



Impact Report

2024





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Why we exist

Transforming lives through education

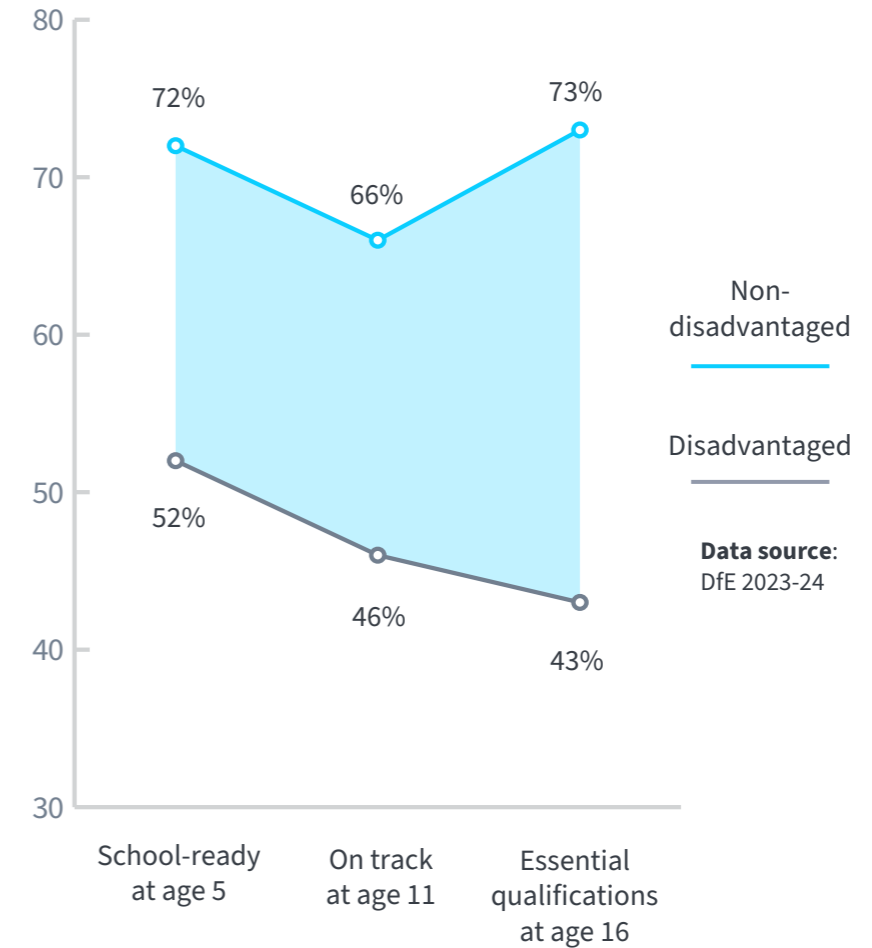
Ark is an education charity that works to make sure that all children, regardless of their background, have access to a great education and real choices in life.

In the UK, a child's educational achievements and life chances remain closely tied to their parents' education level and income.

Children eligible for free school meals have a low family income and are, on average, 20 percentage points less likely to start school on track in their development.

By age 16, the gap widens to 30 percentage points, with only 43 percent likely to gain essential qualifications compared to 73 percent of their non-disadvantaged peers.

