

Ark All Saints Academy

Wyndham Road, Camberwell, London, SE5 0UB

Inspection dates 2–3 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- A parent or carer's email included the following, justified comment: 'I am so happy that my child is in this school – it is brilliant – I feel a trust and respect for the Principal.'
- The Principal, senior leaders, managers and governors have planned and overseen two very successful years of this new academy. Their capacity to keep making improvements is outstanding.
- The consistently good teaching continues to improve as staff receive outstanding training and support. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching regularly.
- Scholars make consistently good progress which is often better than that seen nationally for the same-aged students.
- Achievement is improving in English, mathematics, science and several other subjects. Teachers focus on scholars understanding work in depth and learning how to master problems.
- The provision for scholars' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Citizenship days extend scholars' horizons, their awareness of how to be safe and their understanding of British values.
- Scholars are happy and proud to be part of the academy 'family'. They feel safe and secure and behave extremely well. They value the tolerance and respect promoted by all staff. Relationships are excellent.
- A generous level of staffing supports scholars who have learning or personal difficulties. Pastoral leaders' work is very effective and caring. Excellent procedures are in place to secure scholars' safety.
- Scholars know and appreciate the academy's values of growing in confidence, living responsibly, acting with integrity and being successful. They accept the high expectations that leaders demand, and work hard in lessons.
- Governors combine support and challenge very well. Members have considerable professional experience which contributes to their ability to scrutinise finances, progress and the quality of teaching.
- All staff value the input from, and the benefits of belonging to, the Ark group of schools and academies.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- White British and the most able scholars do not make quite as much progress as other scholars.
- Occasionally, teachers' questions do not make scholars think hard enough or explain their answers in depth.
- Teachers do not always notice when scholars have completed their work quickly and give them more challenging work.
- A few scholars ignore the questions and suggestions for improvement that teachers write in their books.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed parts of 20 lessons. Several observations were carried out with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed a training meeting for staff new to the academy, a reading session and an assembly.
- Inspectors spoke to many scholars (students) informally as well as meeting representatives from Years 7 and 8 and the Scholars' Voice (school council). An inspector met a group of disabled and special educational needs scholars.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal and senior leaders and staff with responsibility for subjects and other aspects of the school's work.
- The lead inspector met the Chair of the Governing Body, three other governors, the academy chaplain and the Ark Director of Education Support.
- Inspectors discussed their observations with teaching staff and examined a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and monitoring records. They also scrutinised information about progress, standards, exclusions, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at a range of scholars' work in lessons. They also looked at English, mathematics and science books with senior leaders.
- Inspectors took into account 39 questionnaires completed by members of staff and 25 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. An inspector met four parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Clare Gillies, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gill Walley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This four-form entry academy, sponsored by the Ark education charity, opened in September 2013. It is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school at present because it only has scholars in Years 7 and 8. By September 2017, it will have Years 7 to 11 and intends to open a sixth form in the future.
- The academy moved into a new building in January 2014 on the site of St Michael and All Angels CofE Academy, which closed in July 2013.
- Most scholars attending the academy are from Black Caribbean, White British and Black African heritages with small proportions from many other minority ethnic groups.
- A well-above-average proportion of scholars speak English as an additional language, of whom a few are at an early stage of learning English.
- Well over half the scholars, a very high proportion, receive support through the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for disadvantaged, specific groups, including scholars known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children.
- About 25% of Year 7 scholars receive catch-up funding which is for scholars who did not attain the nationally expected levels in English or mathematics at the end of primary school.
- The proportion of disabled scholars and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The academy uses several different alternative provisions for a small number of scholars. These include Southwark Inclusive Learning Service, Phoenix Place, the YESS project, Complete Works, Newlands Academy and Octavia House.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress, particularly that of White British and the most able scholars, by:
 - checking that scholars always respond to the suggestions for improvement and questions which teachers write in their books and do any spelling and grammatical corrections they are given
 - ensuring that teachers notice when the most able scholars have completed their work and have challenging work ready for them
 - strengthening the style and range of questions that teachers pose so that scholars have to think hard and explain their answers in detail.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The Principal had two terms to prepare for the academy's opening. She visited several Ark and other academies, and gleaned thoughts about the best ethos for All Saints and how to support its growth. This reflection time contributed to her being able to provide outstanding leadership and management of the academy from its first day.
- The Principal is ably supported by a small and very effective senior leadership team, enthusiastic middle leaders and teachers and dedicated non-teaching staff. One senior leader observed that she loves working at the academy because 'The changes that are being made to the lives of these scholars are fantastic.'
- The Principal and governors have worked extremely hard to ensure high-quality learning. Considerable turnover of staff followed the transition from its predecessor school. These factors, and having only a small number of scholars, affected the number of subjects that could be offered in the first two years. However, the subjects available still provided scholars with a good range of options. In September 2015, all subjects will have specialist and experienced middle leaders and teachers.
- Improving scholars' reading and writing has a very high profile as many of them start at the academy with typically low reading ages. Scholars have at least one English, mathematics and science lesson every day.
- The citizenship days are packed with worthwhile elements which broaden scholars' horizons, address health and safety topics and tackle sensitive topics such as extremism or different family structures. Most scholars participate enthusiastically in the very good range of clubs, activities and things to do after lessons have ended. Music, particularly, strengthens the scholars' cultural awareness. Salvation Army volunteers and staff ensure scholars get home safely when they stay late at the academy.
- Teachers' performance in all aspects of their work, as well as scholars' progress, is assessed rigorously and contributes to their yearly appraisals and pay awards. Teaching and learning are led outstandingly well and the evaluations of the quality of learning are well founded. In the same vein, the academy's development plans are based on accurate knowledge of where further development is needed.
- A teacher wrote on the questionnaire that it was the best school to work in because of the training and all-round support, stating that 'the quality is outstanding'. It includes a week of training for staff new to the school, weekly meetings to share ideas, and a 'Good to Great' programme. Meetings are held for newly qualified teachers, and staff are given time to observe each other in action and extended training sessions once a week.
- Scholars have taken on board all the procedures and high expectations for behaviour and learning, and are very proud to belong to the academy. Senior leaders have created an environment in which at least good teaching and behaviour and excellent relationships flourish. All the parents and staff who responded to the questionnaires agreed that the academy is well led and managed.
- Teachers and support staff apply behaviour strategies consistently so that scholars have a clear structure and know how they should behave. All incidents are recorded meticulously, and restorative justice and internal support are used effectively to help scholars.
- The school's provision for scholars' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Scholars rate highly the learning sessions in philosophy in which they debate issues such as the academy's firm anti-discrimination stance, or racism. They learn about the origins of the universe and humanity, as well as Judaism and Islam in religious education lessons. They consider issues such as shoplifting in drama, globalisation in geography, how to express opinions in English, and 'why rules matter' in physical education. This work is complemented by the school chaplain and the Archdeacon of Southwark, who is also a governor.
- The recent general election was used to add to scholars' appreciation of what democracy means. They have focused on British values in a citizenship day and started one day of the inspection learning about magistrates' courts. Year 7 scholars have a total of 18 lessons with the Principal where she discusses, for example, how to welcome visitors, what tolerance means, the academy's values (such as living responsibly and acting with integrity) and Ark's key principles.
- From their first day at the academy, scholars consider their futures with sessions about universities or the finances involved in higher education; they have their photographs taken wearing mortarboards. Scholars know they have to aim high and the academy does much to inspire them to do this.
- Pastoral leaders visit scholars working in off-site provision to check on their attendance, behaviour and progress. Such provision is carefully selected to meet their individual needs, and some return successfully to full-time mainstream education in the academy. The academy works tirelessly, liaising with external agencies, to acquire funding and permanent placements for a few scholars who need to be placed in an alternative setting where they can flourish.

