

Free Schools in 2014

Application form

Mainstream and 16-19
Free Schools

Completing your application

Before completing your application, please ensure that you have read the 'How to Apply' guidance carefully (which can be found [here](#)) and can provide all the information and documentation we have asked for – failure to do so may mean that we are unable to consider your application.

The Free School application is made up of nine sections as follows:

- **Section A:** Applicant details and declaration
- **Section B:** Outline of the school
- **Section C:** Education vision
- **Section D:** Education plan
- **Section E:** Evidence of demand
- **Section F:** Capacity and capability
- **Section G:** Initial costs and financial viability
- **Section H:** Premises
- **Section I:** Due diligence and other checks

In **Sections A-H** we are asking you to tell us about you and the school you want to establish and this template has been designed for this purpose. The boxes provided in each section will expand as you type.

Section G requires you to provide two financial plans. To achieve this you must fill out and submit the templates provided [here](#).

Section I is about your suitability to run a Free School. There is a separate downloadable form for this information. This is available [here](#)

You need to submit all the information requested in order for your application to be assessed.

Sections A-H and the **financial plans** need to be submitted to the Department for Education by the application deadline. You need to submit one copy (of each) by email to:

mainstream.fsapplications2014@education.gsi.gov.uk

Your application should be: no more than 150 pages long; a Word document formatted for printing on A4 paper; completed in Arial 12 point font; and include page numbers. Annexes should be included within the page limit and restricted to documents relating to evidence of demand (e.g. questionnaires and maps) and relevant CVs. The financial templates are excluded from the page limit and should be submitted separately in Excel. Please include the name of your school in the file name for both your Word and Excel documents. Please do not include photographs, images and logos in your application (other than the demand map). Your email must be no more than 10MB in size.

You also need to submit two hard copies (of **sections A-H** and the **financial plans**) by 'Recorded Signed For' post to:

Free Schools Applications Team
Department for Education
3rd Floor
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

It is essential that the hard copies are identical to the version you email.

Section I must be submitted in hard copy and sent by 'Recorded Signed For' post to:

Due Diligence Team
Department for Education
4th Floor
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Data Protection

Personal data is collected on this form in order to consider an application to set up a Free School and will not be used for other purposes. For the purposes of the Data Protection Act, the Department for Education is the data controller for this personal information and for ensuring that it is processed in accordance with the terms of the Act. The Department will hold all personal information you supply securely and will only make it available to those who need to see it as part of the Free School application process. All personal information supplied in these forms will only be retained for as long as it is needed for this process.

Application checklist

Checklist: Sections A-H of your application		
	Yes	No
1. You have established a company limited by guarantee.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You have provided information on all of the following areas:		
<u>Section A</u> : Applicant details – including signed declaration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section B</u> : Outline of the school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section C</u> : Education vision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section D</u> : Education plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section E</u> : Evidence of demand	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section F</u> : Capacity and capability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section G</u> : Initial costs and financial viability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Section H</u> : Premises	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. This information is provided in A4 format using Arial font, minimum 12 font size, includes page numbers and is no more than 150 pages in total.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. You have completed two financial plans using the financial template spreadsheet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Independent schools only: you have provided a link to the most recent inspection report.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Independent schools only: you have provided a copy of the last two years' audited financial statements or equivalent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. All relevant information relating to Sections A-H of your application has been emailed to mainstream.fsapplications2014@education.gsi.gov.uk between 9am on 17 December 2012 and 6pm on 4 January 2013 and the email is no more than 10 MB in size.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Two hard copies of the application have been sent by 'Recorded Signed For' post to: Free Schools Applications Team, Department for Education, 3 rd Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Checklist: Section I of your application		
9. A copy of <u>Section A</u> of the form and as many copies of the Section I Personal Information form as there are members and directors have been sent by 'Recorded Signed For' post to: Due Diligence Team, Department for Education, 4 th Floor, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT, between 9am on 17 December 2012 and 6pm on 4 January 2013.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Section A: Applicant details

Main contact for this application	
1.	Name: [REDACTED]
2.	Address: ARK Schools 65 Kingsway London WC2B 6TD
3.	Email address: [REDACTED]
4.	Telephone number: [REDACTED]
About your group	
5.	Are any members of your group related in any way, including by marriage, to any other? NB this includes company members or directors, members of the project group, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
6.	If Yes, please provide more details:
7.	How you would describe your group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A parent/community group <input type="checkbox"/> A teacher-led group <input type="checkbox"/> An existing Free School sponsor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> An academy chain <input type="checkbox"/> A federation <input type="checkbox"/> An independent school <input type="checkbox"/> A state maintained school <input type="checkbox"/> Something else
8.	If 'Something else', please provide more details:
9.	Is your group seeking to open more than one Free School application in this round? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
10.	If Yes, please provide more details: ARK Ealing Primary Academy, Ealing Burlington Danes Primary Academy, Hammersmith and Fulham ARK North Enfield Academy, Enfield
11.	In addition to any support/advice from the New Schools Network, did you put together this application with support from another company or organisation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
12.	If Yes, please list the name(s) of the organisation(s) and describe clearly the role they played in developing your application. Please also describe the role (if any) you envisage for them in setting up and/or running the Free School if your application is successful:
Details of company limited by guarantee	

13.	Company name: ARK Schools	
14.	Company address: 65 Kingsway London WC2B 6TD	
15.	Company registration number and date when company was incorporated: 05112090	
16.	Does the company run any existing schools, including any Free Schools?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
17.	<p>If Yes, please provide details:</p> <p>ARK Schools runs the following schools (also shown are details of the relevant local authority and year of opening):</p> <p>Sponsored academies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burlington Danes Academy – Hammersmith and Fulham, 2006 • King Solomon Academy – Westminster, 2007 • Walworth Academy – Southwark, 2007 • Ark Academy – Brent, 2008 • ARK Globe Academy – Southwark, 2008 • Evelyn Grace Academy – Lambeth, 2008 • Charter Academy – Portsmouth, 2009 • St Alban’s Academy – Birmingham, 2009 • ARK Oval Primary Academy – Croydon, 2011 • ARK Kings Academy – Birmingham, 2012 • ARK Tindal Primary Academy, Birmingham 2012 • ARK Rose Primary Academy, Birmingham 2012 • ARK Putney Academy – Wandsworth, 2012 • Isaac Newton Academy – Redbridge, 2012 • ARK Bentworth Primary Academy, Hammersmith and Fulham, 2012 <p>Free schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARK Atwood Primary Academy – Westminster, 2011 • ARK Conway Primary Academy – Hammersmith and Fulham, 2011 • Bolingbroke Academy – Wandsworth, 2012 <p>Schools planned to open 2013 and 2014</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARK Priory Primary Academy – Ealing, 2013 • ARK All Saints Academy – Southwark, 2013 • ARK Enfield Academy–Enfield, 2013 (Free School) • Isaac Newton Primary –Redbridge, 2014 (Free School) 	
<p>Company members</p> <p>The members of the company are its legal owners. We require that there are a minimum of three members. The founding members are those that establish the company and sign the memorandum of association that is</p>		

submitted (with the company's articles of association) when registering the company with Companies House. Further members may subsequently be appointed.

18.	Please confirm the total number of company members: 7
19.	Please provide the name of each member below (add more rows if necessary):
	1. Name: [REDACTED]
	2. Name: [REDACTED]
	3. Name: [REDACTED]
	4. Name: [REDACTED]
	5. Name: [REDACTED]
	6. Name: [REDACTED]
	7. Name: [REDACTED]

Company directors

The company directors are appointed by the members and will eventually form the governing body that will oversee the management of the school. At the point of setting up the company, members are required to appoint at least one director – this may be one of the members. All directors at the point of application must complete a Section I personal information form. All individuals on the governing body must be formally appointed as directors of the company and registered with Companies House.