The disadvantage gap starts early and widens throughout childhood





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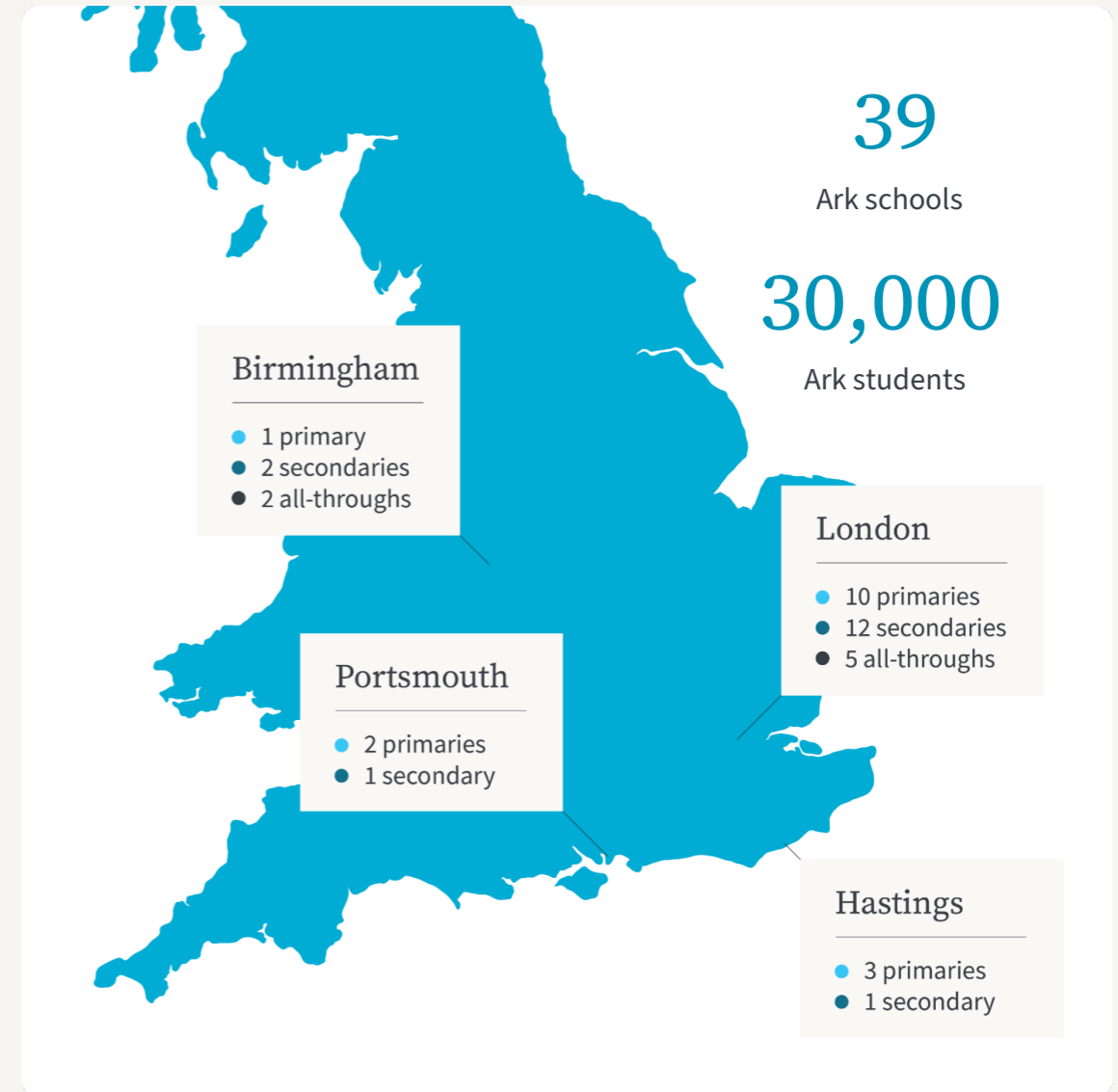
Our schools

We work where we can make the biggest difference

Ark supports 30,000 children across a network of 39 schools in Birmingham, Hastings, London and Portsmouth.

Our students are nearly twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals as students nationally (45 v 25 percent). In some of our schools this is as high as 70 percent.

We are determined that every student, regardless of their circumstances, thrives at school and has the option to attend university or pursue the career of their choice.



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Our ventures

Ark ventures drive system change beyond our schools

We use what we learn in our schools to benefit children nationally. Our ventures and programmes develop innovative solutions to tough problems in education and society.

Since 2002...

20 programmes incubated and supported to scale

1 million+ young people reached

Our current ventures are Ark Curriculum Plus, Ark Learning Institute, Ark Start, and EdCity.



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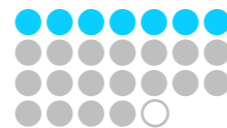
Our impact: School improvement

A strong track record for improving challenging schools and opening new, high-performing schools

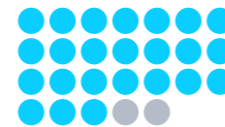
90%

of schools rated Requires Improvement or Inadequate before joining Ark are now Good or Outstanding* according to Ofsted

Ofsted rating on joining the network



Current Ofsted rating



● Outstanding / Good ● Requires Improvement / Inadequate ○ No rating

4x

Ark's new schools are nearly four times more likely to be rated Outstanding than schools nationally (69 vs 16 percent)

*Ofsted ended one-word judgements in October 2024, however schools retain their old gradings until their next inspection.

Schools joining Ark have improved their national ranking by an average of 44 percentage points

