



Director of Finance Candidate Pack

Welcome from the CEO

Welcome

Thank you for showing an interest in working with us at Children First. This crucial role in the Trust will help us to continue to fulfil our aims and improve the lives of the young people we work with. I would like to welcome you personally and I hope that the information provided will inspire you to join our team.

Formed in April 2019, Children First Academy Trust was created through five local primary schools coming together, recognising the value of working together to improve the education we can provide for our children. In the past year all five schools have received very positive Ofsted reports.

Our schools are all located geographically close to each other in Edmonton, North London where there are significantly high levels of deprivation. 35% of our pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and 72% do not have English as their first language. This means we must succeed in what we do and give our children the very best education.

As part of our considered and sustainable approach to growth we have a new, local, school joining us in April and we will continue to look to work with other like-minded school leaders who share our values and aspirations for all young people.

I hope that you will consider becoming part of the team that makes a difference to thousands of young people and their families. I look forward to receiving your application and discussing the contribution you can make to our communities.

Jane Flynn
CEO



Welcome from the Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in the post of Director of Finance at Children First Academy Trust

We are very proud of what we have achieved over the past five years and are passionate about providing the best education and opportunities for our children.

As a group of school leaders and Trustees, we all have a role in building the ethos of our Trust, ensuring throughout that our culture of 'Children First' drives any decisions that are made.

We want to learn from each other; sharing the best practice within our schools, whilst looking beyond the Trust to learn from the excellent practice elsewhere. We want to build partnerships with schools that share our values.

Our governance is strong and effective, working closely with the CEO and the Headteachers to drive strategic direction of the Trust. We are collegiate in our approach, engaging widely, delegating effectively, and recognising our accountability to our communities as leaders of the Trust.

This is a fabulous time to be joining our Trust. Having experienced positive Ofsted outcomes over the past year in all of schools.

Thanks again for taking the time to consider our Trust as the next step in your career. My fellow Trustees and I look forward to reading your application in due course.

Best Wishes

Jenny Tosh
Chair of Trustees



About the Trust

Formed in April 2019, Children First Academy Trust was created through five local primary schools coming together, recognising the value of working together to improve the education we can provide for our children.

Our schools are all located geographically close to each other in Edmonton, North London where there are significantly high levels of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation (IDACI 2019) shows that our communities live in the lowest 10-20% for deprivation nationally with 35% of our pupils being eligible for Pupil Premium funding. 72% do not have English as their first language and there are over 50 languages spoken within most of our schools.

Our schools range from two forms of entry to four forms of entry. Most of our schools have provision for two-year-olds and all have Nurseries within them. The annual Trust budget is approximately £20 million.

Our Governance is made up mainly of local people, with a wide variety of skillsets and backgrounds. Local Governing Boards work at school level to monitor the impact of school improvement strategies, whilst the Trustees are responsible for the performance of the Trust schools. They recognise their moral and legal responsibility to guide the Trust with integrity and aspiration.

Currently consisting of five-member schools, as the Trust matures, we are keen to work with other schools, recognising the exciting opportunities that are possible when working closely together within a Trust.

Our guiding principle is to deliver a first-class education through partnership, innovation, school improvement and accountability and we welcome interest in joining Children First from other schools who wish to become part of this journey with us.



Our Approach

Thrive and Achieve Together

Laying the foundations for successful life-long learners who are; positive local, national and global citizens of the future. We do this through our values of;

- Aspiration
- Integrity
- Resilience

To provide exceptional, ever developing, teaching and learning for the children within our schools.

We believe that our children deserve the best education, regardless of their background, their ability, or their economic circumstances. We believe that, by looking both within and beyond our group of schools, we can research and develop teaching and learning of the highest quality that enables all our children to succeed.

To provide an exceptional curriculum that gives children the knowledge and skills to achieve in their chosen path life.

Our curriculum design will ensure that children gain a deep, cohesive knowledge in all areas of the curriculum. It will include wide ranging opportunities and experiences to apply that knowledge, see it in action and enrich children's lives.

To develop and expand a well led, ever improving Trust with a strong culture of Children First and a reputation of excellence as an employer.

Using the culture of openness, transparency, and trust, which exists between school and Trust leaders, we will continue to drive ambition across the Trust. We all understand the need for excellence in our schools and are therefore committed to developing high quality teachers and support staff and identifying and nurturing future leaders who will lead with integrity and creativity in our schools and across the Trust.

