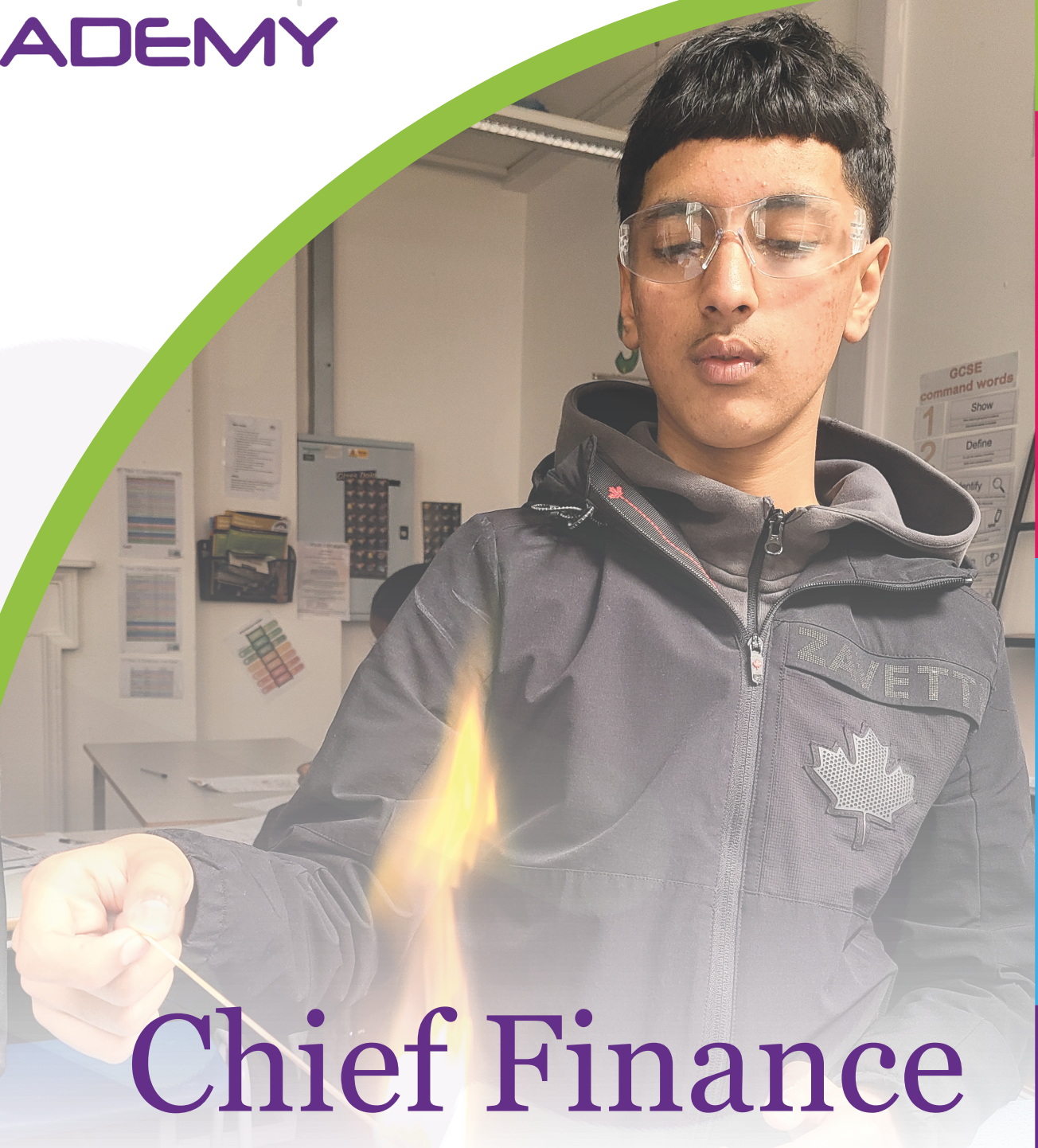




Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

Candidate Pack

Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Welcome to Stone Soup Academy! We are delighted to extend this warm welcome as you prepare to join us in the pivotal role of Chief Financial Officer. Your appointment marks an exciting new chapter in our journey, and we are thrilled to have your expertise and leadership guiding our financial strategy.