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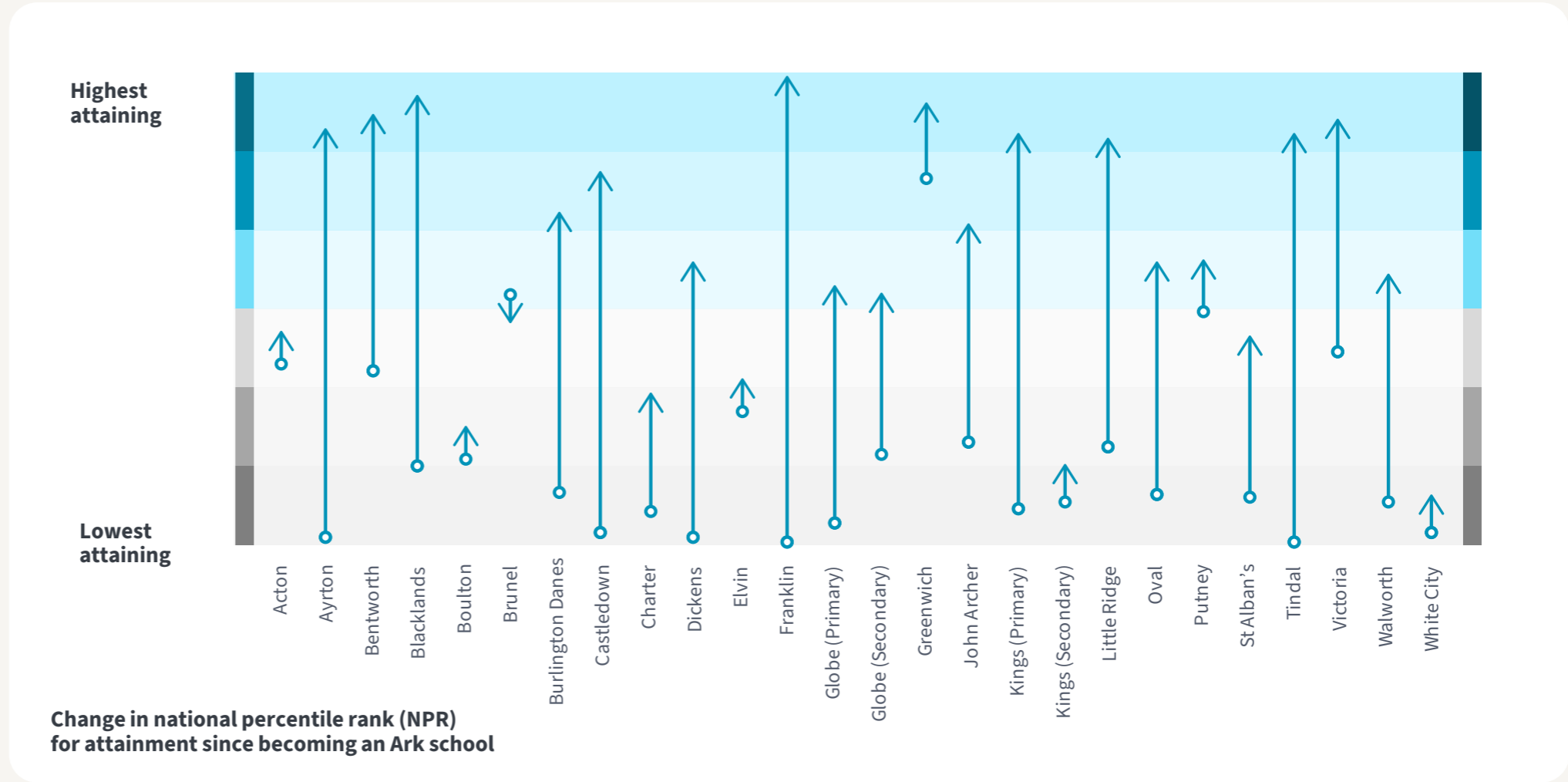
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Case study | London | Secondary

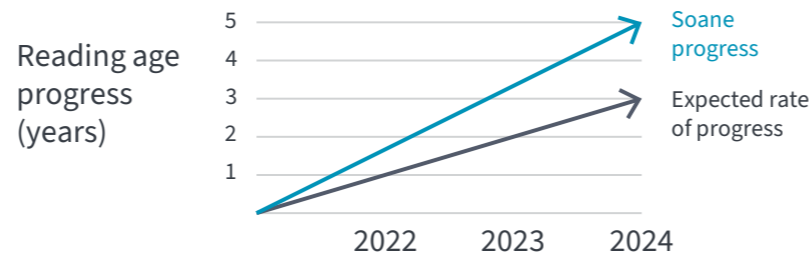
Ark Soane rated Outstanding three years after opening

Ark’s newest school, Ark Soane, opened in Acton, London, in 2021.

It provides high-quality, non-selective, non-denominational education in an area of high deprivation. Fifty percent of students are eligible for free school meals compared to a national average of 25 percent.

The school was rated Outstanding in all areas in its first Ofsted inspection, and praised for setting high expectations within a nurturing and caring environment.

Students have made an average of five years’ progress in reading in three years



Principal Matt Neuberger with students at Ark Soane



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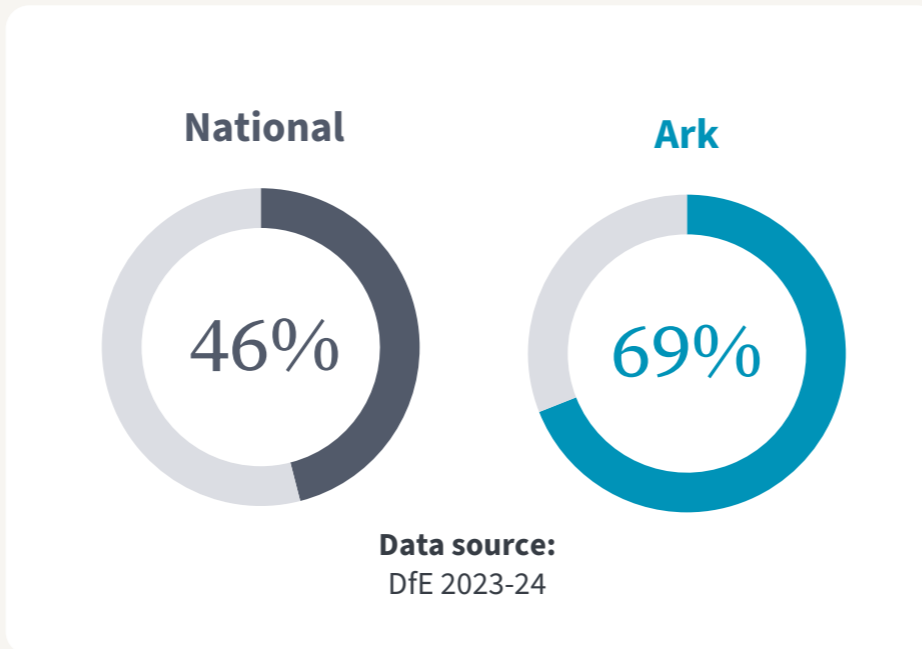
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Our impact: Primary

A top-performing multi-academy trust

Despite operating in areas of high need, our primary schools achieve results well above national averages, and we top the attainment tables among comparable trusts.

