



St Wilfrid's
Church of England Academy

*A*CADEMICIS
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Location: Blackburn, Lancashire
Start date: March 2024 or sooner
Salary: £57,482-£65,010

Chief Operations and Finance Officer Candidate Pack

Welcome from our Principal

DOMINE DIRIGENOS

I am delighted to welcome you to St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy, a high performing single academy trust in the North West.

The Academy is searching for an experienced education business professional to act as our Chief Operations and Finance Officer. The Academy is in a very strong position, with an annual income in excess of £10 million, healthy reserves and a well-earned reputation for excellence.

This is a role for a Senior Leader, who would enjoy significant autonomy and flexibility. You would act as the Chief Finance Officer of the trust, working with the Principal as the CAO, the Trust Board and the Finance Manager to set the strategic financial direction and ensure probity and compliance in all areas.

You would act as Chief Operations Officer setting strategic direction and guiding middle leaders responsible for Administration and data, facilities and HR. You would manage our outsourced contracts.

You would take the lead on our capital and refurbishment programme totalling £2.5 million in the next 18 months and line manage the facilities manager to deliver the Academy's estate management plan.

We are slowly exploring MAT formation, and are seeking an individual with the ability to lead this area of the Academy now, but with the capacity for further promotion.

As a Church of England Academy, who you are is just as important to us as your skills and talents. Our staff are dedicated, compassionate and reflect the Academy vision and values in their day to day lives.



Mrs V Michael
Principal

About the Academy

St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy provides a faith-led education for 11 to 18 year olds serving the Borough of Blackburn with Darwen and parts of Pennine Lancashire. We seek to provide an excellent education based upon a strong Christian foundation, as we develop all who work, learn and serve in our community. Our Academy is exceptionally diverse and inclusive. Our students and staff, whilst united by the Christian ethos of the school, have a wide variety of backgrounds and beliefs.

We benefit from extensive purpose- built accommodation with excellent facilities. The Academy was rebuilt on this site in 2003 and benefits from modern, spacious accommodation, energy efficiency measures and sporting facilities which are open to the community in the evening through a lettings company.

As an Academy, we seek to embrace research driven pedagogy whilst maintaining a balance with traditional practice to bring about excellent examination success. All students have an electronic device for independent learning and we have an I-space room, for immersive learning. Visitors to St Wilfrid's comment on the calm and purposeful environment, the friendly nature of our students and the welcoming nature of our staff.

We enjoy strong links with local churches, Primary Schools and Blackburn Cathedral where we gather for eucharist each term, and our traditional Nine Lessons and Carols service at Christmas.

Overall, St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy is a wonderful community, and a place committed to the growth and development of its staff and pupils.



Our Vision

*Lord direct us to **live** life to the full*

Our vision statement for the Academy derives from two places:

- 1) Our motto 'Domine Dirige Nos', which translates to 'Lord Direct Us'; and
- 2) A verse from the 10th chapter of the gospel of John, which reads:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

We believe that this life should be lived out to the full, through direction and guidance from the Lord. Our hope is that the daily experiences within the Academy enables students to develop holistically; growing in character and valuing all others.



Students will **learn** values through academic study and everyday interactions. They will be **inspired** by the spiritual and enriching out-of-lesson experiences, and in turn, inspire hope in others. Students will become stronger, well-rounded and content individuals who **value** themselves and others. They will be given opportunities to develop and **experience** a fully-inclusive environment.



Learn more about our Christian Ethos,
Vision and Values here

Job Description

PURPOSE

The COFO is responsible for the non-teaching business and financial operations of the Trust and for ensuring compliance with all relevant regulations and statutory requirements.

They will lead and manage the Trust's business functions including Finance, HR, IT and Estates & Compliance, and by supporting commercial decision-making will enable the Trust to work effectively towards the delivery of its vision, aims and agreed strategic direction.

FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK

The COFO will be accountable for maintaining robust financial management of the Trust. The COFO will:

- Act as CFO and ensure the Trust complies with its obligations in accordance with its funding agreements, the Academy Trust Handbook, EFSA guidance and its own scheme of financial delegation.
- Advise and support the Principal in the financial aspects of their responsibilities as Trust Accounting Officer.
- Through the Finance Manager, ensure that the Trust follows best practice in terms of financial governance, ensuring the probity and legislative compliance, of all financial transactions, including the integrity and suitability of all control mechanisms (audit and risk management).
- Supported by the Finance Manager, ensure preparation, completion and submission financial returns and reports as required by Trustees, the Department for Education, the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Charities Commission and Companies House.
- Working with the Principal, annually review the Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) and prepare an analysis report of View my Financial Insights.
- Manage and develop the Trust's financial systems, including managing users to the Access system, providing training, considering future system developments, and generating reports.



