills and knowledge are addressed quickly and effectively by the school. For example, if pupils need to catch up in their reading in order to access the curriculum fully, staff provide additional support to meet pupils' specific needs. Pupils take great pride in their work and reach the high standards set by the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make particularly positive progress through the curriculum.

As a result of leaders' very effective work over recent years, pupils' attainment in examinations at the end of Year 11 is rising rapidly. Although pupils' results used to be well below the national average overall, they now either meet or exceed these standards. The quality of current pupils' work, some of which is very impressive indeed, demonstrates clearly that this trend is set to continue. As a result, pupils are able to progress to ambitious further education or training courses when they leave the school.

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

In the past, pupils' levels of attendance have been too low, including for specific groups of pupils such as pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. At the time of the last inspection, in 2024, leaders were asked to address this. They have done so extremely successfully. Pupils' rates of attendance have improved continually since then because of the school's focused actions. Leaders have implemented a number of very effective approaches, including how leaders liaise with parents and carers and the additional support that pupils get in order to attend regularly. Overall, pupils' attendance is currently above average and on an upward trajectory. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has halved. Significantly, the greatest gains have been made in the rates of attendance of the specific groups of pupils mentioned above.

Leaders have also addressed any issues in pupils' behaviour very effectively. Pupils rightly recognise that the school's clear rules, which are put into practice by staff consistently well, help to maintain the really calm, orderly and respectful environment that they experience at school. The vast majority of pupils behave very well indeed and have positive attitudes to school. Those pupils that need specific help with their behaviour get it. Although the school uses suspensions appropriately to uphold its high expectations, rates of suspension are falling markedly because of pupils' very strong conduct in lessons and around the school. Bullying and any other kinds of discriminatory behaviour are not tolerated by either pupils or staff.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

The school offers a broad and highly ambitious curriculum in both key stages 3 and 4. The driving principle behind leaders' design of the curriculum is to ensure that there are high expectations of what pupils will learn in every subject. Leaders make sure that this principle translates into practice through their thorough reviews of teaching and how the curriculum is helping pupils to learn. All pupils are taught to reach these expectations, no matter what

their starting points are. Pupils acquire strong foundations of knowledge across the curriculum in Year 7, which build year by year.

Leaders ensure that several vital factors combine routinely in lessons to support pupils to achieve these ambitious goals in their learning. First and foremost, staff are experts in their subjects and use a range of very effective approaches in lessons consistently well. Teachers' checks on pupils' learning, prioritising the pupils who need the help most, mean that teachers adjust subsequent activities to meet pupils' needs. If pupils have particular additional barriers, for example if they are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, teachers' in-depth knowledge of how to support these pupils helps teachers to adapt learning very effectively. Pupils rightly see how teachers support them to achieve their best.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Vulnerable pupils are at the front and centre of the school's work. This is clearly evident in all aspects of the school, whatever additional barriers pupils might have. Whether they are pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils or pupils known to social care, leaders and staff prioritise them highly. Leaders use additional funding to ensure that pupils benefit from all that the school offers. Crucially, this means ensuring that pupils attend school regularly, make strong progress through the curriculum and get the pastoral care to help them to build their confidence. Leaders use alternative provision wisely and in pupils' best interests. The school's own internal provision, called 'Compass', provides very effective support for pupils that is tailored to their specific needs. All of this combines to help pupils to flourish and means that they are prepared to succeed in life beyond school.

Well-established and robust processes underpin the school's very successful work. Pupils' individual barriers are identified early and accurately. All teachers are trained and equipped to meet pupils' needs fully in lessons and around the school. Leaders monitor the effectiveness of provision in ways that mean that any necessary adjustments are made swiftly. Leaders and staff establish and maintain constructive relationships with vulnerable pupils' parents and carers. They also utilise the right external specialist help to support pupils when needed.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders have made substantial improvements to all aspects of the school's work. They use robust processes to review the school's provision comprehensively, building on the school's strengths and identifying and addressing any priorities swiftly. Leaders ensure that the high expectations that they set for teaching, pupils' behaviour and the standards that pupils achieve are implemented consistently well. Leaders act as role models for other staff and for pupils, making sure that pupils' best interests are at the core of key decisions.

Leaders use staff training highly effectively. This means that, most importantly, staff know pupils and their particular needs really well. It makes sure that staff are experts not only in their subjects, but in how to manage behaviour and support pupils to engage with school positively. Creating a fully inclusive school has been at the heart of training, cementing leaders' core principle of putting vulnerable pupils first so that all pupils can achieve their potential.

Those responsible for governance and trust officers have played a central role in supporting the school and holding leaders to account. Consequently, improvements have been made at a rapid pace. They fulfil their roles very effectively, ensuring that there is an ambitious vision for the school that comes to fruition in practice.

Leaders work with purpose and determination to build relationships across the school community. They are very thoughtful about taking staff workload and wellbeing into account, especially during a period of rapid change. Leaders have created a united, highly motivated team of staff who see that pupils are rightly at the centre of leaders' decisions and actions. Liaison and communication with parents and carers is very positive with the vast majority of parents, with the proportion of parents who would recommend the school to others nearly doubling in the last 2 years.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard 

The support that the school provides for pupils' pastoral needs is a significant strength. The dedicated team of staff provides high-quality guidance for pupils. Pupils are very confident that they will get the right help if they have any concerns, worries or problems. They are taught about maintaining positive mental and physical health. Pupils who attend alternative provision get support that is closely matched to their needs, as do other pupils who have additional barriers. The school liaises with the right external agencies when necessary. Staff ensure that pupils' transitions from primary school are smooth, getting to know the pupils quickly. Guidance and advice about careers and their future education is highly effective in helping pupils to make informed decisions about their lives. This enables all pupils to move on to ambitious destinations when they leave school at the end of Year 11.