Sixty-nine percent of Ark students from a disadvantaged background leave primary school on track in their maths and English, compared to 46 percent nationally.



A reading lesson at Ark Little Ridge



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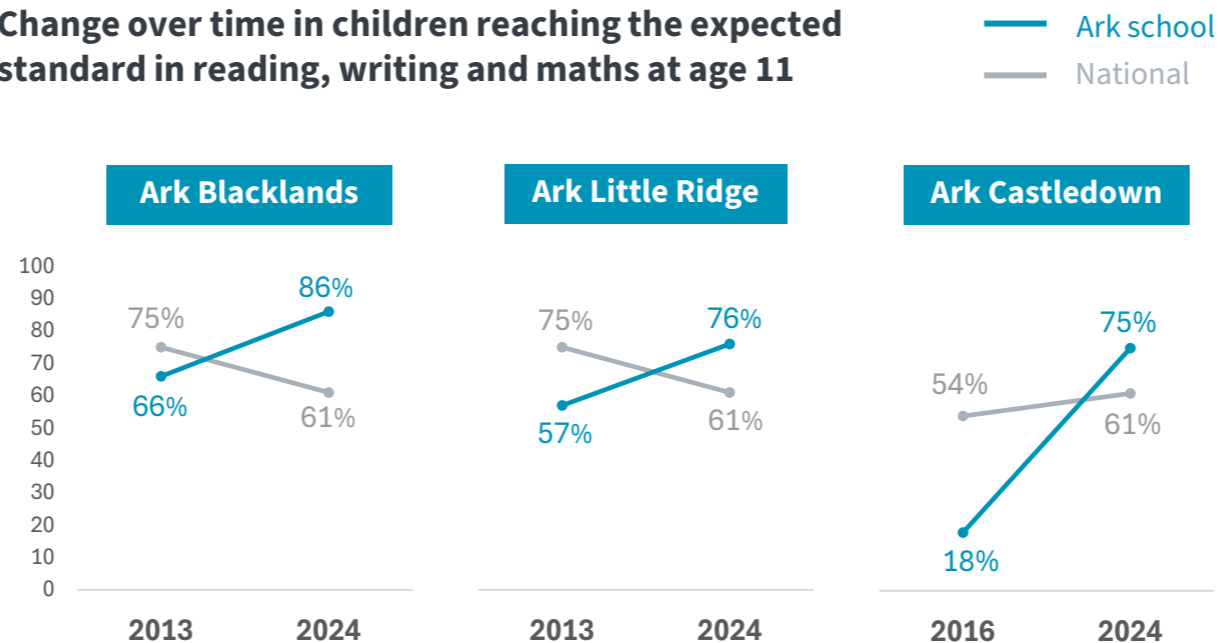
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Turning around underachievement in Hastings

Ark's three primary schools in Hastings serve communities in some of the most deprived wards in the country. Prior to joining Ark, the schools had outcomes well below the national average. Within their first year of transition, all three schools achieved results significantly above the national average and have maintained these high outcomes, placing them among the top performing schools nationally in 2024.



Change over time in children reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at age 11



“
The reason our outcomes are so strong is because of our approach to developing teachers and future leaders.”

Lorraine Clarke OBE
Regional Director

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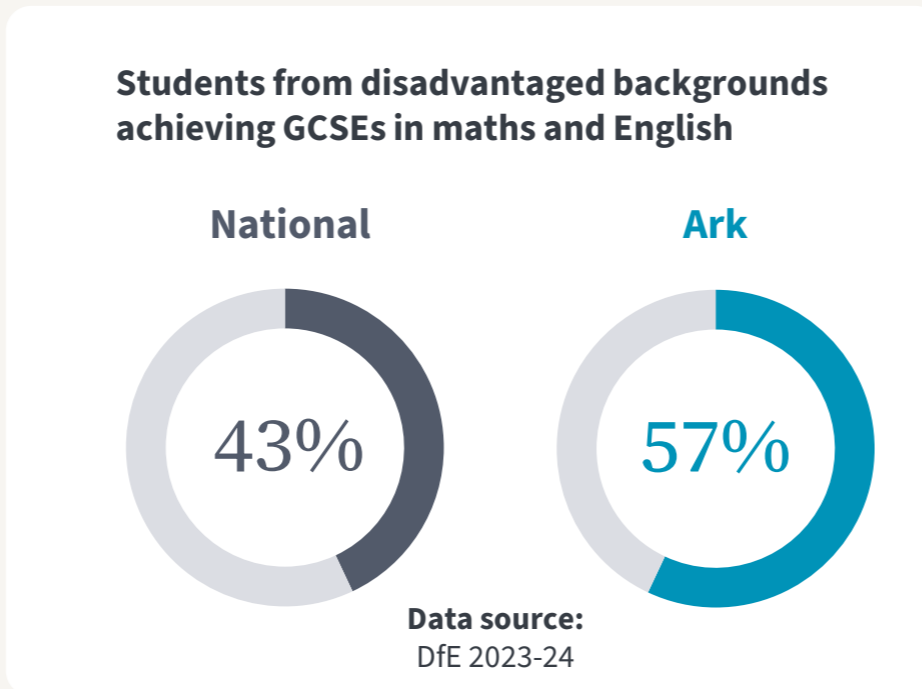
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Our impact: Secondary

