

Role Description

Job Title: Head of Finance

Responsible to: Chief Operating Officer

Level: Support Leadership – Point 54

Purpose

The Head of Finance will provide financial leadership of all aspects of Trust Finance, as well as contributing to the strategic direction of the Trust. All the work of the Head of Finance will be rooted in ensuring benefit to the pupils and stakeholders the Trust serves.

As a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, the Head of Finance will support the CEO and COO with the strategic direction and aims of the Trust. The Head of Finance will keep ahead of funding and legislative changes that apply to the education sector and will provide the Trust Board with strategic financial information and planning to enable informed financial decisions.

The Head of Finance will ultimately be accountable for the operational line management of the Finance and Payroll function and lead all the financial accounting and transactional finance for the Trust, ensuring all systems are up-to-date and reporting is timely and in line with required annual financial returns.

The Head of Finance will lead the work of the central finance team and co-ordinate the work of the external auditor to prepare and submit audited statutory consolidated accounts. Ensuring robust compliant systems, processes and controls are in place, the Head of Finance will monitor financial performance and will drive change within the finance operation of the Trust, bringing greater efficiency in the way the Trust carries out its business.

Job Responsibilities

Key Responsibilities:

- Accountable for ensuring the Senior Finance Officer produces the consolidated financial reporting to enable the Trust to achieve its aims and objectives through the effective and efficient management of its financial resources
- Promote best practice and ensure compliance with the financial processes and procedures set out in the policies of the Trust and Academies Financial Handbook
- The Head of Finance will have a key role in the financial leadership and management of the Trust and will have effective responsibility for the following:
 - Financial statements including the submission of all statutory returns to the ESFA within set deadlines
 - Oversight of the Trust monthly management accounts in line with the requirements of the Academies Financial handbook/ESFA
 - Financial compliance – with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook and Audit requirements;
 - Accountability for the Academy and Trust budget preparation and submission in line with the Trust and ESFA requirements;

- Provide strategic leadership of internal and external audits ensuring that all audit evidence is supplied according to auditor requirements;
- Strategic leadership of Academy and Trust Financial systems and processes;
- Strategic leadership of financial policies and procedures including implementation of the Trust scheme of delegation in relation to finance;
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement within all Finance processes and transactions and to promote shared learning and good practice across Trust academies.
- Ensure all pension returns to Teachers Pension and Local Government Pension Scheme are completed, including the Annual Return and End of Year Certificate
- Ensure the submission of the apprenticeship return on behalf of the Trust
- Support the Trust and academies with financial planning guided by integrated curriculum led financial planning
- Provide regular and bespoke training to Trust and Academy staff as necessary.
- Contributing Financial input to the Senior Leadership Team to inform Trust wide initiatives in support of the strategic direction and growth of the Trust.
- Direct line management of the Senior Finance Officer to include, appraisals, induction, continuing professional development, training and recruitment. Indirect line management, in partnership with Senior Finance Officer of the Finance Business Partners
- Accountable for identification and monitoring of financial risk in accordance with the Trust risk register.
- Accountable for identification and mitigation of reputational risk linked to finance.

Financial Management:

- Ensure the Trust has appropriate financial systems in place and managing these in accordance with the agreed policies and timetable; ensuring accurate financial records are maintained and reported to the DfE, HMRC, ESFA, Companies House and the Charity Commission.
- Prepare the year end statutory accounts and the audit file for the year-end audit of the Trust accounts; liaise with the auditors to reach signoff and filing of annual company accounts according to DfE, ESFA, Companies House and HMRC guidelines.
- Leadership of appropriate accounting procedures to control, monitor and disburse each Academy's budget, including routine financial arrangements.
- Ensure the production of monthly/ quarterly management accounts and produce timely, accurate and appropriate reports and financial forecasts for the Academy Trust.
- Accountable for the computer-based financial systems ensuring fitness for purpose and best value
- Provide support to academies for strategic financial planning in line with the Trust strategic plan
- Developing academy and Trust Financial KPI's, reporting variances to the Senior Leadership Team and Trust Board. Ensure Financial KPI's and reports remain effectiveness and valuable in informing financial decisions or strategic direction.
- Ensure a culture of achieving Value for Money by establishing procurement processes and ensure that an approach at Trust level is introduced around suppliers and services.