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ASPIRATION



INTEGRITY



RESILIENCE

Job Description

Position: Director of Finance

Reporting to: CEO Children First Academy Trust



Strategic Leadership

- To act as the Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook and other relevant statutory requirements.
- To provide strategic advice to the CEO, Trustees, Headteachers, and senior leaders on complex financial issues.
- To prepare the Trust's annual financial forecasts, medium and long-term corporate plans and report to the CEO, Trustees and Headteachers.
- Work with trustees to identify any areas requiring an internal audit and lead the audit process.
- To develop and implement strategies for maximising the Trust's current finances.
- To develop, design and implement financial policies and working practices across the Trust which streamlines functions, ensures efficiency, and produces value-for-money.
- To ensure statutory compliance in all areas of finance.

Growth and Development of the Trust

- Ensure that the financial model of the Trust is scalable and supports Trust growth.
- With the CEO actively seek and engage and lead in the appraisal of opportunities to expand the number of schools within the Trust.
- To identify further income generation opportunities.



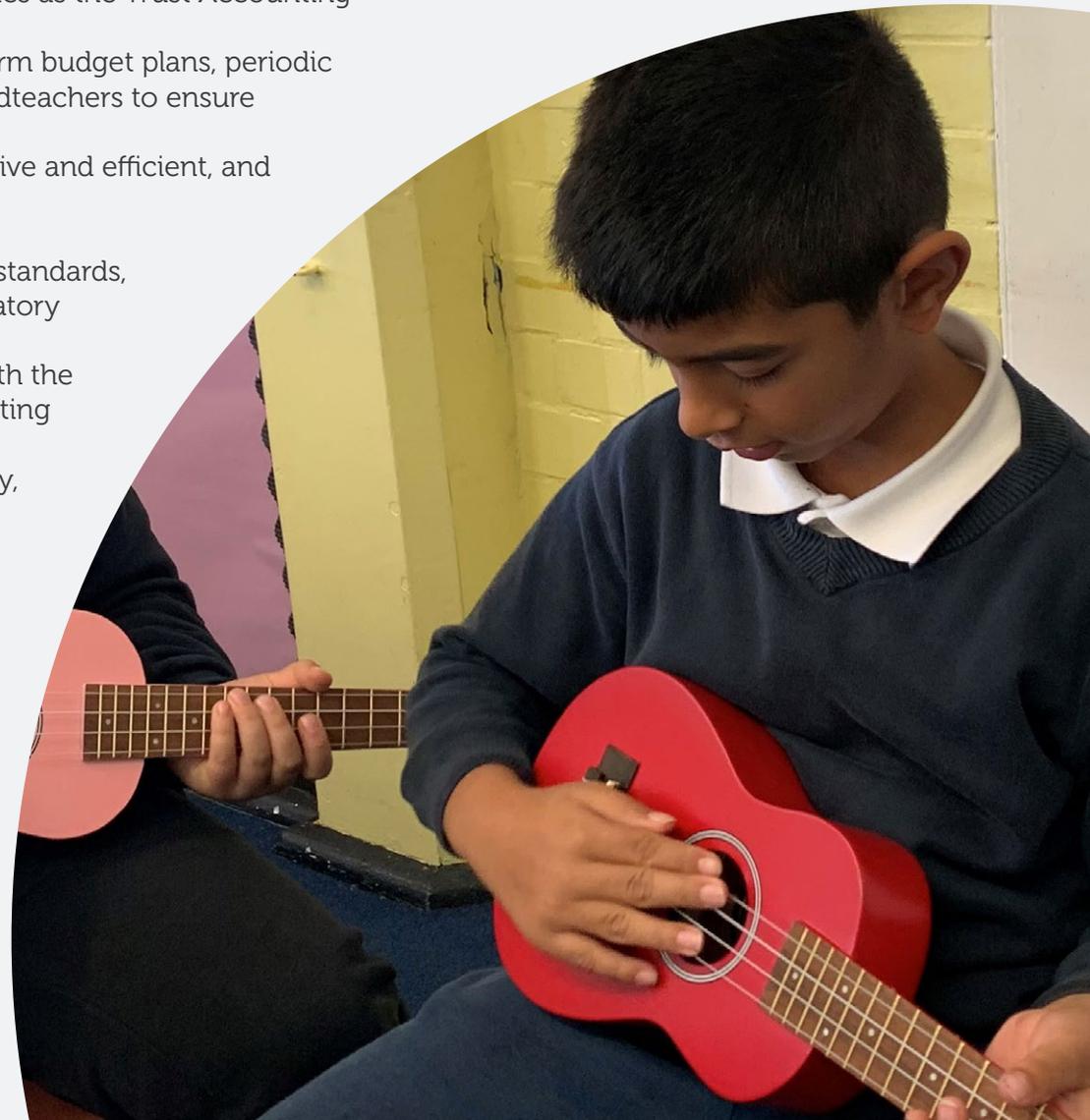
Job Description

Finance, Sustainability and Compliance

- To ensure the Trust complies with its obligations in accordance with the funding agreement, the Academy Trust Handbook and the Trust's financial regulations and procedures.
- To advise and support the CEO in the financial aspects of their responsibilities as the Trust Accounting Officer.
- To lead in the strategic planning process, delivering annual and medium-term budget plans, periodic forecasts and funding requirements, working closely with the CEO and headteachers to ensure consistency with the Trust's strategic and financial objective.
- To ensure that financial services are of high quality and well-led, cost effective and efficient, and enable schools to focus on the quality of education as their core purpose.
- To manage the development of financial reporting systems including KPIs.
- To be responsible for the preparation of the annual accounts to prescribed standards, taking responsibility for the completion and submission of statutory / regulatory reporting in line with prescribed timelines.
- To manage the income and expenditure budgets across the Trust in line with the scheme of delegation, and to identify any potential financial risk, implementing strategies to address issues arising.
- To plan and coordinate all tax and treasury management practice and policy, as appropriate, with reference to charitable status, cash management, and investments.
- Maintain effective systems of internal audit control.
- Drive efficiencies across the Trust.
- Keep the CEO and Trustees informed of any Charity Commission and statutory changes.

People Management

- To develop and lead the central finance team, including line management of the Finance Manager and the development of quality assurance activities and oversight of financial systems and procedures.
- To promote teamwork, working in partnership to ensure effective working relations.



Job Description

Accountability and Governance

- To ensure the Trust follows best practice in terms of financial governance, and ensure the probity, and legislative compliance of all financial transactions, including the integrity and suitability of all financial control mechanisms.
- To ensure 'best value' principles are applied to all appropriate purchasing decisions.
- To ensure the Trust's procurement activities are robust and that they remain aligned with the Trust's vision and values
- To provide financial management reports to the CEO, Board of Trustees, Resources, Risk and Audit Committee and DfE / ESFA
- To support the CEO in promoting a culture of accountability that is recognised and accepted as an essential element of improvement at all levels and across all aspects of the Trust's work.
- Oversight of risk management processes and maintenance of the Trust Risk Register

Other

General

- To support the CEO in ensuring staff have access to high quality professional development, aligned to balance organisational and individual needs.
- To comply with all Trust policies and procedures at all times; including, but not limited to, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and employment policies.
- To work within the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff, both current and prospective.