Secondary students at Ark make more progress

At secondary, Ark’s disadvantaged students make, on average, half a grade more progress than their disadvantaged peers nationally. Nearly a third of our schools are in the top 10 percent for progress in this category.



Exceptional achievements place some Ark secondaries among the top performing schools in the country.

Top
10%

Ark Greenwich and **Ark King Solomon** in top 1% of all state schools for progress at GCSE

Top
5%

Ark Bolingbroke in top 2% and **Ark Isaac Newton** in top 5% for progress at GCSE

Top
7%

Ark Globe in top 5% for A level progress

Ark Elvin in top 7% of all providers for BTEC progress

Data source: DfE 2023-24

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Our impact: Secondary

Quality alternatives to A levels

Around a third of Ark's sixth form students follow our Professional Pathways programme. Designed by Ark and launched in 2016, it includes a bespoke wraparound curriculum to complement the core BTEC qualification. The programme emphasises essential employability skills and supports informed, aspirational post-18 choices.

61%

achieve three Distinctions or higher (equivalent to AAA at A level) compared to 36% nationally

9x

Professional Pathways students are around nine times more likely to progress to a top third university than BTEC students nationally

Students from Ark Burlington Danes learn about careers in Sports Science at St Mary's University



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Our impact: University progression

Breaking down barriers to university access

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds at Ark are nearly three times as likely to progress to university and around six times more likely to progress to a top third university than disadvantaged students nationally.

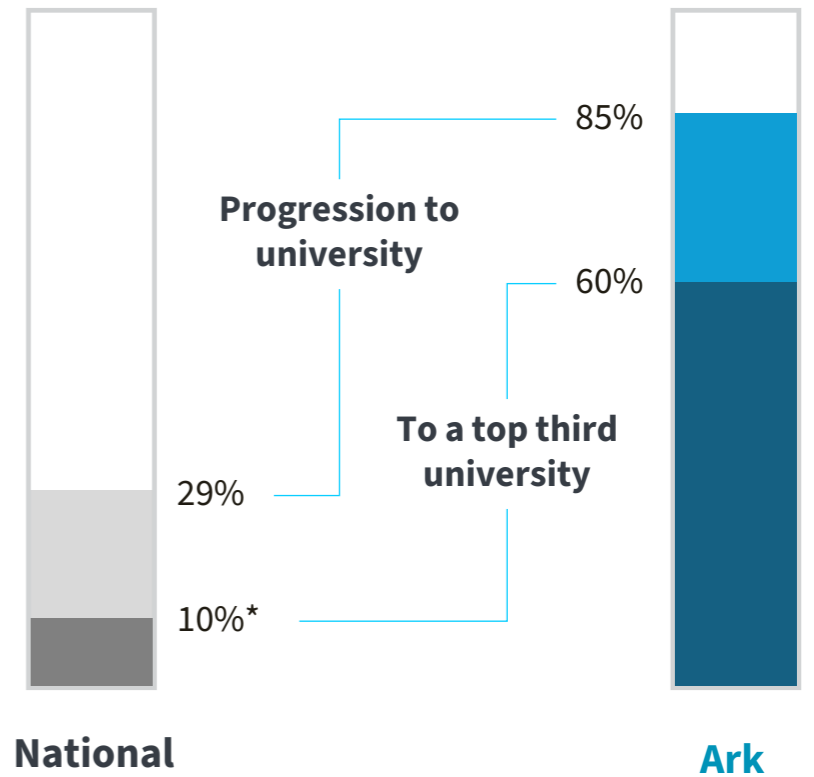
Not only do our students secure places at great universities, our bursary programme supports with university costs. In 2024, bursaries totaling £970k were awarded to 58 students. Seventy-six percent of bursary awardees were the first generation in their family to attend university.



I would never have thought about a place at Oxford without the support of my teachers. Their encouragement gave me the confidence to apply and succeed.

Aamina, Ark Isaac Newton | A*AA in English Economics History

Progression rates at age 18 for students eligible for free school meals



Data sources: UCAS 2023

*Estimate based on DfE widening participation data (2023)



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Our impact: University progression

Adam Elbounabi is a former Ark Burlington Danes student and bursary recipient. After graduating with a BSc from Bath University and an MSc from the London School of Economics, he now works at the Bank of England.



Looking back, it's the breadth of opportunities I had that stands out. Having the opportunity to engage with a variety of academic and corporate partners, as well as an extended curriculum, made me feel that aspirational goals were possible and gave me the confidence to go for them.