- Individual case studies show how effectively the academy meets all scholars' learning and pastoral needs or, where necessary, liaises with social services and the education welfare officer to support families. Strong links with feeder primary schools mean that staff are alert to families which may need support.
- The leadership and management of provision for disabled scholars and those with special educational needs or those who speak English as an additional language are outstanding. For example, a dyslexia-trained member of staff identifies scholars who would benefit from using a laptop. These scholars make at least as good progress as others and gain confidence to be full members of the school community.
- The allocation of funds for disadvantaged scholars, topped up by other funding streams, is thoughtful and effective. It reflects the academy's keen determination for equality of opportunity for all. In addition to financing staff for the intensive reading courses, the funding pays for other interventions for learning and behaviour. It funds scholars to start work with a good breakfast, pays for their individual music lessons and contributes to valuable, team-building residential trips.
- In addition to meeting parents at primary schools, the Principal welcomes their comments and arranges sessions where, for example, they can understand how English and mathematics are taught. Parents who met inspectors described communication as 'very strong'. They mentioned informative written reports and telephone calls from teachers to report scholars' positive and negative achievement.
- Parents with disabled scholars are fully engaged in the work of the academy, being invited to visit and make comments about the new building when it was under construction. Those with children who receive some extra input for learning or personal issues are notified by letter and invited to attend a meeting to discuss their needs.
- In addition to regular and constructive reviews, belonging to the Ark chain gives the academy much support which benefits many senior leaders, teachers and other staff. Principals' or subject leaders' meetings are used to share ideas and spread good practice. Many Scholars develop confidence and experiences through participating in events, such as concerts or competitions, with other Ark academy students. The local authority and diocese also offer useful support as needed.
- The academy fully meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection most effectively. Staff receive regular training on identifying and addressing special educational needs and the signs of child exploitation or female genital mutilation (FGM), for example. Most senior leaders and governors are trained in safe recruitment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - As with all Ark academies, the local governing body has no statutory responsibilities, concentrating on 'educational strategy, school outcomes and aspiration'. It does this extremely well. Governors bring a wealth of valuable experience to their work including education, involvement with the Diocese of Southwark or careers in the City of London.
 - Governors are dedicated to the academy's success and support the Principal enthusiastically. They reflect astutely on the information they receive and ask probing questions. They evaluate detailed information about scholars' progress against the progress that the same-aged scholars are expected to make nationally.
 - Appreciating the importance of high-quality teaching, governors keep themselves informed about its quality and ensure that pay awards are linked to performance and outcomes. They know that high-quality professional development is in place for all teachers, particularly those whose practice has elements requiring improvement.
 - Several governors bring financial acumen to the board's deliberations about how the pupil premium funds are allocated and whether the impact of spending generates significant improvements. They check meticulously that all safeguarding procedures are secure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Scholars move around the academy sensibly. The changeover between lessons is calm and learning starts promptly. Scholars are keen to learn and do well; practically all of them stay focused and work hard, particularly when given writing to complete on their own.
- Scholars are happy having no break between lessons before lunch; they know they come to the academy to work. Many stay for extra activities at the end of the day and feel that they are given plenty of time to socialise. They get on extremely well together and appreciate their different backgrounds and faiths.
- Friday's 'Shout Out' celebratory assemblies are very popular and scholars say they contribute to the 'family feeling'. They also appreciate the special Founder's Day, and are very proud of the badges they receive. It is not surprising that attendance is above average.

