

A photograph of two young school children, a boy and a girl, smiling and looking towards the right. They are wearing maroon school uniforms with white shirts and ties. The background is a library with bookshelves filled with books. The word "Ark" is written in a large, black, serif font in the upper right corner, with four blue dots underneath it.

# Ark

About us

# Welcome to Ark



*Ark is an international charity transforming lives through education. We exist to give every child, regardless of their background, a great education and real choices in life.*

In the UK, we are a network of 35 schools, educating more than 21,000 pupils. Our schools are all non-selective and in areas of historic underachievement. We also set up ventures and partnerships that not only help pupils in our own schools, but improve the education system as a whole.

Internationally, our Education Partnerships Group works with governments, education organisations and schools in low-income countries. We advise on the design and implementation of public-private partnerships and smarter accountability tools intended to transform education systems and make a positive impact on the lives of thousands of young people.





*Transforming lives  
through education*

*Ark schools prioritise a shared set of principles we call the Six Pillars.*





# Our UK Schools



*In the UK, the strongest predictor of how well a child will do at school is still what their parents do for a living. A student from a low-income background is more likely to start school behind their peers, meaning they are likely to leave with fewer chances in life.*

*Ark is working to change this.*

All of our 35 schools serve communities with high levels of economic disadvantage and educational need in Birmingham, Hastings, London and Portsmouth.

Students at our schools are twice as likely to be eligible for pupil premium funding (a measure used by the government to indicate economic deprivation.) This doesn't stop our schools, and their students, from being ambitious. We're proud that they achieve great results, and often break the mould for what was considered possible.

# Our schools are making a difference



*Our network of schools  
in the UK educates more  
than 21,000 students  
and achieves great  
results – especially for  
disadvantaged pupils.*

**93%** of Ark primary school pupils  
pass the phonics check, compared with  
81% nationally.

**82%** of Ark early years pupils  
achieved a 'Good Level of Development'  
in 2016, compared to a national average  
of 69%.



*“The teachers have supported me to reach my full potential. I don’t think I would have got that at other schools.”*

Ark King Solomon Academy student Nadia, who earned 11 A\*s at GCSE.

Over **70%** of Ark students gained places at university in the last two years, compared with the national average of 48%.

**20%** of our year 13 students eligible for free school meals (a measure of disadvantage) gained a place at a Russell Group university this year, compared with a national average of 5%.

Students who are behind their peers academically at the start of secondary school are **twice as likely** to achieve five good GCSEs if they attend an Ark school.

Ark King Solomon Academy is one of the **top six schools in the country** for the progress that students make. Ark St Alban’s Academy is also among the **top 25 schools** for this measure.

# Learning beyond the classroom



*Education isn't simply about passing exams. Arts, sport, and exploration of university and careers are very important to a child's time at school – they not only build character, but they open doors in life.*

Every year, thousands of students at Ark schools benefit from a programme of activities designed to build social skills, stimulate an appreciation of culture, and harness talent.

A child coming to an Ark school will experience opportunities like our network-wide maths, debating, science and athletics competitions, as well as employability skills and mentoring programmes with a vast range of employers, universities and charities.

It can be difficult for disadvantaged students to access opportunities like these elsewhere, but we see them as vital to giving young people the best start in life. However, we don't just want to help students in our schools. We hope that by developing effective models and sharing our approach, we can benefit young people beyond our own schools and improve the education system as a whole.





Our  
music programme  
includes **network**  
**choirs, ensembles, and**  
**instrumental and vocal**  
**programmes** - culminating  
with the chance to perform  
at our popular **music gala.**

Last year, **750** students  
took part.

# UK ventures



*We want to improve the lives of children across the country. Our ventures deliver change far beyond our own schools.*

A decade of running great schools and growing new initiatives within Ark means we have learnt how to build organisations that make a real difference. We work with new ventures to share this knowledge and help them grow quickly and sustainably.

Some ventures start with great ideas born from the needs within our schools. Others come from individuals or organisations outside of Ark who have an idea with the potential to have national impact. With all of them, we provide strategic and operational guidance, an environment to collaborate with others, and hands-on support to help them get started and become sustainable.



We helped launch [Assembly](#), an online platform that allows schools to collect and understand their data. The platform does not replace the school's existing systems; it connects them – allowing the systems to talk to each other, and help teachers to analyse data in new, easier and more meaningful ways.



[EdCity](#) will be an innovative education hub in West London, which will serve as the home of Ark and other education organisations. Its shared space will provide like-minded charities and social enterprises an affordable place to work and collaborate with each other.



