‘Among the highest performing schools in the country’
Evening Standard August 2017

Ark Greenwich Free School

Ambition, Growth, Fellowship, Scholarship.
Mission Statement

AGFS vision
“To ensure every pupil succeeds, regardless of background or previous attainment, by providing outstanding teaching and pastoral care.”

AGFS values
From the school’s vision come the underpinning values that are communicated to staff, parents and pupils. These values underpin all aspects of school operations:

1. High expectations
We believe that every child can achieve great things. So we set exceptionally high expectations for all our pupils, and we do whatever it takes to meet them. Our aspirations are no lower for our most vulnerable pupils.

2. Exemplary behaviour
Our schools are characterised by a respectful and orderly environment, where teachers can focus on teaching and pupils can focus on learning. We teach, recognise and reinforce good behaviour, and we don’t tolerate poor behaviour. We don’t accept any excuses, and we don’t make any either.

3. Excellent teaching
A teacher affects a pupil’s achievement more than any other factor. We work side-by-side with teaching staff, supporting them with training and development so that they can deliver excellent teaching. To make sure that no pupil is left behind, we’ve developed data management tools which help teachers to monitor progress - this shows when pupils, or indeed teaching staff, need extra support.

4. Depth before breadth
When children build firm foundations in English and maths, they find it easier to do well in other subjects too. That’s why we prioritise depth in these subjects, giving our pupils the best chance of success.

5. More time for learning
To make sure children have enough time both for core subjects and for extra-curricular activities, many of our schools run a longer school day. Others are open at weekends and during school holidays, offering masterclasses and revision sessions. Many Ark schools offer residential stays, day trips and summer schools. In every school, no time is wasted - every hour of every day is devoted to children learning.

6. Knowing every child
We organise our schools so that every child knows, and is known well by, every adult in the school. We also recognise that children do best when families and schools work together. We keep parents well informed about children’s targets, and we involve families in all aspects of school life.

We’ve developed Mathematics Mastery to support our children in maths - this highly-effective approach is inspired by successful teaching methods from around the world, and is also endorsed by Ofsted. As well as being used in all of our primary schools, Mathematics Mastery is being used by over 100 schools outside Ark. We also dedicate more time to literacy and English, to nurture a love of reading and develop fluent communication skills. We train all of our teachers to recognise the barriers children might face in building literacy skills, and show them how to support pupils who need more help.

Mission for the school
As an Ark school we follow a set of underlying principles called the Ark Six Pillars:

Ambition: Reaching for the stars and having sky high expectations. Believing that top exam grades, places at elite universities and professional careers are achievable for all of our pupils

Growth: The conviction that improvement is always possible and the determination to continuously develop

Fellowship: The knowledge that the interests of others are as important as my own and the commitment to act as a positive member of the community

Scholarship: The recognition that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is intrinsically valuable and the diligence to pursue mastery of them

Ambition, Growth, Fellowship, Scholarship.
Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for considering the Ark Greenwich Free School for your child. Our core belief is that all pupils can succeed if given outstanding teaching and pastoral care. We are creating a close-knit community-centred school of the highest standards that achieves this both through recruiting and training excellent teachers and support staff and in developing a pastoral system that ensures no child is left behind. We are proud of our respectful and highly disciplined community where pupils and staff feel valued; a no-excuses ethos prevails; and aspirations are unashamedly sky high.

We are housed in new purpose-built accommodation that means we are well placed to deliver a very high-quality education to the children of Greenwich. We want our pupils to develop as thoughtful, creative and confident members of the community whose time at AGFS fully equips them with the skills they will need to be successful in their lives and fully prepares them for their next steps; be that at University, college or in the career of their choice.

We will work tirelessly to achieve these goals but we also expect the support of all involved with the school, especially the parents. At AGFS we don’t talk about ability or potential and we certainly don’t label a child but we do talk about effort and resilience and we expect the same at home.

We will provide the highest quality teaching and resources and ensure we offer support where it is needed and stretch and challenge every pupil. In return we expect every one of our parents to commit to upholding the values and ethos of AGFS.

We have high expectations of both our pupils and ourselves and we are committed to building a school that creates a lasting legacy for Greenwich. We tell all our pupils that “you will achieve your dreams if you are determined, work hard and believe in yourself.”

We hope you will agree!

Mr R. D. R. Spiers
Headteacher

Ark Greenwich Free School
From Our Chair of Governors

Dear Parent/ Carer

It is my pleasure to welcome you as you consider Ark Greenwich Free School for your child. As the Chair of Governors and the Co-Founder of the school, our goal in early 2010 when we started to imagine the school was to provide something a little bit different - a smaller school where children, staff, governors and parents can come together as a community to achieve wonderful things. We have come a long way since then and are now a flourishing school with brilliant academic outcomes, exceptional staff and happy, confident children housed in new purpose-built accommodation.

As Governors, our role is to support the school, but also ensure that it keeps to its original vision which the founders developed - that all pupils can succeed if given outstanding teaching and pastoral care. It is an honour and a privilege to continue to develop the school as we open applications for our next cohort of children. I wish you all the best and look forward to meeting as many of you as parents in the forthcoming months.

