



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

APPLICATION PACK



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WELCOME

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the position of Chief Financial Officer at Falcon Education Academies Trust.

We are a newly formed academy trust established to take on and turn around schools and academies in the North of England with a history of under-performance.

Our purpose is to secure immediate, sustainable improvement in these schools and academies, drawing upon the expertise of our trustees and senior leaders, who have proven track records in improving schools in very challenging circumstances.

The Trust has been established with a governance and leadership structure based on the Department for Education (DfE) model for multi academy trusts.

We are confident that we will achieve immediate, sustainable improvement because the Trust has been established with a strong team of trustees and senior leaders with proven track records in improving schools in very challenging circumstances. We can also draw upon support from a network of partner multi academy trusts to provide additional capability and capacity.

You will be joining a highly innovative, ambitious and unique organisation, and we are therefore seeking an outstanding leader who can realise the highest possible quality of services to support our vision.

This is an exciting and very rewarding role and we look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully

Gareth Mason
Chief Executive Officer



ADVERTISEMENT

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Full-Time, all-year round
Required as soon as possible

Salary: Competitive

Falcon Education Academies Trust is a newly formed multi academy trust, led by a strong Trust Board and executive leadership team with a proven track record of school improvement. We are a Department for Education (DfE) approved sponsor multi academy trust. Our member academies will be either maintained schools that convert under a Directed Academy Order or existing academies that the DfE believes would benefit from being part of our trust.

Working directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), our CFO is a statutory role with overall responsibility for the leadership, organisation and management of finance across the Trust, providing strategic direction and maintaining high standards. The CFO will also lead on the effective financial due diligence of each sponsor academy, along with playing a key role in building and delivering the shared vision of the aims, values and culture of the organisation.

We are looking for an astute and articulate individual who is able to diplomatically challenge where appropriate. You will be a technically strong, dynamic, insightful and influential individual who can operate at a strategic level. You will bring with you managerial and professional experience in a senior multi academy trust finance role, possessing a degree and/or professional qualification relevant to the post and/or equivalent learning through professional experience.

You will be required to work in any of the schools/academies within the trust as directed by the CEO.

Falcon Education Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All appointments will be subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

The application and Equality and Diversity monitoring forms can be found on our website:
<https://www.falcontrust.co.uk/our-recruitment>

Completed forms should be submitted to k.bower@falcontrust.co.uk by **Monday 13th July 2020 (noon)**

If you have any queries, concerns or require support with the completion of your application form due to a disability, please contact k.bower@falcontrust.co.uk or telephone 0345 245 0056. We will be very happy to help.

Informal enquiries regarding the role are also welcome via the above contact details.

No agencies please



OUR VISION

Our goals are:

- To transform lives in some of the most challenging circumstances in the country.
- To raise standards in schools where there is no other support available.
- To support communities that are in acute need of quality educational provision that their children have the right to.
- To take on and work with any school that needs our support ... no matter what the barriers are.

We recognise that there will be different issues in each school or academy, ranging from academic standards, pupil outcomes or quality of teaching through to school leadership, staff recruitment and retention or financial management.

Our aims are to:

- Ensure quality of opportunity for all students.
- Secure the raising of standards, emphasising the importance of outcomes for students.
- Develop and appoint experts to benefit the trust and the wider education system.
- Offer a broad and balanced curriculum which is knowledge rich and places literacy and numeracy at its heart.
- Achieve the transformation of life chances of the children within the schools and academies which the trust sponsors, by raising levels of achievement.
- Give young people important employability skills.
- Provide a fully inclusive education in the belief that all local children should attend local schools.
- Collaborate ahead of competing, avoiding any actions detrimental to any young person, member of staff, or other school or academy within the local community.
- Adapt the implementation of a model which enables every individual academy and all academies collectively to raise standards.
- Create an encouraging environment which retains and develops any unique local community ties and character alongside the transformational systemic model.
- Organise capacity in advance of need at all levels so that newly acquired schools and academies may benefit quickly whilst ensuring that existing academies continue to perform.
- Maximise resource allocation and utilisation to best effect and always within budgetary constraints.



JOB DESCRIPTION

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Trust Central Team
Full-time, all-year round

Salary: competitive

Responsible to: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Trust Board
Responsible for: Finance Manager

Background:

Falcon Education Academies Trust has been established with the support of the Department for Education (DfE) with a unique Master Funding Agreement. It will sponsor 'high risk' academies who have previously struggled to find a sponsor due to various ongoing liabilities with detrimental financial implications.