Job Description continued



- Ensure the Trust's approach to internal and external scrutiny is fit for purpose and in line with statutory guidelines, acting as the main contact for internal and external audit and monitoring implementation of audit points.
- Oversee the preparation of the Annual Report and Financial Statements, taking responsibility for the completion and submission of returns in line with prescribed standards, timelines and the Academies Accounts Direction.
- Proactively manage the Trust's relationship with its bankers, to ensure that appropriate and efficient systems are in place for the Trust's accounting procedures.
- Proactively manage the cash position of the Trust and its operating activities, reporting regularly on this aspect of financial management to the Trustees.
- Produce and implement appropriate policies and procedures for the procurement, depreciation, and disposal of all assets for the Trust.
- Keep abreast of funding conditions and distil information to ensure maximum impact is derived.
- Oversee the Finance Manager acting as main point of contact for the two pension schemes,

dealing with pension queries as appropriate, prepare and sign off the Teachers' Pensions End of Year Certificate and completing pension forms as employer representative.

- Prepare a high-quality, concise risk register, with any subsidiary reports for Trustees of the Audit and Risk sub-committee. Attend the sub-committee.
- Prepare high-quality reports for, and attend the meeting of the Business and Resources sub-committee of the Board.

PEOPLE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The COFO will be accountable for the efficient and effective business functions of the Trust. The COFO will:

- Lead, develop and implement the Academy Estates Strategy, through the Facilities Manager, including the oversight of prioritisation, funding and delivery of capital schemes, reducing the carbon footprint of the Trust, and tactical delivery of the Estates Plan.
- Line Manage the Academy ICT Services Manager, providing the commercial and financial steering on current and future ICT projects.

Job Description continued

- Lead the development of a People Strategy in conjunction with the Principal including the evaluation of the Trust's HR provider, policies, well-being strategies and resources.
 - Manage the catering contract which will be outsourced from February 2024.
 - Lead the Academy's Health & Safety approach, through the Facilities Manager, including audit, training, strategic partnerships and statutory compliance.
 - Oversee the Trust's approach, partnerships, policies and procedures in relation to GDPR.
 - Manage Trust contracts including insurance, HR advisory, Clerking, utilities and payroll.
 - Manage the Facilities Manager, Office Manager, Finance Manager, IT Manager, Cleaning Manager and Marketing Manager.
 - Manage the appraisal process for all support staff and model the Academy values in their management of staff in all matters.
 - Annually update the Pay Policy and make recommendations to the Trustees Pay Committee with regards to pay scales and rates.
 - Act as the point of contact for recognised Union officials for HR and business policy matters.
- The COFO will think strategically and will provide motivational leadership at all levels of the Trust's organisation. The COFO will:
- Provide strategic guidance and leadership of all the Trust's business functions within the Scheme of Delegation, advising the Principal on all matters within this area.
 - Contribute fully to wider strategic planning by providing analysis of complex information and forming solutions and guidance.
 - Contribute fully to the Senior Leadership Team and attend all SLT meetings.
 - Continually review and improve the existing systems, processes and policies ensuring they are streamlined, efficient robust, compliant.



Job Description continued

- Lead on the management of the Trust's business risks and their effective mitigation ensuring appropriate action is taken to address inherent risks, problems, and irregularities.
- Act as a representative for the Trust in external networks and forums, raising the profile of the Trust, engaging with the wider sector, and ensuring that the Trust is horizon-scanning and alert to information, changes and opportunities that could affect its work.
- Prepare high-quality reports for, and attend the meeting of the Board of Trustees as required.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Contribute to and uphold the overall Christian vision, aims and values of the Academy. The COFO will:

- Recognise own strengths and expertise and use these to inspire, advise and support others.
- Promote teamwork, working in partnership to ensure effective working relations.
- Show resilience, approachability and emotional maturity when working with others.
- Be aware and comply with equal opportunities and all Academy policies at all times.
- Respond to complex requests and correspondence from stakeholders and external agencies.
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.

- Maintain confidentiality at all times in respect of Academy related matters and to prevent disclosure of confidential and sensitive information.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the senior level of this post.