20.	Where directors have already been appointed please provide the name of each and the positions they will hold (add more rows if necessary):
	1. Name: [REDACTED]
	2. Name: [REDACTED]
	3. Name: [REDACTED]
	4. Name: [REDACTED]
	5. Name: [REDACTED]
	6. Name: [REDACTED]
	7. Name: [REDACTED]
21.	Please provide the name of the proposed chair of the governing body, if known: [REDACTED] is the [REDACTED], the legal governing body for all ARK schools. A local governing body (LGB) will be set up for ARK Blended Learning Academy in the summer of 2014 and the chair of the LGB will be confirmed at that stage (see section F6).

Related organisations

22.	Through its members, directors or otherwise, does the company limited by guarantee have any formal or informal links (e.g. financial, philosophical or ideological) with any other organisations within the UK or overseas? These may include: other Free School groups; other institutions; charitable bodies; and/or commercial or non-commercial organisations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
23.	<p>If Yes, please provide the following information about each organisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their name; • their Companies House and/or Charity Commission number, if appropriate; and • the role that it is envisaged they will play in relation to the Free School. <p>ARK Schools is linked with the international charity Absolute Return for Kids, although it is a separate legal entity: Absolute Return for Kids (ARK) <i>An international charity whose purpose is to transform children’s lives.</i></p>	

	<p>Company Registered in England no. 04589451 Registered charity no. 1095322 Registered address 65 Kingsway London WC2B 6TD www.arkonline.org</p> <p>Some board members of ARK Schools are also on the board of ARK (Absolute Return for Kids).</p> <p>ARK Schools is co-located with and shares resources with Future Leaders: <i>Future Leaders is a charitable organisation committed to developing outstanding senior leaders to work in challenging schools.</i></p> <p>Company Registered in England no. 5829256 Registered Charity no.1116801 Registered address 65 Kingsway London WC2B 6TD www.future-leaders.org.uk</p> <p>Neither Absolute Return for Kids, nor Future Leaders will play any role in setting up the free school, other than co-location (sharing of resources, office space, office management etc.)</p>	
24.	<p>Please specify any religious organisations or institutions connected to your application (local, national and international). In particular, please describe in specific terms the religious affiliations of your group, including where appropriate any denomination or particular school of thought that influences your group (e.g. Pentecostalism, Deobandism, Reform Judaism, etc).</p> <p>ARK Schools is a secular organisation with no religious affiliations or influences.</p>	
Existing providers		
25.	Is your organisation an existing independent school wishing to convert to a Free School?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
26.	Is your organisation an existing independent school wishing to establish/sponsor a new and separate Free School?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
27.	Is your organisation an existing state maintained school or Academy wishing to establish a new and separate Free School?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
28.	If Yes to any of the above three questions, please provide your six digit unique reference number here:	N/A

29.	If you are an existing independent or state maintained school or an Academy, please state the age range and current number of pupils on roll and your capacity:	N/A
30.	If you are an existing independent or state maintained school or an Academy, please provide the date of your most recent inspection and a link to the report on the Ofsted or other inspectorate website: N/A	
31.	If you are an existing independent or state maintained school or an Academy, please provide a link to your performance data for the last 3 years: N/A	
32.	If you are another type of organisation involved in education, e.g. an Academy sponsor, please describe that organisation. Please ensure you include your company registration number: ARK Schools is an education charity and successful academy sponsor with a track record of providing high quality education at both primary and secondary level in areas of disadvantage and/or historic educational underachievement. ARK Schools' vision is to create a group of outstanding schools that radically improve our pupils' life chances. We aim that every pupil at an ARK academy will do well enough by the age of 18 to go on to university or pursue the career of their choice. ARK Schools Company Registered in England no. 05112090 Registered address 65 Kingsway London WC2B 6TD www.arkschools.org	

**Please tick to confirm that you have included
all the items in the checklist.**



Declaration to be signed by a company member on behalf of the company

I confirm that the information provided in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I further confirm that if the application is successful the company will operate a Free School in accordance with the requirements outlined in the 'How to Apply' guidance and the funding agreement with the Secretary of State. I acknowledge that this application may be rejected should any information be deliberately withheld or misrepresented that is later found to be material in considering the application.

Signed:

Position: [REDACTED]

Print name: [REDACTED]

Date: 3 January 2013

**NB This declaration only needs to be signed in the two hard copy versions
of your application. Please use black ink.**

Section B: Outline of the school

1.	Proposed school name:	ARK Blended Learning Academy
2.	Proposed academic year of opening:	2014
3.	Specify the proposed age range of the school:	<input type="checkbox"/> 4-11 <input type="checkbox"/> 4-16 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 11-16 <input type="checkbox"/> 11-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 14-19 <input type="checkbox"/> 16-19 <input type="checkbox"/> Other If Other, please specify:
4.	Date proposed school will reach expected capacity in all year groups:	2021
5.	Will your proposed school be:	<input type="checkbox"/> Boys only <input type="checkbox"/> Girls only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mixed
6.	Will your proposed school include boarding? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
7.	Do you intend that your proposed school will be designated as having a religious character? NB Please refer to the glossary of terms in the 'How to Apply' guidance for more information about religious character/designation. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	
8.	If Yes, please specify the faith, denomination, etc of the proposed school:	
9.	Do you intend your proposed school to have a faith ethos (but will not be designated as having a religious character)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	

10.	If Yes, please specify the faith, denomination, etc of the proposed school:	
11.	If you have a preferred site, please give details, including the post code:	N/A
12	Please tell us how you found this site:	N/A
13	Is the site:	<input type="checkbox"/> a private building? <input type="checkbox"/> a public/government building? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> don't know?
14	If you have not identified a site yet, please tell us the postcode of your preferred location:	ARK has not yet identified a suitable site for the new academy however we are in consultation with London local authorities around this proposal.
15.	Local authority in which the proposed school would be situated:	Our proposal is that the ARK Blended Learning Academy open in London
16.	If the preferred site is near to a local authority boundary please specify the names of the neighbouring local authorities:	
17.	<p>This application form is designed to be used for mainstream applications and 16-19 applications (as defined at Annex A of the 'How to Apply' guidance). If the school you are proposing does not really fit the definition of a mainstream or 16-19 school but does not fit the definitions of special or alternative provision schools either, you need to use the template that is the closest fit and explain how your school would differ. <i>If this applies to your application please briefly outline the main differences below.</i> You will also need to address these differences in more detail in the relevant sections of the application.</p>	

Section C: Education vision

Please refer to page 19 of the 'How to Apply' guidance for what should be included in this section.

Section C1 – about ARK Blended Learning Academy

Age range

ARK Blended Learning Academy will be a new, all-through academy comprised of:

- A three form entry primary school providing places for 630 primary pupils.
- A six form entry secondary school, providing places for 900 secondary pupils.
- A sixth form of up to 300 pupils.

The age range will be 4-19 years, with the possibility of additional nursery provision depending on the size of the preferred site.

Location

ARK is in consultation with several local authorities on the blended learning approach. Once these discussions are advanced we will be in position to confirm the proposed location of the academy. In line with ARK's mission to reduce the achievement gap between children from disadvantaged and more affluent backgrounds, we will be looking for the academy to be situated in a deprived urban area with a pupil place need. We would be looking to place the school in London where place needs are particularly high (see **section E2**).

Strengthening the ARK model

ARK Blended Learning Academy will use blended learning, the combination of traditional class-room based teaching with online learning, to strengthen its proven academic model. ARK's six pillars remain the foundation of the academy and the curriculum model will remain unchanged. The enhancement of the ARK model comes from the delivery of the curriculum using a classroom rotation model, which utilises technology in order to enable small group instruction which can be targeted at the level of every pupil.

As with all ARK schools, ARK Blended Learning Academy aims to ensure that all children leave the academy equipped with the knowledge and the skills which allow them, at age 18, to go on to university or to pursue the career of their choice.

ARK Blended Learning Academy will use the classroom rotation model for English, maths and science. With this model, the teacher spends the beginning of each lesson introducing the material to the entire class. The

pupils then rotate through three to four stations in small groups that are based on ability. The number and content of each station will differ by subject. These stations may include:

- Small group instruction with the teacher.
- Instruction and input from the teaching assistant (TA).
- Independent or collaborative work.
- Online content or software.

