

Job Description: Strategy Lead

Reports to: Director of Strategy

Location: Currently operating hybrid working in our West London Office

Contract: Permanent (would consider a fixed term contract/secondment for 6-12 months)

Pattern: Full time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm), 0.8 FTE considered

Full Time Salary: £70,000 to £80,000 (depending on experience)

Ark is an education charity that exists to make sure that all children, regardless of their background, have access to a great education and real choices in life. Starting with just one school in 2006, Ark has grown into a network of 39 schools that serves over 30,000 children. Through our ventures we work to reach even more. We are currently opening nurseries through Ark Start and over 300,000 children learn using an Ark curriculum. Last year, despite having more than double the national average of children in receipt of free school meals, our students outperformed the national average at every age and stage. We want to do even more.

About the role:

We are looking for a Strategy Lead to join Ark's newly-formed Strategy team. This is a brilliant opportunity for someone with experience of strategy development and strategic planning who wants to work in an innovative and fast-paced organisation tackling educational inequality. Over the coming year the team will be working on a new long-term vision and strategy, and the Strategy Lead will play a critical role in this exciting and impactful work.

We are looking to make a permanent appointment, but would also consider a 6 to 12 month secondment, e.g. for someone working in strategy consulting or an equivalent role.

The purpose of the role will be to lead high-profile strategic projects that support the development and implementation of Ark's strategy and plans, with a focus on education. Potential areas of work include school and network strategy, financial sustainability, and digital and data, as well as the design and implementation of operational planning and reporting.

About the team:

It's an exciting time to be joining Ark as we look ahead to the next decade. The Strategy team is a newly established team, responsible for leading the development of the trust's new long-term strategy and mid-term strategic plan. This includes developing our underpinning operating plan and the design and implementation of trust-wide planning processes. The team also leads strategic projects to drive improvements in our schools, network, and ventures and develops emerging areas of work (e.g. AI).

Key Responsibilities

- Lead strategic projects from initial scoping through to making recommendations and handover to delivery teams – identifying questions, driving clarity on scope, undertaking research and analysis, commissioning insight where needed, synthesising insights into actionable plans and communicating them
- Design and run operational planning and change management processes to translate strategy into action and to establish appropriate goals and measures
- Make effective use of internal and external data sources to generate new insight – both to support strategic projects and to open up new areas for exploration
- Facilitate meetings and workshops
- Prepare impactful papers and presentations for a variety of stakeholder groups
- Work collaboratively and flexibly with teams across the trust, building relationships and influencing others, including directing the work of other team members and external consultants
- Contribute to a collaborative and inclusive working culture that values transparency and data-informed decisions
- Deliver ad hoc strategic projects as directed by the Director of Strategy
- Contribute to building capability and effectiveness within and beyond the Strategy team

Person Specification: Strategy Lead

Qualifications

- Qualified to degree level or equivalent (essential)

Knowledge & Skills

- Strong track record of leading strategy development at pace in a range of organisations – gained e.g. through consulting experience – with the ability to understand the “big picture”, interpret complex information, and translate insight into action
- Experience of and interest in the education sector, with a strong understanding of sector trends, opportunities and challenges
- Experience of designing and running operational planning processes, and designing appropriate measures and KPIs to track progress
- Numerate, financially literate, and comfortable with modelling and data analysis
- Experience working with and influencing stakeholders and colleagues at a range of levels of seniority, including at Board level
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Strong project management

Personal Qualities

- Structured problem solver and strategic thinker able to frame complex problems
- Confident and credible with senior stakeholders
- Happy working with a degree of ambiguity and driving towards clarity
- Willing and able to challenge the status quo
- Creative and lateral thinker
- Team player, able to work independently, lead, support, listen and collaborate

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](#).

We aim to build a diverse and inclusive organisation where everyone – staff and students – can do their best work and achieve their full potential. We want to reflect and represent diverse perspectives across our organisation because we know that doing so will make us stronger and more effective. To know more about Ark's diversity and inclusion commitments, please click on this [link](#).