

THE arrow

NEWSLETTER FOR ARK SCHOOLS

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Great expectations

King Solomon
Academy's
early success



Exporting success

Team Obama picks up ideas
from Teaching Leaders

Making teaching effective

Lessons from the latest research

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Twenty five leading US policy advisers from federal government and state school districts met Teaching Leaders and ARK US in Washington to discuss launching Teaching Leaders in the US in 2010.

(Left) Members of the Teaching Leaders team with American colleagues at the Washington summit.

US to trial Teaching Leaders

● Team Obama considers urban schools improvement scheme inspired by ARK programme

TEACHING LEADERS was created by ARK Schools and its partners to raise achievement in tough urban schools by developing outstanding middle leaders. Now the programme may be replicated as part of President Obama's \$4.35 billion "Race to the Top" school improvement programme, after a Washington summit hosted by Teaching Leaders.

Key presidential advisers, including Brad Jupp, head of the nationwide drive to raise teacher quality, President Bush's education secretary, Margaret Spellings, and top officials from US school districts in Chicago, Washington DC, Denver and New Orleans, attended the summit organised by Teaching Leaders Director Sharath Jeevan and his colleagues in December. Influential non-profit education providers also took part, including ARK Schools' first Education Director and Teaching Leaders co-founder, Jay Altman, who now runs Leading Educators in the US, New Leaders for New Schools, Teach for America and the New Schools Venture Fund. The Gates Foundation also attended as did members of the ARK Schools UK team and ARK US. Schools Minister

Vernon Coaker addressed the summit by video.

The Teaching Leaders team discussed the programme with officials from the Department of Education and President Obama's director of social innovation, who strongly supported launching a US pilot programme this year.

A number of US initiatives, including Teach First and Future Leaders, have been adopted in the UK. "It would be great to export an innovative educational programme to the US," said Sharath. "Right now the US is looking for ways to rapidly raise teaching standards and school leadership at every level. The

creation of ARK US gives us an opportunity to be a founding partner in a new US model of Teaching Leaders."

Jay Altman said: "As part of Race To The Top, states need to improve their school leadership pipeline, so identifying and developing talented middle leaders will be important. That's sparked national interest in the Teaching Leaders model, and in expanding our New Orleans based, Leading Educators programme, inspired by Teaching Leaders."

A US team is being recruited to drive the effort, supported by ARK's Sunita Mohanty.

Teaching Leaders was launched

in 2008 to raise school standards by developing talented middle leaders. It currently supports 79 middle leaders in 53 London secondary schools, including ARK's academies.

Just 16 months since launch, 30 per cent of the programme's participants have been promoted and pupils taught by participants are on track to improve their GCSE grades.

The programme has cross-party support and the government will fund up to 100 places this year. Shadow Education Secretary, Michael Gove, also backs rapid national expansion.

NEW DEAL FOR FUTURE LEADERS

"Future Leaders has consolidated its status as a high prestige route into leading challenging urban schools through a three year agreement with the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services", says Future Leaders Chief Executive, **Heath Monk**.

"Future Leaders will now be available for up to 75 participants a year as part of the new Accelerate to Headship programme. We'll also be recruiting up to 125 teachers and non-teachers to Tomorrow's Heads, the alternative route to headship in primary, rural secondary or special schools.

"We're also delighted to launch Future Leaders' expansion to Bristol and the South Coast as well as London, the North West, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber.

"There's just time to apply or nominate participants for 2010 before the 16 February deadline. **Find out more at www.future-leaders.co.uk or call 0800 822 3783."**

Your next career move?

If you're a middle leader looking for your next career move it's time to consider Teaching Leaders. Come to an information session and meet current participants this term or find out more at www.teachingleaders.org.uk. Applications for 2010 places are open from 1 March to 31 May.

For more information go to www.teachingleaders.org.uk or contact Emily Burfoot at emily.burfoot@teachingleaders.org.uk or on 0207 395 1475.