The small group instruction and input from the teacher and the TA is targeted at the needs of each ability-based group, allowing pupils to learn material that is at or slightly above their level. The classroom rotation model, therefore, allows teachers to more easily target the needs of every pupil in a class, even when there is a broad spectrum of abilities. Further personalisation is facilitated by the fact that online content/software frequently adapts to the level of the pupils. Furthermore, online content/software often provides teachers with data about each pupil that can inform their small group instruction. See annex 1, which outlines the benefits that KIPP Empower Academy in the United States has experienced due to the classroom rotation model.

The further personalisation enabled by the small group instruction and online content/software will allow ARK Blended Learning Academy to provide targeted catch-up for pupils who are behind, while continuing to challenge the pupils who are ahead of their age expected level.

The classroom rotation model will be used across all year groups at ARK Blended Learning Academy; however, its implementation will vary at each phase. While the primary classes will remain structured, secondary classes will be more fluid with the teacher promoting independence to the students who will benefit from greater self-direction. The independent and collaborative work that is encouraged by the classroom rotation model will help students develop into independent thinkers who take ownership for their learning, helping to prepare them for university and the working world.

The classroom rotation model is currently being piloted in Year 4 and Year 5 literacy classes at King Solomon Academy (see annex 2 for more detail). While student attainment data from this term is not yet available, teachers at KSA report that they are seeing stronger gains in writing and reading than in previous years due to the increase in small group instruction. Students report that they are enjoying literacy class because of the increase in small group instruction with the teacher and TA and the introduction of computers. The results generated by this pilot will allow us to continuously adapt and improve upon the model before it is implemented at ARK Blended Learning Academy.

A proven track record

- Of ARK's nine academies which have had Ofsted inspections, three have been rated Outstanding and five Good. ARK's two new all-through academies have been rated Outstanding and the third, the merging of two existing schools, has been rated Good with

Outstanding features.

- Our transition schools' average GCSE pass rate (5 A* - C grades including English and maths) has improved from 22% in 2006 when our first school opened to 57% in 2011.
- The average annual increase in pupils achieving five GCSEs at A*-C including English and maths since each ARK academy opened is 7% (2012 data).
- At key stage 1, Ark, Globe, Oval and KSA are all ahead of national levels. Across the ARK primary network 94% of pupils achieved level 2 in reading, writing and maths compared with 87% nationally.
- ARK has two transition schools reporting results at key stage 2: ARK Globe and ARK Oval. At ARK Globe, 86% of pupils achieved level 4 or above in both English and mathematics in 2012, compared to a national average of 79%. At ARK Oval, the percentage was 70%. This is a major achievement considering that the school was in special measures when it joined the ARK network in 2011.
- ARK Schools' value added score, which measures pupil progress between key stage 2 and GCSE is the best of the major academy groups at +24 (2011 data).

Vision and ethos

As laid out above, ARK Blended Learning Academy will aim to ensure that every pupil will leave at age 18 with the skills and qualifications needed to go to university or pursue the career of their choice.

The new academy will be non-selective and non-denominational and will develop high aspirations, high motivation and high achievement for all its pupils, regardless of their background or prior attainment.

Like all ARK academies, ARK Blended Learning's education plan will reflect this vision through its shared commitment to ARK's six pillars:

1. High Expectations

ARK believes that every child can reach their potential with the right teaching and support. We set exceptionally high expectations for pupil attainment, which we reinforce constantly as they go through school. These expectations are reflected in the academy and individual targets (see below) as well as in the principal and staff performance management structures.

2. Excellent teaching

ARK's recruitment team ensure that our schools attract and retain outstanding staff (see **section F5**). At the same time, we prioritise learning and development and ensure that all leaders, teachers and support staff have access to high quality CPD opportunities throughout their career. These are provided through bespoke training programmes such as 'Aspiring to Headship' and the 'Lead Teacher Programme'; through the ARK training menu – an online CPD tool; and through numerous school and network wide events throughout the year, including the annual ARK Summit, which brings together all staff in the network.

3. Exemplary behaviour

Our schools are characterised by a friendly and orderly environment, where teachers can teach and pupils can learn. A smart, recognisable uniform ensures that all pupils are seen as, and act as, ambassadors within their local community.

4. Depth before breadth

A strong command of the core subjects of English and maths is vital for the whole curriculum. This is all the more true if pupils arrive at school with lower than average attainment. We therefore prioritise depth before breadth so that pupils secure firm foundations in these core subjects as quickly as possible. At primary, this means we spend up to 10 hours a week on literacy classes (including phonics, handwriting and reading) and between six and eight hours a week on mathematics; at secondary, around five hours a week each is focused on literacy and mathematics. See **section D1** for more detail.

5. More time for learning

To enable us to spend time on the core subjects, as well as ensure that pupils experience a range of creative and enrichment activities, ARK academies operate a longer school day. Typically at primary, the day will run from 8.30am to 4pm and at secondary from 8.30am – 4.30pm, with optional breakfast clubs and after school sessions running until 6pm.

6. Knowing every child

Positive relationships between pupils and staff reinforce a culture of excellent behaviour and commitment to learning. ARK schools are organised as small schools so that every pupil knows and is known by every member of staff within their small school. An all-through school of this size will be led by a principal, with a head of primary responsible for the primary phase and vice principals responsible for the key stage 3, key stage 4 and key stage 5 schools.

Aspirations and targets

The Blended Learning model complements the ARK commitment to delivering exceptionally high outcomes for its pupils. These targets, which are higher than national expectations, are consistently applied over both primary and secondary level:

Primary

We aim that at least 90% of our pupils achieve 7 points or above by the end of Reception; at least 90% achieve a level 2a or higher at key stage 1; and at least 90% of pupils leave primary school with a level 4a.

Secondary

At secondary, we aim for at least 80% of all pupils to achieve five good (A*-C) GCSEs including English and maths, and that the majority of these will take the GCSEs required to achieve the English Baccalaureate.

In the sixth form, at least 80% of pupils will qualify for a good university and 100% will secure a university place, job, training course or apprenticeship.

ARK has substantial experience and expertise in running excellent, inner city comprehensive schools and our curriculum and assessment model is specifically designed to achieve the targets laid out above (see **Vision and Ethos** above and **sections D1 and D5** for more detail).

An inclusive academy

Admissions

ARK academies are non-selective community schools for local children. ARK Blended Learning Academy will welcome all local children regardless of ability or background. At the end of Year 6 children will automatically transfer into the secondary phase of the academy.

After admitting children with statements of special educational need the oversubscription criteria (in order of priority) will be:

- a) children in care
- b) those with a sibling attending the academy
- c) straight line distance lived from the school.

For more information see **section D6**.

Inclusion

ARK is fully committed to inclusion; the ARK education model particularly supports those pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or English as an Additional Language (EAL) (**section D4**). The classroom rotation model complements ARK's commitment to inclusion as it enables teachers to further personalise lessons to the level of each individual pupil. ARK will work with the Local Authority and other agencies to ensure effective and high quality SEN provision.

Religious education

ARK Schools is a non-denominational organisation providing education for children of all faiths and none.

ARK Blended Learning Academy will follow the locally agreed religious education curriculum. Parents will have a right to withdraw their children from religious education if they wish.

Section D: Education plan – part 1

In the table below, please provide the proposed numbers in each year group at the point of opening and an explanation of how pupil numbers will build up over time. Please add additional rows/columns if appropriate. If you are an existing independent school wishing to become a Free School, please use the first column to show how many pupils you currently have.

If you are proposing to open later than 2014, please leave the relevant earlier columns blank.