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How we do it: Our approach

The Ark pillars – a shared approach across our schools

While our schools each have a unique character, they all subscribe to the same set of principles:

High expectations

We believe that every child can achieve great things. Our aspirations are no lower for our most vulnerable students.

Exemplary behaviour

Our schools are characterised by a respectful environment, where teachers can focus on teaching and students can focus on learning.

Depth for breadth

We prioritise depth in English and maths, giving our pupils the best chance of success in every subject.

Knowing every child

Every child knows, and is known well, by the adults in the school. We also involve families in all aspects of school life.

Excellent teaching

A teacher affects a student's achievement more than any other factor. We prioritise teacher development so they can keep improving.

Always learning

Learning is at the heart of what we do and what we invest in – for all. Our teachers are professionally curious and our children have access to a rich academic curriculum and a diverse range of experiences.



Jordan Crawford, Vice Principal at Ark Elvin, at an Ark training event for leadership staff



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How we do it: Teaching and leadership

A culture of continuous learning and progression

Ark's approach to professional development is one of our most distinctive qualities, and essential to our mission of providing an excellent education for every child. Through a selection of bespoke, specialist programmes, we support staff to develop at every stage of their career, including outstanding training for those joining the profession through Ark Teacher Training (ATT).

1,250

teachers have qualified with Ark Teacher Training since it was founded in 2013

75%

of Ark's current principals were promoted from within the network

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Case study | Professional development

Rashma Rahman is a former Ark student who teaches at Ark King Solomon. She graduated from the University of Oxford and qualified with Ark Teacher Training.

“

We often think about that one special teacher. But I had the privilege of claiming that every single teacher was special, and each teacher had a profound impact on my life. I was driven to go into education to push for a change where every single child gets to enjoy that privilege.



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Students from Ark Blake learn about flammable fuels using methane bubbles



How we do it: Curriculum

Curricula that set children up for success

Ark's evidence-based curricula are designed by subject specialists to give students the essential knowledge they need, while reducing teacher workload. Every teacher has access to curriculum programmes, each containing up to 1000 editable resources. Through Ark Curriculum Plus, these programmes are shared with hundreds of schools nationally.

“

The subject content that students learn is planned in detail and expertly taught.

Ofsted, 2024 School Inspection Report (Ark Soane)

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Students at Ark John Archer doing group reading

How we do it: Reading

A dedicated focus on reading

Reading ability has a considerable impact on both educational attainment and wider life outcomes. Our reading strategy puts reading at the heart of every subject and provides targeted interventions for students who are behind in their reading age.

3,500

students have taken part in a targeted reading intervention in the past two years

74%

of children leaving an Ark primary school are reading at or above their chronological age, compared to 39% when first tested in year 2

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How we do it: Digital

Digital innovation to enhance learning

Ark's digital strategy is enabling schools to integrate EdTech to enhance lessons and reduce workload for teachers.

Ark schools use seven Ark-approved digital education tools. Students from Year 3 up can access a free device to support their learning, equipping them early on to thrive in today's digital world.

24k

devices have been provided for Ark students

2,000+

staff have attended digital training tailored to their role



Students at Ark Blacklands learning using their Chromebooks



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Ark partners with children's mental health charity, Place2Be



How we do it: Mental health

Mentally healthy schools

Young people's mental health needs have escalated sharply since Covid. Our aim is for every Ark school to be a mentally healthy school, with specialist support for students with high need and a school culture that promotes wellbeing. We work in partnership with leading children's mental health charity, Place2Be.

2,600

children were supported this year across 10,000 sessions

86%

of students taking part in counselling said it helped their situation improve

“

I didn't think I believed in counselling before, but now I do.

Ark student

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How we do it: Extended curriculum

An extended curriculum for all, for free

We want every child at Ark to access a wide range of enriching activities, within and beyond the school day, regardless of their ability to pay. Our minimum entitlement gives all 30,000 Ark students guaranteed access to a range of in-school clubs and to our three dedicated enrichment programmes: Ark Music, Ark Sport and, recently launched, Ark Culture.

