

Ark

Chief Executive Ark

May 2026 | RBZEA





WELCOME

A letter from our Chair.

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive of Ark. This is a rare opportunity to lead one of the country's most influential incubators, working to develop new organisations and initiatives that address some of the most deep-rooted challenges in education and society.

From early years to teacher training and development, our ventures address issues facing our schools and communities, as well as the wider education sector. We use the frontline expertise we gain from Ark Schools to develop and test new approaches through our national education programmes, so that our impact benefits the wider system.

Over the past two decades, under Lucy Heller's leadership, Ark has grown from a small portfolio of local and international partnerships in social care, health and education, to one of the largest and highest performing multi-academy trusts (MATs) in the UK, and a leading voice in education reform.

Ark has incubated 21 ventures and helped to develop 7 more, including Maths Mastery, Ark Curriculum Plus, Ark Teacher Training, Ark Start, Ambition Institute, Now Teach, Frontline, and Purposeful Ventures. Collectively, these ventures, partnerships and directly operated programmes have had an impact on over 5.5 million children in the UK and reach over 45 million children globally each year.

Ark's most recent venture, EdCity – an ambitious civic partnership in West London – brings together mission-aligned organisations and individuals from the education and charitable sectors to collaborate, partner and work together for the benefit of all children.

Our Board is looking for an exceptional leader with the vision, integrity and operational judgement to take Ark into its next chapter – someone who shares our belief that research-led approaches in education can be implemented at scale to improve the education outcomes of all young people so they leave school with real choices.

If this sounds like you, we would very much welcome your application.

Ian Wace

Chair of Trustees, Ark

ABOUT ARK

Transforming lives through education

At Ark, we believe that every child deserves an excellent education and real choices in life. Yet for too many young people, life chances are still shaped by background and socio-economic circumstances. That conviction has driven our work from the very beginning and continues to shape everything we do across our schools and wider programmes, enabling children to fulfil their potential regardless of their starting point.

A research-led approach and an entrepreneurial mindset have defined Ark from the beginning. These principles have driven the development of a wide range of projects and partnerships, which today reach over 45 million children globally each year.

Since opening our first school two decades ago, Ark has sought to test new approaches to teaching and learning, and to extend our impact well beyond the classroom.

We are committed to continuous improvement and innovation in every aspect of our work, always striving to do more and do better for the children in our care. Insights from our schools feed directly into our national education programmes, ensuring our impact extends beyond our own communities and contributes to improving outcomes across the education system.

Read about our [history](#) and our [impact](#).

ARK IN NUMBERS

20+

years of innovating, incubating and school improvement

39

schools across the Ark network

30,000

children educated every day in Ark schools and nurseries

5.5m

children reached across the UK

45m

children impacted globally



GET FURTHER



A new leadership model

Ark is growing fast, expanding its network of schools and nurseries across the country as well as continuing to develop innovative programmes for the sector as a whole. To support our ambitions, Ark is appointing two Chief Executives: one to lead Ark Schools, and one to lead Ark, the wider charity. This structure will provide each organisation with the dedicated strategic focus it needs, while preserving the close collaboration between schools and ventures that has long been central to Ark's success. The two organisations will continue to operate as 'One Ark', with the Chief Executives working in close partnership to advance a shared mission and deepen our collective impact for the benefit of all children.

ARK

Innovating for system change beyond our schools.

Ark is an education charity that develops, tests and scales the programmes that extend Ark's impact far beyond our schools. Our portfolio of ventures in subject mastery, teacher training and early years reaches over 300,000 children nationally, while EdCity provides a hub for the wider education sector to connect and collaborate for greater system impact.

ARK SCHOOLS

Great schools for our communities.

Ark Schools is a large multi-academy trust, operating 39 primary and secondary schools across Birmingham, Hastings, London and Portsmouth. Our focus is on delivering excellent outcomes for the 30,000 children educated in Ark schools today — and growing that reach by onboarding new schools and trusts into the network.

Innovating for system impact.

Today, Ark's work focuses on the UK — developing, testing and scaling what works across early years, curriculum and teacher training – and sharing this with the wider sector. Together, our current ventures reach hundreds of thousands of children and teachers nationally, and extend Ark's impact far beyond our own schools.

Ark Start

A network of six nurseries in London delivering a new model of affordable, high-quality early years care. 95% of Ark Start children meet a good level of development — significantly above the national benchmark — and the model is now recognised and being scaled with government support.

Ark Curriculum Plus (AC+)

Evidence-based subject-excellence programmes in English, maths, science and geography used by 733 partner schools and 300,000 learners nationally. AC+ supports schools to improve teaching and outcomes at scale, turning our classroom experience into national impact.

