

Ark Isaac Newton Academy

1 Cricklefield Place, Ilford, Essex IG1 1FY

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The principal and her senior team provide strong, highly effective leadership. The school has expanded rapidly since 2014. Leaders have managed this very successfully and ensured that the school provides an outstanding education.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stages 1 and 4 is consistently above average. Standards in English and mathematics are high, with many pupils achieving the top grades in these subjects by the end of Year 11.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in all year groups because teaching is very effective. High-quality planning and excellent questioning ensure that pupils' needs are identified and fully met.
- Excellent support is in place for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils make very strong progress.
- The curriculum is planned exceptionally well and provides truly memorable learning experiences. It ensures that pupils' personal development is outstanding.
- Pupils' health and safety is given the utmost importance. Strong partnerships are forged with external agencies to keep all pupils safe.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy school. As a result, attendance has improved further and is above the national average.
- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and priorities. They provide timely and effective support and challenge to the leadership team. Governors have contributed directly to the outstanding quality of education that the school provides.
- Children get off to a flying start in the early years and make outstanding progress. They have access to a wide range of high-quality activities which support their all-round development.
- Provision in the sixth form is outstanding. Almost all students are studying academic subjects and thriving.
- Occasionally, some teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough in lessons before moving on.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers are highly effective in checking pupils' understanding in lessons to inform the next steps for pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The principal, ably supported by an experienced and ambitious governing body, leads a school that provides a safe, secure and very successful learning environment. Leaders' enthusiasm to promote the highest aspirations for both pupils and staff alike is infectious. As a result, the school provides an outstanding quality of education.
- Due to the investment in high-quality professional development, staff are highly motivated to continue to improve their work. Training for teachers is targeted to individual need and is of a high quality. This leads to outstanding outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders and governors have managed the expansion of an 11 to 16 to a 4 to 18 all-through school extremely well. This is partly because the systems which underpin all aspects of the school's work are comprehensive and efficiently run. In addition, recruitment processes are very thorough, and leaders are insistent about recruiting staff who are fully committed to the school's vision and values.
- Subject leaders are very skilful at carrying out their 'support and development' activities, for example using assessment information intelligently to focus their work. As a result, the contribution that subject leaders make to the school's self-evaluation and subsequent development planning is very thorough.
- Leaders have gone to great lengths to develop a curriculum based on 'knowledge, learning power and character', as expressed in the school's vision. They give considerable thought to developing an inspiring curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Curriculum planning across the school is flexible so that it can be adapted quickly to meet the different needs of pupils. Careful planning ensures that all subjects systematically build on, and develop, pupils' knowledge and skills. The music curriculum is particularly strong. All pupils in key stage 3, for instance, learn to play a 'Big Band' instrument and value the opportunity. An excellent start is made to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as soon as they join the school in the Reception year. In addition, the school's 'BRIDGES character dispositions' and fundamental British values are exceptionally well developed.
- Leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils imaginatively and effectively. Leaders support disadvantaged pupils to engage in a range of creative and academic activities, raising the expectations they have of themselves. As a result, these pupils make exceptional progress across the curriculum.
- The regional leaders of Ark Academies provide strong support and challenge. For example, they scrutinise assessment information in depth and discuss it in relation to challenging targets. Different groups of pupils make equally good progress. It is rare for any pupil to fall through the net, and almost all stay on track and achieve exceptionally well.
- Leaders work hard to address, through coaching and mentoring, the few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Governance of the school

- Governors ensure that they are thoroughly informed about the school's performance. They hold senior and middle leaders to account for the effectiveness of their work to improve the school. Governors assure themselves that the school provides an outstanding quality of education.
- Governors are fully involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the school. Consequently, they understand its strengths and weaknesses well. They ensure that improvement priorities are sharp and focused. For example, they have clear plans for further strengthening the curriculum offer for students in the sixth form.
- Governors ask pertinent questions about the information that leaders provide. They successfully challenge leaders about their work. For example, governors rigorously question leaders about pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils and boys. They push the boundaries by comparing the performance of their school to other schools in England that perform very highly.
- Governors routinely speak to parents and pupils to gather their views. They follow up any issues raised during subsequent visits.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The training of staff and governors in safeguarding policies and procedures is comprehensive. Leaders make sure that all staff training is refreshed regularly. They also ensure that staff who join the school during the year receive appropriate safeguarding training, including in child protection.
- Staff know about the potential areas of risk for young people. They receive effective training to help them to identify a child at risk and to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse.
- Leaders provide effective early help to pupils and families to prevent problems from escalating. They work closely with outside agencies by raising any child protection issues swiftly and by checking that appropriate actions are taken.
- Leaders work effectively with parents, carers and external agencies. Checks made by inspectors demonstrate that referrals are followed up in a robust manner and that record-keeping is effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils, which means that pupils have the confidence to ask questions and sometimes make, and learn from, mistakes.
- Teaching is consistently strong across the curriculum and key stages. Highly effective teaching was seen, for instance, in music, history, English, mathematics, art and physical education. In these lessons, pupils were genuinely inspired and strongly motivated to continue learning.