The personal development curriculum, taught through 'life lessons' and 'drop-down days', is very well designed and focused on helping pupils to develop a wide range of relevant knowledge really securely, including about healthy relationships, how to stay safe online and how to keep themselves safe in other ways. Pupils learn about the values that underpin life in modern Britain, such as democracy and the rule of law. They demonstrate a strong understanding of people from different cultures and know about what different beliefs mean for people's lives. In particular, pupils reflect insightfully on their own spirituality. Pupils translate this knowledge into practice, showing respect and kindness for each other, and a keen sense of what is right and wrong.

Pupils benefit greatly from the range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities that the school provides. These help pupils to discover and nurture their talents and interests, as well as to develop very positive character traits and leadership skills. All pupils have access to these opportunities because the school makes any adaptations necessary to include everyone.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils' wide range of needs are met extremely well by this highly inclusive school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or with other barriers to their learning are at the very heart of the school's work. All pupils are expected to aim high, to

achieve well and to take great pride in all that they do. Lessons are designed and delivered in ways that make sure that pupils engage positively and learn in an industrious atmosphere. The rapid rise in the quality of pupils' work since the last inspection, combined with the excellent support that they receive, means that they are very well prepared for their next steps when they leave the school. As a result, the majority of pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and thrive.

The school's Christian ethos and its central values of 'faith, kindness and excellence' make a real difference to pupils' experiences at school. They regularly reflect spiritually, developing insights into their own beliefs and those of others. This supports a culture within which pupils respect each other and the staff that they work with. Pupils care about each other's feelings and emotions. They do not tolerate unkind behaviour. Any bullying that occurs is dealt with effectively by staff, which means that pupils rightly feel safe at school. The majority of pupils are very confident about raising any worries or concerns that they might have with staff who know them well.

Pupils strive for excellence beyond their academic learning. Activities such as being part of the Combined Cadet Force, participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award or taking on other leadership roles make a highly positive contribution to pupils' character development. The wide range of stimulating enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities, including in the sports and the arts, is open to all pupils. This means that participation rates are strong, including for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils. Importantly, pupils recognise each other's achievements and are keen to celebrate them.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue their highly effective work to make substantial improvements to key aspects of the school, such as pupils' achievement, so that these significant successes are sustained over time.

About this inspection

This school is part of Ark 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 Tina Alexandrou.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the executive headteacher and the headteachers of each of the 2 school campuses during the inspection, as well as other senior and middle leaders, a representative of those responsible for governance, a representative of the Diocese of Chichester and the director of education for East Sussex local authority.

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.

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The last section 48 inspection took place in February 2024.

The school makes use of 2 alternative provisions, including one that is unregistered.

The school is based on 2 sites: the William Parker Campus (the headteacher at this site is Alex Birks-Agnew) and the Helenswood Campus (the headteacher at this site is Tommy Ittu). The executive headteacher works across both sites. These leaders and a number of other key leaders took up post in the autumn of 2023, shortly before the last Ofsted inspection.

Executive headteacher: Rhys Spiers

Lead inspector:

Matthew Haynes, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Paula Sargent, Ofsted Inspector

Catherine Old, His Majesty's Inspector

Nicky Archer, Ofsted Inspector

Tom Neave, Ofsted Inspector

Michelle Lawson, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 16 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

1,431

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

1,800

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,154

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

33.76%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.49%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

14.19%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	40.7%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	32.6%	45.9%	Below
2022/23 (final)	30.0%	45.3%	Below

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	42.6	46.1	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.4	45.9	Below
2022/23 (final)	38.4	46.3	Below

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.79	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.87	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	32.4%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	17.5%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	16.5%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	34.4	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	26.8	34.6	Below
2022/23 (final)	29.1	35.0	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.49	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-1.51	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	32.4%	53.1%	-20.7 pp
2023/24 (final)	17.5%	53.1%	-35.7 pp
2022/23 (final)	16.5%	52.4%	-36.0 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (final)	34.4	50.4	-16.0
2023/24 (final)	26.8	50.0	-23.2
2022/23 (final)	29.1	50.3	-21.2

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.49	0.16	-1.65
2022/23 (final)	-1.51	0.17	-1.67

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (revised)	89%	92%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	85%	93%	Below
2021 leavers (revised)	89%	94%	Below

16 to 18 performance

A-level average point score

The average points that students achieved per A-level entry.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	40.06	35.00	Above
2023/24 (final)	35.14	34.38	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	32.86	34.16	Close to average

A-level value added

A score showing students’ progress between the end of key stage 4 and the end of their academic qualification studies.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (final)	0.5	0.0	Above
2023/24 (revised)	0.5	0.0	Above

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	9.0%	8.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	12.6%	8.9%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	11.3%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	27.9%	23.4%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	38.1%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	31.6%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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