

## Ark Ventures: Interim Chief Operating Officer (COO)

### **Introduction:**

We are looking for Ark Venture's first Chief Operating Officer. This exciting new role will be integral to the growth of the Ark Venture's team and to the successful delivery of strategic and operational support to a range of new and existing ventures.

You will be a proven leader who is ready to wear many hats and help guide an ambitious and mission-driven team through a period of exciting growth while also supporting partner ventures tackling challenges facing children and young people.

As a core member of the team, you will report directly to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Ark and work alongside the Ventures team, leaders of our ventures, the Ark Central Teams and external providers.

As a fast-growing team at an exciting inflection point, there is a lot of scope for you to positively influence our work and the success of our ventures. This role is a fantastic opportunity for someone who is passionate about improving social mobility and tackling educational inequality.

### **About Ark:**

We're an international charity, transforming lives through education. Our network of 39 schools in the UK achieves great results for young people, and some of our schools are among the best in the country. The ventures that we develop and support are tackling some of the most challenging problems facing young people, both in the UK and around the world.

Many of these ideas start in Ark schools. Others come from innovators and partners outside of Ark. But they all share the ambition to address some of the most intractable issues in education and society and they all have the potential to deliver widespread system change.

Ark Ventures works to overcome the some of the barriers which prevent social issues being addressed at real scale. We provide ventures with bespoke support which includes expertise, access to funding, operational support and networks. The ventures we support are not-for-profit, but develop business models which are financially sustainable in the long term.

Our present group of ventures are broad in their ambition. They include Ark Curriculum Plus, which seeks to transform student achievement through unique curriculum and teacher development programmes; EdCity, an innovative education hub where we will bring together mission-aligned organisations in shared office space alongside a school and other child and adult education provision; and Little Village, which aims to provide support to early years children and their families in the form of a Baby Bank.

To find out more about Ark and the work we do, please visit: [www.arkonline.org/ark-ventures](http://www.arkonline.org/ark-ventures)

### **Purpose of the role:**

The role has two important elements:

- To provide a consistently high standard of strategic and operational direction to support the work of the Ark Ventures Team
- To ensure efficient and successful operational support to the ventures that we are developing, supporting and funding (such as the recently launched Martingale Foundation)

## Job Description: Interim Chief Operating Officer

**Reports to:** Deputy Chief Executive Officer

**Location:** West London – currently operating an agile working policy with a minimum of two core days (Mon and Weds) in the office

**Contract:** Fixed term (to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023)

**Pattern:** Full Time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm)

**Salary:** £70,000 to £90,000 (depending on experience)

### About the role:

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for all aspects of business planning, financial management and operations (including co-working office space, IT, HR, quality assurance, governance, and risk management) for Ark Ventures.

The Chief Operating Officer will ensure ventures that we are developing, supporting, and funding benefit from operational leadership and support and appropriate financial and governance oversight.

As well as ensuring that practical operational arrangements are in place, you will create the conditions that help a growing team and an expanding portfolio of ventures to operate effectively and to focus on their mission, vision, and values.

### Key Responsibilities:

#### **Strategy and Business Planning**

- Support the Deputy Chief Executive Officer to identify how the organisation needs to evolve in order to remain distinctive and continue to achieve its mission
- Oversee strategy review processes, developing recommendations on any changes to the team's operating model
- Develop and implement the annual organisational goals and objectives, ensuring these are clearly communicated and understood by the team
- Develop the corresponding infrastructure and people requirements required to enable the team to achieve its growth plans
- Be accountable for setting and co-ordinating the financial and operational aspects of annual business plans

#### **Operations**

- Be accountable for ensuring that all business support operations including HR, IT, data systems, training and administration are performing efficiently and effectively
- Support team planning and project resourcing to maintain momentum and high quality across the team's work
- Lead on the implementation of new information systems, including CRM and time recording, which will support future growth
- Ensure fit for purpose office facilities are available for Ark Ventures and our ventures including planning for the relocation to co-working space in at the Hub in EdCity

#### **Human Resources**

- Oversee a people strategy that drives a high-performance culture and leads to strong recruitment, induction, performance and retention

- Lead on resolving any people risk issues

### **Financial Management and Accounting**

- Have a clear understanding of the team's financial situation and leading on the production of timely management accounts, reporting, and forecasting to support decision-making
- Lead the annual budget-setting process, engaging team and functional areas and ensuring the budget process is efficient and well-managed
- Oversee overall income and cost management within budget and plans
- Following independence, oversee the preparation of the annual financial accounts and liaison with external auditors

### **Governance and Risk Management**

- Provide accurate and timely reporting to the relevant governance groups and boards
- Develop and oversee the risk management and business control framework
- Lead the development of and ensure compliance with organisational policies
- Ensure Ark Ventures meets all statutory requirements, including charity commission, HMRC and ICO

### **Impact and Quality Assurance**

- Oversee the impact strategy to ensure that Ark Ventures can consistently demonstrate its intended impact internally and externally
- Ensure there is robust evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of the work of Ark Ventures and the impact of our work with ventures

### **Relationships**

- Act as the first point of contact for our ventures in respect of operational and financial support
- Liaise with Ark central teams on the delivery of all operational services to Ark Ventures and our ventures
- Lead the sourcing, negotiation, execution and delivery of contracts with third party providers and manage relationships to maximise long-term value

## Personal Specification: Interim Chief Operating Officer

### Knowledge & Skills

- Experience of overseeing the operations of a limited company or charity including finance, technology, human resources and governance
- Experience of developing and interpreting a strategic vision into an operational model
- Experience of leading high-performing cross-functional teams
- Experience of working effectively with internal and external stakeholders to drive change and implement policies
- A proven track record of developing and driving through efficiencies and challenging ways of working
- Strong analytical and financial skills and the ability to quickly assimilate and interpret financial and non-financial data and turn it into strategic advice
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Technologically savvy, with experience of having worked with IT staff to develop and implement effective processes and systems
- Proven influencing and negotiation skills
- An understanding of both the opportunities and challenges of working in the not-for-profit sector

### Personal Qualities

- An experienced and confident senior leader with a proven ability to lead and implement change effectively and sustainably
- Ability to probe, challenge and question appropriately and strive for continual improvement with the confidence and experience to make commercial judgements
- Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills
- Commitment to the social sector with a passion for Ark Venture's mission and values
- Enjoys working in a fast-paced, ambitious organisation that is constantly changing

### Other

- Right to work in the UK
- Commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding and welfare of all students
- Willingness to undertake training
- This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check

*Ark is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its academies. In order to meet this responsibility, its academies follow a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.*

*Ark requires all employees to undertake an enhanced DBS check. You are required, before appointment, to disclose any unspent conviction, cautions, reprimands or warnings under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Non-disclosure may lead to termination of employment. However, disclosure of a criminal background will not necessarily debar you from employment - this will depend upon the nature of the offence(s) and when they occurred. To read more about Ark's safer recruitment process, please click [this link](#).*