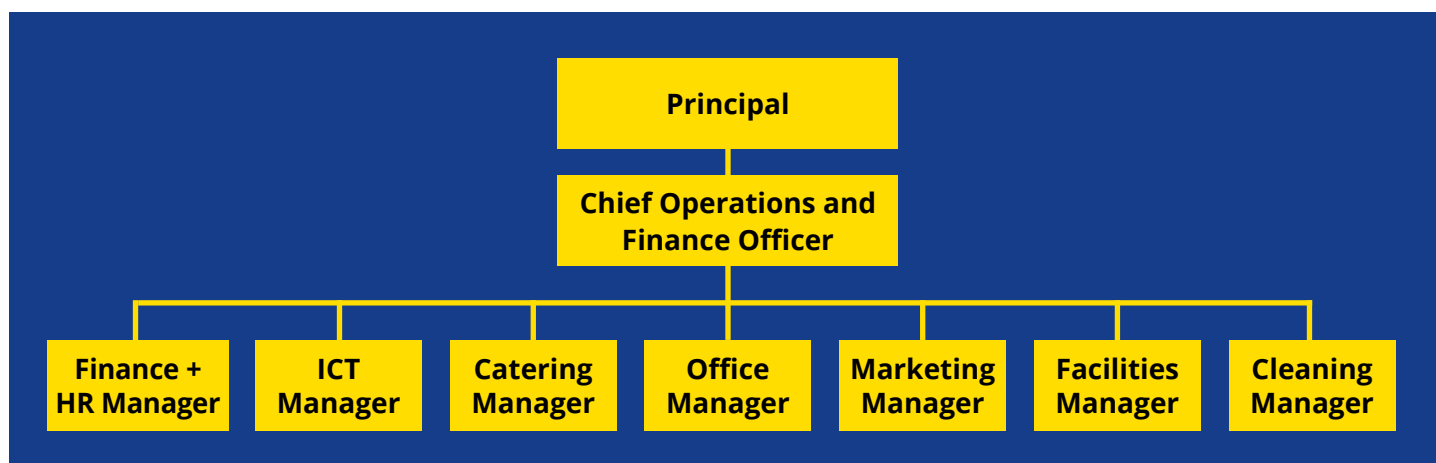
REWARDS AND BENEFITS

- Leadership Payspine: L9 to L14 (£57,482- £65,010).
- Local Government pension scheme.
- Access to Employee Assistance programme offering free confidential support on a range of issues such as work, wellbeing, money, health and legal advice.
- Excellent opportunities for continuous professional development and support to develop your career.
- Annual leave entitlement is 6.6 weeks (including bank holidays), rising to 7.6 weeks (including bank holidays) after five years' service.

SAFEGUARDING

St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

LINE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES



Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		
• Degree in a finance or business-related discipline	X	
• Professional Accountancy qualification, e.g., ICAEW, CIMA, ACCA or CIPFA		X
• Level 6 Diploma in School Business Management		X
• Level 7 in Academy Financial & Operational Leadership, or Certificate in the Financial Reporting of Academies (CertFRA)		X
Experience		
• Significant resource management and strategic leadership experience	X	
• Proven track record of successful leadership and building effective teams	X	
• Significant experience of leading and managing budgets	X	
• Evidence of entrepreneurialism and innovation, with an ability to identify commercial opportunities to maximise income	X	
• Experience of working within an educational setting	X	
• Experience leading one or more business service discipline such as IT, Finance, HR, Estates and Administration	X	
• Successful experience of managing teams of staff	X	
• Experience of developing and managing external relationships with professional and regulatory bodies		X
• Experience of working with Governors, Trustees, or similar		X
• Experience in obtaining additional funding		X
• Detailed and up-to-date knowledge of accountancy and professional codes of practice		X
• Experience of working in a Church School setting		X
Knowledge		
• Advanced knowledge of statutory requirements and funding strategies	X	
• Substantial knowledge and experience of managing pro-procurement and contracts	X	
• Proven awareness and respect for the highly sensitive status of information and its confidentiality	X	
• Knowledge of HR policy, practice and legislation	X	
• Demonstrable commercial acumen	X	
• An understanding/experience of working with external auditors and agencies	X	
• Understanding of employer pension responsibilities		X
• Up-to-date knowledge of Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts		X
• Knowledge of the unique characteristics of Church Schools and Academies		X
Skills and Abilities		
• Proficient in the use of MS Office applications and Financial Information Systems	X	
• Excellent analytical skills and sound judgement	X	
• Ability to direct a multi-disciplinary team effectively and demonstrate excellent leadership skills	X	
• Ability to interpret complex financial information, advice, and statutes and to devise policy/practice autonomously considering these	X	
• Ability to manage own workload without direction, having the ability to prioritise to meet tight deadlines	X	
• Highly effective communications skills and ability to influence and negotiate effectively	X	
• Ability to present complex information to a varied audience	X	
• High ethical standards and strong moral purpose	X	
• Emotional resilience and maturity	X	
• Ability to persuade, motivate, negotiate and influence	X	
• Excellent written and presentation skills	X	
• Ability to work autonomously and flexibly	X	
• A personal commitment to lifelong learning and continuous professional development	X	
• Commitment to high standards, best value, and continuous improvement	X	
• Ability to be reflective and self-critical	X	
• Proactive and self-motivated	X	
• Experience of leadership of health and safety and facilities		X

How to Apply



If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or you would like to have an informal discussion, please contact **Neil Massie** at **Academicis**, our recruitment partner, on nmassie@academicis.co.uk or by phone on 07818 875514/01223 907979.

Please email your application to: nmassie@academicis.co.uk

Closing date: Noon, Monday 15th January 2024

Shortlisting: Tuesday 16th January 2024

Interviews: Thursday 25th January 2024

St Wilfrid's Church of England Academy
Duckworth Street, Blackburn
Lancashire BB2 2JR



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