4,000

students performed with Ark Music this year

2,500

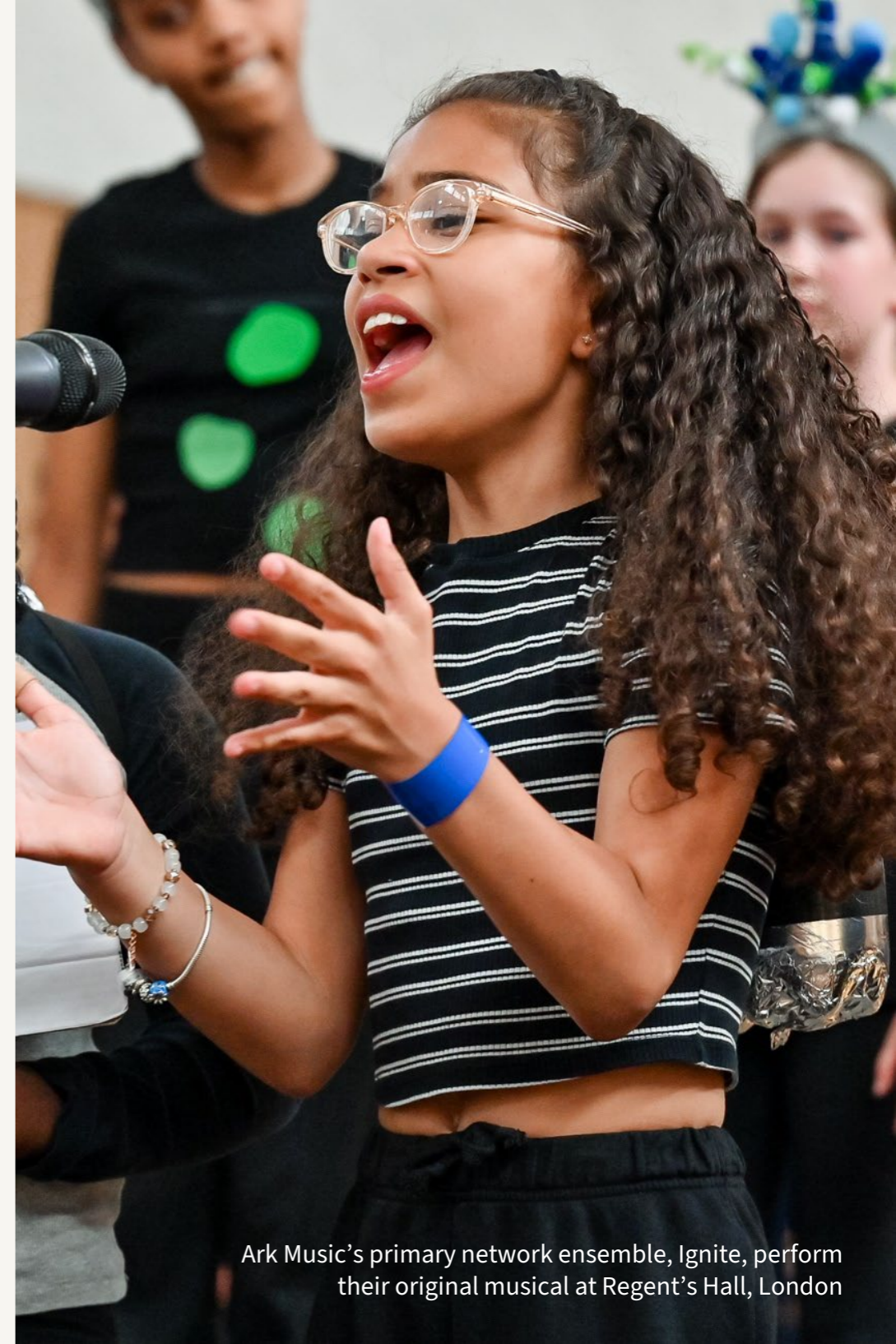
students competed with Ark Sport

15

arts organisations worked in partnership with Ark Culture

100

students were awarded a sport or music scholarship



Ark Music's primary network ensemble, Ignite, perform their original musical at Regent's Hall, London

Ark athletes triumph on the national stage

Ark Globe is now ranked in the top 4 percent of all schools nationally (including private schools) for success in sporting competitions. This year three students (pictured left to right) achieved on the national stage:

Ezekiel Olu-Micah won the Long Jump at the English Schools Track and Field Championships with a jump of 6.47 metres.

Cecilia Victorious was selected to play for the England Under-15 team and the Junior NBA European Finals in Spain.

Jomiloju Hughes won the Triple Jump at the English Schools Track and Field Championships with a jump of 14.26 metres, breaking the championship record and making him the national record holder.

“

During the final, I didn't feel any fear – I felt like I was there to win. My next goal is to try out for England.

Ezekiel



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Case study | Ark Music

Nurturing musical excellence

Leandro Veiga, a student at Ark Walworth Academy and an Ark Music Scholar, successfully auditioned for the National Youth Choir, the London Youth Choir, the Peckham Chamber Orchestra and the National Youth Folk Ensemble.



When I arrived at Ark Walworth, I was a self-taught violinist. I played with flair, but I didn't know what I could achieve. Through school I had access to free lessons, mentoring and supportive staff who encouraged me to refine my talents.



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A photograph of a teacher and a young student sitting at a desk in a classroom. The teacher, on the left, is wearing glasses and a watch, and is gesturing with her right hand while holding several colored pens in her left hand. The student, on the right, is a young child with curly hair, wearing a green sweater, and is resting their chin on their hands, looking at the teacher. The background shows other students and desks in a bright, well-lit classroom.

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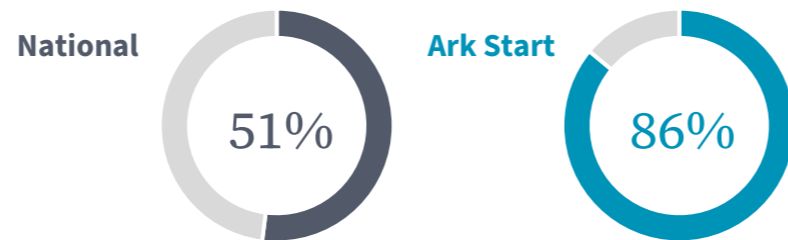
Shaping the future of early years education

We launched our own nursery programme, Ark Start, in 2020 because we cannot achieve our ambitions for every child without solving the inequity that exists in the early years.

