

Job Description: Head of School Governance

Reports to: Director of Governance and Risk

Location: Birmingham region, with an expectation that at least two-days per week will be spent in schools

Contract: Permanent, 37.5 hours per week

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

Salary: £55,000 to £60,000 (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 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. It leads the design and delivery of frameworks that are both innovative and effective, embedding consistency and transparency in practice. The role holds oversight of key governance processes—including admissions, complaints handling, and permanent exclusions—ensuring alignment with trust-wide policies and standards.

In addition, the Head of Governance brings strategic insight to the development of governance solutions, evaluating emerging technologies and translating improvements into practical actions across the network, and enhancing governance effectiveness at a time of rapid change in governance practices and technologies.

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 role also includes leading the trust's 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 and play a central role in evaluating their impact. This includes shared responsibility for governance pilots and innovation, such as the introduction of community councils in selected schools during 2025/26.

In addition to national responsibilities including occasional travel to Ark's London Headquarters, the appointed candidate will serve as the key governance point of contact for Birmingham and the Midlands. They will support colleagues in neighbouring regions and occasionally travel to Ark's London offices. They will also fulfil all aspects of a governance officer role for Midlands schools, including preparing for and servicing local governing body meetings and panel governance including permanent exclusion, supporting governor recruitment and training, ensuring statutory compliance, and acting as a trusted advisor to school leaders and governors.

The successful candidate must be located within easy reach of Birmingham and will be expected to work from schools for at least two days per week in term-time to support regular school visits and regional engagement.

Key Responsibilities:

Day to day

Provide expert advice and support to local governing bodies and Community Councils, enabling them to fulfil their roles effectively.

Provide expert advice to all schools regarding admissions, exclusions etc etc

Support colleagues in neighbouring regions.

Fulfil all aspects of a governance officer role for Midlands schools, including servicing meetings, supporting recruitment and training, and advising school leaders and governors.

Strategic Projects & Delivery

Provide oversight of school governance and related compliance structures within Ark, ensuring alignment with trust values, statutory requirements, and best practice.

Act as the lead for specialist governance areas, including permanent exclusions, admissions, and complaints handling, ensuring consistency and compliance across all academies.

Drive innovation in governance, identifying and adopting emerging technologies and practices that enhance effectiveness and transparency.

Team Development & Support

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.

Provide line management to members of the governance team, as required by the structure and operational needs of school governance.

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

Build and maintain strong relationships with Chairs of Governors and governance professionals across the trust, fostering collaboration and shared learning.

Act as a key point of contact between the central governance team and local governance bodies, with additional responsibilities for Birmingham schools.

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](#).