

Job Description: Head of Destinations

Reports to:	Director of Sixth Form
Start date:	August or September 2026
Location:	Currently operating hybrid working in our West London office
Salary:	£60,000 to £65,000 depending on experience
Contract:	Permanent, full-time
Closing date:	Tuesday 19 th May 2026
Interviews:	Thursday 21 st and Friday 22 nd May 2026

The role

Ark exists to make sure that all children, regardless of their background, have access to a great education and real choices in life. Academic outcomes are the undisputable foundation for these choices. We are equally committed to ensuring every Ark student is provided with the advice, guidance and opportunities to develop skills and attributes that will enable them to thrive, both educationally and professionally.

Our post-18 destinations data show that we outperform many providers across all sectors on progression to 'top third' universities (around double the national average in 2025 and six times the national average for disadvantaged students). We continue to focus on improving our leavers' persistence rates beyond national benchmarks, and we want to do more as a network to support our students' progression to the most competitive post-18 pathways – whether at university or directly to employment through high-quality apprenticeships. We know that destinations work needs to start as early as possible. To that end, we will continue to develop a rich and coherently planned all-through CEIAG programme starting in EYFS, building on the strongest practice in our network.

The purpose of this role is to lead our network team and our schools in the next phase of our work on careers and destinations. Our Head of Destinations will build on our network strategy, oversee further codification and implementation of principles and approaches that ensure all Ark leavers, whether post-16 or post-18, are ready to progress to high-quality destinations that facilitate their career of choice.

Reporting to the Director of Sixth Form and with direct access to Regional Directors and school Principals, the Head of Destinations will work with schools, the central team and external partners to develop a programme of support that ensures continued progress towards the achievement of ambitious network destinations goals attached to:

- Increasing achievement against the Gatsby Benchmarks and Ark's excellence framework for careers education.
- Challenging network goals for progress in Unifrog.
- Increased achievement against the Ark Primary Careers Framework.
- Further increasing the number of sixth-form students progressing to top third universities, apprenticeships and super-selective HE pathways.
- Long-term improvement in sustained post-16 and post-18 destinations.

Key responsibilities

Leadership

- Curate and develop the messaging, goals and objectives for all destinations work within the Sixth Form and Destinations Team.
- Develop strong working relationships at senior level across Ark, seeking out opportunities for collaboration and solving areas of tension or challenge.
- Cascade key messages to the destinations sub-team and support strategic alignment within the Sixth Form and Destinations team.
- Ensure individual and shared accountability for achieving destinations goals and KPIs, founded on a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Strategy & planning

- Create, hold and communicate a compelling and aspirational vision for destinations strategy and the rationale for how we approach this work.
- Further develop our destinations strategy across all phases in primary and secondary, within our Sixth Form and Destinations Strategy, with particular focus on work in KS3 to KS5:
 - Achievement against the Gatsby Benchmarks and the aligned Ark excellence criteria for CEIAG
 - KS5 Destinations Support (including employability and work readiness)
 - Highly competitive post-18 pathways (including universities and apprenticeships)
 - Ark University Bursary students – support through university to early career
- Create a compelling narrative for all our destinations work for internal and external stakeholders.
- Continue to develop the key performance indicators to measure impact of network destinations support.
- Maintain project plans for new initiatives: managing the research, pilot, launch and implementation phases of each.
- Maintain ongoing research into external organisations for opportunities to improve the cost and/or quality of our CEIAG offer.
- Oversee the selection, sign off and implementation of all support received from external organisations.
- Contribute proactively to the wider development of network strategy for destinations and sixth form.

Programme Design and Project Management

- Work with colleagues across schools and the central team to articulate plans for developing destinations support and CEIAG and to coordinate the delivery of work under the SFD strategic objectives.
- Work with existing external partners to support and continuously improve the delivery of network destinations support.
- Continue to codify all aspects of network approaches to destinations support and all-phase CEIAG to ensure consistency and support continuous improvement.
- Liaise with the Development Team to maintain and grow a comprehensive database of potential partners to support destinations work.

Programme Delivery & Reporting

- Directly manage roles relating to:
 - HE access
 - Secondary CEIAG

- Primary careers and PD
- Provide information for and work with RDs to ensure the delivery of the destinations elements of SFD strategy.
- Participate in network monitoring and review activity when required (alongside the Director of Sixth Form) to support quality improvement and gather feedback on the impact of network support in schools.
- Ensure there is a robust and efficient reporting structure for all strands of destinations work to support strong implementation and high levels of impact.
- Reporting structures to include a mixture of:
 - System-generated and manually completed KPIs
 - Written reports
 - School surveys of staff, pupils and parents
 - Observations and evidence gathered from review and monitoring

Ark Central and School Relationships

- Build and maintain strong relationships with RDs, Principals and SLT responsible for destinations and CEIAG.
- Develop strong working relationships with relevant members of the Ark central team, including the rest of the SFD Team, the Data and Insights Team, education teams (especially extended curriculum/enrichment) and all relevant operational teams.
- Work closely with the Development Team to build and manage external fundraising as required (see below).

Communications

- Regularly communicate the nature, purpose and strategy of our destinations work through multiple channels and to multiple audiences including:
 - The Principals' Bulletin
 - Network Groups: Sixth Form Principals (termly); Sixth Form SLT (half termly); Destinations SLT/Middle Leaders (termly)
 - 1-1 with SLT and Principals
 - RD meetings (as required)
 - Management Team and the Board (as required)
 - External stakeholders including funders

Fundraising

- Work with the central Development Team and Director of Sixth Form to develop a narrative for our destinations work which appeals to external funders.
- Provide support for individual pitches as and when necessary.
- Report to donors in accordance with funding agreements.

People Management and General Management

- Undertake the line management of any direct reports in accordance with the Ark People policies.
- Provide a robust reporting structure for destinations and all those who contribute to or support the work across the organization.
- Undertake all reasonable responsibilities and actions as requested by Ark in line with the JD.

Person Specification

Education & Qualifications

- Educated to degree level
- QTS (Desirable)
- Right to work in the UK

Knowledge and Experience

- Knowledge of Gatsby Benchmarks and DfE expectations around careers advice and guidance for young people.
- Knowledge and experience of post-18 destinations advice and guidance, gained from leadership of staff in a school or college context (or equivalent experience in the education sector):
- UCAS, including Oxbridge, Medicine and other highly competitive HE pathways
- Degree and higher apprenticeships
- Experience of successfully developing strategy and vision.
- Line management and/or coaching experience, and experience of developing staff.
- Delivery against ambitious and stretching goals.
- Experience of working with and influencing a range of senior stakeholders (e.g. Principals, Regional Directors or equivalent) with conflicting priorities and viewpoints.
- Experience of working productively with a range of external stakeholders (essential) including direct experience of fundraising (desirable).
- Ability to synthesise complex and detailed projects into both written and oral presentations for senior stakeholders.
- Experience of basic finance processes including budgeting and financial planning.
- Knowledge and experience of Unifrog to support destinations work (desirable).
- Strong track record of being a self-starter.

Personal Characteristics

- Able to demonstrate a commitment to the mission of improving educational opportunities for underprivileged children.
- Highly-organised, detail-oriented and systematic in delivering against ambitious objectives.
- Able to respond positively to setbacks.
- Flexible in approach and able to adapt to changing circumstances and priorities.
- Confident, proactive and hard-working team player - happy to lead by example and to go above and beyond for their colleagues.

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](#).