

Job Description: Deputy Director, Early Years – Ark Start

Reporting to: Director of Early Years

Location: Pontefract with travel to various locations

Contract: Permanent

Working Pattern: Full-time, all year round

Interviews: Interviews will be arranged as suitable candidates are identified

Salary: c. £60k

About the role:

The deputy director role at Ark Start is a senior leadership position focused setting up and growing a cluster of not-for-profit nurseries, initially focused on Pontefract and Bradford. This individual will play a crucial role in ensuring every nursery is delivering the highest quality early education as well as shaping a positive culture that embodies Ark Start's values. As well as responsible for line managing the nursery managers, this individual will be responsible for developing partnerships with schools, local authorities and other external partners to support the expansion and profile of Ark Start.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership of the region

- Lead the establishment and expansion of Ark Start nurseries in West Yorkshire
- Ensure strong relationships with partners across the region
- Establish a strong and positive culture, setting consistent expectations and embodying Ark Start's values across the region
- Participate fully in the leadership of Ark Start nationally

Operational Excellence

- Line manage the nursery managers, supporting their development and ensuring continuous improvement
- Tailor the Ark Start approach to suit the unique context and developmental needs of each nursery, ensuring flexibility and adaptability
- Oversee the implementation of Ark Start and statutory policies, including safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, and risk assessments
- Identify and address strengths and weaknesses within the nurseries, supporting the managers to implement plans for improvement where necessary

Quality Assurance

- Ensure nurseries are Ofsted-ready, leading inspections and ensuring compliance with regulatory standards
- Serve as the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the region, overseeing the management of safeguarding cases and ensuring adherence to Ark Start's safeguarding policy
- Ensure the highest quality provision for children with additional needs, ensuring all necessary paperwork and provision are in place for children with additional needs
- Monitor curriculum implementation, supporting managers to deliver consistently excellent educational provision

Talent, Development & Training

- Ensure the recruitment, retention and development of the staff team across the region
- Ensure compliance with HR policies and procedures, including recruitment, performance management and employee relations

- Coach and mentor nursery managers and staff, fostering a culture of professional growth and continuous learning
- Support managers in identifying training needs and facilitating ongoing professional development for all staff members
- Ensure effective deployment of staff, meeting the needs of each nursery while considering staff skills and strengths
- Ensure apprentices are suitably supported to achieve their qualifications and provide support throughout their development
- Identify staffing needs and gaps, working with the Headteacher of Ark Start, and wider team, to ensure effective workforce planning

Financial Management

- Meet financial targets for the nurseries in the region, monitoring budgets
- Ensure appropriate resource allocation across the nurseries and regions

Partnership & Community Engagement

- Build strong relationships with partner schools, local authorities, and external agencies to support the development and success of Ark Start nurseries
- Lead the implementation and continuous development of the family programme, enhancing parent engagement and support

External Relations

- Represent Ark Start with external partners including funders and media
- Participate in building Ark Start's profile, regionally and nationally, in line with Ark Start's priorities

Person Specification: Deputy Director, Early Years – Ark Start

Qualifications

- Level 6; QTS desirable

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- Proven experience in leadership within an early year setting
- Experience and knowledge of early child development
- Sound knowledge of the legislation and guidelines of the EYFS and an excellent understanding of pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment
- Effective and systematic behaviour management

Behaviours

- Genuine passion for and a belief in the potential of every child
- Commitment to the vision and ambition of Ark Start
- A robust awareness of keeping children safe, noticing safeguarding and welfare concerns, and you understand how and when to take appropriate action
- Excellent interpersonal, planning, and organisational skills
- Resilient, motivated, and committed to achieving excellence
- Reflective and proactive in seeking feedback to constantly improve practice
- Skilled communicator who enjoys working with families
- Generous manager who can bring out the best in colleagues through coaching and support
- Commitment to regular and on-going professional development and training to establish outstanding classroom practice.

Other

- Right to work in the UK
- Commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding and welfare of all students
- Able to travel within and outside London regularly
- 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](#).