

**Free Schools - Proposal Form**

The Proposal Form asks you for details on the educational aims and objectives, parental demand and premises of the proposed Free School. It also asks questions about the suitability of the provider(s) involved. All new Free Schools will be opened with the same legal status as Academies, in a binding agreement with the Secretary of State.

Please note, all information provided in this form will be published on the Department for Education website.

**INITIAL DETAILS**

**Name** (Please specify if you are the nominated representative of an organisation that wishes to set up a Free School)

██████████, ██████████, ARK Academies

**Name of your organisation**

ARK Academies, working with North Hammersmith Parent Group

**Address** (of organisation or individual)

ARK Academies

██████████

London

██████████

**Email Contact**

██████████

Telephone

**Number**

██████████

**Are you an existing independent school wanting to convert to a Free School?**

**No**

**If yes, please provide your 6-digit school unique reference number (URN)**

**If no, please confirm the nature of your organisation** (educational group / charity / business / parent group etc)

ARK Academies, a DfE Accredited Schools Group (form attached - appendix A) with the North Hammersmith Parent Group

**Please confirm whether your organisation is incorporated** i.e. set up as a Company which is registered at Companies House. If so, please provide the Company Registration Number, Company Address and details of the Directors and Secretary. If not, please indicate the approximate date by which it will be incorporated.

**Yes, our organisation is incorporated**

Company Registration Number: 05112090

Company Address: [REDACTED] London, [REDACTED]

Details of Directors and Secretary: Directors:

[REDACTED] Company Secretary; [REDACTED]

**No, our organisation is not yet incorporated**

Approximate date by which it will be incorporated:

**In which Local Authority area will the school be based?** If you are near to a LA boundary, please include name of neighbouring LA(s)

Local Authority Hammersmith and Fulham

Neighbouring LAs Hounslow, Ealing, Brent, Kensington and Chelsea; Richmond Upon Thames, Wandsworth (across the river)

**Is your Local Authority aware of your intention to set up a Free School?**

**Yes**

(If Y please give details of your discussions with them so far)

The North Hammersmith Parent Group approached the local authority over a year ago to set up a new primary school in the Shepherd's Bush / White City area. The authority has worked with them to identify the [REDACTED] as a potential site and is strongly supportive of both the new school and of ARK as a provider (see attached letter from the Leader, appendix B), as ARK already successfully operates the nearby Burlington Danes Academy and has a strong track record of primary education in the neighbouring boroughs of Westminster and Brent.

As part of its contribution to the project, the authority has committed to providing the site, valued at around £875k, to ARK at a peppercorn rent and carried out a detailed feasibility study (see premises below).

**SUITABILITY OF PROVIDER**

The Secretary of State will consider each proposal on its merits, and take into account all matters relevant to that proposal. Generally, he would expect that all proposals will comply with all aspects of the rigorous suitability and vetting tests throughout the application process, including due diligence and CRB checks and will reject any proposers who advocate violence, intolerance, hatred or whose ideology runs counter to the UK's democratic values.

Do any of the following apply to the organisation (or any consortium member), or to (any of) its director(s)/partners/proprietor(s) or individual applicants (select Y/N):	
Is in a state of bankruptcy, insolvency, compulsory winding up, receivership, composition with creditors (including any Individual Voluntary Arrangement), or subject to an Administration Order or any legal proceedings concerning their solvency?	No
Has been convicted of a criminal offence?	No
Is involved in any illegal activities?	No
Has not fulfilled obligations related to payment of taxes?	No
Is guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying information?	No
Is not in possession of relevant licences or membership of an appropriate organisation where required by law?	No
Is barred from certain work with children as a result of being:	
[a] included in the list of those barred from Regulated Activity with children, kept by the Independent Safeguarding Authority? Or	No
[b] included in the list kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999(4) (list of those considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children)? Or	No
[c] subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (5) (or any other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction)? Or	No

<p>[d] disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000(6)?</p> <p>For further information on [a], [b], [c] and [d], please contact the CRB <a href="http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk">www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk</a>.</p>	No
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 10A of the Children Act 1989(7) for child minding or providing day care?</p>	No
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006(8)?</p>	No
<p>Is a member, or has been a member in the past, of a proscribed organisation?</p>	No
<p>If the answer to any of these questions is “Yes” please give details below:</p>	

## **EDUCATIONAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Briefly outline your reasons for wanting to set up a Free School.** Max 200 words.