INSTITUTE  
FOR TEACHING



Mathematics  
Mastery



The newly-formed **Institute for Teaching** is a specialist, not-for-profit higher education institution. Building on the success of Ark's teacher training programme – which was recently rated outstanding by Ofsted – the IfT will train and develop expert teachers to work in the areas where they are needed most.

**Mathematics Mastery** is a professional development programme for teachers that aims to transform mathematics education and embed an approach to teaching that improves pupils' understanding, enjoyment and attainment. Its approach, based on international best practice, is now being taught in more than 350 schools in the UK.

**Now Teach** was set up to encourage people who have already had a successful career to retrain as teachers. Their goal is to start a movement of senior professionals redeploying their skills in the classroom.

# The Ark family



*Once sustainable, our ventures are spun out of Ark and become independent organisations. We continue to work together and share best practice.*



## STiR

**STiR** works in India and Uganda, helping to ignite the spark in teachers and empower them to become influential changemakers. It does this by partnering with governments and building local teacher networks, where today's teachers can solve the learning crisis together, and reclaim their profession.

25,000 teachers have joined the movement since 2012. STiR hopes to see 1 million teachers joining by 2026, so that up to 40 million children can realise their potential.

## Ambition School Leadership

**Ambition School Leadership** was formed in 2016 from the merger of two education charities created by Ark, *The Future Leaders Trust* and *Teaching Leaders*. It is building a network of exceptional school leaders at all levels to improve the life chances of the most disadvantaged pupils.

Ambition School Leadership provides world-class leadership development and technical training to educators across England and Wales – from teachers aspiring to lead their department, to academy trust CEOs, and all the leadership roles in between. There were more than 4,000 school leaders in the network at the time of the merger and more than 1,500 leaders will be recruited for their flagship development programmes each year.



An independent evaluation by Cardiff University found that Frontline participants were rated higher than those on mainstream social work programmes on every one of the ten assessment criteria.

# FRONTLINE

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## CHANGING LIVES

**Frontline's** mission is to transform the lives of vulnerable children by recruiting outstanding individuals to become social workers. Its two-year programme offers high-achieving graduates and career changers the opportunity to join one of Britain's most challenging, but also most rewarding professions.

Now an independent charity, it has trained more than 380 participants across four regions in England.

It has also launched *Firstline*, an innovative new programme that develops existing social work managers into outstanding leaders.

Internationally, nearly half of all children leave primary school without being able to read, write, or do basic maths.



# Education Partnerships Group



*Our **Education Partnerships Group (EPG)** works internationally to bring together governments, education organisations and schools. EPG advises on the design and implementation of public-private partnerships and smarter accountability tools that drive innovation and excellence in education systems in the developing world.*



## *Liberia*

EPG has been helping reform the school system in Liberia - a country still suffering from the effects of civil war (in which 80% of schools were destroyed or damaged), the Ebola outbreak, and ongoing failings in the education system. Our advice has helped the government launch *Partnership Schools for Liberia* – a pilot programme which brings in eight school operators to run 94 public schools. The aim is to design a sustainable model that dramatically improves literacy and numeracy outcomes for Liberia’s poorest children.



## *South Africa*

In South Africa, EPG is supporting the Western Cape Education Department to pilot a new education model called *Collaborative Schools*. Participating schools benefit from the expertise and support of non-profit education sector partners while remaining no-fee, non-selective and held to account by the government.



## Uganda

Ark has been working in Uganda for the past five years, partnering first with the *PEAS* network of 28 affordable secondary schools in rural areas, and now supporting the government to introduce a new method of evaluating secondary school performance, called *Value Add*. With Ark's help, the government and parents can now analyse and compare schools, to see which ones make the biggest difference in terms of the progress that students make.



## India

We opened our first school outside the UK in July 2015, a primary school in Delhi.

*Ark Lajpat Nagar III* is located between five low-income communities, serving Hindi, Bengali and Tamil-speaking families. Many of the 230 children in the school previously either had no formal education or had been in huge classes where they learned by rote. We're working with the South Delhi Municipal Corporation to create a network of no-fee, top-quality primary schools.

We are also supporting the government in Madhya Pradesh to analyse data on the performance of 40,000 schools, through the development of a new quality assurance framework.





# Our supporters



Our work would not be possible without the help of individuals, trusts and companies who share our vision and are committed to transforming the lives of children across the world. Financial support enables us to provide an excellent education to pupils at our schools, to incubate ground-breaking new ventures here in the UK and to work with our partners to change the education landscape internationally.

*We would like to thank the following supporters for their help in the past year.*

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