NEWS IN BRIEF

**Globe pupils quiz the PM**

Year 11 Globe Academy pupils, Khalid Elmourei and Lara Fagade (pictured above), were selected from children all over the country to question the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Ed Milliband MP (also pictured) at a climate change event at the Natural History Museum on December 4.

Top neurologist visits BDA

Renowned neurologist and author of *The Oxford Handbook of Neurology*, Dr Hadi Manji, led a careers workshop organised by the sixth form at Burlington Danes Academy on December 14. Director of sixth form, Stephen Adcock, said: "Medicine is the most popular career choice for our students, so we're glad we could offer them a chance to meet an expert in the complex field of neurology."

ARK is moving

ARK Schools is moving to offices up the road in Holborn to provide space for its growing team. ARK will move in early March. The new offices, on the top two floors of 65 Kingsway, London WC2B 6TD, will almost double ARK's space. It will make head office a far better resource with more meeting space, a large open plan office area and more hot desks. We look forward to seeing you there.

New choir for talented pupils

● ARK programme for children with exceptional musical ability

TALENTED PUPILS from ARK's London academies have won places in a new network choir.

The ARK Scholarship Singers choir comprises 40 age 11–14 pupils and is part of a new programme to engage children in inspirational music and develop their singing skills.

The Young Leaders programme will train 14 year 9 and 10 pupils to lead singing and song writing sessions in their schools.

The programmes are designed to encourage and develop the talents of pupils with exceptional musical ability or strong leadership potential. It will be run in partnership with world

class organisations including the Guildhall School of Music, Royal Opera House, Roundhouse, Orchestra Europa, Grand Union Orchestra and Voices Foundation.

The choir will be led by outstanding coaches, including Suzi Digby, director of the Voices Foundation, and a judge on TV's *Last Choir Standing*. Pupils will be given individual voice coaching and the chance to attend a series of master-classes. They will also visit well known venues and take part in professional singing events.

In December, they gave their first public performance at Siobhan Davies Studios, Elephant and Castle. The programme

culminates in a performance at the ARK Schools Music Gala 2010 at the Barbican in the summer.

ARK Schools Music Director, Jane Wheeler, said: "We're very excited about the Scholarship Singers programme. In every academy we're finding pupils of enormous ability and enthusiasm in music or potential as young leaders. This programme is a great route to help them become exceptional singers and musicians."

For more information about the Young Leader and Singing Scholarship programme contact Jane Wheeler on 0207 395 2080. jane.wheeler@arkonline.org

Pupils get tips on Shakespeare's magic

ST ALBAN'S Academy pupils were treated to an audience with actor Lenny Henry after they saw him perform in the title role in *Othello* last term.

The group included cast members of St Alban's own production of the play at the Shakespeare Schools Festival in London in November.

Having seen the professional production, the opportunity to talk to its leading actors Lenny Henry and Conrad Nelson offered pupils a valuable perspective on the play.

"It was a brilliant day and those who had acted in *Othello* were bowled over, not only by how realistic the performances were but also by how close some of the interpretation of the lines and roles was to our own," said Year 9 pupil Victoria Sogbesan.

After meeting the show's stars, Victoria said: "We asked about their acting careers and collected tips on how to stay calm and produce theatre 'magic'. It was a really good discussion."

As well as St Alban's *Othello*, pupils from Burlington Danes, Evelyn Grace and Globe academies gave performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,



St Alban's pupils with Lenny Henry. Below, Globe Academy's *Hamlet*

Romeo and Juliet and *Hamlet* at the Shakespeare Festival. Actor Alan Rickman, a former *Hamlet*, admired their performances.

ARK Schools' UK programmes manager, Sarah Gregory, said: "It was terrific to see all the performances come together. The actors were outstanding, especially as the shows were staged in a busy term and it was a great achievement for everyone."

Watch the highlights at www.arkschools.org/pages/ark-schools/news.php, the academy websites or on YouTube.



