

Our Six Pillars

Strong discipline

Calm, purpose and order are established through the consistency of expectations and explicit teaching of discipline.

Strong discipline is at the heart of our school, providing the calm and focussed environment that allows pupils to learn, show and receive respect and develop the behaviours that will enable them to play a full role in society. The school is orderly and all transitions are managed carefully to maximise time for learning. The routines are completely consistent across every member of staff and are implemented in a kind, respectful and nurturing manner. Many of our classroom routines are communicated with non-verbal signals, meaning teacher talk can remain focussed on learning. Pupils are taught self-discipline. We explain our expectations very clearly, why they are important and then we expect 100% compliance at all times. As a result, the pupils understand how the routines help to create an excellent school. They also understand how the development of their self-discipline, alongside character development, will help them in the future. Our behaviour systems are designed to support pupils to reflect upon and learn from their mistakes and develop their ability to make good decisions.

Mastery Curriculum – depth before breadth

Our curriculum design enables pupils to develop a framework of knowledge and understanding in each subject area that provides a solid foundation for further study.

Our curriculum is planned backwards from university in each subject area, ensuring pupils master key learning before moving on. It is a knowledge rich curriculum where what pupils are learning about is as important as the skills they are developing. Our children join us at very different starting points, we assess them on entry and ensure that our curriculum meets their needs whilst holding the same high expectations for every child. We have designed a rapid EAL catch up programme and track the progress of students on this forensically so that they can access the full curriculum as soon as their language ability allows them to. We provide more time for English and maths for all pupils to ensure they develop literacy and numeracy skills to a very high level.

Assessments test mastery of the content by requiring pupils to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application independently and in unseen contexts. Exam weeks are held three times a year. End of year exams test mastery of the whole year's learning. Revision is built into the curriculum because new problems are designed to draw upon and utilise prior learning. The focus on developing depth of understanding and mastery means that pupils experience the deep satisfaction derived from grappling with and grasping challenging content, which in turn supports the development of a growth mindset. It also means that they are developing a solid framework of understanding and set of skills that support all future learning in that subject area. The rigour of the curriculum is reflected in the curriculum planning documents, high quality teaching, pupil work and the feedback that pupils receive.

High Quality Teaching

Teachers are subject experts with an excellent understanding of the intellectual journey they are taking their pupils on and master the teaching skills to support this.

Teachers use the school routines to create an excellent climate for learning and to ensure that pupils make exceptional progress. Lessons are never task driven; they are planned using the most effective methods to engage with the content. They are underpinned by high expectations, from the use of academic language, grammatical precision and level of rigour expected in pupil responses, to the great thinkers and scholars they introduce the pupils to along the way. The atmosphere is scholarly and teachers display and elicit a passion for their subject and for learning more generally. Our teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their understanding of the curriculum is detailed, meaning that they recognise how the learning fits into the pupils' broader development within the subject. They engage with the knowledge being developed and understand the crux of the lesson. This allows them to be very responsive in the classroom, always able to ask the most important questions, pick out the most important points, identify the underlying misconceptions that are holding pupils back and give meaningful feedback that moves pupils forward. Our teachers ensure all pupils master the key concepts and skills required for each unit before moving on. Errors are opportunities and emphasis is placed on growth rather than attainment. All classrooms and all teaching is a team effort, with each individual practitioner delivering planning that is the result of a collaborative process and developing facilitation skills that are part of our collective approach as a school.

Character Development

Pupils develop the characteristics that support their academic achievement, create thoughtful citizens and allow them to make reflective choices over their personal lives.

We will teach *Character Education* formally, translating abstract personal attributes into concrete situations. Pupils will study *character* once a week through sessions that always end in a structured discussion led by pupils but our approach to character education will also be delivered through our tutor programme and through subject lessons as all teachers will be trained in this approach. The programme along with our tutor programme covers personal, moral and global topics. Pupils always discuss a news item once a week. We provide opportunities to develop and reinforce these attributes beyond these sessions as they provide the framework in which we understand personal development and the language to discuss it. Pupils' curiosity and adaptability will mean they are outward looking and able to get the most from and seek out experiences and opportunities. Their honesty, altruism, and empathy will give them an integrity that means they can stick to their convictions and form strong personal relationships. Their responsibility and reflectiveness will help them to make good choices for themselves and for others. Tenacity will underpin their character and ensure that they work hard and see their choices through.

Alongside these attributes, pupils will develop *Key Learning Dispositions*. These are learning habits that allow pupils to make the most of the excellent teaching and will enable them to engage in study at the highest level. They will be able to organise themselves, take notes, listen, discuss and debate, conduct research, give presentations, manage extended projects and write at length. Ultimately, our pupils will carve out their own futures; they must have the skills to thrive in whatever environment they choose and the self-awareness to make choices that will make them happy and be fulfilled.

Raising Aspirations and Enrichment

Pupils understand the opportunities that a school and university education will afford them in terms of careers and quality of life. Pupils develop their passions and interests through an in-day enrichment programme.

The aim of raising aspirations must permeate our school. Teachers use interactions with pupils, through lessons, tutoring and informal discussions to introduce and discuss aspirational role models, current affairs, further study, university and careers. We take every opportunity to continually support pupils to think more deeply and more broadly about the world around them and the opportunities it presents. As a school we are making ourselves knowledgeable about post 16 and 18 options and careers and seek advice where we do not have the expertise. Each term, a speaker visits to give pupils an insight into their career; each year pupils visit a university. As they get older, these university visits are increasingly tailored to their individual aspirations. As a result, they have an excellent understanding of a variety of careers and understand what qualifications, skills and experiences they would need in order to pursue them. They understand the role of university in providing opportunities and they are well informed about universities that provide the most valued degrees in the subject areas they wish to pursue. Pupils recognise how their learning, character and personal development support their future prospects; they reflect on their character and interests when making choices about their futures. Their broad experience of visiting universities, the opportunity to meet people from a range of different careers and the development of their communication skills through character mean that they are able to express themselves articulately and confidently in any forum. Alongside the breadth of career and educational opportunities they come into contact with, we are also supporting our pupils to develop their passions and interests through a wide ranging enrichment programme. Enrichment is a celebration of curiosity and is a central part of our school.

Developing educational leaders in high performing teams

All members of staff see themselves as leaders within an aligned community of professionals and are systematically trained in best practice. We create high performing teams to drive our school improvement.

Training and development are part of daily life at Ark Elvin and our goal in this is to create an alumni of exceptional school staff, excellent teachers, thoughtful and strategic managers and visionary leaders that will be able to make an important contribution to education.

- We develop excellent teachers through coaching, whole school and differentiated training and weekly collaborative planning meetings
- We develop impactful operational staff through strong planning, effective systems, training and feedback.
- We believe that every staff member has leadership responsibility; they are supported to engage in evaluative, data driven and strategic thinking related to their role. We return regularly to the pillars and their day to day manifestations to ensure that everyone feels that they are the guardians of them and are empowered to make decisions based on them.