

Job Description: Head of Subject – English (Secondary)

Reports to: Programmes Director

Location: West London (with flexible working available)

Contract: Permanent

Pattern: Full Time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm)

Salary: Competitive

About the role:

The Head of Subject English (Secondary) provides authoritative educational leadership for their programme, under the pan-programme leadership of the AC+ Education Director. The Head of Subject for English Secondary is responsible for the programme's educational quality and impact across Ark schools and the wider partnership and shares responsibility with Ark Schools colleagues for improving subject outcomes across the network. They will work as an integrated part of an Ark subject leadership team to establish a shared vision for subject excellence that underpins how their programme is understood, implemented and developed, and will work across AC+ to ensure that this vision informs implementation support and the programme's ongoing evolution.

They will contribute directly to Ark Schools' work to improve subject outcomes across the network, including providing school support and undertaking an agreed allocation of work directed by the Ark Schools' Director of Curriculum and Assessment. They will ensure that insights from this work inform the programme's ongoing development, supporting a live and responsive partnership between Ark Schools and AC+. The Head of Subject (English Secondary) will lead their subject within the Programmes team, keeping the team up to date with educational thinking and coordinating all ongoing programme maintenance, including high-quality assessment writing.

They are also hands-on, working alongside the design team on curriculum writing, pedagogical quality assurance and coaching of design team members. They will also build the programme's external profile by sharing its curriculum and pedagogical thinking, contributing to national subject conversations and developing strong advocates for AC+ approaches.

Key Responsibilities:

Leadership

- Contribute to and implement the organisation's strategy and mission, working closely with the Product Strategy Director, Education Director and Heads of Product to develop and implement a programme strategy that supports the organisation's mission, strategic priorities and long-term sustainability
- Lead identified cross-functional projects and activities as appropriate, presenting regularly as required to the AC+ Leadership team and Ark Schools' Steering Committee

Educational Leadership

- Keep abreast of sector and subject developments, legislative changes, research findings and innovative practice relevant to their subject on a national and international level, working with the Expert Advisory Council to stay connected to the wider subject community

- Work with the Education Director and wider Ark subject team to establish a shared understanding of how educational principles translate into secondary English, and establish and uphold a vision for subject excellence that underpins how the programme is understood, implemented and developed over time
- Contribute to consistent pan-programme educational approaches, ensuring that they are appropriate to the subject and phase and informed by the needs of schools across the AC+ partnership
- Establish and maintain a strong programme of subject-specific professional learning for AC+ colleagues, building subject expertise and knowledge of the pedagogical approaches used across Ark Schools and AC+ programmes
- Lead the strategic design and ongoing development of the English Mastery Secondary curriculum, ensuring that it is ambitious, coherent, carefully sequenced, inclusive and responsive to developments in curriculum, assessment and the wider education landscape
- Ensure that inclusion-first principles are embedded across curriculum, assessment, professional development and implementation support, enabling all pupils, including those with SEND, lower prior attainment or English as an additional language, to access an ambitious English curriculum
- Work closely with the Head of Subject for English Mastery Primary to strengthen coherence, progression and shared educational approaches across the primary and secondary English programmes

Prioritisation of Programme Developments

- Establish and facilitate regular Subject Panels, recording and sharing outcomes in line with agreed structures, and maintain a rigorous understanding of the implementation, impact and perceptions of their programme through subject panels, assessment outcomes, school visits, feedback, metrics, data points and other user feedback mechanisms
- Review and quality assure existing programme resources to identify strengths and priorities for improvement, building alignment with the Education Director and Ark subject leadership team around developments that will improve teaching, learning and pupil outcomes
- Work closely with Heads of Product to ensure that evidence from schools informs the prioritisation of programme developments and that all developments remain faithful to the programme's educational vision

Impact within Ark Schools

- Provide school support across the Ark network, using AC+'s codified school-support model and adapting support in collaboration with Ark stakeholders to strengthen implementation and subject outcomes
- Undertake work directed by the Ark Director of Curriculum and Assessment as part of the integrated Ark Subject Team, which may include school visits, subject guidance, training development, implementation support, assessment quality assurance and analysis of outcomes
- Build and maintain positive relationships with key Ark Schools stakeholders to drive high levels of school engagement, ensuring proactive, effective and timely communication