Our model is designed to support the needs of the most disadvantaged children. Sixty-two percent of Ark Start students are disadvantaged compared to the national average of 25 percent.

This year we moved from pilot to growth phase, expanding our network of nurseries from two to five sites.

Disadvantaged children reaching a Good Level of Development (GLD) at age 5 in the last three years



Data source: DfE 2021-24



Bridget Phillipson at Ark Start Oval for her first visit as the new Secretary of State for Education

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Molly Devlin

Headteacher, Ark Start



At Ark Start we believe that our communities deserve more. That means more purposeful interactions between teachers and children, more support for families and more career paths for staff – all leading to the end goal that children start school ready to thrive.

In September Molly was appointed as an Expert Adviser to Ofsted.



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System change: Ark Curriculum Plus

Extending our reach through Ark Curriculum Plus

Ark Curriculum Plus (AC+) uses our nearly 20 years of experience in curriculum design and training to benefit children nationally. Teams of subject experts work in partnership with more than 700 schools – most in areas of high need.

AC+ programmes have a proven impact on student progress, and Mathematics Mastery Primary is subsidised by the Department for Education to aid post-Covid recovery.

300,000

students learn with an AC+ curriculum

9,000

teachers use the MyMastery online platform for resources and training



Ark Curriculum+



AC+ works in partnership with over 700 schools



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Andrew Truby

CEO, St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust



We have a shared ambition with colleagues who work for AC+. It's that true partnership that really makes the difference, where we all believe together that every single child will achieve.

St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust is based in the Liverpool City region and serves some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country. In 2022, the trust began implementing AC+ programmes across seven of its schools.



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Partnering with Ark

System change: Ark Learning Institute

A new centre of excellence for learning and development

The newly launched Ark Learning Institute (ALI) brings all of Ark’s training programmes under one banner to serve the development of Ark’s 3,500 employees as well as the wider education sector.

Now incorporated into ALI, our outstanding Ark Teacher Training programme works with over 200 partner schools nationally to prepare new teachers for the classroom.



Professional Development at Ark is the best I have ever had in 18 years of teaching.

Head of Department | Ark school

Ark vice principals at a network event for leaders





1EdCity, a 10-storey office block in west London and Ark's new home



About Ark

- Why we exist
- Schools
- Ventures

Our impact

- School improvement
- Primary
- Secondary

How we do it

- Our approach
- Teaching and leadership
- Curriculum
- Reading
- Digital
- Mental health
- Extended curriculum

System change

- Ark Start
- Ark Curriculum Plus
- Ark Learning Institute

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System change: EdCity

EdCity: foundations for tomorrow

In 2024, we opened the doors to EdCity – a £150 million investment in west London providing facilities for learning, living and working. The development is an ambitious non-profit partnership between Ark and Hammersmith & Fulham Council, bringing the benefits of wider regeneration in this part of the borough to the White City community.

The campus includes a school, community facilities, affordable housing, an office block and green public space connecting local residents to the nearby innovation district. EdCity is also the new home for Ark and a place to bring the sector and mission-aligned organisations together to focus on improving the lives of children, especially through education.



This is one of the most advanced expressions of a civic trust working for wider public benefit.

Leora Cruddas

Chief Executive, Confederation of School Trusts



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Phase 1:
Completed 2024

Ark White City Primary
A purpose-built two-form entry school and nursery for children aged 3-11 years

WEST Youth Zone
Recreational facilities and support for young people, operated by Onside

1EdCity
A 10-storey office block and event space for the education sector, as well as Ark's new home

Phase 2:
Coming in 2025

Affordable housing
132 high-quality residential units

Harmony Nursery
Early years care for children under five

Adult skills centre
An education and employment hub focusing on STEM careers

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Rahma Sow

Rahma lives in the White City Estate and has six children, all of whom attended or currently attend Ark White City Primary. She works at WEST, which her children go to around three times a week.



WEST has brought hope to the community. I used to be fearful of sending my children out, but now there is a safe environment where they can go. It's given confidence, opportunities and freedom to our young people.

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Partnerships are vital for greater impact

We work with a wide range of organisations, individuals and partners to provide support and opportunities for thousands of young people. There are many ways to get involved in Ark schools and ventures:

- **Give**
From high-quality extracurricular programmes, to support for mental health, careers advice and bursaries, you could help our students access opportunities and experiences that might otherwise be out of reach.
- **Partner**
We establish long-term corporate partnerships with organisations that share our passion for education and want to invest in the future success of young people – especially those from disadvantaged communities.
- **Volunteer**
Volunteers inspire and support Ark students and alumni by providing practical support and guidance as they step into further education and employment.



Ark are to be applauded for investing time in supporting teachers and developing curricula for long-term change. We are delighted to be able to play a small part in the development of this approach.

Imogen Bond

Royal Ballet and Opera



Ark primary school teachers explore storytelling techniques at a training session with Royal Ballet and Opera

A group of diverse young children in school uniforms are smiling and laughing. They are wearing maroon V-neck sweaters over white collared shirts and yellow ties. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a building. A teal banner is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

With thanks

Our work to transform the lives of children is made possible thanks to the generous support of individuals, trusts, foundations, and corporate partners.



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