

Ark Swift Primary Academy

Australia Road, London W12 7PT

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| Inspection dates | 5–6 May 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders and members of the local governing board have worked successfully together to secure good teaching, learning and assessment in Years 1 to 6 and raise pupils' academic outcomes.
- Leaders and members of the local governing board check the standard of the school's work very regularly. They have an accurate view of the school's performance and plan further improvement carefully.
- Leaders have developed consistent approaches to teaching and assessment in Years 1 to 6 that support pupils' learning effectively.
- Senior and subject leaders have placed a strong emphasis on improving pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. This helps current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability, to achieve well in Years 1 to 6.
- Recent assessment information and current work in pupils' books show that rates of pupils' progress have increased and are good in Years 1 to 6.
- Pupils respond readily and positively to the school's high expectations of their behaviour. They are friendly, welcoming and greet visitors confidently. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe from harm.
- Visitors to the school and outings to local places of interest, as well as a wide variety of popular extra-curricular clubs, encourage pupils' enjoyment of their learning. Pupils express ambitious goals for their future lives and are keen to do well.
- As a result of all these strengths, the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Changes in teaching staff have limited the impact of initiatives to secure consistently good teaching and children's good progress in the early years provision.
- In a few classes, pupils make stronger progress in reading, writing and mathematics than in other subjects when the range of curriculum opportunities is limited.
- The most able pupils are not consistently challenged to reach the highest standards of attainment of which they are capable.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment further by:
 - making sure that the most able pupils are set challenging tasks to attain the highest standards
 - improving the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years provision so that children make good progress
 - making sure that the curriculum helps pupils develop skills in all aspects of their education by providing a consistently wide range of learning opportunities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the school opened, senior leaders and members of the local governing board have worked with determination to establish good-quality teaching in Years 1 to 6. Through developing a shared set of values for the whole school community, leaders have encouraged staff to share their ambitions for the school and motivated pupils to aim high.
- Senior and subject leaders check the quality of teaching regularly. They manage teachers' performance effectively, sharing examples of good practice and developing consistent approaches that support pupils' learning successfully. They identify any underperformance in teaching, provide additional support and guidance, and check that improvements have been sustained. Leaders have been particularly effective in establishing consistency in teaching, learning and assessment in Years 1 to 6. In the early years provision, where the quality of teaching is of variable quality, leadership of teaching has not been as effective.
- The curriculum supports pupils' good progress and makes sure that pupils build strong reading, writing and mathematics skills. The curriculum for phonics (the link between letters and sounds) helps pupils in key stage 1 to develop early reading skills securely.
- Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to museums, visitors to the academy and opportunities to take part in musical performances, capture pupils' interest and provide pupils with a wide range of engaging experiences. Extra-curricular clubs including art, football, steel pans and debating broaden pupils' interests. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged strongly. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy learning to play a musical instrument and pupils in Years 1 to 6 learn French. Fundamental British values are actively promoted, for example through democratic elections of members of the school council. Pupils develop respect and tolerance for others through learning about a wide range of faiths and festivals from a variety of cultures.
- Sometimes the breadth of the curriculum is uneven in making sure that pupils consistently experience wide-ranging learning opportunities. When teachers in a few classes focus more on reading, writing and mathematics than on a broader range of subjects, the curriculum is not as well balanced.
- The pupil premium funding successfully closes gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with that of others at the school and nationally. Leaders put the additional funding to a variety of uses to make sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to benefit from all that the school has to offer.
- The physical education and sport premium funding encourages pupils' participation in sporting activities and promotes their positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Members of the local governing board are ambitious for the academy and work closely with the academy's senior leaders. They have a secure understanding of the academy's overall effectiveness. They check the reliability of the academy's assessments of its performance in order to measure the accuracy of the academy's own self-evaluations. Members of the local governing board visit the academy regularly. They check the progress the academy makes in tackling key priorities for improvement, and challenge the academy to meet ambitious targets. They review the success of performance management in delivering improvements to teaching and pupils' progress. Governors know how the academy's leaders use the pupil premium funding and check how effectively additional funding secures improvements to outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and make sure that pupils are supported and safe. Leaders have made sure that staff receive regular training. Staff are well informed about current safeguarding guidance, including arrangements to promote pupils' welfare and how to identify pupils at risk from radicalisation and extremism. Staff know what steps to take should they have any concerns about pupils' safety. Records show that leaders take swift action to safeguard pupils should any concerns arise. They work effectively with parents and in partnership with a wide range of safeguarding professionals.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have made sure that the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good. Teachers and teaching assistants use consistent approaches so that pupils make good progress in developing reading, writing and mathematics skills. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and help pupils who need additional guidance.
- Teachers and teaching assistants support the learning of pupils who have special educational needs or disability effectively in lessons and in additional sessions so that they make good progress.
- Teachers explain new learning clearly. They use a variety of resources that help pupils learn well, particularly in mathematics. Through daily reading sessions, pupils develop their enjoyment of books. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their favourite authors and the books they prefer to read. Pupils write regularly and check for themselves that they include key features of high-quality writing. Teachers encourage pupils to write neatly and fluently, as displays around the academy showing pupils' joined-up handwriting reflect.
- Relationships between teaching staff and pupils are positive and encouraging. Pupils enjoy learning and are diligent to complete the tasks they are set.
- Teachers follow a consistent approach to giving feedback on pupils' work and help pupils to improve further. Pupils take responsibility for responding to teachers' guidance.
- Pupils who join the school at the early stages of learning English as an additional language benefit from extra help and build up their knowledge of phonics and English vocabulary rapidly.
- In Years 5 and 6, teachers set the most able pupils challenging tasks and help them make rapid gains in learning. However, the most able pupils in other year groups are not consistently set demanding tasks to help them make progress towards the highest standards.
- Teaching in the early years provision is not as effective in supporting children's good progress. Adults often acknowledge children's efforts in discussions and are encouraging. However, when opportunities are missed to extend children's learning and thinking, their progress is hindered. Tasks are not consistently well selected to help children deepen their knowledge and understanding quickly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The academy's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are keen to take on roles of responsibility, for example as class ambassadors. Pupils are polite and confident. During the inspection, they frequently introduced themselves to the inspection team.
- Pupils know the academy's aims, 'dream, believe, achieve', and these encourage them to aspire to do well. They have ambitious plans for their future careers and understand that working hard in the school and achieving well will help them in their future lives.
- Older pupils confirm that since the school opened, instances of bullying such as name-calling have reduced. Activities to make the whole school community aware that bullying is unacceptable successfully make sure that any instances of bullying are rare. Pupils are confident that should any problems arise, the staff would take rapid action to address any issues, as the school's records show. Pupils know what they should do to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, for instance when crossing the road and when using information and communication technology.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They walk from one part of the building to another sensibly at break time and conduct themselves sensibly in lessons. Pupils respond quickly to reminders from staff about the behaviour that is expected.
- The school is a calm and positive learning environment. Pupils have taken part in selecting the school's five values. Suggestions from pupils have also helped contribute to improvements, for example to the toilet facilities and motivational displays around the school. The school site is well maintained and free from any litter or graffiti.