- To maintain high professional standards of attendance, punctuality, and conduct; and maintain positive, courteous relations with students, parents and colleagues.
- To engage actively in the performance review process, and in relevant continuing professional development.
- To undertake other duties commensurate with the senior nature of the post, as directed by the CEO.



Person Specification

		Essential or Desirable	How assessed
Qualifications and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACA, ACCA or CIMA qualification. 	E	App
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable experience and expertise at senior management level. 	D	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of continued professional development. 	D	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant post-qualifying experience to include strategic financial planning and management. 	E	App/Ref
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of producing financial and management accounts . 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of budgetary control including budget setting, monitoring and reporting. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of income generation in an academy or other organisation. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful track record of managing and communicating complex organisational change. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of performance management of staff and processes to ensure targets are consistently achieved. 	D	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of leading continuous quality improvement to improve outcomes and efficiencies. 	D	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of strategy development and delivery. 	D	
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the principles relating to the funding and governance of a multi-academy trust. 	E	App/Ref/Int
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the principles of the quality assurance and accountability frameworks relevant to a multi-academy trust. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound knowledge of financial control risk management. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and appreciation of current education policy and priorities. 	D	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the education landscape and implications for a multi-academy trust. 	D	

Person Specification

		Essential or Desirable	How assessed
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong financial management skills 	E	App/Ref/Int
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to work in partnership with school leaders, executive directors and trustees. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity and appetite to implement and manage change within an organisation. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent written, verbal, editorial and presentational skills, with ability to communicate complex issues effectively for a range of audiences including highly complex, sensitive and/or contentious information. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly developed negotiation, persuasion and influencing skills. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business service planning, analytical and numeracy skills. 	E	
Personal effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to the aims of the Children First Academy Trust. 	E	App/Ref/Int
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to support the Trust's agenda for safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion and health and safety. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A motivated self-starter with the ability to work flexibly, both working collaboratively and independently. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to act with integrity to ensure confidentiality is maintained. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong IT skills including word processing, using spreadsheets and presentation software. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible and adaptable. 	E	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to own continuing professional development. 	E	

How to Apply

ACADEMICIS

If you would like to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or you wish to have an informal discussion, please contact our retained consultant at Academicis, Vonya Campey:

vcampey@academicis.co.uk or 01223 907979 / 07340 010983

Please email your application to, Vonya Campey: vcampey@academicis.co.uk

Closing date: 27th February 2024

Shortlisting: 28th February 2024

Interview dates: 7th March 2024