“An incredibly impressive school” says Cameron

CONSERVATIVE LEADER, David Cameron MP, has visited three ARK academies in recent weeks. In December, he visited King Solomon Academy. In January, days after its new building opened, Mr Cameron and shadow education secretary, Michael Gove MP, visited Walworth Academy, pursued by journalists and TV crews, to launch a draft education manifesto in Walworth's new top floor library. After meeting pupils and staff and visiting a science class, Mr Cameron described Walworth as “an incredibly impressive school with a record of achievement that shows what can be possible and makes me optimistic.” Finally, he visited Burlington Danes Academy for a “Cameron Direct” public consultation on education, chaired by ARK's own policy guru, Amanda Spielman.

■ Politicians haven't been the only celebrity visitors. Channel 4 newscaster, Krishnan Guru Murthy, visited BDA to help year 10 English students record a special bulletin on the earthquake in Haiti.



Inspecting the menu in the new dining room, meeting principal Devon Hanson and students. Mr Cameron's busy day at Walworth Academy.

BDA launches “sponsor a seat” campaign

BURLINGTON DANES Academy principal Sally Coates has launched a “sponsor a chair” fundraising campaign to kit out the academy's new Dennis Potter Performing Arts Centre named after the playwright and pupil of the original St Clement Danes School.

The campaign aims to raise half of the £50,000 needed for the 280 seat auditorium. The stunning modern centre opens this summer and is at the heart of developing the academy as a specialist performing arts hub.

Within days the appeal won £2,500 in pledges. The funding team is asking for £100 a chair, and has encouraged families and friends to club together to honour a pupil, parent or grandparent with a chair in their name.

“Parents and friends have been very generous and it's a great way to make a lasting commitment to the school,” says Sally Coates. Governor Zillah Bingley added: “It seemed like a really good way to get lots of people involved and to spread the word about the good work going on at BDA.”

Ask the expert: managing your career with ARK Schools



Many of you ask how to go about managing your

career, how to find out what opportunities are available. ARK Schools head of recruitment, **Lexy di Marco**, writes about developing your career with ARK Schools.

AS YOU will know, in September 2009 ARK Schools added Charter and St Alban's to the network and opened King Solomon Academy's secondary school. In September 2010, Ark Academy in Wembley Park opens its secondary school, Evelyn Grace and King Solomon each add another year to their secondary school and Walworth will open its sixth form. In 2011, Globe opens its sixth form and in 2012 we open a ninth academy in Redbridge.

So, there's a lot going on and every opening, growth or transition offers new opportunities. If you're looking

for a new challenge, or to broaden, or change your role, it's worth at least considering these.

You may want to speak with your principal, small school head or line manager in the first instance. They'll often be thinking ahead about who might be interested in the next role they have to fill. But they're juggling lots of options so don't take it for granted that they know you want something new. Sometimes you might miss out on a short term sideways move that could be a good way to acquire new skills or broaden your experience, even if it's not an instant promotion.

We, of course, want to develop

and keep our talent within ARK Schools, so do keep up to date with all the vacancies which are posted at www.arkschools.org. Also, watch the network pages in the Arrow for training opportunities and use the development day to chat to colleagues at other ARK academies, as they'll know what opportunities might be coming up in their own schools. And if you're not sure what your next move might be and want to talk it over, please do call me directly.

Lexy di Marco, 0207 395 2080, alexia.dimarco@arkonline.org



Making teaching effective – what really works?



Schools are assailed with advice on how to make learning more effective. Professor John Hattie's twenty year study of the impact of different educational

approaches on achievement, synthesises more than 50,000 research studies to compare the effectiveness of around 100 separate factors. ARK Schools' research director, **Amanda Spielman** looks at the lessons for ARK academies.

Professor Hattie's research, (*Visible Learning*, Routledge, 2009), used data from more than 800 research studies which, in turn drew on the results of more than 50,000 individual research studies around the world to calculate an average effect size for each approach or intervention studied. (That is, the rate at which student attainment went up or down as a result of the approach or intervention.)

