

Job Description: Strategy Manager fixed term / secondment)

Reports to: Director of Strategy

Location: West London (with flexible working available)

Contract: FTC for 6 months, extendable to 12. Would suit a secondment or externship.

Pattern: Full time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm with flexitime options; part 0.8 FTE will be considered)

Full Time Salary: dependent on experience

Application instructions:

To apply for this role, submit a CV and covering statement [here](#). Please note carefully the following points about the application process:

- Your covering statement should be no more than 500 words (ignore the system instructions which specify 750 words)
- It should be split into 3 clear sections outlining:
 1. Your motivation for applying for this role
 2. Your experience of developing strategy/strategic projects at pace, including brief examples of projects you have delivered; bullet points are encouraged
 3. The other skills and experiences you would bring to this role
- You are welcome to use AI to help you draft your application but make sure that you review and edit yourself so that it gives an authentic account of your interests and profile

About Ark:

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.

An opportunity has arisen to join Ark's strategy team for the coming 6 months (extendable to 12). The team works across both Ark Schools – our growing national multi academy trust – and the wider education charity – including our curriculum/subject excellence programmes, nurseries, teacher training, and emerging new ventures). We are a collaborative and forward-looking team with wide-ranging experience of working in schools, third sector organisations, and top management consultancies. We are always open to hearing from people who could bring new skills and experiences to the team. If you can demonstrate tangible experience of delivering strategic projects, enjoy structured problem solving, and you want to contribute to our mission we would love to hear from you – even if this role doesn't feel like the right fit in terms of seniority/experience. We would be particularly interested to hear from people with experience of driving AI and digital innovation though this is not essential.

About the role:

We are looking for a Strategy Manager to join Ark's Strategy team for the next 6 to 12 months, potentially as a secondment or externship. This is a brilliant opportunity for someone with experience of strategy development and strategic projects who wants to work in an innovative and fast-paced organisation tackling educational inequality. It's an exciting time as we transition CEOs and the Strategy team is working at the heart of Ark to deliver an exciting range of forward-looking projects.

The Strategy Manager will play a critical role in driving forward high-profile strategic projects. The focus will be on Artificial Intelligence, and you will take end to end responsibility for delivering a selection of AI projects and pilots. Other potential areas of work include operating model design and effectiveness, and our future strategy for post-16. The post-holder will also have an important role in engaging colleagues internally and external partners (e.g. through meetings and focus groups).

Key Responsibilities:

- Manage and deliver strategic projects – identifying questions, driving clarity on scope, undertaking research and analysis, commissioning insight where needed, synthesising insights into actionable plans and communicating them
- Monitor ongoing developments in the wider sector, particularly in AI and associated technologies, and bring new insight into Ark
- Support internal teams and work with external partners to deliver projects and pilots – ensuring these are well managed and delivered to plan
- Facilitate meetings and workshops
- Prepare impactful papers and presentations for a variety of stakeholder groups
- Work collaboratively and flexibly with teams across Ark, building relationships and influencing others
- 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
- Support other strategy team members in their work
- Contribute to building capability and effectiveness within and beyond the Strategy team

Person Specification: Strategy Manager

Qualifications

- Qualified to degree level or equivalent

Knowledge & Skills

- Previous experience of delivering strategy projects – gained e.g. through consulting experience – with the ability to understand the big picture, analyse and interpret complex information, and translate insight into action
- Experience working with and influencing stakeholders and colleagues at a range of levels of seniority
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Strong project management skills
- Financially literate, and comfortable with modelling and data analysis (desirable)
- Experience of and interest in the education sector and/or related sectors (desirable)
- Experience of deploying tech innovation and AI (desirable)

Personal Qualities

- Structured problem solver and strategic thinker able to frame complex problems
- 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
- Flexible approach and desire to work directly with schools

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](#).