- Most teaching is characterised by very effective planning. Teachers have detailed knowledge of their pupils and plan activities that are well matched to their abilities and needs. Consequently, levels of challenge are high and pupils who need extra help are very well supported.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and they use questioning very effectively to check the level of pupils' understanding. Most teachers extend learning through probing questions in lessons. This provides pupils with opportunities to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The teaching of phonics and reading comprehension skills is exceptionally strong. Teachers are very skilful in showing pupils how to make inferences from carefully chosen texts that have the right level of challenge. Consequently, pupils' standards in reading continue to rise as they move up the school.
- Teachers put considerable effort into ensuring that pupils apply their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects effectively. Primary and secondary teachers work admirably well together to plan a curriculum in English and mathematics and teach it very effectively. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress in these subjects across the school.
- Teaching meets the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities very well. Leaders have trained teachers well. Consequently, teachers plan activities in which these pupils are appropriately challenged. Teaching assistants provide additional expert support in class when it is needed.
- Most teachers are meticulous in following the school's assessment and feedback policy. They provide verbal and written feedback that pupils value greatly. Indeed, pupils who spoke to inspectors were very keen to share the improvements they had made in their understanding of some difficult concepts as a result.
- Teachers know their pupils very well and have a clear idea of the different levels of attainment in each class. In a few cases, though, teachers do not check pupils' understanding comprehensively in lessons. As a result, some pupils do not grasp the key ideas taught well enough before moving on to the next stage in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The curriculum is rich in the emphasis it gives to developing pupils' self-awareness and confidence in keeping themselves safe. As a result, pupils have a very well-developed understanding of personal safety. Year 7 pupils, for example, confidently discussed the dangers of over-sharing information online in a lively lesson.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their leadership and management skills, for instance leading a team or organising an event. The school's very wide range of extracurricular activities allows pupils to build their stamina and resilience through music, sport, art and drama. Participation rates are high, and these include disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. Pupils in all phases often think deeply about what they are learning, in particular the wider implications of ideas and concepts. The school's well-established 'BRIDGES' programme plays a significant role in encouraging deeper thinking. Concepts such as bravery, integrity, resourcefulness and emotional intelligence are key features of this programme, and pupils have a shared understanding of what these concepts mean to them and how to apply them when tackling problems in different subjects.
- Pupils take great pride in their work, in their appearance and in their school environment. When given the opportunity, pupils work remarkably well together in pairs and groups. During these tasks, pupils display confidence and independence. Pupils who met with inspectors spoke very positively about their school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are very polite and courteous. Student ambassadors in every class were very keen to explain to inspectors what pupils were learning and why this was important. Excellent attitudes to learning prevail in lessons and pupils are strongly motivated to succeed.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and arrive at lessons promptly. There is a sense of urgency to start learning as soon as possible and maximise the benefits to be gained inside a class. Pupils love for learning is also reflected in their above-average attendance in both the primary and secondary sections of the school.
- Breaktimes and lunchtimes are calm and sociable occasions. Staff and pupils eat together and enjoy each other's company. Staff provide positive role models for pupils, which helps them to develop excellent social skills.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare. They are confident that when there are squabbles and arguments, these are quickly sorted by staff.
- The behaviour policy is well known by staff and pupils. Leaders have high expectations of behaviour and expect the policy to be adhered to by all pupils. Exclusions are used as a last resort and inspection evidence found that exclusions are rare.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 is consistently above average. Year-on-year, almost all pupils achieve the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. Pupils build very effectively on these successes in Years 3 and 4 and make outstanding progress in English and mathematics. As yet the school does not have any pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Scrutiny of primary pupils' topic books shows that they make consistently strong progress across the curriculum. Pupils are adept at applying their reading and writing skills in different subjects, for instance science, history and religious education. The work seen demonstrated pupils' ability to make meaningful connections between subjects and deepen their learning as a result.