Stone Soup Academy is an Ofsted outstanding (June 2025) award-winning alternative provision academy based in the heart of Nottingham. We exist to transform the lives of young people who have found mainstream education challenging. Our vision is simple yet profound: to create a nurturing, inclusive environment where every student feels valued, inspired, and empowered to succeed. Put simply we create unimagined futures. We believe that education should be transformative, not transactional—and that every young person deserves a second chance to thrive.

Our values—respect, collaboration, positivity, kindness and celebration—are at the heart of everything we do. We foster strong relationships built on kindness and respect, and we champion positivity in both teaching and leadership. We are proud of our culture of collaboration, where staff and students alike are encouraged to grow, challenge convention, and celebrate success.

Looking ahead, our aspirations are bold. We aim to deepen our impact locally, regionally and nationally by expanding our outreach and partnerships, and continue to innovate in how we deliver education to those who need it most. As CFO, your role will be instrumental in shaping our financial resilience and sustainability, enabling us to invest in our people, our spaces, and our students' futures.

We are excited to work alongside you as we continue to build a school that changes lives. Thank you for joining us on this mission—Together, we have the opportunity to create lasting change—and we're excited for all that lies ahead.

Kind regards

Kerrie Henton
Executive Principal

Gavin Hosford
Chair of Trustees



About Us

Creating Unimagined Futures

Stone Soup Academy is an alternative provision free school in the centre of Nottingham, serving students outside mainstream education in an environment that encourages their academic and personal development. We are committed to the education and welfare of our students, with the goal of preparing them for reintegration into mainstream education or the personal skills to be successful members of our communities as they enter the world of work.

The foundation of our work is the ambition to create systems that equip young people who would otherwise be left behind. All too frequently, students who are deemed to be difficult or disruptive are faced with a future of unemployment or social disadvantage.

The Academy holds at the heart of its work the ambition to create an environment that fully equips students for their personal and academic development. Our goal is to empower each individual student to achieve in practical, functional, and long-lasting ways. To access futures that when they joined us they did not seem possible to achieve.

With this in mind, we aim to:

- Provide a supportive environment that aids the learning and personal development of all students;
- Prepare students, where appropriate, for reintegration into mainstream education;
- Improve the behaviour and attitude of each student with both adults and their peers;
- Reinforce each student's self-esteem and integrity;
- Instil an understanding of fundamental British values for citizenship.

The curriculum offered here focuses on achieving these goals through a wide range of courses to ensure continued student engagement and attendance.

We believe that a diverse curriculum encourages students to develop integrated skills that will more truly prepare them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. As an alternative provision academy, a creative outlet increases focus and guides learning. Here at Stone Soup we combine Functional Skills qualifications and core GCSEs in Maths and English with classes in creative subjects such as Media, Music Technology, and Creative Arts and access to Nottingham College and Nottingham Trent University. All of these are aimed at growing the skills and confidence of students as well as teaching them new crafts that could potentially turn into a career.

Students also have classes in PSHE/RSHE which explore a wide range of topics aimed at equipping them for citizenship and ensuring they understand fundamental British values including democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith. While these are specifically addressed in form time and PSHE/RSHE, these values are additionally embedded in the curriculum and environment of the Academy. We deliver these aspects through Votes For Schools, an online package that poses a question which allows for debate within the classroom.

Alongside the academics offered, we also have a system that ensures the welfare of our students by providing services to students and their families. Most importantly, our policy is to tailor the learning career of each student to their particular needs, and cross-reference initial assessment with future progress to maintain a positive learning experience.

Individual pastoral support is also available to our students, as well as both individual and group sessions with educational specialists. We maintain regular contact with parents/caregivers and outside agencies involved in each student's welfare to provide the best possible level of support and protection for all-round development, in keeping with our mission as an organisation.

Our Vision



“Creating Unimagined Futures” is the vision of Stone Soup Academy. It is present in everything that we do and it is alive in the Academy. We don’t see barriers, we see opportunities and we all love what we do.