	Current number of pupils (if applicable)	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Reception		90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90
Year 1			90	90	90	90	90	90	90
Year 2				90	90	90	90	90	90
Year 3					90	90	90	90	90
Year 4						90	90	90	90
Year 5							90	90	90
Year 6								90	90
Year 7			180	180	180	180	180	180	180
Year 8				180	180	180	180	180	180
Year 9					180	180	180	180	180
Year 10						180	180	180	180
Year 11							180	180	180
Year 12								150	150
Year 13									150
Totals		90	360	630	900	1170	1440	1680	1830

Section D: Education plan – part 2

Please refer to pages 20-26 of the 'How to Apply' guidance for what should be included in this section.

Section D1 – Curriculum Model

The curriculum for ARK Blended Learning Academy has been designed to achieve the vision that at least 90% of pupils complete primary school with a level 4a and at secondary at least 80% of all pupils achieve five good GCSEs including English and maths. Where appropriate, pupils will be offered high quality vocational pathways alongside English and maths GCSE.

In line with the ARK principle of depth before breadth, there will be an emphasis on English and maths during both the primary and secondary phase, with additional support for those pupils below level and additional stretch for those pupils exceeding targets. The classroom rotation model will allow teachers to further personalise lessons to the level of each pupil, facilitating both catch-up and stretch. The allocation of curriculum time is determined by each pupil's needs, with priority given to academic acceleration in core subjects. The academy will cover the national curriculum in English, maths and science.

Although the ARK network focuses on achieving mastery in the core subjects before tackling the wider curriculum, the academy will ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered for all pupils over the course of their school career. The small group instruction facilitated by the classroom rotation model will ensure that teachers and TAs have a strong understanding of the pupils' current understanding of each subject.

Once in post, the leadership team will develop the detailed curriculum offer, with support from ARK's education team. Each year the principal will be responsible for determining which courses are offered and how they are taught in order to best serve the needs of each pupil.

Primary Curriculum

ARK Blended Learning Academy will follow the ARK primary curriculum, which reflects the belief that well-structured knowledge is the foundation for broad intellectual development, and that skills development should build on the knowledge acquired by pupils. From Reception onwards, pupils will be taught the following topics daily: phonics, literacy, handwriting, grammar, guided reading and writing. Maths learning will take place through a daily maths lesson as well as a daily maths meeting, which focuses on developing mathematical fluency.

Early Years

ARK has developed an Early Years Curriculum which reflects a structured

approach to literacy (synthetic phonics) and maths. This approach was commended on a recent HMI visit to an ARK school where the inspector noted that ‘the vast majority of children make exceptional progress, achieving skills that are securely within or beyond the levels expected for their age.’

Maths

ARK has also developed a specially tailored maths curriculum for both primary and key stage 3 – the Mathematics Mastery programme. This has been developed through a combination of education research, existing UK best practice, and learning from the curriculum and pedagogy of Singapore. There is a strong emphasis on number sense, place value correct terminology and problem solving.

Our mastery approach dedicates more time to each new mathematical concept or process. This means a smaller number of topics in each term and each year, but much less time wasted revisiting what was previously taught.

The ARK Schools Mathematics Mastery approach was commended by HMI on a visit to an ARK primary academy. The approach has subsequently secured external funding from the Education Endowment foundation and been rolled out to over 30 primary and secondary schools across the country.

Science

ARK has a tailored science curriculum for Years 1 – 6, loosely based on the Singapore science curriculum. Its salient features are a strong emphasis on scientific knowledge and vocabulary development, rapid progress and a lively variety of activities and observations. Each unit of work is planned in detail including links to websites, instructions for all activities and appropriate outcomes.

The full primary curriculum model, including number of hours per subject at each key stage is shown in annex 3.

Secondary Curriculum

Key Stage 3

The key stage 3 curriculum is still focused on depth before breadth, so that pupils develop outstanding skills in English and mathematics in order to access the wider curriculum. There will be room for flexibility in the way that these subjects are delivered based on rates of pupil progress and the attainment of those pupils joining the academy from other primary schools.

At key stage 3, English, maths, science, humanities and MFL will be delivered in ability groups. In maths, the academy will use the approach developed in ARK’s Mathematics Mastery curriculum. Art, DT, music and PE will be taught in mixed ability groups to ensure that all pupils have a chance to integrate and learn with their contemporaries. Humanities

subjects will be taught as distinct subjects from year 7 onwards. IT will be taught across the curriculum rather than as a discrete subject until year 10.

At secondary level, ARK Blended Learning Academy's longer school day will enable enrichment activities and master classes to stretch and challenge all pupils or to allow for targeted catch up where needed (see enrichment section below).

Key Stage 4

We aim that the majority of pupils will take the GCSE subjects required to achieve the English Baccalaureate.

The principal will decide whether to implement alternative qualifications such as IGCSE and native language qualifications to reflect and support the local community.

The 16 – 19 curriculum

The 16 – 19 curriculum will stretch and challenge pupils, and will promote independent learning to prepare them for university and working life. The principal will at a later stage decide whether to offer International Baccalaureate, depending on the suitability of the course for each cohort.

Details of these courses, along with the full secondary curriculum model, including number of hours per subject in each year, is shown in annex 4.

Enrichment

ARK's vision is that ARK Blended Learning be an outstanding school which enhances its pupils' life chances. We will provide an enriched and extended curriculum accessible to pupils of all abilities which will support the high aspirations we have for them and encourage excellence by providing them with a variety of opportunities.

Some enrichment will be delivered as part of the compulsory teaching week, but will also extend beyond the teaching week to weekends and school holidays. It may include master classes, residential trips, summer schools and revision classes as well as day visits and in-school experiences.

ARK currently provides four main strands in its enrichment programme across its network of schools. The aim of these strands is to give our pupils the skills and experiences that a rigorous academic education alone cannot provide.

1. Music: we believe that every child can be a musician, and that music has the facility to develop confidence, creativity, community and excellence. Our aim is for all pupils to have access to, and participate in, a breadth of experiences. Through their engagement with high-quality curriculum and enrichment activities, we aim for pupils to become successful, passionate and versatile musicians, who will maintain an active relationship with music

throughout their lives.

The academy's music curriculum and enrichment programme combined will involve vocal opportunities, instrumental opportunities and an enhanced curriculum for every pupil, at both primary and secondary level.

2. University success: we ensure pupils have the skills and experience (not simply the grades) to make informed university applications, succeed in the interview process, and complete a successful degree course. This involves visits to universities as well as guidance on interview techniques. At primary level we hold workshops – 'What is university' – to introduce to pupils the notion of university life.

3. Careers success: we ensure that pupils make informed and appropriate career choices, and have the skills to be successful in those choices.

4. Personal development and showcasing excellence: we ensure that pupils develop confidence, experience and skills to be successful. This includes world-class opportunities which publically enhance the academy's image, whilst contributing significantly to pupils' development such as performing at the Barbican.

Academy specific enrichment

In addition to these specific strands, there will be a full range of extracurricular activities delivered by the academy staff, through a combination of PE and music lessons, as options within the extended school day, or as clubs during lunchtime or before / after school. A list of possible activities this will include is attached in annex 5.

Section D2 – Academy timetable and calendar

The academy day

The primary school day will run from 8.30am until 4pm. The secondary school day will run from 8.30am until 4.30pm. Both phases end school at 3pm on Fridays to allow for staff training.

Optional breakfast clubs and after schools activities will also be available.

More details on the timings of the school day are laid out in annexes 6 (primary) and 7 (secondary) and the curriculum maps are included in annexes 3 and 4. These two documents will be used to generate the first year timetables for the academy (at both primary and secondary level) in the spring before opening.

The academy year

The standard ARK Blended Learning Academy year will provide 185 teaching days and 10 staff training days, and will follow PAN London term dates.

In the first year, an additional five training days will be included to allow detailed staff induction before the academy opens to pupils.

An indicative academy calendar for year one is shown in annex 8.

Section D3- Staffing

ARK Blended Learning Academy Staff Structure

The proposed staff structure has been structured to deliver the proposed curriculum (see annexes 3 and 4) and is based on experience to date in similar sized schools. As laid out in **section G**, the staff structure is affordable.

The following staffing structures are attached in the annexes:

Annex 9a – first year of opening, primary.

