

Ark Schools 2020



2020 has been a year like no other – and the pandemic has had a significant impact on all our students. So we are delighted to be welcoming them back to school this term.

Throughout the last six months, Ark's primary and secondary schools have had to provide new ways to support our young people, and have worked hard to help, including those looking to making the important next steps to higher education or apprenticeships. I am proud of how our students have responded, despite to the enormous challenges they and their families have faced. You can see some examples of the achievements of our Year 11 and Year 13 students here.

The major focus for this term and beyond will be to help our students catch up and to close the education attainment gap that the pandemic has exacerbated. So we are putting a great deal of effort and resource into a comprehensive programme of support in the coming weeks and months. This programme - wholly funded by voluntary donations - will provide an additional 9,000 digital devices to students over and above those provided by the Government, tailored academic interventions focused on those students that need particular help to catch up, and specialist mental health support to those that need it.

Ark will also continue to support education improvement beyond Ark schools themselves. Through our Venture programmes and the wider Ark family, we will support ongoing high quality training and development for teachers and school leaders, expanding the availability of high-quality early years provision, and education projects across the globe. We saw the great value of this wider work with the Oak National Academy during the lockdown. This teacher-founded online learning platform drew heavily on the contributions of our staff, resources and expertise, and will continue to do so.

I do hope you find the information here useful and I look forward to sharing more stories of how are students and schools continue to grow and develop over the next few months.

Lucy Heller
Chief Executive, Ark

Who we are

Ark is a charity that aims to transform children's lives through education.

Our 38 schools are located in some of the most disadvantaged areas of England and are among the highest achieving in the country – and Ark's venture programmes bring support and innovation to a much wider group of schools nationwide.

Across everything we do, we work to help young people, particularly those from deprived backgrounds, gain the outcomes they need to meet their aspirations.

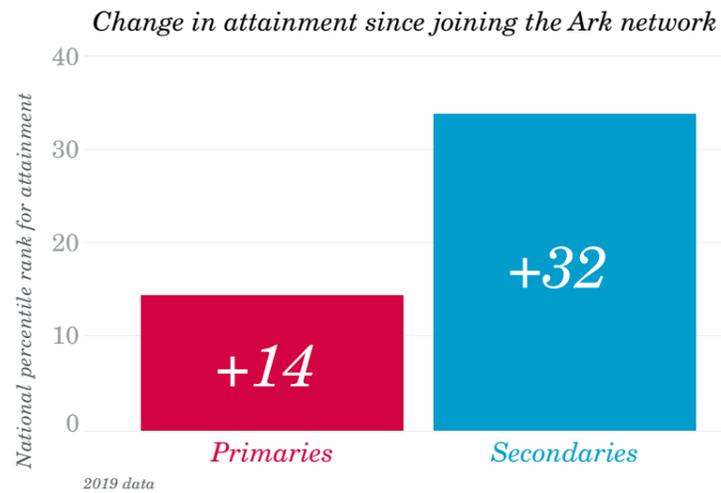


Building and running successful schools

Nearly a third of Ark's schools are new. These were established to provide pupil places for communities that need them. All of these schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, and three quarters of them have results that place them in the top 20% of schools in the country.

Most Ark schools, however, were existing schools that joined the Ark network to improve – often from difficult circumstances.

On average, the primary schools that have joined our network have moved up 14 places in national rankings after becoming an Ark school, and our secondaries improved by 32 places.



Through Ark Ventures, we also develop and support programmes that are tackling some of the most challenging problems facing young people, both in the UK and around the world.

Our Ventures

Ark Family

Reopening our schools

Welcoming students back for the new term



All Ark schools have been working hard over the summer to make sure students can return to a safe and welcoming environment. Ark Priory Primary School in Acton even had Secretary of State for Education Gavin Williamson to see how preparations were coming along. He joined Executive Principal Jacqueline Steele and Head of School Daniela Grasso for a tour of the school.

Mr Williamson said: "Ark is one of our most innovative and successful multi-academy trusts and it is fantastic to see the Ark ethos in action. The enthusiasm for bringing children back into school and getting them learning again was palpable. Getting all pupils back in the classroom at the start of this term is a national priority and it was reassuring to see how well prepared Ark Priory is. Teachers, school leaders and staff have worked incredibly hard throughout the pandemic and my visit to Ark Priory illustrated further everything that is being done to make sure children are not disadvantaged."

"Ark is one of our most innovative and successful multi-academy trusts."

Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education

Targeted support to help students close the gap



Students are returning to a very different school environment to the one they left – and many will need targeted help and support to catch up.

