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For immediate release

CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP - ARK NETWORK CELEBRATES IMPROVEMENT IN GCSEs

Average 11 percentage point increase from 2010 across network

ARK Schools has secured a fifth year of improved GCSE performances across its academies. ARK's five academies with GCSE results achieved an average rise of 11 percentage points over last year. Since each school opened as an ARK academy the average annual increase in pupils achieving five GCSEs at A*-C including English and mathematics is also 11 percentage points.

Initial data shows that 62% of ARK pupils have achieved five A*-C grades including English and maths. This compares to an average of 19% in the predecessor schools six years ago and a national average of 55% in 2010 (2011 figure not yet available).

% pupils passing five GCSEs at A* - C inc English and maths	Opened	2009	2010	2011	Percentage point increase 2010 - 2011	Av annual percentage point increase since opening as ARK academy
Burlington Danes	2006	50	67	75	8	9
Walworth	2007	45	59	70	11	11
Globe	2008	35	42	45	3	6
St Alban's	2009	31*	50	68	18	19
Charter	2009	21*	24	39	15	9
Average across ARK Schools					11	11

*Predecessor school

Notable successes include:

- **Burlington Danes Academy:** 75% of pupils achieved 5 A*-C grades including English and maths, up from 31% since it became an ARK academy and only narrowly missing the ARK target of 80% within 5 years of the school becoming an academy. A quarter of both the English and maths entries secured A/A* grades.
- **St Alban's Academy:** The GCSE pass rate is up by **18 percentage points** in one year – to 68% (2010, 50%) and up 37 percentage points in the two years since becoming an ARK academy.
- **Charter Academy:** Results are up to 39% - a **15 percentage point** increase on last year and putting the school above the national floor target. In 2006 the predecessor school achieved just 3%.
- **Maths specialism:** ARK average of **73% A*-C** grades in maths and **20%** of maths entries across the network are at A or A*.

Notable individual successes include Bahgah Katamesh, a year 11 pupil at Burlington Danes Academy. She achieved A* grades in every subject at GCSE along with two A* grades at A Level (Maths and Arabic, two years early) and A at AS Level (Biology, 1 year early).

ARK Schools managing director, Lucy Heller, said: “These are terrific results and I am delighted by the rate of improvement across the ARK network. The progress made across the academies is testament to the hard work and dedication of our staff and pupils over the last year.”

The GCSE figures come a week after ARK Schools' first A level results, at Burlington Danes Academy, where more than more than two thirds (68%) of the school's first Sixth Form cohort gained their first choice university place. Pupils secured places at a range of leading universities, including Warwick, Bristol and King's College London and on the highly competitive KPMG-sponsored accountancy degree scheme.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ARK Schools was set up in 2004 to create a group of outstanding schools that radically improve pupils' life chances and runs a network of eight academies in London, Birmingham and Portsmouth, with three new primary schools opening this September.

ARK Schools' aim is to help close the achievement gap between children from disadvantaged and more affluent backgrounds. ARK's academies focus on raising attainment so that every pupil has a real choice of going on to higher education when they complete school.

ARK academies are non-selective and community-oriented and are generally situated in areas of high social deprivation. Just under half of ARK Schools' pupils are on free school meals, compared with around 15% nationally. ARK's Director of Education is Sir Michael Wilshaw, Executive Principal of Mossbourne Community Academy.

Ends

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