Annex 9b – final year, primary.

Annex 9c – final year, secondary.

The staff structure for the primary and secondary phases of ARK Blended Learning Academy will grow in parallel with the pupil cohort. The staffing model for years R – 13 as the academy builds up its roll are shown in the financial model in **section G**.

Academy organisation

The academy will be primarily organised around a small school model. This will mean that the head of primary and vice principals of key stages 3, 4 and 5 will have overall responsibility for both the academic progress and pastoral welfare of all the pupils in that phase or key stage.

Within each small school, pupils will be organised in year groups, with a form teacher primarily responsible for their pastoral welfare.

An all-through academy allows for a seamless transition between the primary and key stage 3 phases as all pupils are known to staff. This allows them to plan effectively to ensure the needs of all children are known and ensures no time for learning is lost.

Academy organisation: Leadership responsibilities

The principal will have responsibility for the overall vision and strategic direction of the academy. There will be three vice principals who will lead on the following three core areas of whole academy responsibility:

- Teaching, learning and CPD.
- Behaviour, ethos and inclusion (including safeguarding).
- Assessment, data and IT systems.

The finance and resources director will lead the operational team and be responsible for the school budget.

The head of primary and each vice principal of key stage 3, 4 and 5 will be responsible for the progress and outcomes of the pupils in their small school as well as creating and embedding a stage appropriate ethos and rewards. All senior leaders at the school will be expected to take on some teaching responsibilities when first appointed. This will then reduce as the pupil cohort increases.

Each subject lead will be responsible for the quality of teaching and learning in that subject area.

Full details of the academy leadership structure can be found in the following annexes:

Annex 10a – primary senior leadership roles and responsibilities, year 1.

Annex 10b – primary senior leadership roles and responsibilities, final year.

Annex 10c – secondary senior leadership roles and responsibilities, final year.

Section D4 – Inclusion (providing for pupils with different abilities)

ARK Blended Learning Academy will be committed to providing a stimulating learning environment across the whole curriculum which maximises individual potential and ensures that pupils of all ability levels are well equipped to meet the challenges of education, work and life.

The curriculum will teach pupils from their starting point, even if this is below the level normally expected in a given key stage and is designed to achieve rapid catch-up for those pupils who are behind. The allocation of curriculum time will be determined by each pupil's needs, with priority given to academic acceleration in core subjects. There may be a reduction in other curriculum time if it is necessary to make enough time to accelerate a pupil in English and/or mathematics: for example, deferring second language study and/or limiting design/technology or humanities in any key stage.

Special educational needs (SEN)

The academy 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.

To support pupils with SEN, ARK has appointed a network SEN specialist to work across the network to help identify, assess and plan high quality provision. We have also introduced 'Drive for Literacy' – a programme to identify and accelerate the progress of pupils with literacy difficulties – and have a full time Speech and Language Therapist who works within the network. ARK also has an Early Language and Communications Advisor who focuses on the early identification of language difficulties.

A primary SENCO will be appointed in the first year of opening to lead, oversee and coordinate all matters regarding special and education needs. There will also be a secondary SENCO in the first year of the secondary school. Both SENCOs will hold the appropriate qualifications and work closely with the local authority and ARK's SEN team.

The SENCOs will lead a team of specialist teachers and assistants who will ensure that all pupils with special needs are identified early, not just those with formal statements of special educational needs, and will support teachers to write Individual Education Plans, or where necessary, Personal Behaviour Plans. These will be communicated to families and monitored termly. It is our expectation that these IEP targets will be addressed through targeted differentiation in lessons as well as, where appropriate, additional targeted classes.

Pupils with physical disabilities

The SENCOs will also be responsible for those pupils with a physical disability, who will be fully included in the academy curriculum. Individual plans will be developed for these pupils to ensure any necessary adjustments are made to enable full participation in aspects such as sports.

Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)

Many of ARK's academies serve communities with a high proportion of children with English as an additional language.

ARK's focus on depth before breadth is particularly well suited to supporting these pupils as, where needed, the curriculum will be tailored to provide additional time to accelerate progress in the core subjects. A solid grounding in English and mathematics will then allow them to more fully engage with an expanded subject base.

Gifted and talented

We identify gifted and talented children as being those young people with one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities.) We will expect gifted and talented pupils to make three sub-levels of progress per year as a minimum requirement in a subject that they are excelling in. This will be achieved through outstanding teaching and teachers who have excellent subject and specialist knowledge; furthermore, the classroom rotation model will support gifted and talented pupils by providing them with small group instruction with students of similar abilities. 'Extension tasks' will be developed to allow pupils to demonstrate different ways of thinking.

Gifted and talented pupils will also be offered additional advice, guidance and experiences including opportunities to: demonstrate leadership and planning; compete at county and national level and benefit from individual curriculum pathways that may allow for early entry and additional subject options.

Working with other agencies

In addition to the internal ARK resources we have developed, ARK also supports its schools to buy-in to local provision to support children with special needs. ARK Blended Learning Academy will work closely with the SEN, educational psychology and safeguarding teams at the local authority to ensure that the full circumstances of each child are known and that the full range of specialist support can be given to every pupil in order to help that pupil succeed.

Working with the wider community

ARK has substantial experience and expertise in running excellent, inner city comprehensive schools serving communities where FSM and EAL percentages are high and our education model has been developed to deliver outstanding outcomes for all pupils, regardless of their background or prior attainment.

We recognise that to serve these pupils properly, we need to work in partnership with the Local Authority and a range of other external agencies. These relationships will be built by working with those outside the school environment as equal partners and by making the time and effort to work across existing institutional boundaries and to explore ways of achieving the best outcomes for pupils and their families.

Our approach to engaging young people and local parents and building a strong local community can be summarised as:

- **We form a close partnership with parents.** We encourage parents to visit the academy for achievement assemblies, mealtimes and other special occasions. We have clear and easy to access websites to keep parents up to date. We maintain day to day contact with parents through regular phone calls, letters, texts and meetings – both to pass on praise and discuss any concerns. We will also feedback pupil progress to parents regularly.
- **We support families.** We provide a range of support for parents and families to enable them to engage with their child's education. A parent representative body will be established which would take the lead on providing services to the parent community.
- **The academy is open to the community.** Academy facilities are made available to local groups at affordable rates, encouraging the perception of the academy as a wider community resource.
- **We work with others in the community.** We work in partnership with other local schools, organisations and agencies (see below).

Section D5 – monitoring and assessment

Assessment is critical to the ARK education model and a key factor in our ability to achieve the ambitious targets laid in **Section C** and to ensure that all pupils are progressing as far and as fast as possible.

Target Setting

Targets will reflect the high expectations of the academy. The minimum attainment targets for pupils at each key stage, irrespective of entry point are:

- Early Years: seven points on all Literacy and mathematics scales
- Key Stage 1: level 2a in reading, writing and mathematics
- Key Stage 2: level 4a in English and mathematics
- Key Stage 3: level 5b in English and level 6c in mathematics
- Key Stage 4: grade C in English and mathematics.

As well as the floor target, the minimum expected progress in each key stage is:

- Early Years: at least four points on all literacy and mathematics scales
- Key Stage 1: at least 6 sublevels in English and mathematics
- Key Stage 2: at least 7 sublevels in English and mathematics
- Key Stage 3: at least 6 sublevels in English, 8 sublevels in mathematics
- Key Stage 4: at least 6 subgrades in English and mathematics (equivalent to at least two levels of progress).

For children with special educational needs, the minimum expectations will be tailored if necessary in discussion with the relevant SENCO.

Assessment and monitoring

ARK Blended Learning Academy will follow the ARK assessment model, which focuses on four main aspects:

- *Accurate diagnosis of learning and teaching needs* – outcomes of assessment for individuals and groups are used to pinpoint gaps, areas needing reinforcement and misconceptions.
- *Reliable judgements of attainment* – pupils' achievement in subjects is assessed regularly by each teacher and moderated in relation to external benchmarks.
- *Regular tracking, analysis and communication of pupil progress* – each pupil's academic progress is recorded, communicated, analysed and reported so that teachers, pupils and parents know how well each pupil is progressing from their baseline towards their target and can act if required.
- *Adjustment to provision* – outcomes of day-to-day assessment and formal summative assessment informs classroom teaching, curriculum, pupil grouping, individual pupil provision and teacher development. The use of online content/software will increase the ease of collecting and sharing real time progress data with the students and teachers.

