Ark

Gender Pay Gap Reporting

2025

Introduction

This report contains the information that Ark Schools, as an organisation with over 250 employees, is required to provide about its gender pay gap. It also explains the main reasons for the gap and provides a summary of the plans in place to address this.

The gender pay gap refers to the differences in the average pay between men and women across all roles and job types. This is different from equal pay, which is the requirement that people are paid equally for work of equal value. We are confident that, based on our analysis, we give men and women equal pay for equal work.

The Ark Schools gender pay gap figures shown here are at the 'snapshot' date of 31 March 2024. We confirm that they have been collated in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017.

Understanding our gender pay gap

This year, Ark Schools' mean gender pay gap is **11 percent**. Ark's median pay gap figure is **13 percent**. These figures have both decreased slightly since last year, which is a positive trend.

Female representation is higher than male representation across most parts of the Ark network. This is in line with the broader education sector. We also see more women in very senior roles across network.

The gender pay gap may seem surprising in a network that is dominated by women, however this can be explained by the types of work that men and women do across our network, and the proportions of men and women within each of our pay quartiles.

Calculating the gender pay gap

The mean pay gap is the difference between women's mean hourly pay and men's mean hourly pay. The mean gender pay gap is calculated by deducting the average hourly pay of women from the average hourly pay of men and the gap is the difference (%) between these hourly rates

The median pay gap is the difference between women's median hourly pay and men's median hourly pay. The median hourly pay rate for both women and men is calculated by taking all hourly rates for each, lining them up in order from lowest to highest and finding the middle salary. The median gender pay gap is the difference between these midpoint hourly rates.

The pay quartiles are calculated by taking all the employees within the reporting cohort and their hourly rates, lining them up in order from lowest to highest and splitting it into four quartile groups. Within each quartile, the amount of both men and women is found and this is calculated as a % to indicate the proportion of men and women in the quartile.

Mean pay gap: 11%

Median pay gap: 13%

Proportion of men to women in Ark Schools

28%

72%
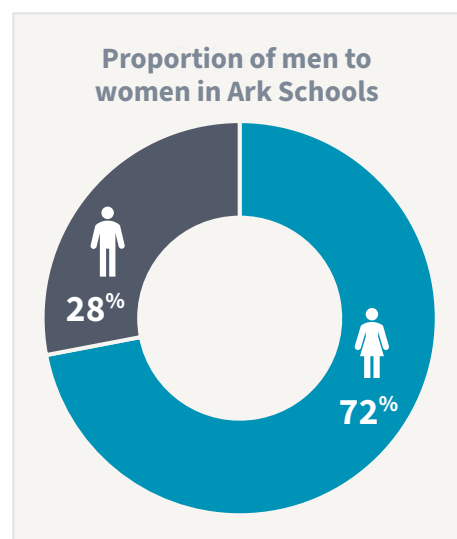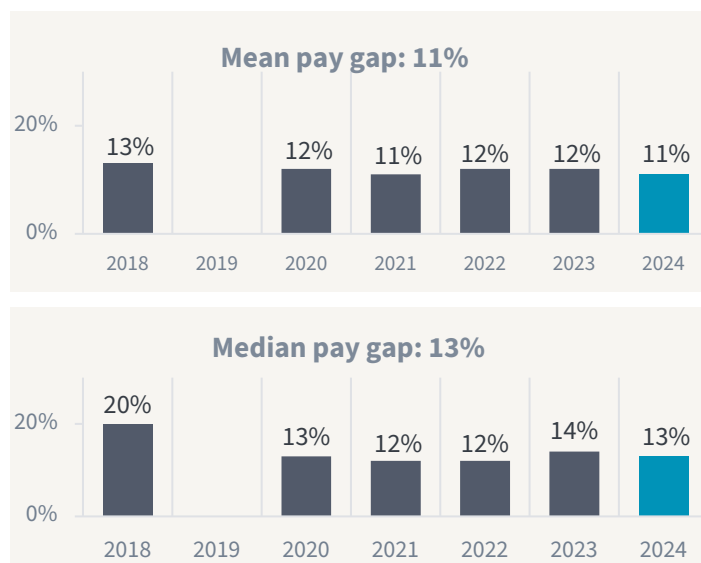
At Ark, more than 85.7 percent of positions are filled by women in our primary schools. By contrast, 66.6 percent of positions in our secondary schools, are filled by women. In line with national trends, hourly pay in our secondary schools is typically higher than hourly pay in our primary schools.

