

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

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

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 City of Westminster

Neighbouring LAs Kensington and Chelsea, Brent, Camden, City of London; Wandsworth, Lambeth (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)

ARK has been in discussion with the Local Authority in response to increasing demand for primary provision in the area. ARK already runs the outstanding King Solomon Academy primary school in Church Street Ward and the Local Authority is supportive of the proposals to open another ARK primary school to fulfil the need for places in the area and parent demand.

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 www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 10A of the Children Act 1989(7) for child minding or providing day care?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006(8)?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is a member, or has been a member in the past, of a proscribed organisation?</p>	<p>No</p>
<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.

There is an increasing need for primary places and oversubscription at reception entry level in the North Westminster area. Westminster's projected population growth is among the highest in the country and the demand for primary places will continue to increase over the coming years.

ARK has a track record in primary education in the area, as it runs King Solomon Academy nearby (rated outstanding by Ofsted in its first inspection). Despite only opening three years ago, this year 100 parents applied for only 60 reception places at to the school, leaving a waiting list of 40 parents.

In every year since opening, King Solomon pupils have outperformed both local and national averages in their rates of progress, despite their intake having lower than average rates of attainment (Appendix 2). If pupils continue to improve and achieve along this trajectory, the majority of them will achieve A*s at GCSE level in English and maths.

Based on the highly successful model at King Solomon, ARK is seeking to expand primary provision to serve as many parents as possible, to ensure that their children are ready to fully engage with and excel in their secondary education.

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. 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. It will have particularly strong links with King Solomon Academy. All ARK schools operate within one academy Trust, ARK Academies, with a local governing body for each school and a single ARK Academies board of trustees.

ARK will ensure that high minimum expectations are held throughout the school; we will 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.

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 King Solomon 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 and work with local parents 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

The implementation of this model will be based on the following approach:

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 which operates eight academies in London, Portsmouth and Birmingham, (three of which include primary schools) 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' in its first full Ofsted inspection, within three years of its opening.

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. 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 3rd 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 local early years, primary and secondary experts (in particular from King Solomon Academy) 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, local parents and staff from King Solomon Academy will be represented on the project steering group, which will be responsible for signing off key documents and decisions.

ARK will then work with parents and local education 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.

As described above, local primary school capacity is currently being stretched and parents are increasingly unable to find places at local primary schools for their children.

Westminster's population is growing at one of the fastest rates in the UK. It is projected that between 2008 and 2018 the population will increase by 18.4%, to reach a figure of 292,000. The population is also becoming younger, with the proportion of people aged 0-15 increasing by 1.5% over the same time period. The number of young people in the borough is therefore forecast to increase dramatically over the next ten years.

The number of applications for primary places in the borough has been rapidly growing over the last few years, with a 7% increase in the number of applications in 2009 and a further 5% increase in 2010.

This year, 100 children across Westminster were not allocated a primary place to take up this September, putting significant strain on the admissions service to try to find alternative provision for them. Of those parents who were able to secure places, almost a quarter (23%) did not receive their first choice of primary school. King Solomon Academy primary school was oversubscribed by a whole form of entry, demonstrating the very real parent demand for the ARK model of educational provision in the north Westminster area.

Projections show that between 2011 and 2015 there will be demand for an extra 351 primary places in the northern half of the borough, with the majority of this demand located in the north west quarter. This will place increasing pressure on existing primary schools in this area, many of which like King Solomon are already oversubscribed.

The sites under investigation for the proposed new school are located in the centre of this area of increased demand.

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

The proposed capacity of the school is 480 places.

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

The proposed school will 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 opens in currently-unused accommodation in King Solomon Academy in September 2011. King Solomon Academy has a fully kitted out primary school, with its own administrative areas, entrances and playspace, which could be made available for up to two years (120 pupils). The school would then move to its permanent accommodation (see below) in 2012.

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.

Westminster City Council is currently reviewing possible sites for the Free School and aims to have identified a site in the North Westminster area by the end of December 2010. This is likely to be an existing educational building which will require refurbishment to make it fit for purpose.

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

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.