The ARK assessment cycle

All ARK schools share the same assessment system and cycle:

- Half termly assessments in core subjects (including science at secondary phase).
- Termly assessments in all other subjects.

Teachers will review and discuss the results of these assessments promptly and thoroughly with their line manager and feedback to pupils and parents, with face to face parent meetings taking place at least twice a year. Where a child is at risk of underachieving, clear and coordinated strategies will be implemented and monitored.

The attainment reports are also analysed to ensure that particular groups of pupils are not underperforming (for example those on free school meals) and all pupils are receiving the support they need from different staff across the academy, in order to achieve their predicted targets.

Each term, the ARK central team also analyses the data available and provides the principal, the director of education and the Local Governing Body with a detailed report. This report informs the monitoring visits (see **section F1-F4** for more detail) and enables both ARK and the governors to identify any issues early on and provide appropriate challenge and support.

Section D6 – Admissions

Primary and secondary admissions

ARK academies are non-selective, community schools for local children and we therefore propose using straight line distance as the main admissions criterion (after admitting pupils in care and those with siblings already attending the school).

In line with all ARK schools, the admissions policy will be in accordance with the School Admissions Code and we will work through the Local Authority's coordinated admissions process.

16 – 19 Admissions

When making course decisions at age 16, pupils will be given high quality careers and university advice by the academy to ensure that their course choices properly support and prepare them for their intended destination when they leave education.

For admission into the academy sixth form, all applicants will be expected to have an academic reference from their current school supporting their suitability for A level study and must meet a basic requirement of having five GCSEs at or above grade B level, including English language and

maths. Some higher individual grade requirements may be necessary to study specific courses. These will be confirmed and published before opening the sixth form.

If the academy sixth form is oversubscribed, places will be offered first to applicants who are looked after, then to existing year 11 pupils who are continuing their studies at the academy and applicants with a sibling attending the academy. The remaining places will be allocated to those applicants meeting the basic qualification who live closest to the school.

Section D7 – Behaviour management and pupil wellbeing

The vision for the academy places an emphasis on excellent standards of behaviour and conduct in school and the local community at all times. As laid out in the six ARK pillars (**Section C**) ensuring that teaching and learning are uninterrupted makes exceptional achievement possible. The academy's behaviour policy is therefore extremely important in ensuring academic success for every pupil.

The aim of the academy's behaviour policy will be to determine the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, at all times encouraging pupils to take greater personal responsibility for their actions, and a hierarchy of rewards and sanctions and how they will be fairly and consistently applied.

The principal will develop the detailed policy and procedures in consultation with ARK's director of education in advance of the academy's opening as part of the principal training programme. The policy will be made explicit to staff, pupils and parents during the recruitment and induction process and will be applied fairly and consistently. The principal will review the policy regularly and monitor it systematically to evaluate and constantly improve it.

Overall, the policy will:

- Promote self-discipline and proper regard for authority among pupils
- Encourage good behaviour and respect for others and prevent all forms of bullying among pupils
- Regulate pupils' conduct
- Ensure pupils understand how to monitor, learn from and take responsibility for their own behaviour
- Promote the idea of personal responsibility.

Pupils will be encouraged to develop:

- Respect for others; their feelings, opinions, cultures, limitations and the right to their individuality.
- Respect for themselves; pride in their own achievement and that of others within the academy, high standards of dress and behaviour and the desire to produce their best work at all times.
- Respect for the environment; their personal environment, the academy and other people's property and the wider community in which we live

- Respect for the future; the belief that we can all make a difference by our contribution to the local, national and global community.

Rewards and Sanctions

An academy ethos of encouragement is central to the promotion of good behaviour. Rewards will be clearly defined and there will be a strong emphasis on praise, both formal and informal, to individuals and groups.

Sanctions are also required to respond to inappropriate behaviour and a range of appropriate sanctions will be clearly defined in the procedures. Their use will be characterised by clarity of why the sanction is being applied and what change in behaviour is required. The procedures will make a clear distinction between the sanctions applied for minor and major offences.

Roles and responsibilities

The principal will be responsible for the implementation and day-to-day management of the policy and procedures, but all staff will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied.

Working with parents

Parents and carers will be encouraged to work in partnership with the academy in maintaining high standards of behaviour and will have regular opportunities to raise any issues which arise, particularly those related to bullying or other disruptive incidents.

All parents (and pupils at secondary level) will be expected to sign a home-academy agreement outlining behaviour expectations, roles and responsibilities. The home-academy agreement will also be signed by a member of the senior leadership team on behalf of the academy.

Bullying and pupil wellbeing

A strong culture and explicit teaching of behaviour will minimise the opportunities for children to be bullied or become bullies. A culture will be fostered at the academy that everyone has the right to learn in a safe and secure environment and a responsibility to be vigilant when it comes to noticing and reporting bullying. On those occasions where bullying is found to occur, the academy will implement a system of clear procedures for dealing with different degrees of bullying, recognising the needs of all of the pupils involved and ensuring that a consistent response is provided to both bullies and their victims.

Feedback on pupil well being will also be elicited from the pupil council and we will ensure that pupils are appropriately supported, coached and counselled at stressful times such as test and exam periods.

Attendance

In order to achieve our ambitious attainment targets, it is essential that every pupil attends school every day. This is a basic expectation that will be

stressed to parents/carers at every opportunity. Leave of absences will not be granted during term time and that all medical appointments should be made out of school hours. This will be reinforced in home visits and is a commitment made in the home/school agreement. Attendance officers at primary and secondary phases will make first morning absence calls to parent and carers. 100% attendance will be recognised and praised with certificates and raffles prizes. At secondary level, lateness will incur a same day detention.

Exclusions

Exclusions – both fixed term and permanent – are considered a last resort in managing behaviour. ARK's exclusions policy (as laid out in its master funding agreement) is in line with national guidance and policy on exclusions.

Section D8 – (not applicable)

Section E: Evidence of demand – part 1

Please complete the table, using the information below to assist you.

If your school is new provision:

- In **column A** please provide the proposed number of places in each year group.
- In **column B** please provide the number of children of the relevant ages whose parents have indicated that they will choose the proposed school as their first choice.
- Leave **column C** blank.
- In **column D** please express the demand (column B) as a percentage of the places available (column A). i.e. $D = (B/A) \times 100$.

If your school is an existing independent school applying to become a Free School:

- In **column A** please provide the proposed number of places in each year group.
- In **column B** please provide the number of children already on roll at your school.
- In **column C** please provide the number of children of the relevant ages, who are not currently on roll but whose parents have indicated that they will choose the proposed school as their first choice.
- In **column D** please express the total demand (column B + column C) as a percentage of the places available (column A). i.e. $D = ((B+C)/A) \times 100$.

	2014				2015			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Reception	90	NA	NA	NA	90	NA	NA	NA
Year 1					90	NA	NA	NA
Year 2								
Year 3								
Year 4								
Year 5								
Year 6								
Year 7					180	NA	NA	NA
Year 8								
Year 9								
Year 10								
Year 11								
Year 12								
Year 13								
Totals	90	NA	NA	NA	360	NA	NA	NA

See section E2 for details of ARK’s extensive work to demonstrate demand for ARK Blended Learning Academy.

Section E: Evidence of demand – part 2

Please refer to pages 27-29 of the 'How to Apply' guidance for what should be included in this section.