The pandemic has already further widened the education achievement gap and so we are investing in a comprehensive programme to support our students over the longer term. This will include:

- 9,000 digital devices in addition to the 1,000 being provided by the Government, to support remote learning;
- personal and tailored academic interventions with a particular focus on English and Maths;
- Specialist mental health support to those that need it, and wider pastoral interventions to build long-term resilience.

This support is made possible by the generous donations of supporters and we hope to raise further funds to expand the programme and widen its reach further

On to university



Megan, Ark Alexandra from Hastings

Megan studied History, English Literature and Psychology and is going to the **University of Southampton** to study History.

Megan has always been extremely active in her school community and maintained her high grades. Having volunteered to assist Year 7 science classes, Megan discovered she enjoyed seeing how students learnt and finding different ways in which she could help them. Megan aspires to either teach English or History. She has been a part of the Hastings Youth Council where she was able to express the areas of concern amongst her peers at the Hastings Borough Council Chambers. She will receive a Reuben bursary from Ark to help with the financial costs of university life.



Livan, Ark Acton Academy from Acton in London

Livan studied Maths, Further Maths, Physics and Chemistry. He has a place confirmed at **Harvey Mudd College**, the best undergraduate university for engineering in the US to study Maths and Liberal Arts.

Livan is a naturally gifted mathematician and achieved the highest maths grade in his school's GCSEs. At school he has led STEM societies and delivered weekly seminars. His volunteer work in teaching maths in Ghana and Kenya with Original Volunteer Group and local maths hub has proven his impact and success. Consequently, a small group of children can now access formal education in these countries.

His Extended Project Qualification work involved him designing a water pumping system prototype, influenced by his volunteer visit to Africa. His objective is to implement a more sustainable water pumping system which will be used in developing countries. The progress of the project is exhilarating and confirms his passion in conservation to make sure we respond to climate changes and the impact of technological advancement.



Anisa, Ark St Albans from Birmingham

Anisa is going to the **University of Birmingham** to study Pharmacy.

Ark St Alban's Academy student Anisa won a place at Birmingham University to study pharmacy after receiving two A grades and a B in her A Levels. Anisa is keen to stay in her home city and hopes her studies will help her to be able to give back to the communities she has grown up in. Teachers at St Albans describe her as joyful and humorous with an enthusiasm for learning. Ark's Realising Opportunities programme enabled her to visit a number of high-profile universities to help her make her choice about her course and destination. She is the first member of her family to go to university.

Bursaries

Thanks to our generous partners and donors, we offer a range of financial bursaries for our students going on to university. These bursaries, which range from £3,000 to £50,000, ease the financial burden of university life, allowing students to go to university who would otherwise not be able to.

This year:

54

students have been awarded a bursary to go to university

88%

of these are the first generation in their family to go to university

73%

have offers from Russell Group universities – with 6% going to Oxford or Cambridge



On to apprenticeships

Apprenticeship give students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviour that allow them to become well-rounded, employable individuals. We make sure that all students know apprenticeships are an option for them (compared to just 11% of 16-18 year olds in the UK who are encouraged to consider an apprenticeship).



"I am really happy with my results. I got into my firm university choice but I have been offered a level 7 apprenticeship at Deloitte which I am going to accept. I am looking forward to working whilst gaining a qualification and real life experience as well. I want to go into trading and investment banking as I have always enjoyed maths and numbers. I joined INA for Sixth Form and I am so glad I did. I have gained lots of experience here, for example I did work experience with Morgan Stanley which was amazing."

Avneet, Isaac Newton Academy

This year, Ark alumni have been offered apprenticeships with the following organisations:



GCSE success stories



Yumna triumphs with amazing grades!

Yumna from Ark Isaac Newton Academy aims to study medicine.

"I couldn't be happier. I hoped I was going to do well, but I wasn't expecting this. The teachers have been amazing, I wouldn't have got these grades if I hadn't been taught well so the school has really helped, and I am grateful. I spent my entire summer last year revising for the GCSE exams, which didn't happen, and I was worried I had wasted all that time, but I now feel that all that hard work was worth it."

Ark Putney student overcomes a challenging year to secure top grades

Andria's aspiration to be a lawyer is one step closer having secured top grades in her GCSEs.

"This year has been challenging for me, balancing my GCSE studies and my council housing relocation far away from the school. I am very grateful to all my teachers who have helped me with school work and access to resources. In September I am going to study History, Psychology, and Sociology in the Ark Putney Academy sixth form. My long-term aspirations are to be a lawyer and to graduate from Kings College University. I am looking forward to what next year has to offer."