Parents in the North of Hammersmith have had difficulty accessing local provision due to increasing pressure on primary level places in north Hammersmith and Fulham over the last few years.

In the W12 postcodes, applications have risen from 438 in 2006 to 518 in 2010, with only 375 permanent places in the area as at September 2010. The Council has implemented bulge classes in each of the last two years to temporarily meet this need. However, the parents, the local community and the council all agree that this is unsustainable.

Moreover, the shortage of primary phase places is reducing the proportion of parents getting their first-choice local school. In the area, 26% failed to get their first-choice. This situation will only get worse, as the council predicts that the child population will increase by a further 19.5% over the next 10 years. A new free school will meet the critical shortage of school places and provide additional choice to parents.

ARK currently runs Burlington Danes Academy, a rapidly improving secondary school in White City, which would be able to provide the primary school with access to specialist teachers and facilities. ARK also operates three other primary schools, which have been rated either good or outstanding by Ofsted, and with which the proposed new free school would share expertise and resources.

**Please set out the Free School's aims and objectives.** You should also describe:

- the teaching methods that will be used and whether the Free School will follow a particular philosophy (eg Montessori);
- the outline of the Free School's proposed curriculum, including any religious ethos;
- how the Free School will improve pupil learning and ensure strong discipline;

Max 2000 words.

The school will be a two form entry primary school, located on the site of the [REDACTED]. It will be non-selective and non-denominational, open to all local children. After prioritising children with special educational needs and those in public care, straight line distance will be the main admissions criterion.

The school will be part of the network of ARK schools sharing curriculum, teaching and learning practices, pastoral practices and administrative services.

ARK has extremely high expectations for all its pupils; we will ensure that at least 80% of pupils achieve a high level 4 in English and mathematics by the end of KS2, so as to be fully prepared for secondary education.

King Solomon Academy in Westminster, which opened in 2007, was recently rated as 'outstanding' by Ofsted. At King Solomon, KS1 pupils have recently achieved results well above the local and national averages in every subject. Despite starting from relatively low baselines, an average of 75% of pupils reached level 2a across their subjects, compared with only 49% of pupils in primary schools nationally. The same model is being used at ARK's other two primary schools in Brent and Southwark, which opened in 2008, and have been rated 'good' by Ofsted.

ARK Academies will build on this track record of success at both primary and secondary level by working with the North Hammersmith Parent Group and local early years, primary and secondary experts to build a school with a strong vision and ethos that meets local needs and aspirations.

The key principles of this model will be:

1. High expectations for:
  - Student achievement and behaviour
  - Staff professionalism, skill and commitment
2. Rigorous and engaging lessons
3. Respect for teachers in a calm, orderly environment
4. Continuing assessment and responsive support for each pupil
5. Depth before breadth: an emphasis on literacy and maths
6. More time for learning
7. Aspirational identity
8. Motivational culture
9. Strong partnership with parents

We will achieve this through:

1. Focus on the key levers of improvement
  - We expect all our pupils to progress much faster than national academic norms and will do what it takes to achieve this
  - Pupils and staff are expected to aim for the highest standards of behaviour, character and achievement
2. Clear and simple aims, roles and accountability
  - Objectives, staff structures and organisational systems and practices are kept as clear and straightforward as possible
  - Roles and responsibilities are well-defined so that every position is clear
  - We insist on clear accountability for performance
3. Transparency and honest feedback

- Transparency, regular data and focused evaluation are used to create a culture of honest feedback and continuous improvement
- We discuss effort, quality of work and relationships with others clearly and honestly
- We seek to be clear about what people are doing well and what they can do better - those who ask for and accept feedback make more rapid progress
- All members of the school community should develop their skill in providing feedback to help others grow
- We see mistakes as learning opportunities

#### 4. Principal autonomy

- We recruit principals and headteachers who share our core beliefs and principles
- We will empower principals to deliver our shared vision

The school will comply with the statutory code of practice and other guidance issued by the secretary of state as it applies to maintained schools, relating to special educational needs.