- Pupils' attainment at the start of Year 7 is broadly average. By the end of Year 11, the standards pupils achieve are consistently above average in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. This indicates outstanding progress by the end of key stage 4 and is consistently in the top 1% of all schools nationally.
- Historically, pupils' progress in languages, in particular for boys, has not been as strong as that in other subjects comprising the English baccalaureate. Leaders have analysed the issues systematically and taken very effective action to turn the situation around. For example, a senior leader has been leading the department very well since April 2018, and the languages lead from Ark Academies is providing very useful weekly support. Inspectors judge that current pupils in key stages 3 and 4, including boys, are making strong progress in languages due to the timely actions that leaders have taken.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve very well and outperform their peers nationally in English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4. Their progress across a wide range of subjects is also very strong. This is due to consistently effective teaching coupled with precisely targeted support and early intervention.
- The most able pupils achieve equally well. Around one-third of the Year 11 cohort of 2017 achieved the top grades 7 to 9. The proportion that did so in 2018 is slightly higher. Most-able pupils are challenged in lessons to provide deeper explanations of the concepts they are learning. They come prepared to lessons having completed the pre-reading to build on what they already know.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities have their individual requirements identified and met well. Accordingly, their progress is consistently strong across a broad range of subjects, and they move on to further education or training successfully.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education. The proportion of pupils entering sustained education, employment or training at the end of Year 11 is above the national average.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- For the past three years, the proportion of children that reach a good level of development has been above the national average. Children in the early years make outstanding progress. Indeed, many exceed the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Reception. Children's attainment in their personal, social and emotional development is also consistently above average. As a result, children are admirably well prepared for their learning in Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is highly effective and insightful. Leaders have created a vibrant space where children are constantly enticed to explore, try out, think and reason. Leaders are skilful in using evidence from research to review their practice and make further improvements to raise standards in all areas of the curriculum.
- Adults model language very effectively. As a result, children's communication skills develop well and almost all children in the early years are articulate and are able to speak in sentences. In addition, questioning is used effectively to support children's development in all areas of learning.

- A wide range of resources and high-quality activities are planned both indoors and outdoors. Children engage fully in their learning and remain on task for long periods of time, exploring their own ideas as well as those which are planned.
- Learning journals are used effectively to record children's progress against different aspects of the early learning goals. This includes the opportunity for parents to share with school their child's achievements at home. Children's progress is therefore assessed using a rich source of evidence.
- Children are extremely well cared for and kept safe. They are supervised very carefully by all adults and behave exceptionally well. Their curiosity and willingness to play and work with others makes an excellent contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- The sixth form was established in September 2017 and current students are the first cohort to experience the programme it offers. Students are highly complimentary about the quality of teaching, the level of challenge and the resources they have access to. They have every confidence in their teachers. They say that teachers know what to do and that they care and want them to do well.
- A strong sense of community prevails in the sixth form, in line with the main school. Students feel very safe. There is no bullying and sixth-form students have regular well-being sessions to update them on safeguarding issues. The enrichment programme provides a wide range of sporting activities and clubs to complement their academic studies.
- The very strong features of teaching, learning and assessment in the main school have been imported seamlessly into the sixth-form programme. Students of religious studies, for instance, clearly enjoyed actively debating the idea of 'God as a noun or a verb' from a feminist thinker's perspective. Thinking in greater depth about important ideas is a typical feature of learning in the sixth form.
- As yet, there are no external examination results in the sixth form to enable national comparisons to be made. Nevertheless, students' work in folders, supported by focused discussions, confirms that they make very strong progress in a wide range of subjects.
- The leadership of the sixth form is exceptionally strong, as indicated by the impressive developments over the past 13 months. Very strong foundations have been laid to build on the early successes. Just over half of the Year 11 cohort of 2017 joined the sixth form this academic year. Leaders have very clear plans in place to build on this solid start.
- Planning for the sixth form has been very thorough, and actions taken to improve it further are well thought-through.
- Currently, the curriculum offered is almost entirely academic and meets the needs of the current students remarkably well. As a result, they prosper in their studies and are very well prepared for higher education. Leaders have clear plans in place to broaden the curriculum further for next year, for example through the introduction of applied science.

School details

Unique reference number	138518
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10067731
Type of school	All-through
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1548
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	207
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair	Gerard Griffin
Principal	Jo Spencer
Telephone number	020 8911 6666
Website	www.isaacnewtonacademy.org
Email address	info@isaacnewtonacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	5–6 June 2014

Information about this school

- Isaac Newton Academy is an average-sized all-through school serving a culturally diverse community.
- The primary phase of the school commenced in September 2014 and currently comprises of three classes in each year group from Reception to Year 4.
- The sixth form was established in September 2017 and is currently educating its first cohort of Year 13 students.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly in line with the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally.
- The vast majority of students are from a Black and minority ethnic heritage background, and many speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not currently use off-site provision for any of its pupils.
- The school is sponsored by Ark Academies. Although the chief executive officer of Ark Academies holds the local governing body to account, the governing body is given a high degree of autonomy.
- The school currently has an interim principal, who was the vice-principal of the school until the end of the Spring term 2018. The primary section of the school has its own headteacher.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classes across all year groups and in a wide range of subjects to observe pupils' learning and look at their work. Some of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders.
- Four groups of pupils talked to inspectors about their views of the school. Inspectors talked with pupils in classes and at breaktimes and lunchtimes about their learning and progress.
- Inspectors met with three governors, including the chair of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the Ark Academies Trust. Inspectors also held a meeting with the regional director of Ark Academies, who provides school improvement support to the leaders of Isaac Newton Academy.
- Inspectors met with school leaders to discuss the impact of their work. This included the principal, head of primary, senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation, records of pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the 119 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of the 122 responses to the online survey for staff.
- This inspection is a section 8 deemed section 5 inspection, due to the addition of a new primary phase in 2014 and a sixth-form section in September 2017.

Inspection team

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Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector
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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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