Introduction

In order to demonstrate evidence of demand for ARK Blended Learning Academy to pupils of all backgrounds and abilities, we have undertaken a wide range of activities:

- **Parent demand survey.** We undertook a statistically robust phone survey of 3,200 homes across London to test the demand for the ARK model among parents with children of appropriate age (see *Parent Demand* below).
- **Place need analysis.** We analysed which LAs in London have the greatest basic need (see *Place Need* below).
- **Demographic analysis.** We analysed the demographics of London (see *Demographics* below).
- **Community engagement.** We have a strategy for raising awareness of the school locally once a school site is selected (see *Additional Local Demand* below).
- **Comparative analysis.** We looked at our experiences at our comparable open schools to assess likely demand (see *ARK Experience* below).

We have consulted on this approach with both the Department for Education's Free Schools Group and the New Schools Network.

Parent demand

In November 2012 ARK commissioned an independent research company to carry out a phone survey of parents with potential primary (0-4) and secondary (5-11) aged children to establish whether they were aware of and supported an ARK free school proposal.

Phone interviews were conducted with 3,200 parents living across 16 local authorities in London. The full results of this survey are included as annex 11. The highlights are as follows:

- Across London, 75% of parents were likely to send their children to an ARK school.
- This figure increased to 77% among parents who were already aware of ARK Schools as an academy operator. This figure rose 79% in Redbridge.
- Parents were particularly supportive of the incorporation of blended learning with the ARK model. 81% agreed that it was important that schools used new forms of IT. This figure was even higher in Hammersmith and Fulham, 89%, and Brent, 90%.

- Parents overwhelmingly approve of the key aspects of ARK's educational model. Specifically:
 - 97% of all parents interviewed agreed that they would like to send their child to a school that encourages its students to progress academically.
 - 77% agreed that they would be happy for their child to attend a longer school day from 8:30 – 16:30.
 - 95% of parents agreed that they would like to send their child to a school which offers a wide range of extracurricular activities.
 - 97% agreed that a focus on developing strong English and mathematics skills for every student was important.
- Across London 33% of parents surveyed with children aged 5-11 felt that there were insufficient places available in local secondary schools which they would like their child to attend. Among parents of incoming primary aged children this figure was 30%. A large number also commented on how there were not enough good quality local school places available.

These statistics show that there is a high demand for the ARK Schools model across London and that demand will be boosted further by the incorporation of the blended learning model.

Place need

There is a huge need for school places across London. According to recent figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) the birth rate in London has risen to 130,840 per annum in 2010, up from 104,312 in 2002. Annex 12 details the increase in birth rate from 2002-2010. The local authorities where this trend is most acute are Croydon and Ealing which remain among the local authorities highest birth rates over an eight year period (ranging from second to sixth highest).

In 2011 the ONS put the number of children approaching both primary and secondary age (0-4/ 7-10) as over 500,000 and 380,000 respectively, well over 10% of the entire population of the capital. These figures demonstrate the increased pressure on school places in the incoming years with this pressure being felt across the whole of the city.

Demographics

As with all ARK Schools, it is ARK's expectation that ARK Blended Learning Academy will serve a diverse community. On average, London Lower Super Output Areas (the area on which the index of deprivation affecting children, IDACI, is measured) have the highest levels of deprivation of any region in the country. The three local authorities with the highest levels of income deprivation are all in London (see annex 13 for London's IDACI map).

In 2008, across London over one third of children spoke English as an Additional Language. In 2009, 23% of secondary school age children were eligible for free school meals. Among primary and nursery aged children this figure rises to 24%.

ARK has significant experience of delivering an outstanding education to children from a similar background.

Community Engagement

To ensure that the academy is full ARK will work to develop strong relationships with the local community when the location for the academy is confirmed. In particular, we will work with the local authority and a variety of voluntary organisations and local schools to ensure that the new academy is viewed as a school of choice by all local people, not just one particular group.

We anticipate that once the site is confirmed, parent commitment to the new school proposal will be even higher. The approaches we use to engage with the community, including the use of facilities, are described in detail in **Section D4**.

Annex 14 details the proposed community engagement which ARK will undertake should this free school proposal be successful and our experience is these activities help to boost admissions during the year prior to opening.

ARK experience

The table below shows the build-up of demand (expressed as applications for places overall and first preference applications) for our two of our secondary schools, Ark Academy and King Solomon Academy.

Academy	Admission year	1st preference	Other Preference	Total
Ark Academy	2010	55	186	241
	2011	285	702	987
	2012	325	783	1108
King Solomon Academy	2009	69	193	262
	2010	109	256	365
	2011	156	321	477
	2012	135	345	480

Both King Solomon Academy and Ark Academy were undersubscribed in their first year of opening, but within two years of opening both were oversubscribed on first preferences alone.

Since building a successful network of schools, we have seen our admissions numbers in new schools increase significantly. For example:

- In its first year of opening, Isaac Newton Academy received 525 applications for 180 places.
- In its first year of opening, Bolingbroke Academy received almost 600 applications for 120 places.
- ARK Atwood, which opened without confirmation of its permanent

site, received 29 applications for entry in 2011 (but opened with a full cohort through late applications and the strong local basic need). For entry in 2012 the number of applications had risen to 143 of which 33% were first choice applications.

These data reflect the strong demand for the ARK education model and that this demand increases rather than decreases once our academies have opened.

Conclusion

Based on our research into basic need and demand for the ARK model across London the local authorities we think would be particularly supportive of the ARK Blended Learning proposal are Croydon, Ealing, Brent and Redbridge. Early discussions around this proposal have already taken place and we would progress these with the relevant LAs should this proposal be successful.

In light of the high need for school places across London as well as the widespread demand for the ARK education model we are confident that ARK Blended Learning Academy would be full from year 1, and would be oversubscribed on first preferences within two years of opening.

Section F: Capacity and capability

Please refer to pages 30-33 of the 'How to Apply' guidance for what should be included in this section.

Sections F1 – F4 ARK Schools central resources and expertise

ARK Schools has a successful track record of opening and operating new schools at primary and secondary level.

ARK Schools' central team supports all 18 schools within its network. In addition, ARK Schools is using its charitable income to help create the central infrastructure to support an expanded network of schools (20 secondary and 30 primary academies).

As with all new or existing ARK schools, ARK Blended Learning will be able to draw on these network resources before and after opening.

ARK Schools will use the staff in its central team to support the opening and running of ARK Blended Learning Academy. The central team's role is to support the academy by:

- Providing effective support services
- Creating a collaborative network which facilitates the sharing of good practice and resources among staff
- Holding schools accountable for performance through regular monitoring and rigorous performance management.

This means that ARK comfortably has capacity within its education, financial and operational teams for the new academy to ensure its successful opening and on-going support of the academy.

Details of the roles and the capacity of the ARK central team in the key areas of educational, financial and operational support are below.

Project management

The projects team consists of 10 people and is responsible for coordinating the opening of new schools and the management of the academy building projects. The projects team has been undertaking the project management role since 2007. We have opened fifteen academies since then and have four more currently in development at the time of submitting this free school application.

ARK will provide a dedicated project manager to work on the development of ARK Blended Learning Academy, The project manager will be supported by an administrator and will draw on the other key personnel in the projects team (and the wider ARK central team) as necessary to plan and coordinate the opening of ARK Blended Learning Academy. These include

the project director, head of construction, finance manager and buildings project manager. Additional technical, client design advice (buildings) and legal advice is contracted as necessary. See annex 15 for an organisational chart of the ARK Projects team.

Blended learning expertise and capacity

In addition to the dedicated project manager from the ARK Projects team, ARK Blended Learning Academy will also be supported by an additional project manager that is focused on blended learning and innovation. This project manager is helping to set up and evaluate blended learning pilots across the network. The blended learning project manager and team of teachers currently working on the blended learning pilots will ensure that the academy's blended learning model is informed by on-going research from both within and outside the ARK network.

Education expertise and capacity

The ARK education team comprises former teachers, school leaders and educationalists who support the principals and senior leadership teams of each school, both in their planning before a new or transition school opens and in the delivery of their educational vision once the school is open.