Jonathan Simons
Chair of Governors

Our ethos:

High expectations.
No excuses.
No shortcuts.

We believe all pupils can succeed if given outstanding teaching and pastoral care.
**Timetable:**

We start every morning with a dedicated reading time. This ensures we can allow time for sustained independent reading and offer targeted literacy support where necessary without taking pupils out of lessons. We know that developing a love of reading amongst every one of our pupils is one of the best ways of helping to ensure GCSE and A level success.

Added to this we build in time for our tutors to build strong relationships, and this dedicated tutor time also gives space for our innovative Wellbeing programme.

We can offer more lessons than most schools to ensure our pupils are fully prepared for GCSEs, A-Levels and university. Our pupils spend more time on English, Maths and Science, but our extended day also provides time for a broad range of other subjects such as sport, the humanities and the creative arts.

Extra-curricular clubs are compulsory, because they’re a great way to develop personal skills, discover new passions, and have fun! We also offer a supervised independent learning space after school to help pupils develop independent learning skills, but with access to subject specific support and a school library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday - Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday – Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08:05-08:20</td>
<td>Gates open and pupils arrive</td>
<td>Gates open and pupils arrive</td>
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<tr>
<td>08:20-08:50</td>
<td>Registration/reading/ Assembly</td>
<td>08:20-08:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>08:50-09:50</td>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>08:50-09:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:50-10:50</td>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>09:50-10:50</td>
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<td>10:50-11:05</td>
<td>Break</td>
<td>10:50-11:05</td>
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<td>11:05-12:05</td>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>11:05-12:05</td>
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<td>13:50-14:50</td>
<td>Period 5</td>
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<td>14:50-15:50</td>
<td>Period 6</td>
<td>14:50-15:10</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:50-16:00</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Registration/PSHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
<td>15:10</td>
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</tbody>
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The AGFS School Day (2018-19) – 6 periods Mon-Tuesday, 5 periods Wednesday-Friday
What makes AGFS special?

“The test of a successful education is not just the amount of knowledge that pupils take away from school, but their appetite to know and their capacity to learn.”

Richard Livingstone, Vice Chancellor of Oxford University

Academic Curriculum
We focus on ‘depth before breadth’, helping pupils master the fundamentals whilst stretching and challenging them to achieve above their expectations. This leads to outstanding outcomes.

The whole child
Acknowledging that providing pupils with a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities for personal development is as important as examination results.

Outstanding staff
We invest in recruiting and training the very best teachers and support staff. We give them training every Thursday afternoon to ensure our practice is always cutting edge.

Distinctive Ethos
We follow a ‘high expectations; no excuses; no shortcuts’ approach to work and discipline in which everyone takes responsibility for their actions.

Ark Greenwich Free School
“It takes courage, skill, judgement and camaraderie to venture into the unknown and those are the qualities that underpin the capacity to live a happy and fulfilling life.”

G. Claxton
Improvement is always possible

World-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck has carried out decades of research on achievement and success. Her findings can be boiled down to a simple idea - the growth mindset.

In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work - brains and talent are just the starting point. This view of the brain creates a love of learning and a resilience that is the basis of great accomplishment in every area of life.

In a fixed mindset, people believe that their basic qualities are fixed. They spend their time documenting or judging their talents and abilities instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success, without effort.

How will we develop a growth mindset?

Every word or action sends a message. It tells children how to think about themselves and how to view the world around them.

It can be a fixed-mindset message that says: “You have permanent traits and I am judging them”. Or it can be a growth-mindset message that says: “You are a developing person and I am interested in your development.”

In a nutshell: Praising children’s intelligence harms their motivation and harms their performance. If success means they are smart, then failure means they are stupid.

- Our focus is on teaching our students to love challenges, to be intrigued by their mistakes, to enjoy effort and to keep on learning.
- Our extended day and regular ‘drop-down days’ allow us to ensure that every pupil develops a growth mindset; it allows them to develop the skills and attributes necessary for success and to experience a range of different activities.
- Through our commitment to sport our pupils learn how to compete and to win but also how to deal with failure or setback with humility and reflection.
“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.”

Beverly Sills
‘We are creating an environment where education will be almost inevitable.’

Margaret McMillan
Fellowship

We recognise that creating a true learning community requires us to focus on areas of life other than just academic subjects.

To that end we dedicate time each week for our Wellbeing programme. This programme aims to foster the conditions necessary for learning and to allow our pupils to flourish. We also commit time each day to reading and helping build a community around shared experiences.

However, by fellowship we mean more than just getting along with one another and learning how to work as part of a team; we mean creating a community where we put the needs of others before our own. We set the highest standards for behaviour and we expect our pupils to meet them; a key part of being a member of AGFS is treating others as we would wish to be treated.

This notion of fellowship extends to parents and carers as well. We expect our parents and carers to uphold our values and to support our expectations at home. If we are to create an outstanding organisation then we need every member of AGFS to actively support us.
Scholarship

At AGFS we are committed to excellence and we want to be able to guarantee that every one of our pupils will enter the university or profession of their choice when they leave us.