Programme Quality and Continuous Improvement

- Work alongside and coordinate subject team members from across the Programmes team to manage routine year-on-year programme maintenance, including overseeing high-quality

assessment writing, ongoing CPD creation and refinements, and management of new and existing community-based programme components

- Lead the subject assessment strategy, including diagnostic, formative and summative assessment, and oversee the development and quality assurance of assessments, mark schemes, exemplification, standardisation and re-teach materials, ensuring that assessment evidence informs programme improvement
- Ensure that evidence from Ark improvement work and wider school engagement informs every component of the programme, maintaining a live and responsive partnership grounded in current classroom practice
- Approve the content and sequencing of subject induction, CPD, school support and conference provision, signing off content at agreed milestones and before publication
- Work with and through Senior Delivery Managers and Principal Development Leads where relevant to author, review and pedagogically quality assure induction, CPD and school support content as required, ensuring content meets a high education standard faithful to the educational vision and approaches underpinning their programme

Curriculum and Programme Development

- Develop clear curriculum and pedagogical rationales and briefs, and train and support colleagues across the Programmes and Design teams, alongside external curriculum designers and authors, to produce consistently high-quality educational content
- Lead pedagogical quality assurance reviews, following guidance as appropriate created by the Product Strategy team
- Conduct design and research visits to schools outside the Ark network to inform programme development and support the Product Strategy team to create mock-ups and prototypes of new programme resources for user testing and agile development

External Profile

- Develop constructive relationships with education policymakers, researchers, professional bodies and funders where appropriate, contributing to national conversations about English curriculum, pedagogy and assessment through publications, events, partnerships and professional networks
- Build the programme's external profile by sharing its curriculum and pedagogical thinking, developing advocates for AC+ approaches and contributing expert subject content to marketing and communications campaigns as appropriate
- Work with the Heads of Product and the Partnerships team as needed, ensuring that the benefits of the programme are well understood and communicated to enable Ark Curriculum Plus to achieve its growth plans
- Attend and present at relevant events and conferences, representing Ark, AC+ and the English Mastery Secondary programme, including leading the subject pedagogical sessions at Ark Network Days and AC+ Conference

Person Specification: Head of Subject – English (Secondary)

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level, with a relevant degree or equivalent subject expertise in English or a closely related discipline
- Qualified Teacher Status or an equivalent teaching qualification
- Strong commitment to ongoing professional development and specialist qualifications, with a strong understanding of progression in English across the primary-secondary transition

Knowledge & Skills

- A minimum of three years' successful teaching experience in secondary English, including Key Stages 3 and 4
- Deep knowledge of secondary English curriculum design, sequencing, subject pedagogy, curriculum and assessment requirements
- Experience of leading curriculum development or improvement beyond an individual classroom, including designing or quality assuring English assessments, mark schemes and standardisation materials
- Track record of providing professional development to teachers, including coaching, mentoring and training
- Knowledge of inclusive curriculum design and approaches supporting pupils with SEND, EAL and lower prior attainment
- Experience of using qualitative and quantitative evidence to identify priorities and evaluate impact, with strong editorial judgement and attention to accuracy
- Experience of leading complex, cross-functional projects, with the ability to manage competing priorities and reprioritise effectively
- Strong stakeholder management, negotiation and external partnership skills, with excellent written and verbal communication skills and the ability to communicate complex educational ideas clearly to different audiences

Personal Qualities

- An experienced and confident leader with a proven ability to lead and implement sustainable change
- Ability to probe, challenge and question appropriately and strive for continual improvement
- Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills
- Commitment to AC+'s high aspirations and expectations for pupils, schools and colleagues
- Strong professional judgement and the confidence to make and communicate difficult curriculum decisions
- A collaborative approach and the ability to build alignment across teams with different priorities

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](#).