- Scholars know that they must have all the correct folders and equipment with them, and pastoral staff check this regularly. Even so, a few of them do not write neatly or present their work tidily; science graphs, for example, are not always completed with a sharp enough pencil.
- Based on very low thresholds, the very few racist, homophobic, bullying incidents are recorded and analysed to inform future personal development. Most of them believe there is no bullying, putting that down to discussion during citizenship days and assembly presentations.
- Trained, peer-mediator scholars ensure that any troubles are sorted quickly. A group of scholars with special educational needs observed that if anyone gets frustrated or angry, 'others help to calm them down' agreeing that their therapy sessions are very helpful.
- The behaviour of the small number of scholars attending alternative provision is as good as can be expected and, for most, often generates improvement and a return to mainstream provision. They are all in safe environments which the academy monitors regularly.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Experienced teaching partners (assistants) and pastoral leaders contribute significantly to all scholars feeling highly cared for and safe. All staff and scholars report any concerns with confidence that they will be addressed promptly.
- Staffed by pastoral workers who have relevant training and expertise, the Alpha and Omega 'withdrawal rooms' are used very well to help individual scholars to reflect on their work and attitudes to learning; repeated attendance is very rare.
- Staff never give up on support for scholars who find the academy's routines and expectations difficult to meet. Pastoral leaders only seek alternative provision for individual scholars when they have to accept that this is best for their needs and well-being. Staff are equally diligent in helping discreetly children who are looked after.
- Scholars are taught about how to live safe lives. E-safety has a high profile in computer science lessons, and dangers in the community, such as weapons and drugs, are addressed in citizenship days, assemblies and by a visiting member of the police.
- The 'Scholars' Voice' members focus as much on fund-raising for those less fortunate than themselves as discussing academy life and making sensible suggestions for improvements. If suggestions, such as having an AstroTurf sports pitch, are refused, the Principal ensures that they understand the reasons, which are often related to the cost. Scholars relish taking on other positions of responsibility. Year 8 scholars realise that they will always be the oldest ones and must lead by example.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is predominantly good, with examples of practice which generate outstanding learning. Scholars are extremely attentive and diligent in lessons and convey their enjoyment of learning when taught by confident and experienced teachers. Vibrant, brisk and clear teaching was seen in history, technology, computer science, drama, physical education and English lessons.
- Several new middle leaders (one took up post during the inspection) have not had time to instil the best practice in their subjects. Teachers new to the academy, some of whom are new to teaching, have yet to hone their skills to match the academy's individual scholars' needs. It is for these reasons that teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Teachers are fully aware of scholars' individual needs, such as those of disabled scholars and scholars who have special educational needs, disadvantaged scholars or those who speak English as an additional language. Teachers are attentive to lower attainers but are not so alert to the most able scholars who occasionally complete work and do not move on rapidly to further, challenging work.
- Four days a week, all scholars read and discuss a book of their choice for half an hour. Those who need extra help have four hours a week following intensive, successful reading programmes.
- In practically all subjects, teachers know that scholars' reading and writing are their responsibility. They set short writing tasks in lessons and longer ones each term. Most of them make a point of emphasising subject-specific and other important words: 'conduction' in science for example, or adjectives to describe an aggressive Dickensian character. Equally helpful is when scholars explore with their teachers why words can have several meanings; however, teachers do not automatically do this.
- The application of numeracy skills is not as widespread in all subjects as it is for literacy. However, the recently appointed head of mathematics has started to develop scholars' problem-solving skills, and has prepared plans to place the promotion of numeracy in other subjects high on the agenda for next year.