Purpose of the Job:

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is a statutory role with overall responsibility for the leadership, organisation and management of finance across Falcon Education Academies Trust, providing strategic direction and maintaining high standards. A key aspect of the role is the leadership of effective financial due diligence around each academy. This involves identifying all liabilities and financial risks and negotiating with the DfE to secure additional funding and identify liabilities that will not transfer to the Trust with the sponsorship of each academy.

The role is accountable for systems, processes, compliance and procedures relating to budgeting and finance, in line with the Board and Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements. Whilst creating a predominantly centralised finance function, the role will also be responsible for ensuring each academy abides by the Trust financial regulations and that they provide timely information in a prescribed format.

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Trust Board and Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the CFO has responsibility for the financial management of the Trust and for delivering on the Trust's financial strategy. This role is the designated CFO for The Trust and sits on the Executive Leadership Team. The CFO will work closely with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the Trust's business services, in line with The Academies Financial Handbook and other statutory obligations.



Special Features

- The postholder will be required to travel to any academies/schools within the Trust

Personal Contacts

External: DfE, ESFA, auditors, legal team, external professional consultants, HMRC, suppliers, parents, other government and local authority staff, other staff from academies and any other visitors to the Academy.

Internal: Students, staff, Trustees, Members of the Trust Board and Academy Council representatives.

Key Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Provide leadership to the Board on finance and accounting strategy to optimise the Trust's financial performance and strategic position;
2. Ensure that the Trust and its academies remain financially viable, working with the Executive Team, DfE, ESFA and Trustees to formulate and deliver plans that are achievable and affordable;
3. Be responsible for financial due diligence, identifying all financial risks and liabilities for incoming schools and ensuring that agreements are in place with the DfE to underwrite any deficits and inherited liabilities;
4. Liaise regularly with the DfE around grant funding, SFA development and underwriting academy liabilities and ensure that all grant related returns are submitted within required timescales;
5. Contribute fully to the development of the Trust's strategy across all areas of the business, facilitating decision making, as appropriate, and providing financial analysis and guidance on all activities, plans and targets;
6. Develop and oversee the quality of management information, budgeting and forecasting processes;
7. Ensuring that the Trust Board and Executive Team have regular and accurate information to manage delegated budgets. Provide professional advice and assistance as required;
8. Lead on the development and submission of bids for grants and proactively seek out other income generation opportunities;
9. Strengthen financial competence across the organisation to improve financial decision making and operational effectiveness;
10. Ensuring the continued evolution of sound information systems to enable the Board to make measured strategic and operational decisions;
11. Establish a high level of credibility and manage strong working relationships with external parties including the ESFA, HMRC, the DfE and external auditors;
12. Reviewing and improving existing Trust financial systems and policies ensuring they are robust, compliant and support current activities and future growth;
13. Ensuring the development of sound capital strategy for the Trust, working with the Estates and ICT teams to create medium and long-term capital plans;
14. Lead on the Trust's approach to risk management and co-ordinate the strategic risk registers and Board Assurance Framework;
15. Delivery of monthly (internal) and annual (external) consolidated accounts;
16. Cash/Treasury management – both day to day and strategic deposits – including daily movement/deposit of funds to ensure maximum returns for the Trust;
17. Managing development of financial reporting systems (including KPI dashboard) to ensure appropriate level/standard to support Trust objectives/plans;
18. Ensuring appropriate controls to safeguard, manage and account for all Trust assets.
19. Management of the budget process from planning through consolidation to final approval by the Trust Board;



20. Management of production of Trust Medium Term Financial Plan;
21. Delivery of consolidated management accounts pack (income statement/balance sheet/cash flow/variance reports to budget and revised full year forecasts);
22. Management of preparation of statutory accounts;
23. Management of submission of returns to tax authorities (VAT, Corporation Tax, PAYE/NI) including relationship with relevant external advisors;
24. Leadership, mentoring and provision of managed/continuous development of Finance staff across group;
25. Change management – developing/leading development of Finance organisation – adapting shape/structure/team abilities to meet evolving organisational requirements;
26. Management of establishment and maintenance of finance related policies and processes including Procurement policies and procedures;
27. Lead on Trust-wide procurement, including the management of the contracts register and ensure value for money is achieved across the Trust;
28. Undertake regular benchmarking, reporting any variances to Trustees and contribute to curriculum led financial planning;
29. Ensure the accurate and timely payment of salaries to all Trust employees;
30. To oversee effective operation of the payroll system;
31. Keep abreast of all developments and legislation surrounding payroll, pensions and benefits. Ensuring all legislation is implemented and adhered to by the Trust.
32. Management of project cost tracking including provision of monthly update to Finance and Audit Committee and Board;
33. Ensure the provision of 'on-boarding' support (in Trust policies and procedures/provision of transitional Finance support) to new academies