At least once a term the ARK director of education leads a monitoring visit of each academy and prepares a report on the academy's progress. This report is shared with the Managing Director and the Chair of Governors of each academy and enables ARK and the local governing body (LGB) to work together to provide support and intervention to the academy wherever necessary (outlined below).

The ARK education team provides expertise in the following key areas to support each academy:

- Mathematics – [REDACTED]
- Maths Mastery – [REDACTED]
- English – [REDACTED]
- Science – [REDACTED]
- Special educational needs – [REDACTED]
- Music – [REDACTED]
- Extended Schools – [REDACTED]
- University and careers success – [REDACTED]
- Assessment and data – [REDACTED]
- Learning and development – [REDACTED]
- Head of Initial Teacher Training – [REDACTED]
- Sixth form lead – [REDACTED]

We attach particular importance to the training and development of all our staff and offer all staff three full-network training days every year, as well as access to a wide range of courses and opportunities through ARK's online training menu, supported by the training and development team.

The ARK also works closely with Future Leaders and Teaching Leaders to

maximise opportunities for staff within the network.

Operations capacity – Finance and Facilities

The central finance team provides strategic direction, support and training to the finance teams at each academy. The finance team also performs a procurement function for some of the operational contracts across the ARK network to make best use of economies of scale and other benefits.

The Responsible Officer role at ARK's academies is performed by members of the central finance team, providing oversight of each academy's financial affairs to ensure that resources are being managed economically and effectively and that sound systems of internal financial control are being maintained.

Two network facilities managers (one based in London and one in Birmingham) support the finance and resources staff at each academy with small scale building projects and facilities and premises related issues such as catering and cleaning, both during the planning stage and once the schools are open.

Operations capacity – HR and recruitment

ARK is a single employer with over 1000 staff and takes its commitment to managing and developing its staff seriously. The network has a single set of HR policies, including the diversity and equality policy, which is monitored centrally. The HR team works closely with the principals and academy Finance and Resources Directors to ensure the implementation of these policies is consistent and well managed.

ARK has a specialist recruitment team. The recruitment team is responsible for working with individual schools to meet their recruitment needs and developing network approaches to recruitment and retention (see **section F5** for more detail). [REDACTED] is ARK's [REDACTED] and works on the development of capacity within the ARK network. This includes identifying aspiring deputy headteachers and assistant principals and supporting them to develop into future leaders within the ARK network. [REDACTED] role also encompasses the identification of governors to each academy's local governing body, ensuring the needs of each school are met through its governance arrangements.

Operations capacity – IT

IT is managed centrally, enabling flexible deployment of staff and a higher quality, better value managed service. ARK also runs network wide management information systems to support school improvement, HR and finance. CMIS is used for pupil data and assessment; Sage Snowdrop is used to handle all HR information and PS Financials, Soprano and Vision are used as the organisation's finance systems. Implementation of and training on these systems is managed centrally and delivered to schools both before they open and at regular intervals.

Governance

ARK's governance arrangements (as laid out below) are laid out in the Master Funding Agreement. Through the success of ARK's existing schools, the governance structure has been demonstrated to be effective in delivering challenge to those with executive functions at the school.

ARK Schools governance arrangements

Under its funding agreement, the legal governing body for all ARK academies is the board of directors of ARK Schools.

The ARK Schools Board delegates some of its powers to each academy's local governing body (LGB) which operates as a committee of the ARK Schools Board.

See annex 16 for a table detailing the division of responsibilities between ARK Schools Board and the local governing bodies and annex 17 for a diagram laying out the above structure.

LGB composition

The LGB composition for ARK Blended Learning Academy will be:

- The principal.
- One elected member of the teaching staff.
- One elected representative from the non-teaching staff.
- One elected parent representative.
- One local authority nominee.
- Up to seven other nominations.

Local governing bodies will normally meet six times a year. Where appropriate, the chair may decide to hold part of the meeting without academy staff governors or officers present.

Where appropriate and necessary, finance and curriculum subcommittees may be established by the LGB. Otherwise the oversight of these areas is carried out by the full LGB.

Principal performance management

The principal is jointly line managed by ARK's director of education and Chair of the LGB. At least once a term, ARK's director of education will lead a monitoring visit to ARK Blended Learning Academy and prepare a report on the school's progress. This report is shared with the Managing Director of ARK Schools and the LGB Chair and informs the performance management of the principal. The outcome of the monitoring visit also informs the central education team's termly support plan.

As well as the monitoring report, the academy is monitored against termly attainment reports and a termly finance report, shared with the ARK Schools team and the local governing body.

Parent representative body

ARK Schools will work with the LGB to establish a parent representative body. Although the precise nature of this body varies for each academy, the parent body usually has responsibility for:

- The promotion of strong community relations.
- The development of suitable fundraising strategies.
- Communicating any parental concerns to the chair of the parent representative body.

Section F5

Recruiting the head of primary designate and principal designate

As referenced above, ARK Schools has a dedicated recruitment team who will recruit all of the staff to ARK Blended Learning Academy.

ARK is committed to recruiting outstanding leaders and also identifying and developing talent within its own network of schools. Across its network, ARK uses its experienced principals with outstanding track records, such as [REDACTED] (Ark Academy), [REDACTED] (Burlington Danes Academy) and [REDACTED] (Isaac Newton Academy) to identify potential talent through its Aspiring to Headship Programme and provide training, leadership and mentoring support to all of ARK's first time headteachers.

The recruitment team is responsible for ensuring that the recruitment process is rigorous and the very best candidate is appointed. The process and timeline for recruiting both the primary headteacher and principal designate is laid out in annex 18.

Recruiting other high quality members of staff

The ARK recruitment team will also work with the principal and head of primary to recruit the members of staff (both teaching and support) for ARK Blended Learning Academy. This will be done through:

- A number of specific recruitment events.
- Advertising in the TES and other relevant publications.

Recruiting from the local community

We aim to recruit staff from the local community wherever possible. This will bring benefits to the wider community and build ownership of the academy locally. To support this, where possible, ARK will advertise through the local Council's job websites and publications.

The timeline for recruiting the staff for the academy's first year of opening is attached as annex 19.

We have not yet identified any specific candidates for either staff or governor positions.

Recruiting governors

Once a Free School proposal was approved and a site identified, ARK's head of organisational development will work with local contacts to identify

suitable governors for the academy. We aim to seek out prospective governors who reflect the local community and will be highly regarded within it. We will also seek to appoint governors with skills which would particularly benefit the governing body.

All potential governors are asked to submit a CV and covering letter before being interviewed at ARK. Appropriate safeguarding checks are carried out before the governor position is finally offered.

For more detail of the role of local governors see **section F1-F4**.

Section G: Initial costs and financial viability

Please refer to pages 34-38 of the 'How to Apply' guidance for what should be included in this section. As explained in the 'How to Apply' guidance you are required to complete the necessary financial planning spreadsheets as well as providing a supporting narrative. The templates can be found [here](#). Please use this section for the narrative.

Part 1 – Financial plans

Two financial plans for the academy are attached. Annex 20a shows the position where each year group is full as it comes on stream (100% pupil roll). Annex 20b shows the impact if each year is only 80% full.

Part 2 – Financial narrative

Section G1: Provide accurate financial plans that are consistent with the rest of your application and based on realistic assumptions about income and expenditure.

██████████

Section G2: Show how the school will be viable by operating within the expected levels of funding available both during the post-opening period and when there are pupils in each year.

██████████

Section G3: Show how the school will be financially resilient to reductions in income.

██████████

Section H: Premises

Please refer to pages 39-40 of the 'How to Apply' guidance for what should be included in this section.

Proposed site for ARK Blended Learning Academy

ARK Schools is working with local authorities across London to identify a suitably sized site for the academy, which is also ideally located to meet the significant place need which is spread across the city.

Annexes

The annexes:

- are included within the page limit and restricted to documents relating to your evidence of demand (e.g. questionnaires and maps) and relevant CVs;
- should be submitted as part of your application i.e. as one Word document;
and
- do not include the financial templates (which should be submitted separately in Excel and are excluded from the page limit).

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