**What are your organisation's core areas of work / aims? Max 500 words.**

ARK Academies is an education charity, already operating eight academies in London, Portsmouth and Birmingham, with a ninth opening in September 2012. ARK's aim is to ensure that every pupil, irrespective of their background, has real choice when they reach the age of 18: to go on to further education or to pursue the career of their choice. To achieve this, ARK aims to ensure that at least 80% of its pupils achieve at least five good GCSEs including English and maths.

To this end, at primary level we aim for all pupils to achieve very high rates of progress and ensure that at least 80% of pupils achieve a high level 4 in English and mathematics by the end of KS2, so as to be fully prepared for secondary education. Two of our primary academies have already been rated 'good' and one, King Solomon Academy, has been rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted.

ARK also runs two programmes aimed at developing leaders in urban secondary schools – Teaching Leaders and Future Leaders. Future Leaders will start its pilot primary headteacher training programme in Autumn 2010 with a view to training up a cohort of leaders to take on primary headships from 2011.

**What capacity and capability do you have (or have access to) in order to deliver the educational vision set out above? Please indicate the resources, experience and expertise (educational and legal) that you have or have access to. Max 500 words.**

ARK Academies already operates eight academies and has a clear and well documented strategy for achieving its ambitious targets. ARK is currently the top achieving multiple sponsor, with a weighted annual average improvement in GCSE results of 7.8 percentage points and an average of 12 percentage points value added on the SSAT Jesson measure.

The ARK central team supports school leadership teams to implement the ARK model. This support takes three forms:

- Providing effective support services
- Creating a collaborative network that facilitates the sharing of good practice and resources
- Holding schools accountable through monitoring and performance management

The central team is led by [REDACTED], the [REDACTED] and divided into the following roles and functions: education; finance and resources; IT; HR and recruitment; communications; and projects.



**Do you have plans to work with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisation?** If so, please include their details below and set out the intended nature of that relationship (for example, a contract, co-sponsorship arrangement, informal partnership).

ARK will be working in partnership with the North Hammersmith Parent Group as well as local early years, primary and secondary experts (in particular Vanessa Nursery School and Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre) to set up the school, develop its vision and ethos and ensure it meets local needs.

**Please name the key individuals / trustees involved in setting up the Free School** (if available). Please also indicate whether trustees have been chosen and their roles confirmed. Please provide details of employment of these individuals and any conflicts of interest you believe might arise.

The school will be an ARK school. The ARK Academies board will be the legal governing body and single employer (see above for more details on ARK's directors).

During the set-up phase, members of the North Hammersmith Parent Group and local education professionals will be represented on the project steering group, which will be responsible for signing off key documents and decisions.

ARK will then work with the North Hammersmith Parent Group and local professionals to agree effective governance arrangements that put parents at the centre of the school's accountability once the school is open.

**EVIDENCE OF DEMAND**

**What evidence of local parental demand do you have?** For example, a petition or a declaration from interested parents or pupil number projections for the area. Max 200 words.

The North Hammersmith Parent Group has been exploring the feasibility of establishing a new, independent primary school in north Hammersmith for over a year (see attached letter, appendix C). The group wanted to establish a new school that would make high quality education available to local children and reflect the broad range of backgrounds and interests living in North Hammersmith.

As laid out above, the shortage of primary phase places is reducing the proportion of parents getting their first-choice local school. In the area, 26% failed to get their first-choice and the council has identified that this will increase by a further 19.5% over the next 10 years.

