

Inspection of Ark Soane Academy

Gunnersbury Lane, Ealing, London W3 8EA

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Matthew Neuberger. This school is part of Ark Schools, 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?

This is a school where pupils excel. Pupils and staff are proud to be a part of this school community. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. They share into the school's culture and ethos. Pupils embrace the school's motto to 'Work Hard. Be Kind. Aim High'. Pupils feel safe, are motivated to learn, and attend well.

The school is aspirational for the community it serves. The curriculum is carefully designed to maximise future opportunities. The subject content that pupils learn is planned in detail and expertly taught. The school is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders think carefully about supporting disadvantaged pupils. As a result, pupils are fully engaged in their learning and achieve highly.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are polite, welcoming, and work hard in lessons. Pupils interact respectfully with adults and conduct themselves with maturity. This is because the school sets high expectations which are well understood. Staff promote positive attitudes to learning. Pupils thrive because working relationships are nurtured in a caring environment.

Pupils enjoy many clubs and outings. The school prioritises pupils' wider development through carefully planned 'exploration days'. Pupils value these experiences and enjoy being active members of their school community.

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

The school is highly ambitious for all pupils. The curriculum is broad, rigorously planned and captures the knowledge and skills pupils must learn. Careful sequencing and appropriate challenge ensure that pupils learn progressively over time. The school has developed an extensive range of high-quality resources that strengthens the quality of curriculum delivery. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils learn carefully sequenced subject content that consolidates and builds on prior learning. For example, in history pupils explore the expansion and collapse of medieval African empires in Year 7. They look closely at the causes of the First World War through the lens of empire building in Year 9. In English, pupils develop knowledge of literature deeply. For instance, they explore corruption and flawed characterisation through 'Oliver Twist' in Year 7. In Years 8 and 9, pupils go on to study Sherlock Holmes and 'Othello'. These very strong foundations prepare pupils well for their next stage of learning.

The curriculum is expertly taught by highly skilled teachers, who have strong subject knowledge. All staff benefit from regular, high-quality training within school and through the trust network. Teachers consistently use a range of assessment techniques. This ensures that learning is adapted appropriately and committed to

pupils' long-term memory. Any misconceptions and gaps in knowledge are quickly addressed.

The school is uncompromising in the high standards they expect of pupils. Teachers apply rigorous routines consistently that help to create an exceptionally supportive learning environment, free from any disruption. Pupils are very positive about how their teachers challenge them to work hard and aim high. These shared values ensure that pupils are fully focused in lessons. Staff enable pupils to produce work to a very high standard. This rigorous and consistent approach secures excellent progress across the curriculum, including for pupils with SEND. The school identifies any gaps in pupils' attendance closely. Staff make sure that pupils attend regularly.

The school prioritises pupils' ability to read fluently. Pupils at the early stages of reading are provided with extensive expert support. This helps pupils to become confident readers. Staff make sure that all pupils are equipped to learn the same academically challenging curriculum. The school prioritises oracy and language development. The use of rich texts across the curriculum promotes both intellectual curiosity and reading for pleasure. Pupils with SEND access specialist support so that they too aspire and achieve highly, in line with their peers.

Pupils participate well with the wider opportunities the school provides for personal growth and development. Pupils speak confidently about life in modern Britain, showing an awareness of, and appreciation for, diversity and inclusion. They value the 'exploration days' provided, with trips to iconic landmarks and places of historical interest. The school ensures that pupils learn how to be safe and healthy, both physically and mentally. Pupils enjoy 'Family Dining', a daily opportunity for all pupils to refine their social and public speaking skills. Clubs are well attended, catering for a broad spectrum of talents and interests. These include 3D sculpture, singing and chess club.

The school is well led by highly skilled and resilient leaders. Governors provide appropriate levels of support and challenge. They are equally committed to delivering an ambitious education for this community. The trust provides sophisticated and expertly informed support, which helps the school to deliver high-quality education. Staff feel very well supported and are proud to be an integral part of Ark Soane.

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](#); 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	147863
Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	10293314
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	526
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sir Paul Marshall
Principal	Matthew Neuberger
Website	arksoane.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- 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.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff, including the principal, teaching staff and support staff.
- Inspectors met with the chair of the governing body, as well as representatives from the trust, including the Regional Director.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, history, mathematics, physical education and modern foreign languages. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, 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 other subject areas.

- 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.
- Inspectors looked at documents such as the school's wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Sophie Cavanagh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alan McDougall	Ofsted Inspector
Debbie Lebrecht	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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