Job Description

Stone Soup Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Job Title	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Reporting to:	Executive Principal
Hours:	The hours for this position are full time 37.5 hours per week, 30 days holiday per annum.
Salary:	£80,000

Role Overview

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is expected to provide strategic leadership to ensure the Trust’s financial stability and compliance with regulatory requirements. The CFO is a key leader within the trust. The Executive Principal, Principal, Chief Financial Officer and the Business and Operations Manager, all work together with the Board of Trustees to determine and realise the values and ambitions of the Trust.

The CFO will have direct line management and responsibility for the finance, contracts and procurement activities across the Trust.

The CFO, alongside the Business and Operations Manager, Deputy Head of Operations will be expected to deputise in the absence of the Chief Executive Officer for all non-academic issues.

This job description is written at a specific time and is subject to change as the demands of the Trust and the role develops. The role requires flexibility and adaptability, and all employees need to be aware that they may be asked to perform tasks and be given responsibilities not detailed in this job description.

Child Protection and Safeguarding:

The successful candidate must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is the post holder’s responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children. You will comply with Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies, and the requirement to report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any concerns relating to the safety or welfare of children.

Health and Safety:

The post holder must, at all times, work within the requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, current Health and Safety legislation and the School’s and LEA’s policies and procedures. The postholder is responsible for their own Health and Safety, as well as that of their colleagues.

All school sites are non-smoking sites.



Job Description

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Strategic Leadership and Financial Planning

As Chief Financial Officer (CFO), you are expected to:

1. Report to the Executive Principal and Trust Board and relevant sub-committee meetings. Prepare accounts, papers and presentations for these meetings as required.
2. Lead the development and delivery of the Trust's financial strategy, aligned with its objectives and long-term plans as the Trust grows.
3. Negotiate and influence strategic decisions alongside other senior leaders to ensure financial propriety and best value principles are consistently applied.
4. Plan and manage change in accordance with the Trust Strategic Plan, contributing to the overall strategy and direction of Stone Soup Academy by providing financial insights that enable effective resource allocation and risk management.
5. Provide high-level financial advice to the Trustees and Senior Leadership Team and school finance teams to ensure alignment between financial strategies and organisational priorities.
6. Lead, manage and develop Finance support staff within the Academy, streamlining and optimising financial operations and championing innovative processes that reduce unnecessary workload for staff. Ensure strong performance, professional development and alignment with Trust objectives.
7. Together with the Business and Operations Manager, Deputy Head of Operations support the effective delivery of payroll and pensions services for the Trust.

Financial Management

As Chief Financial Officer, you are expected to:

1. To take on the role as lead financial business partner to all school leaders and local governing bodies, providing financial oversight and scrutiny.
2. Ensure compliance with the Academies Handbook, and all UK financial regulations, staying abreast of any changes, amending our practice as appropriate.



3. Ensure the financial sustainability of the Trust, making accurate long-term forecasts and putting in place programmes of change as appropriate.
4. Advise the Executive Principal and the Board on all matters relating to the financial strategy, on the impact of their decisions on the financial position of the Academy and on strategic matters, within the framework for financial control determined by the Board.
5. Uphold good governance and ethical behaviour within the finance function and ensure that the Board upholds excellent accounting, reporting and internal control systems.
6. Participate, along with the, Business and Operations Manager & Deputy Head of Operations in the management of major projects, which may include potential growth, as required by the Board.
7. Act as the lead point of reference for all financial and commercial contract procurement and ongoing effective contract management and performance ensuring efficiencies are achieved and maintained.
8. Prepare the consolidated financial statements in the statutory format specified by the DfE, Companies Acts and Charity Commission for auditing by the external auditors. Ensure the audited statutory accounts are filed by 31st December

