

Job Description: Head of School Governance

Reports to: Director of Governance and Risk

Location: West London – currently operating an agile working policy with two core days (Weds and Thurs) in the office (*Occasional travel to Ark schools, including attending LGBs, in London, Birmingham, Portsmouth and Hastings will be required*)

Contract: Permanent, 37.5 hours per week

Pattern: 0.75-1 FTE (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm)

Salary: £65,000 to £70,000 FTE (depending on experience) + 11% non-contributory pension

Working pattern: Please note that due to the varying requirements of our schools and governing bodies, this role cannot be offered on a term-time only basis. However, Ark is committed to supporting flexible working arrangements. We welcome applications from candidates seeking a year-round working pattern of **0.75 FTE or above**, with working time distributed between term-time and out-of-term periods by mutual agreement.

About the role:

Ark is seeking a highly motivated and experienced governance professional to join our central team as Head of Schools Governance. This is an important and interesting role responsible for running, shaping and strengthening governance across the trust, with a particular focus on innovation, development, and specialist governance. Working closely with the Director of Governance and Risk, this role ensures the operational rigour of governance and compliance models across the trust. The role holds oversight of key governance processes—including admissions, complaints handling, and permanent exclusions—ensuring alignment with trust-wide policies and standards.

The role also includes leading the trust's local governance structures, including LGB governor recruitment and development strategy, helping to build a diverse, skilled, and engaged governance community. The successful candidate will support the implementation of new governance models, looking at how we can make the best use of this expert and dedicated group of volunteers, and play a central role in evaluating the impact of local governance. This includes shared responsibility for governance pilots and innovation, including looking at ways we can develop stronger links between our schools and the communities they serve.

In addition, we are looking for the Head of School Governance to look at ways we can innovate, including looking at new technologies to seek ways we can increase impact and reduce the administration burden on our schools and governors, be that through virtual clerking, streamlining complaint management, AI recording of meetings focusing on actions and better time management of meetings.

Above all, the successful candidate will be motivated by providing an outstanding quality of governance support and service to schools across Ark—bringing a practical, hands-on approach and a genuine commitment to helping school leaders navigate challenges and deliver the best outcomes for their communities.

The successful candidate, while based in our central head office, will be expected to travel throughout our network, on scheduled visits and attend a number of local governing bodies throughout the year.

Key Responsibilities:

Day to day core responsibilities

- Provide line management to members of the governance team, as required by the structure and operational needs of school governance.
- Provide expert advice and support to local governing bodies, enabling them to fulfil their roles effectively.
- Act as the lead for specialist governance areas, including permanent exclusions, admissions, and complaints handling, ensuring consistency and compliance across all academies.

Strategic Projects & Delivery

- Provide oversight of school governance and related compliance structures within Ark, ensuring alignment with trust values, statutory requirements, and best practice.
- Drive innovation in governance, identifying and adopting emerging technologies and practices that enhance effectiveness and transparency, increasing impact and reducing bureaucracy.

Development & Support of Governors

- Undertake the recruitment and development of voluntary LGB members
- Design and deliver a comprehensive programme of governor development, with a focus on coaching, capacity-building, and succession planning.
- Share best practice across the trust and contribute to sector-wide learning through external networks and forums.

Compliance & Risk

- Ensure governance practices meet all legal and regulatory requirements, including those set by the Department for Education (DfE), Ofsted and compliance regimes including data protection.
- Work closely with the Director of Risk and Corporate Governance to identify, assess, and manage governance-related risks.
- Monitor and report on governance and compliance performance, contributing to trust-wide assurance and improvement processes.

Collaboration & Communication

- Act as a key point of contact between the central governance team and local governance bodies.
- Manage the annual rhythm of communication, including all governor newsletters, chairs communication, annual chairs forum and all governor meetings.

Person Specification: Head of School Governance

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level or equivalent professional experience .
- Strong working knowledge of governance frameworks in education, including statutory and regulatory requirements for academy trusts.
- Demonstrable understanding of school governance structures, including schemes of delegation, Articles of Association, and compliance obligations.
- Proven ability to interpret and apply relevant legislation, including the Companies Act 2006, Academy Trust Handbook, and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) .

Knowledge & Skills

- Proven experience in a senior governance role within education, public sector, or a similarly complex organisation.
- Strong understanding of statutory governance requirements, including DfE and Ofsted expectations.
- Experience leading governance innovation, including the adoption of new technologies or models.
- Demonstrable experience in managing specialist governance areas such as exclusions, admissions, and complaints.
- Track record of designing and delivering governance development programmes, including coaching and capacity-building.
- Experience working with or supporting governing bodies, trustees, or similar boards.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to translate complex governance challenges into practical, scalable solutions.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trust and credibility across diverse stakeholder groups.
- Strong analytical skills, with the ability to evaluate impact and use data to inform decision-making.
- Confident in using governance platforms and digital tools to improve efficiency and transparency.
- Able to manage competing priorities and deliver high-quality work under pressure.
- Skilled in facilitation, training, and stakeholder engagement.

Personal Qualities

- Enthusiasm for Ark's mission and values .
- Highly motivated and proactive, with a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation.
- Detail-oriented, with the ability to grasp and bring order to complex information .
- Collaborative and adaptable, with a strong team ethic and a willingness to support colleagues across regions.
- Professional integrity and discretion, particularly when handling sensitive governance matters.

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.
- Willingness to travel regularly to schools across Birmingham and the Midlands, and occasionally to Ark's London offices and other regions.
- Flexibility to attend evening meetings and events as required.

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](#).