The size and breadth of the study makes the analysis extremely accurate. Almost all the effects apply regardless of country, age or subject, so the research is a good starting point from which to consider interventions that could make an impact in ARK schools.

John Hattie is Professor of Education at Auckland University, New Zealand, and author of Visible Learning (Routledge 2009).

Impact on achievement – the core argument

In general, people tend to respond positively to change, so most educational interventions have some positive effect. The vast majority of the interventions studied had an effect size between 0 and 1, with only a few producing negative effects. But many interventions are alternatives, so we should look for the approaches that have most positive effect that can be managed within school resources.

An effect size above 0.4 represents above average effectiveness; while an approach with an effect size of 0.2 or less is unlikely to be a good use of school resources.

To give some examples:

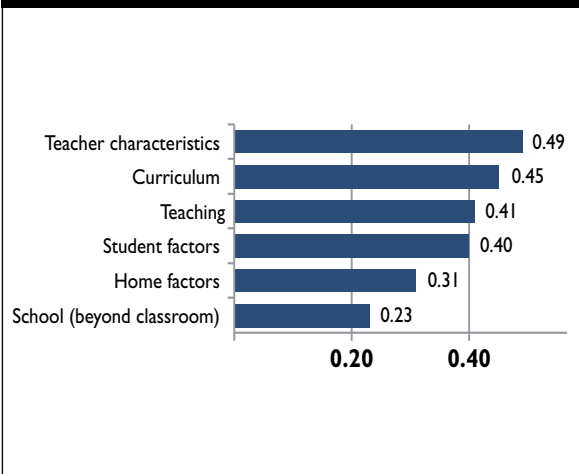
Approach	effect size
Pupil retention (holding back)	-0.18
Class size less than 30	0.21
Effective teacher feedback	0.73

So although holding back underachieving students to repeat a year is common in some countries, it actually reduces achievement. Another surprise is that reducing class sizes has relatively little effect, so although small class sizes do improve results the effect size is only 0.2. By contrast, effective feedback from teachers (at 0.73) is a far more important driver of educational attainment than smaller class sizes or pupil retention

How important are different types of contributor?

Grouping the hundred contributory factors into categories, you get a really clear picture. As you would expect, the top three categories, those relating to teachers, the curriculum and teaching, are what matter most.

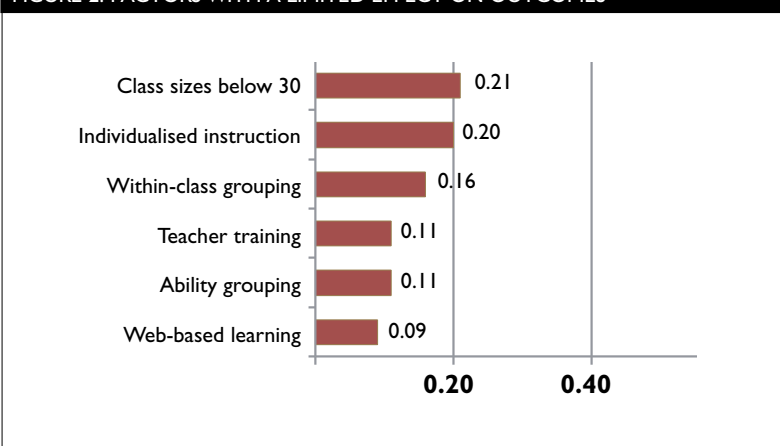
FIGURE 1: EFFECTIVENESS FACTORS GROUPED BY CATEGORY



The three low scoring categories are far less significant but they do include some points worth noting:

- **Students:** after prior attainment the most significant factors are motivation and concentration/persistence/engagement (both 0.48): both strongly prioritised by ARK academies.
- **Home:** by far the most important factor is parental aspiration and expectations for children's educational achievement (0.80), followed by parental communication with the child (interest in progress and talking about and helping with homework and school work) (0.38). Note that it is parent-child rather than parent-school communication that is most important.
- **School:** outside the classroom, one of the more significant factors is school size (0.43). The reported maximum desirable school size, from this study, is 600-900 pupils (i.e. 150-225 pupils per year), with the caveat that the higher the proportion of minority students, the smaller the school should be. Again the research backs up ARK's preference for schools with no more than 180 pupils in a year.