When the group approached the council to identify a site, the council supported the group's aspiration and to provide help in finding premises and advice on setting up a new school. The [REDACTED] was identified as a possible site and the Council considered selling the premises to the group. However, the sale was not possible because the group was unable to raise the necessary funding and because of doubts at the time about the viability of a one-form-entry primary school.

**What is the proposed capacity (number of pupils)?** Max 200 words.

The proposed capacity of the school is 480 places (two form entry primary and nursery)

**What is the proposed age range of the Free School?** Please include details of planned pupil numbers in each year group.

The proposed school would be a two form entry primary school for children aged 3 - 11, including a 60 (part time) place nursery.

**When do you hope the Free School will start operating** (for your first set of pupils)?

It is proposed that the school will open with two reception classes in the refurbished [REDACTED] in September 2011.

## **PREMISES**

**What steps have you taken to identify a potential site?** Please include details of the geographical area the school seeks to serve; a list of any sites you have considered; and any discussions you have had to identify a suitable site. If known, please include the proposed location, premises and postcode of the Free School.

The North Hammersmith Parent Group identified the site of [REDACTED] in North Hammersmith as the ideal location for a new two form entry primary school serving the local neighbourhood. A picture of the building is attached as Appendix D.

The local authority is strongly supportive of the proposal and, as part of its contribution to the project, have worked up detailed feasibility studies for the development (see appendix E for the full feasibility and Appendix F for the requirements for September 2011 opening).

The feasibility study shows that the site would need to be enlarged (by closing two roads and redesignating the land for educational use) to enable the construction of a new build element to accommodate the KS2 pupils, alongside the refurbishment of the current listed buildings (formerly the library) which would accommodate the foundation stage and KS1 pupils.

The feasibility study suggests that the total cost of the development (refurbishment, new build and external works) would be between [REDACTED] (appendix F2). We would hope to be able to deliver at the lower end of this estimate, subject to detailed survey information.

In order to open to two reception classes in September 2011, we would only need to have completed the refurbishment of the existing buildings - estimated to be between [REDACTED]. These are demonstrated in Appendix E (including a project plan).

The local authority has confirmed that they would be willing and able to commission the works, which would ensure the buildings were delivered efficiently and quickly, and that potential planning issues will not impact negatively on the programme or costs. They are also considering the possibility of joint procurement with Westminster City Council, which is also planning a primary school in the north of the borough. This would ensure best value for money for both projects.

Moreover, as part of its contribution to this project, beyond the support already outlined, the Local Authority has committed to providing the site, currently valued at [REDACTED], at a peppercorn rent to ARK.

Next Steps

In order to open the new primary school in 2011 and meet the critical need for additional reception places as well as parent demand for additional provision in the area, the next steps are:

- Confirm in principle agreement to proceed from DfE and funding available [20 July 2010]
- Issue statutory notice for admissions [ 21 July]
- Confirm procurement route and work up detailed construction programme [December 2010]
- Start on site [January 2011]
- Open in [September 2011]

### **Further information**

Please note, all information provided on this form will be published on the Department for Education website. Information that you supply on this form may be shared with (a) the New Schools Network and (b) the Local Authority in which you wish to set up the Free School. Information about the New Schools Network can be found at <http://www.newschoolsnetwork.org>.

Submission of this form will be treated as consent, from both you and anyone else whose personal data is contained on this form, to the sharing of this information as set out above.

In addition, information that you provide on this form, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Next Steps**

Please email completed Proposal Form to [freeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freeschools.registration@education.gsi.gov.uk)

You will hear back from a named official at the Department for Education within two weeks, who will offer you advice on how best to progress your application. The Secretary of State will make a judgement on the potential of the project based on criteria relating to educational aims and objectives, evidence of demand, potential premises, suitability of provider and any other relevant considerations to decide whether the proposed Free School project should move into stage 3, namely that of drawing up a business case and plan.