

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Devon Hanson  
Ark Evelyn Grace Academy  
255 Shakespeare Road  
Lambeth  
London  
SE24 0QN

Dear Mr Hanson

### **Short inspection of Ark Evelyn Grace Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 16 May 2017 with Susan Maguire, Ofsted Inspector, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in March 2014.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You and your leadership team have a clear moral purpose to ensure that pupils develop strong personal and social skills as well as high academic aspirations. You have developed a very inclusive school, where pupils of all backgrounds and faiths can develop into confident young people, secure in the knowledge that they are contributing to the school's success as well as their own. The school was awarded the Centre of Excellence Inclusion Quality Mark in February 2017. You have ensured that there is leadership capacity at all levels to take the school forward. A range of senior and middle leaders met with inspectors or visited classes with them during the inspection: all leaders were confident and knowledgeable in taking responsibility for their areas.

The school has continued to improve since the previous inspection. The school's efforts to raise the quality of teaching have had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong and teachers' questioning encourages and challenges pupils to think and participate. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They have no fear of getting an answer wrong because they are keen learners. Pupils present their work very well.

You and your leadership team, supported by governors, have developed a closer working relationship with the Ark schools' network and Ark consultants. This work has had a particular focus on using assessment information more effectively and improving provision in science. These initiatives are having a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment.

## **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. The single central record of staff employment checks is an example of strong practice. Systems and procedures are clear. All visitors to the school must have required checks in place. Contractors are emailed in advance to ensure that visitors do not arrive without appropriate documentation. All senior staff have completed safer recruitment training. The principal and governors ensure that all essential information is recorded before staff appointments are made.

Similarly, staff are trained to a high level. All staff have level 2 safeguarding training and are up to date about the range of risks to pupils. Senior staff follow up concerns about pupils in a persistent and timely manner and work effectively with a range of external agencies and groups. Leaders put a high priority on educating pupils about the risks they may face in the local community. Pupils value the opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe through personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and tutor time. Pupils also benefit from specific workshops about gangs and online safety.

## **Inspection findings**

- The school's assessment information shows that pupils of middle ability, particularly boys, have made slower progress than other groups in the past. They are now making more rapid progress in English and mathematics in key stages 3 and 4. This is as a result of improvements in leaders' monitoring of pupils' progress, targeting support for pupils and ensuring a consistently higher level of challenge in teaching. Middle-ability boys respond positively to teachers' high expectations and probing questioning. As a result, they are now making progress broadly in line with that of middle-ability girls. Pupils' assessments are standardised across the Ark schools' network. Progress information and pupils' work in their books confirm that this group of pupils is making better progress.
- There is an improving trend in pupils' progress in science. This is because of carefully targeted preparation for the linear examinations and stronger intervention work with middle-ability pupils in particular. Teachers have benefited from the support of Ark consultants, and the impact of this work is evident, particularly in key stage 4. However, the level of challenge is not always consistently high in key stage 3.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally strong and has a positive impact on their social skills, personal development and learning. There is a studious, mature learning environment in classes and around the school. Pupils are engaged and participate in their learning and are proud of their achievements. They are polite and orderly around the school and were a credit to the school during the inspection.

- Exclusions remain above national figures, but there has been a falling trend over the last four successive years, in total and for the number of pupils excluded. The proportion of pupils with more than one exclusion is now below the national average. School leaders maintain a robust approach to exclusion. Over a third of exclusions are for incidents outside school. This firm application of well-known policies ensures that the school is a safe place for pupils and that pupils understand that external disagreements must not be brought into school.
- School leaders have focused on improving students' progress in the sixth form. Leaders have raised the entrance requirements so that students are taking courses relevant to their needs and interests. A strong transition programme has been developed to ensure that students feel confident and well prepared to embark on their sixth-form studies. Leaders monitor students' progress meticulously. This shows that students' progress has accelerated during Year 13. Even so, reflecting some unevenness in the quality of teaching, progress is more rapid in some subjects than others.
- There is a high level of individualised support for students, which underpins their improving academic progress. Students spoke to inspectors about how much they valued the range of academic, personal and emotional support available. Leaders ensure that the vision of the sixth form continues to emphasise social mobility. The high-quality enrichment programme and careers information, advice and guidance have a positive impact on students' motivation and aspirations.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- middle attainers in key stage 3 continue to make more rapid progress across the range of subjects, with a particular focus on science
- sixth-form students make more consistent progress across the range of academic subjects.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lambeth. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Hallett  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

The lead inspector met with you and senior leaders at the start of the school day to review the school's self-evaluation, agree key lines of enquiry and plan inspection activities. Inspectors visited classes in a wide range of subjects to observe pupils' learning and to look at their books. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of governors and met with two representatives of the Ark trust. Inspectors spoke with pupils in classes and at lunchtime and met with two groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school. Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including safeguarding records. Inspectors considered the responses to the school's own parent survey since there were insufficient responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire and no responses to the staff questionnaire.