FIGURE 2: FACTORS WITH A LIMITED EFFECT ON OUTCOMES

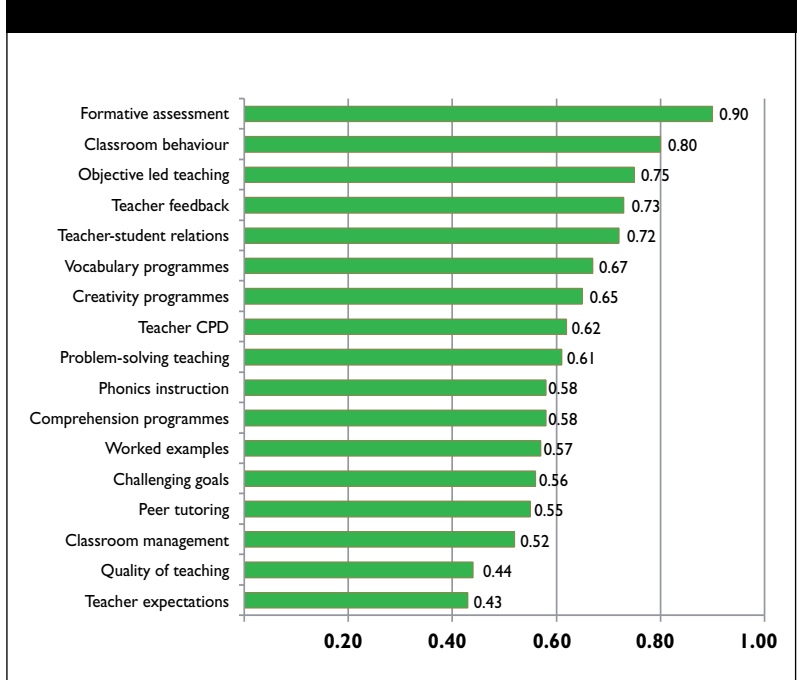


What should not worry us

The study also shows (figure 2) that much public debate focuses on factors that have a fairly limited impact on outcomes.

Where these cost little or nothing to implement, they are good to have; but if they consume significant staff time or money they are probably diverting them from better uses.

FIGURE 3: TEACHING EFFECTS – WHAT WORKS BEST



Teachers, curriculum and teaching: what makes a big difference?

Remember – every one of these are the factors that have a significant impact on pupil progress. So what does the research say makes the difference? **YOU do!** What you teach and how you teach it has by far the biggest impact on what students achieve.

And the factors that make the difference remind us that:

- We all need to believe in what students can achieve and take responsibility for our students' high achievement.
- As teachers, we do tend to underestimate students' ability so it is essential that we have high aspirations for our students if they are going to reach and exceed their potential.
- Formative assessment has far more value than grading and is the single most effective practice identified.
- We must encourage students to support their classmates trying, and sometimes failing, as they learn. They need the confidence to make mistakes they can learn from.
- Teaching is all about knowing what your students think and understand, what they can or cannot do, and helping them to fill in the gaps.
- We need to be active teachers not just "guides on the side".
- Teachers need to make time to think about how they teach; discussing teaching with each other is a particularly effective way of doing this.

Conclusion

All in all, this research is a really useful indicator of what actually works and reinforces much of the approach taken by our academies; this article gives only a taste of the findings. It is very encouraging to see how many of the practices that the study highlights as valuable are already embedded in some or all of our schools.

● *What do you think? Does it ring true based on your experience? I would love to hear your views. Contact me at amanda.spielman@arkonline.org.*