- Teachers formally assess scholars' work three times a year, and do this accurately. The progress they record in English, mathematics and science is verified by external specialists.
- Scholars often respond well to probing questions which check and reinforce their learning, helping to improve their speaking in formal English. An effective question was seen when a teacher asked, 'Who can improve on that answer?' Occasionally teachers pose questions which do not seek explanations of their responses or which only require short answers, so scholars are not challenged to think hard enough.
- Many teachers mark scholars' work helpfully and write comments making it clear what would make the work better, posing questions and identifying spelling and grammatical mistakes. Most scholars are diligent about responding but those that do not are not always spotted and consequently avoid benefiting from learning from their mistakes.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From their different starting points, all scholars make at least good progress in all subjects – more than might be expected nationally for their ages. The academy sets targets which are above those expected nationally and many scholars are on target to meet them. There is no difference between boys' and girls' achievement, or the achievement of Black Caribbean and Black African scholars, and other ethnic groups. Just a few White British scholars do not do quite as well as other groups.
- With well over half the scholars eligible for pupil premium funding, the national picture is reversed, as their progress is slightly better than that of others.
- The most able scholars make good progress but it is not as securely strong as other scholars', such as the low attainers. The academy is fully aware that these scholars do not always do sufficiently stimulating and challenging work to reach their full potential.
- Scholars who speak English as an additional language make particularly rapid progress in English as the reading programmes are so successful. The academy is successfully tackling the problem of a few English-speaking scholars, even in Year 8, who have not yet matched their reading age to their actual age.
- The education provided for disabled scholars and those who have special educational needs is of a high quality and fully meets their needs. When necessary, they receive intensive support to improve their learning as well as developing their confidence. Their basic skills improve fast, as do those for scholars eligible for catch-up funding.
- The Ark's 'English Mastery' structure is planned to develop 'skills long after scholars have left school' rather than just absorbing examination techniques which may easily be forgotten. In addition to good progress in grammar, scholars are learning how to summarise – a valuable tool, along with useful research skills. In mathematics, scholars confidently explore 'Pi' by calculating diameter and circumference ratios to appreciate the relationship in depth and then tackle related problems.
- The head of mathematics believes that the scholars' primary school standards do not necessarily represent sufficiently deep understanding of key principles. The Ark 'Mathematics Mastery' programme is fully in place so that scholars explore concepts using practical equipment and images. The inspection confirmed that they are developing skills and resilience to tackle problems. They particularly enjoy a stimulating, online homework programme that makes them want to carry on working.
- Scholars are making particularly good progress in tackling complex computer programming. They design and produce imaginative, neat textile work, improve their Spanish accents, and master cricket and high-jump skills. They also evaluate their work in drama and weigh up the strength of historical evidence.
- The achievement of scholars attending alternative provision is in improved emotional behaviour, better attitudes to learning and stronger skills in English and mathematics. Success is most evident when scholars return to mainstream schooling.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because, despite no significant gaps between any groups of scholars' progress, some scholars do not achieve quite as well as others. Also, beyond the academy's control, progress over time in a few subjects has been held back by a lack of specialist teachers during the academy's first two years.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	139718
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	450289

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11–13 (11–16 by September 2017)
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Martin
Principal	Lucy Frame
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 7450 5959
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Email address	info@arkallsaintsacademy.org

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