Working towards his goal

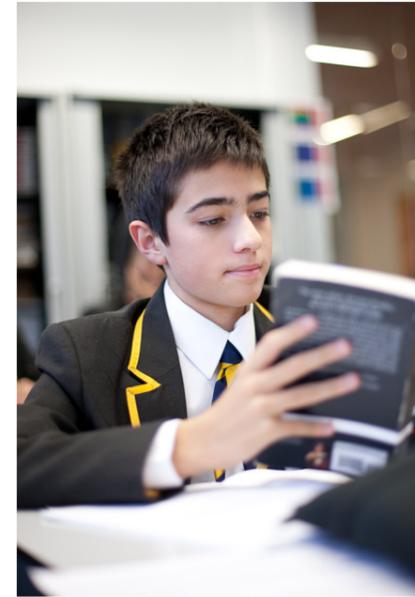
Abdimajid from Ark Victoria will be joining the Under 18s team for Port Vale FC, where he will continue his studies in Sport and continue to play football.

"The school and teachers pushed me to keep working hard and to be the best. I'm very happy with my results!"



Learning through the pandemic

Supporting the national response



As well as its schools, Ark contributes to education and wider social policy through a variety of charitable ventures. All of these have been active during lockdown in helping schools support their pupils. Ark Curriculum + is the provider of highly-regarded programmes such as [English Mastery](#) and [Mathematics Mastery](#), which offer resources, training and support to teachers to improve their professional expertise and enhance students' learning.

During the past few months AC+ and the Ark Music programme have been involved in [Oak National Academy](#), an online classroom and

resource hub set up by a group of schools and academy trusts in a few short weeks after lockdown was announced. It provides high-quality video lessons and resources to support teachers, parents and pupils at school and at home. AC+'s Maths team as well as Ark's Early Years team have been part of the effort. They have contributed to an estimated 220,000 users per day clocking up more than 4.7 million engagements with Oak in its first term alone. AC+ will continue to be involved with Oak National Academy as it continues into next year, supporting teachers and their students through school reopening and beyond.



Ark Curriculum+

A socially distanced choir

Over the summer term, students united across the Ark schools network in an ambitious creative project led by an inspiring team of professional musicians. In place of the usual end-of-year musical celebrations, students were invited to take on the spirit of carnival through taking part in the [Ark 'Soca Medley' challenge](#). More than 350 students and alumni from 31 of our schools learnt three Trinidadian classics – learning the vocal lines, instrumental parts, choreography, or how to drum along using body percussion or pots and pans from their kitchens. Students joined from their homes and their Community Classrooms to create a music video showcasing the joy and creativity present across the Ark network.





Ark fundraising to support young people

Supporters so far include:

1851 TRUST



Aream & Co.

amazon

Atos



Resolution Trust

Ark has focused efforts on supporting those disadvantaged young people that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic.

In the immediate aftermath of the lockdown, Ark teachers helped provide food parcels and food vouchers to families struggling to feed their children. Yet the lockdown and school disruption threatens to have a deeper, longer-term impact on the life chances of many. So we are investing in additional academic interventions to support catch-up learning and digital devices for as many of our students as possible. We are also providing vital wellbeing and mental provision for those that need it.

With the help of our students, schools and the generous donations of individuals and organisations, we have raised £900,000 to support this essential programme. Yet there is still more to do and, as students return to school, we are continuing to fundraise to ensure we can support as many of our students as possible. If you can support this work, please contact Cordelia Harwood, Head of Development (cordelia.harwood@arkonline.org)



Ark schools triumph at lockdown sports challenge

The Ark Sports Day Challenge, which took place across two weeks in July, encouraged students, parents, staff, and school communities to 'travel' the distance around the world - which is 40,000 km - by running, walking, cycling or any other inventive ways.

The response to the challenge was overwhelming – in just five days and 11 hours, participants had completed the 40,000km target. So, the challenge had to be extended into space – with participants travelling the distance around the Earth, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Venus, Pluto and beyond.

In total, **3,805 people** across the network took part and completed a fantastic **195,027 km**. Participants also raised £20,000 for Ark's coronavirus appeal, helping students recover and build the resilience needed following school closures. The money has gone towards digital devices, academic interventions and mental health support.

Contact us

If you would like to know more about Ark, any of our ventures, or the wider Ark family, please contact John Blake, Head of Public Affairs and Engagement (john.blake@arkonline.org). We are always keen to share our work with people inside the education sector, those who have an interest in educational development or policy, or those who are keen to join the profession themselves.

T +44 (0) 20 3116 0800
E info@arkonline.org
arkonline.org

Twitter: @arkschools
Facebook: arkschools

1 Nicholas Rd, London, W11 4AN

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