Job Description

9. Prepare monthly management accounts and other ad hoc reporting as required.
10. Evaluate information, consult with, and report to, the Executive Headteacher and Trustees to prepare a realistic and balanced budget for the successful and sustainable achievement of strategic and operational functions at Trust and school level.
11. Submit the proposed budget to the Executive Principal and Trustees for approval and guide the overall financial planning process.
12. Maintain a strategic financial plan including (a minimum) 3-year budget plan for the organisation.
13. Notify the Board if fraudulent activities are suspected or uncovered.
14. Receive, analyse and interpret financial reports, communicating findings in a simplified manner when necessary.
15. Research additional funding, revenue/ income opportunities and additional business opportunities.
16. Prepare appropriate bids or tender documents to acquire identified additional funds or grants.
17. Monitor all control accounts and reports.
18. Be a catalyst for driving efficiencies across the Academy, including leading on the year-on-year reduction in spending across key categories such as utilities, consumables, insurances, external support contracts and other unfunded discretionary spends.
19. Monitor all bank accounts and cash flow, establishing and managing a 'Trust Treasury' function to ensure that there is adequate cash flow to meet Academy requirements, taking advantage of interest-bearing accounts where appropriate.

20. Develop the Academy's central financial services, ensuring these are fit for purpose so that they provide a high-quality service to individual schools, helping the Academy achieve continuous improvement.
21. Execute the duties of a senior strategic leader, modelling excellent leadership behaviours.

Risk Management

As Chief Financial Officer (CFO), you are expected to:

1. In conjunction with the Business and Operations Manager, Deputy Head of Operations, oversee the Academy's risk register, and work with the Executive Principal to ensure that the Academy's risk registers align with the Academy.
2. Lead on the approach to financial risk management, identifying key financial risks and developing mitigation strategies.
3. Ensure effective management of financial risks, including those related to investments, debt, and cash flow.



Job Description

Procurement and Trust Contracts Register

As Chief Financial Officer (CFO), you are expected to:

1. Ensure continued management of the Trusts Contract Register, reviewing regularly and reporting to the Trust Board at least annually to evidence efficiencies and robust contract management with regard to contract milestones, spend against target, ensuring value for money in all significant spend areas, implementing effective procurement solutions that meet the needs of the Trust and its schools, while complying with public sector procurement rules.
2. Ensure timely actions for contract renewal and identify any further actions for improvements.
3. Ensure procurement compliance with financial regulations and UK procurement regulations.
4. Develop and maintain procurement policies and processes for all services, supplies and contracts.
5. Procure and administer the schools' insurance, including all claims.
6. Organise and maintain comprehensive financial and procurement files, ensuring compliance with audit requirements.
7. Prepare and write tenders and bids for various projects and services required by the Academy.
8. In conjunction with the Business and Operations Manager, Deputy Head of Operations ensure that supplier contracts are offering value for money, maximising efficiencies, challenging suppliers where necessary.
9. Be responsible for preparing and writing
10. In conjunction with the Business and Operations Manager, Deputy Head of Operations the CFO will be responsible for contracts, ensuring value for money, and challenging inadequacies where necessary.
11. Be responsible for ensuring income streams from lettings and other commercial contracts is maintained and that contracts are reviewed regularly.

Compliance

As Chief Financial Officer (CFO), you are expected to:

1. Liaise with external regulators such as the DfE, Charity Commission, Companies House, external auditors and internal auditors as required.
2. Develop and maintain the in-house Finance Handbook that sets out the Academy's operational finance procedures.
3. Act upon the Accounts Direction issues by the DfE.
4. Ensure all statutory forms and returns specified by statutory and regulatory bodies e.g. DfE and Pension administrative bodies are prepared and submitted in the formats specified by these bodies and filed by the relevant filing deadline.
5. Develop and maintain effective systems of internal audit control.
6. Review Academy policies, processes and procedures to ensure compliance with various external regulations including filing deadlines regarding VAT, PAYE, DfE, HMRC, Charity Commission and Companies House.
7. Ensure principles of best value are adhered to.