- Provide strategic guidance to the Senior Leadership team and Trust board in relation to cost of living increases for the purposes of effective budget planning
- Ensure timely and effective financial information for Trustees and provide general support to ensure the effective conduct of their business in accordance with the articles of governance and financial regulations policy.
- Identify and lead bids for additional funding (DfE and others) for the Trust.
- Lead the financial monitoring of projects as determined by the CEO, COO or Trust Board
- Strategic leadership of due diligence in relation to all aspects of finance for new schools joining or leaving the Trust

Audit Services:

- Advise the CEO and the Board on external and internal audit arrangements, as required by financial regulations and memoranda.
- Procurement of an internal audit function and to manage the Audit contract and relationship with Internal Audit.
- Liaise with both Internal and External auditors and facilitate all audit arrangements in line with strict deadlines.
- Implement audit requirements and recommendations, as they affect all financial activities in the Academy Trust.

Values

- To uphold and model the Preston Hedges Trust values of Ambition, Drive, Excellence and One Team at all times.
- Consistently demonstrate an understanding of the values and model these at all times.
- To support in the delivery of the Trusts purpose, vision and policies.

Safeguarding

- Committed to ensuring the highest levels of safeguarding are upheld at all times.
- To report any safeguarding concerns to the Senior Designated Person in line with the school's safeguarding policies.
- To adhere to all safeguarding policies, practices and expectations including online safety.

Post: Head of Finance

Person Specification

Education and Qualifications	Requirement
Educated to degree level or equivalent	Desirable
Accounting qualification, CIMA (or equivalent) qualified or working towards	Essential
A record of Continuing Professional Development	Essential
Experience of advanced Excel skill including the use of pivot tables and macros	Essential
Competent and confident in using Microsoft Office	Essential
Experience, Knowledge, Skills	
Successful experience of working within a business or commercial environment managing finance and budgets	Essential
Excellent financial management and financial planning skills.	Essential
Ability to interrogate finances accurately and identify next steps progress.	Essential
Strong knowledge and experience of finance packages	Essential
Knowledge of using educational finance packages, ideally IRIS Financials and IMP	Desirable
Experience of leading, coaching and motivating staff within a performance management framework, providing professional development and effectively challenging and managing any underperformance.	Essential
Experience as a member of a Middle or Senior Management Team.	Essential
Experience of delivering on multiple projects	Essential
Successful experience of working in a School or Academy financial management role, or in a similar position working alongside schools e.g. Local Authority, MAT or independent education sector.	Desirable
Experience of producing and presenting complex management accounts	Essential
Experience of managing large and complex budgets working within strict budgetary constraints	Essential
Ability to synthesise information in report format for a variety of audiences.	Essential
Commercial awareness and ability to achieve value for money.	Essential
Ability to analyse financial issues and to interpret complex information and to offer sound, reliable professional advice.	Essential
Ability to introduce and maintain effective and robust financial systems.	Essential
Experience of delivering change management programmes	Desirable
Personal Attributes	
Supportive of the Trusts values and ethos	Essential
Outstanding communication skills (verbal, written and presentational); ability to communicate effectively with the Trust Board, the Senior Leadership Team and Principals and to liaise effectively with internal and external auditors, as well as Government agencies	Essential
Ability to work effectively under pressure, managing conflicting priorities and to meet challenging deadlines	Essential
Ability to work independently to tackle problems creatively and to think laterally	Essential
Proactive and solution focused.	Essential
Self-motivated and a good time manager.	Essential
Able to demonstrate continuous personal and professional development of self	Essential
Willing to undertake tasks and assume responsibilities outside of direct job role tasks	Essential