In order for us to achieve this we provide:

- Excellent role models who went to good universities.
- Visits to universities from Y7 onwards so all students set their sights high and know what is required to get there.
- Focussed career days where pupils get to talk to professionals from a variety of professions and understand the journey they took to get there.
- Careful advice and guidance that ensures all pupils understand how the GCSE choices they make have an impact on their A-Level choices and in turn which University degree or apprenticeship that will mean they can access.
- A challenging curriculum that will ensure our pupils gain the qualifications they require to access the elite universities and the elite professions.
- Excellent teaching and adults who model that learning is a life-long process.

It is our aim that any pupil who has attended AGFS can stand shoulder to shoulder with any pupil from any school and have the same chance of securing the University place or job interview of their choice.

Key Stage 3 Curriculum model:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Hrs per week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFL</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>PE</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday Enrichment</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“There is only one twenty first century skill. And that is the ability to act intelligently when you are faced with a situation for which you have not been specifically prepared.”

Seymour Pappert

Ambition, Growth, Fellowship, Scholarship.
Settling in

Feeling comfortable in a new community

Moving from primary to secondary school can be a daunting time for parents and pupils, but the right transition programme can ensure new pupils have a happy and confident beginning. In addition to meeting with pupils and families, we:

- work closely with primary schools to ensure that we have as much information as possible about what kind of nurture and challenge our pupils need;
- hold an induction day at the end of the summer term for pupils to visit their new school, meet their class and their form tutor;
- run a bespoke transition curriculum

Uniform

The Ark Greenwich Free School sets high expectations of pupils in all areas, and uniform is no exception. We want our pupils to take the great pride in their school community and that means wearing their uniform correctly.

We have a traditional uniform, strictly enforced. We know that uniform is one of the outward signs by which the local community recognises and makes judgements about pupils. We want those judgements to be entirely positive. We also know that uniform is vital in creating a disciplined and well-ordered learning environment in school. We enforce our strict uniform policy without exception and expect all parents and carers to support us in this.

We operate a strict no mobile phone policy.
Extra-curricular

A great education involves far more than outstanding lessons in the classroom. Extracurricular activities engage and excite pupils about school, teach important personal skills that help them in and beyond the classroom, and let them discover new passions.

They help students become well-rounded individuals who can play a valuable role in the community.

Our mandatory enrichment activities and regular day long experiences:

- **support the curriculum** by, for example, reinforcing understanding of angles through orienteering, or learning to develop an historical argument through debating. Visits to places like the Natural History and Imperial War Museums will be designed to reinforce topics pupils have covered in class.

- **engage and excite** pupils by, for example, rewarding them for exceptional effort or achievement with trips that also help to build teamwork.

- **build skills** by, for example, allowing pupils to represent a country in a Model United Nations conference, design a new enterprise in an ‘Apprentice’ challenge, or campaign to improve their local community.

- **promote healthy lifestyles** through regular sports days and team sports.

- **develop passions** by encouraging pupils’ creativity, and allowing them to discover what they love doing. We encourage our pupils to learn a musical instrument and we aim to have a first class orchestra.

We also organise 12 Drop Down Days each year where students are taken off of normal timetable to attend educational visits to a range of exciting venues including the Science Museum, Woodlands Farm and the University of Greenwich.

"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed."

Michael Jordan
Admissions to the Ark Greenwich Free School at Year 7

Ark Greenwich Free School is a publicly funded, co-educational, non-denominational, secondary Free School and will have an agreed admission number of 100 pupils who will begin Year 7 each September. Ark Schools is the Admissions Authority for Ark Greenwich Free School and holds responsibility for the admissions of pupils. All applications for places at the School from September 2018 onwards will be considered in accordance with the arrangements set out below.

Application Form
Ark Greenwich Free School will participate in Royal Greenwich’s coordinated scheme for planned admissions. Further information about the coordinated scheme is available at http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/admissions. Applications to the Greenwich Free School are made on the Common Application Form provided by the Local Authority in which you live.

Oversubscription criteria
If the number of applications for admission to the secondary school or sixth form is greater than the PAN, applications will be considered against the criteria and order set out below:

a. Looked After Children and children who have been previously looked after but immediately after being looked after became subject to adoption, a child arrangements order, or special guardianship order. *1

b. Children whose acute, established and documented medical or social needs justify a place at the school. *2

c. Children who at the time of the admission have a sibling who attends the academy. For this purpose, “sibling” means a whole, half or step-sibling or an adopted child resident at the same address.

*1 A looked after child is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989).

*2 Ark Schools, the admissions authority, will decide whether this condition applies and parents will be responsible for providing supporting evidence from social workers, doctors, health advisors and other professionals of why the need means the child should be given a place at the academy rather than at any other local school. Parents will be responsible for submitting medical evidence and clearly identifying the implications for the child if they were not given a place at the academy by the national application deadline. Information received after this deadline will not be considered.
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