Job Description

General

As Chief Financial Officer (CFO), you are expected to:

1. Contribute to and uphold the overall vision and ethos of the Academy.
2. Recognise own strengths and areas of expertise and use these to inspire, advise and support others.
3. Promote teamwork, working in partnership to ensure effective working relations.
4. Be aware and always comply with equal opportunities and all Academy policies.
5. To assist with the development of policies and procedures as may be required outside own remit of role.
6. To participate in training and other learning activities and performance development as required.
7. Always maintain confidentiality in respect of Trust related matters and to prevent disclosure of confidential and sensitive information.
8. To communicate and work closely with the Executive Principal and academy staff at all levels.
9. To communicate with, and report to, the Board.
10. To work with other professional advisers and regulatory bodies including the Health and Safety Executive, Information Commissioners Officer and other professional associations.
11. To develop relationships with other finance professionals.

As a member of staff, you are expected:

1. To safeguard all students, promoting their safety, health, and welfare in accordance with school policy, both on the school premises and on school activities elsewhere.

2. To have a responsible and diplomatic approach to matters of a confidential nature.
3. To ensure awareness of what is happening in and around the Academy; checking and responding, where necessary, to work emails regularly and at least once every working day.
4. To undertake any other duties that might be reasonably requested, by the Executive Principal and Board. Any request will correspond with the general character of the post and are commensurate with the level of responsibility.

This job description may be reviewed at the end of each academic year or earlier if necessary. In addition, it may be amended at any time in consultation with the post holder. The post holder will be expected to participate in the Academy's appraisal programme and to participate in appropriate staff training and development activities.



Person Specification

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Knowledge and Experience		
Successful experience of working in a School or Academy financial management role, or in a similar position working alongside schools e.g. LA, independent education sector	£	
Finance degree, CCAB or equivalent qualification	£	
Experience of managing budgets	£	
Experience of producing and presenting management accounts	£	
Evidence of significant and relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	£	
Experience operating financial systems with an integrity - e.g. fair trade purchasing, supporting green issues	£	
Knowledge of Academy financial rules and regulations	£	
Knowledge of Charities SORP	£	
Knowledge of PAYE and VAT regulations	£	
Successful experience of working in an Academy financial management role and managing school budgets		£
Engagement with wider educational partnerships spanning secondary and local authority sectors		£
Experience of developing Academy's financial systems		£
Experience of successful bid writing or fundraising		£
Skills and Abilities		
Excellent financial management and financial planning skills	£	
Ability to introduce and maintain effective and robust financial systems	£	
Outstanding communication skills; ability to communicate effectively at Executive Principal, senior staff and Chair of Governors level and to liaise effectively with internal and external auditors, as well as Government agencies	£	
Ability to analyse financial issues and to interpret complex information and to offer sound, reliable professional advice	£	
Commercial awareness and ability to achieve value for money	£	
Competent and confident in using Microsoft Office	£	
Knowledge of using accounting software e.g. Xero or similar	£	
Ability to work effectively under pressure, managing conflicting priorities and to meet challenging deadlines	£	
Ability to work independently to tackle problems creatively and to think laterally	£	

Person Specification

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Skills and Abilities continued		
Self-motivated and a good time manager	£	
Ability to interrogate school financial performance data accurately and identify next steps for progress		£
Good negotiation skills		£
Ability to successfully manage initiatives for change		£
Experience of advanced Excel		£
Receptive to new ideas and able to generate them		£
Personal Qualities		
Be committed to promoting the ethos of Stone Soup Academy	£	
Excellent numerical and verbal skills, understanding and application	£	
A positive, enthusiastic outlook with the energy, drive, enthusiasm and determination to succeed	£	
Must be proactive not reactive	£	
Driving licence and use of own car	£	
It will be a requirement of the Academy for staff to support and attend our Celebration evenings and Stand up to Knife Crime event	£	
Commitment to and belief in equality of opportunity for all	£	
Ability to work as a supportive member of a small team, acting flexibly to support colleagues at pressure points	£	
Sense of humour and fun		£
Ability to cope resiliently with the responsibilities and demands of the post		£
Motivation to work with students & young people in an educational setting		£





Arrange a Visit / Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity or to arrange a visit, please contact Cressida Johns at Academicis (our recruitment partner):

cjohns@academicis.co.uk | 07733 628155 | 01223 907979

CLOSING DATE:

Monday 1st December 2025

SHORTLISTING:

Wednesday 3rd December 2025

INTERVIEWS:

Tuesday 9th December 2025