Supplementary Support

- a. Be aware of, and comply with, policies and procedures relating to child protection, health and safety, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to an appropriate person.
- b. Be aware of and support difference and ensure all students and staff have equal access to opportunities to learn and develop.
- c. Contribute to the overall ethos/work/vision and values of the Trust.
- d. Attend and participate in meetings.
- e. Participate in training and other learning activities as required.
- f. Recognise own strengths and areas of expertise and use these to advise and support others.
- g. Other duties agreed from time to time by the post holder with the Line Manager or Executive Principal/Chief Executive Officer.
- h. Play an appropriate part in child protection procedures, such as relating relevant information and recording/reporting disclosures to the designated teacher/relevant professional.

Notes

This job description is not necessarily a comprehensive definition of the post. It will be reviewed at intervals and it may be subject to modification or amendment at any time after consultation with the holder of the post.

This job description may be subject to change, following consultation between the post holder and the Trust.

The Trust is committed to safeguarding the welfare of its students and the successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service certificate and checks of the relevant barred list / prohibition lists.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

| Knowledge & Experience | Essential | Desirable |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Managerial and professional experience in a senior multi academy trust finance role | ✓ | |
| A successful record of working within a change environment and a commitment to the delivery of Best Value services | ✓ | |
| A sound knowledge or experience of relevant legislation | ✓ | |
| An innovative leader with a vision for strategic financial leadership in a multi academy trust | ✓ | |
| Knowledge of principles of, or direct experience of, “lean thinking” methodologies e.g. systems thinking | | ✓ |
| Experience of successfully line managing high performing finance teams, ensuring the achievement of KPIs | ✓ | |
| In-depth knowledge of current academy financial regulations, including procurement, VAT and HMRC | ✓ | |
| Experience of leading effective financial due diligence and identification of financial risks and liabilities of incoming schools | ✓ | |
| Qualifications | | |
| A degree and/or professional qualification relevant to the post and/or equivalent learning through professional experience | ✓ | |
| Membership of a relevant professional body | ✓ | |
| A recognised management qualification (or commitment to undertake) | ✓ | |
| Skills | | |
| Ability to demonstrate a business focus and commercially minded approach to managing a public sector finance function | ✓ | |
| The ability to present complex information with knowledge and confidence, to meet the needs of various stakeholders (e.g. Trustees, ESFA, DfE) | ✓ | |
| Ability to win support for new ideas and concepts through effective advocacy skills | ✓ | |
| A strong understanding of ICT and its potential for the effectiveness of the organisation | ✓ | |
| A proven ability to successfully manage resources effectively | ✓ | |
| The ability to translate a visionary/innovative concept into a practical implementation plan | ✓ | |



PERSON SPECIFICATION

| Personal Qualities | | |
|---|---|--|
| The requirement is for a commercially astute, articulate, technically strong, dynamic, insightful and influential leader with the ability to operate at a strategic level | ✓ | |
| An astute individual who is able to diplomatically challenge where appropriate | ✓ | |
| A team player with excellent communication skills , combined with a robust and focused approach to the delivery of key strategic imperatives | ✓ | |
| Highly motivated, with an inquiring mind and a passion for excellence and innovation in pursuit of success | ✓ | |
| High integrity and openness combined with commitment to good governance | ✓ | |
| A mature and balanced approach to the assessment and management of risk | ✓ | |
| An ability to use the full range of leadership skills and qualities, including emotional intelligence, as appropriate to the situation | ✓ | |
| Someone who is resilient and determined but can also provide support, demonstrate empathy and deal with staff and situations in a sensitive and considerate manner | ✓ | |



HOW TO APPLY

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**Thank you for your interest in Falcon Education
Academies Trust**



FALCON

EDUCATION TRUST

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