

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)

██████████

Name of your organisation

ARK Academies (working with the Neighbourhood Schools Campaign, the NSC)

Address (of organisation or individual)

ARK Academies

██████████

London

██████████

Email Contact

██████████

Telephone Number

██████████

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

No

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

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

ARK Academies, a DfE Accredited Schools Group (form attached) working with the NSC (parent group)

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

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, our organisation is incorporated Company Registration Number: 05112090 Company Address: [REDACTED], London, [REDACTED] Details of Directors and Secretary: Directors: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. Company Secretary; [REDACTED]
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 Wandsworth Neighbouring LAs Richmond Upon Thames, Kingston Upon Thames, Merton, Lambeth; Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, City of Westminster (across the river)
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Is your Local Authority aware of your intention to set up a Free School?

Yes

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

The Local Authority supports the proposals and recognises the need for new secondary places in Northcote Ward in Wandsworth. The LA is in ongoing discussions with the Neighbourhood School Campaign.

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.

The NSC has been campaigning for a non-selective, non-denominational school in Northcote ward since 2009. Over 2,000 parents have signed the NSC's petition to establish the new school because there is a real local need - local Year 6 children currently disperse to 49 different secondary schools. A new school will give local parents real choice and raise standards across the borough.

In May, the NSC selected ARK to set up and operate the new school. This was based on a number of meetings, school visits, a questionnaire (attached) and an interview.

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 NSC's aim is to create a small, socially inclusive neighbourhood secondary school, where teaching and learning enable pupils to become knowledgeable, confident, competent and self reliant citizens, fully prepared for adult life and the world of work. The school and parents will work in partnership to ensure every child fulfils their potential.

The NSC and ARK share a belief in high aspirations, high motivation and high achievement in and for all pupils, irrespective of their start in life. In particular, we aim to ensure that every pupil makes enough progress by age 18 to have real options: to move into higher education or follow the career path of their choice.

The school will be a five form entry secondary school, ideally located on the site of the disused [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. It will be non-selective, probably using straight line distance as its main admissions criterion, and non-denominational. The school will be part of the network of ARK schools sharing curriculum, teaching and learning practices, pastoral practices and administrative services. 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.

To achieve our ambitious aim, ARK will bring together experienced teachers

and education professionals to deliver a rigorous educational model which results in an outstanding local school. The key principles of this model are:

1. High expectations for:
 - Pupil achievement and behaviour
 - Staff professionalism, skill and commitment
2. Rigorous and engaging lessons
3. Respect for teachers and 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. Larger schools broken down into smaller units: schools-within-schools
8. Aspirational identity
9. Motivational culture
10. Strong partnership with parents

The ARK implementation of this model is 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 who share our core beliefs and principles
 - We will empower principals to deliver our shared vision

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

ARK Academies is an education charity, already operating eight academies in London, Portsmouth and Birmingham, with a ninth opening in September 2012, whose 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.

ARK also runs two programmes aimed at developing leaders in urban secondary schools – Teaching Leaders and Future Leaders – and is currently piloting a Year 7 intervention programme called ARK Plus, which supports pupils with behaviour difficulties to make the transition to secondary education.

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], 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).

The NSC has selected ARK to operate the new school as one of ARK's network of academies (see above). ARK will work in partnership with the NSC to deliver the school.

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 proposed 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). ARK will work with the NSC to agree effective governance arrangements that put parents at the centre of the school's accountability.

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 noted above, 2,000 parents have signed the NSC's petition supporting the creation of a new school in Northcote Ward. The following key statistics demonstrate the need underpinning the campaign:

1. Wandsworth has the lowest percentage of parents being offered their first choice of school – 48%. As a result, local Year 6 pupils disperse to 49 different secondary schools each year. In 2009, 27.8% of Wandsworth secondary pupils went to another authority to attend school.
2. Of the 11 borough secondary schools, seven are oversubscribed – for example, one of the more popular schools has a catchment zone of 0.4 miles, the Northcote community live over 3 miles away. In September 2009, of the 346 surplus places, 50% related to Catholic schools where non-Catholics are not offered places on religious grounds. Of the three remaining schools with surplus places, the percentage of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C including English and maths are 43%, 36% and 37%.

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

The proposed capacity of the school is 950 places (including sixth form).

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 five form entry secondary school (150 per year group), and a sixth form for 200 pupils.

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

It is proposed that the school open in temporary accommodation (if this can be provided) as early as September 2011. The school would then move into its permanent buildings in September 2013.

PREMISES

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

The NSC has identified the site of the former [REDACTED] as the potential site for the academy ([REDACTED], London [REDACTED]). [REDACTED]. It is a listed building, which would require significant refurbishment to operate as a school. An outline feasibility study has shown that the site is large enough to accommodate a school of this size. We await more detailed information from [REDACTED] on the estimated costs of the refurbishment but indications are that it will be in the region of [REDACTED].

ARK and the NSC have met with [REDACTED] to tour the building and discuss the options, as well as visiting six other potential sites with them. Of these [REDACTED] has identified the [REDACTED] as a possible option, although is not the NSC's preferred site.

Temporary accommodation could potentially be provided in demountables on site or through phased occupation of the [REDACTED]. The preferred option, however, would be to open the school at the [REDACTED], as suggested by [REDACTED]

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



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.