- Attendance rates are rising. Leaders rigorously follow up pupils who are absent and there is a marked improvement in the attendance of pupils who have previously had high rates of absence. Attendance targets for each class are challenging. Through celebrating the class with the best weekly attendance and rewarding pupils who rarely miss a day of school, leaders make the importance of attending every day abundantly clear to the whole school community.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Leaders have secured steady improvements to pupils' outcomes since the school opened. Although pupils in Year 6 in 2015 did not meet the floor targets for progress over key stage 2, their progress in Years 5 and 6 was considerably faster than in Years 3 and 4. Assessment information showing the progress of pupils currently at the school and work in pupils' books show that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points. Previously low standards of attainment are rising. Gaps between floor targets and the school's outcomes are narrowing consistently.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. In 2015, gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils at the school and nationally narrowed in assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, at the end of the Reception Year, and in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability benefit from support and additional guidance tailored to their needs and make good progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress as a result of the additional support and guidance they receive.
- Through regular checks on the progress all pupils make, leaders identify quickly any pupils who may be at risk of falling behind in their learning. Extra sessions with teachers and teaching assistants for selected pupils help them to catch up.
- The most able pupils generally make good progress. The most able pupils who left at the end of Year 6 in 2015 made particularly rapid progress in Years 5 and 6. However, the proportions of pupils who reached the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 were below national averages. The most able pupils in other year groups are not consistently well challenged to make fast progress in their learning.
- The previously low proportion of children reaching average standards at the end of the Reception Year has improved year on year. However, outcomes for children currently in Nursery and Reception classes require improvement because the quality of provision is uneven.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Leaders have not been as successful in securing lasting improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years provision compared with Years 1 to 6. Changes in teaching staff have hindered the effectiveness of initiatives to secure consistency in teaching quality.
- Adults are not consistently effective in extending children's thinking and vocabulary, and deepening their understanding. Children currently in the early years provision are not fully prepared for the start of Year 1, and their progress is variable when activities for children to select are insufficiently demanding, particularly for the most able.
- Leaders and members of the local governing board use partnerships with other academies within the Ark multi-academy trust to help improve the quality of provision in the early years. However, these have not had time to show a sustained impact on the consistency of teaching.
- Workshops encourage parents to contribute to assessments of their children's learning and to spend time in the early years provision supporting their children's learning. Together with home visits by staff before children join the early years provision, these help build close links with parents.
- Children in the early years provision behave well, listen carefully to the adults and follow instructions sensibly. Children in the Reception class concentrated hard to describe caterpillars in a container that they were examining. Well-established routines make sure that children are safe and no time is wasted, for example when children move from one activity to the next.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139820 |
| Local authority | Hammersmith and Fulham |
| Inspection number | 10011702 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 384 |
| Appropriate authority | The local governing board |
| Chair | Tina Alexandrou |
| Principal | Christopher Greenhall |
| Telephone number | 020 8743 2514 |
| Website | www.arkswift.org |
| Email address | info@arkswiftprimary.org |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It converted to academy status in September 2013 and is part of the Ark multi-academy trust.
- Most children attend the Nursery full time and a few attend part time in the morning or the afternoon. Children in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs or disability compared with national averages.
- In 2015, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 30 teaching sessions from Nursery to Year 6 across a range of subject areas. Most visits to lessons were conducted together with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, and with senior and subject leaders. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in lessons and around the school, and looked at work in pupils' books. They also met with groups of pupils from key stage 2 and listened to pupils reading. Inspectors met with the chair of the local governing board and the regional director for the Ark multi-academy trust. A whole-school assembly was observed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including assessment information, minutes of meetings of the local governing board, and the school's action plan and self-evaluation reports. The school's records relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- There were six responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke informally with parents during the inspection and considered the academy's own recent survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

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| Madeleine Gerard, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Helen Ridding | Ofsted Inspector |
| Jacques Szemalikowski | Ofsted Inspector |

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