Women also proportionately occupy more support and auxiliary roles in the network. These roles often fall in the lowest paid quartile. It appears the decrease in mean gender pay gap this year is largely attributed to a greater proportion of women moving into the upper pay quartile (up from 61.2 percent).

Bonuses

Bonuses are paid to an increasingly small proportion of the network. They are low in value and include referral bonuses paid to employees who successfully introduce new recruits to the network.

Gender distribution in pay quartiles

	Women	Men
Lower Quartile	79.30%	20.70%
Lower Mid Quartile	75.50%	24.50%
Upper Mid Quartile	68.30%	31.70%
Upper Pay Quartile	63.40%	36.60%

■ Women ■ Men

Last year, the percentage of men and women who received a bonus was 1 percent for men and 0.5 percent for women. The bonus pay gap tends to fluctuate significantly year to year, due to the small percentage of employees who receive bonuses. Last year our mean bonus gap was 43.2 percent in favour of women.

Action plan to address our gender pay gap

Ark Schools is committed to attracting, developing, and retaining a diverse workforce, with a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Since our last report, we have put in place a range of measures to improve diversity and inclusion, and support gender equality throughout the organisation. Some of the initiatives we are currently prioritising are below:

1. **Promoting flexible working**

Ark is committed to encouraging work life balance for our employees, as we know this supports employee engagement and productivity. We've recently expanded flexible working options in our network team, including flexibility around core working hours. In our schools, we've piloted several flexible working approaches and we plan to launch a suite of flexible working options in the 25/26 academic year.

2. **Supporting return to work after maternity leave**

We will expand our coaching programme, which is specifically designed to support staff returning from maternity leave. This pilot initiative focuses on promoting wellbeing and easing transition back into a professional environment.

3. **Launching carers guidance**

According to the 2021 UK Census, 59% of unpaid carers are women. We know that women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men, while more women than men provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work (Carers UK, 2022). With that in mind, we plan to launch guidance to support our line managers to enable employees to remain in work and stay in roles that reflect their skills.
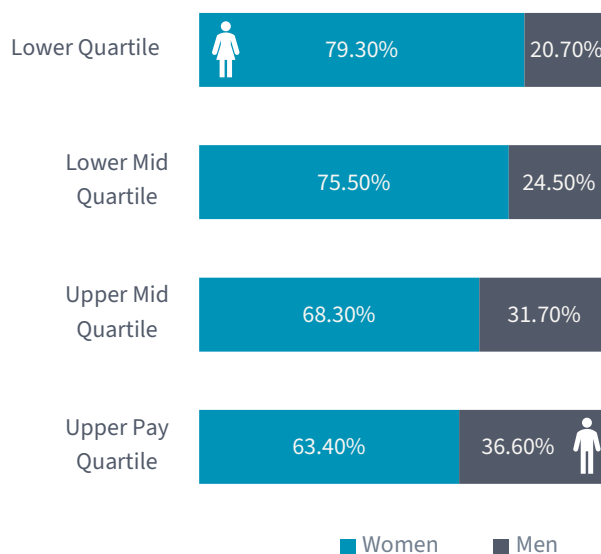
4. **Supporting women through menopause while at work**

We've launched menopause guidance and a risk assessment framework to enable us to better support our employees. We continue to promote awareness and plan to launch an e-learning course to help managers and employees to better support colleagues.

5. **Analysing our data and processes**

Our new recruitment system, launched in November 2024, provides enhanced data and analytics capabilities, as well as new features including anonymised shortlisting and anonymised CVs, which reduce the risk of bias in our talent acquisition and talent management processes. All Hiring Managers across the network are also required to participate in fair recruitment training.

We are currently procuring a new HR system that will enable us to collect and analyse data such as retention rates of pregnant employees, the proportion of mothers returning after maternity leave, and their employment status two years post-return.