Ark Learning Institute

A centre of excellence for teacher training and professional development. Ark Teacher Training has trained 1,430 teachers since 2013 and partners with 168 schools nationally. A growing apprenticeship offer brings new talent into the profession.

EdCity

A £150m partnership in west London, providing a shared home for mission-aligned organisations, and a growing network of education practitioners, leaders and thinkers driving sector-wide change. The wider campus supports place-based transformation and community building.



Better, bolder, bigger — together.

We want to see every child in our schools and across the country reaching their full potential, thriving at school, and flourishing at the next stage. We've raised our ambitions for outcomes and effectiveness in our schools, and we're charting an exciting course to further scale the impact and influence of our wider work. Our 2035 strategy is built on four strategic shifts:

Better

Iterating, improving and sharing best practice

We will strengthen our model and consistently implement what we know works to benefit all children, in our schools and beyond.

Bolder

Innovating to reach our ambitious goals and bring about system change

We will invest in innovation, leveraging digital technologies and AI to improve outcomes, increase our effectiveness and solve some of the biggest challenges facing education.

Bigger

Growing our network to impact more children nationally

We will grow our nursery and school networks, expand our ATT and AC+ partnerships, and scale what we know works to have greater reach and influence.

Together

Working collaboratively with our communities, partners and the wider sector

From our new home at EdCity, we want to drive system change through enhanced collaboration across the education and charity sectors.



THE OPPORTUNITY

Lead Ark's next chapter of innovation and system change.

The next CEO of Ark will take a portfolio with more than two decades of sector-shaping impact, scale it further, and build the partnerships, products and platforms that change outcomes for children far beyond our own schools.

This is a rare opportunity to lead Ark's portfolio of ventures—AC+, Ark Learning Institute, Ark Start and EdCity—and to explore the possibility of starting new ventures, at a point when the sector urgently needs innovation.

Our next CEO will understand this landscape and recognise the importance of working in partnership to address it. Drawing on the insight generated across our schools and using them as a platform to test and refine new ideas, they will work with entrepreneurs and innovators to identify what works. They will support the development of commercially viable models and scale those with the greatest potential to drive meaningful change across the UK and beyond.

Chief Executive Officer, Ark.

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Chief Executive of Ark provides strategic leadership for Ark, ensuring the organisation fulfils its mission to transform lives through education and related initiatives.

The CEO is responsible for the overall strategy, development and external engagement of Ark, ensuring activities are aligned around a shared mission and operate with strong governance, financial sustainability and system impact.

The CEO of Ark also works in close partnership with the CEO of Ark Schools to ensure strategic alignment and to maintain the important connection between schools and ventures.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategy and Mission

- Develop and articulate Ark's long-term vision and strategic direction
- Ensure Ark's ventures and initiatives contribute coherently to the organisation's mission and impact
- Identify opportunities for Ark to influence and improve the wider education system

Leadership

- Provide leadership to Ark's portfolio of ventures and initiatives
- Collaborate closely with the CEO of Ark Schools
- Foster collaboration across the Ark ventures and schools to maximise impact

Governance

- Report to the Ark Board, working closely together to shape strategy and ensure strong governance
- Ensure appropriate oversight of Ark's ventures and activities

External Relations and Partnerships

- Represent Ark nationally with government, regulators, philanthropy and partners
- Develop strategic partnerships that extend Ark's reach and influence
- Lead philanthropic engagement and fundraising for Ark's mission

Financial Sustainability

- Ensure the financial sustainability of Ark and its ventures

Key Relationships

- Ark Board of Trustees
- CEO, Ark Schools
- Leaders of Ark ventures and initiatives
- Government, regulators and sector partners
- Philanthropic partners and donors

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Exceptional strategic leadership experience
- Strong understanding of education and social impact
- Experience working with complex governance structures
- Ability to build partnerships and influence at system level
- Strong financial and governance capability
- Track record for innovating, developing and scaling new ventures and initiatives
- Collaborative working style
- An advocate for educational equity and system change

Application process.

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Ark on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role via <https://roles.saxbam.com/> using code **RBZEA**. Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

Noon on Tuesday 26 May 2026

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.

Safeguarding

Ark is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. In order to meet this responsibility, Ark follows a rigorous selection process and requires all employees to undertake an enhanced DBS check.

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, Saxton Bampfylde Ltd are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply. Please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter), and do not include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.



Transforming lives through education.

APPOINTMENT MANAGED BY

Saxton Bampfylde