



Head of Finance - CFO Designate

Candidate Pack



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Welcome

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for considering working with us within the Attain Academy Partnership.

The true strength of Attain lies in its people. The Trust and our schools employ talented, caring and committed staff, supporting happy pupils who are proud to be there. The Trust Leadership team and our Headteachers have a shared vision for all our children. Leaders work together to create the conditions where each child can better achieve their potential. Our Local Governing Bodies and our Trustees are both ambitious and supportive and we have developed strong relationships with our parent bodies. This partnership approach involves all members of the school and Trust community, achieving significant levels of mutual support to support the successful outcomes of all our children.

The Head of Finance – CFO Designate will be a strategic leader, able to balance oversight of operational excellence with high-level strategic insight, ensuring long-term financial health and growth. You will ideally have experience of working collaboratively in education and will be prepared to support our individual academies with budget management and planning. This is a great opportunity to join a values-driven Trust at an exciting stage in our development. You will be a key member of the Trust's Leadership Team, working closely with the CEO and other Leaders to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the organisation's strategic objectives sustainably.

The Head of Finance – CFO Designate is expected to bring a modern, commercial approach to the leadership of the finance function, running it as a highly competent and efficient service with an emphasis on a proactive and education-focused service. As well as ensuring the financial health of our organisation, you will bring experience of lateral thinking when it comes to realising the financial opportunities that we have within our Trust. The Head of Finance – CFO Designate will provide advice on strategic financial issues and be responsible for financial management and for the leadership and management of the financial team.

Additionally, any new member of our team brings fresh ideas and strengthens the development of our educational and business journey and as such I am very keen to welcome any questions or queries which challenge our existing practice and offer innovative changes.

Susannah Edom-Baker

CEO
Attain Academy Trust



Our Vision

Attain Academy Partnership aims to provide an outstanding education for all children in all schools, relevant to the world in which they live.

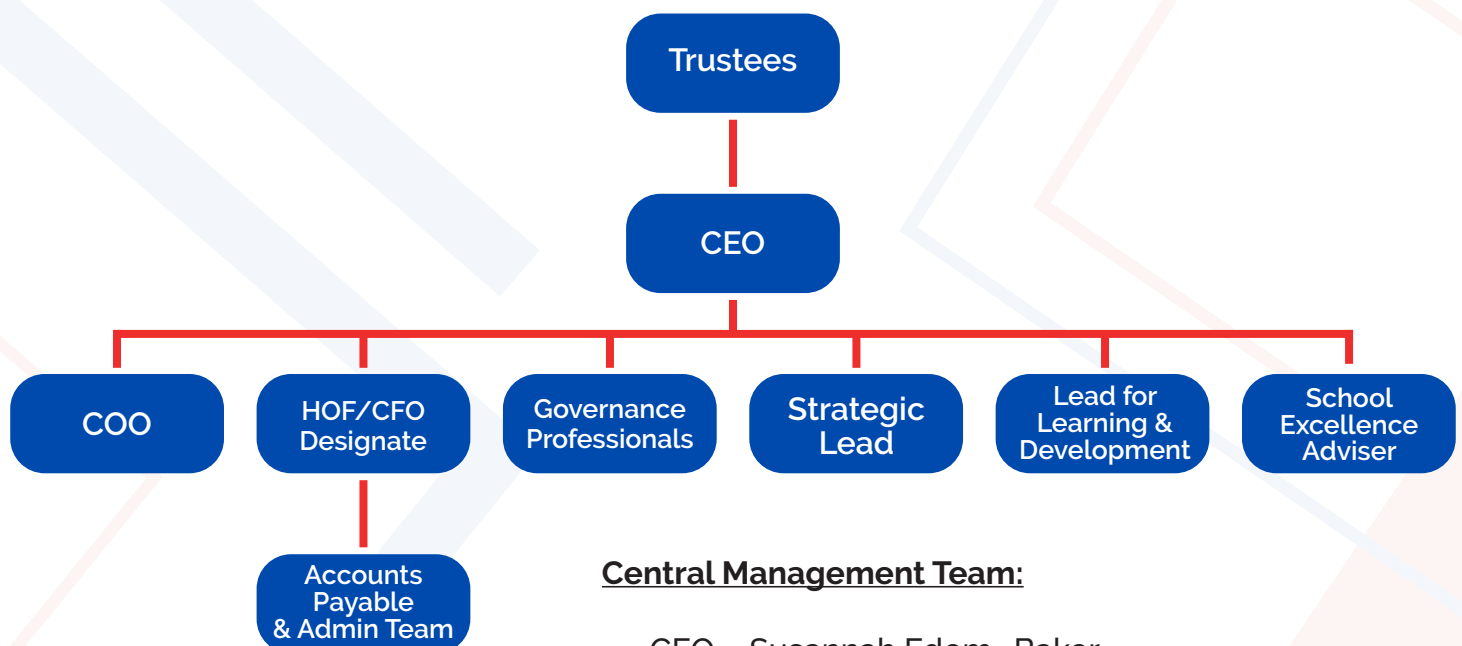
We would like all members of Attain to become:

- Ambitious, capable learners who are resilient and independent
- Enterprising, creative contributors who have a real love of learning
- Ethical, informed citizens who value differences and inclusivity
- Healthy, confident individuals who contribute to a mutually supportive environment

We want to create a community of outstanding schools with the highest aspiration and dedication to achieving the best outcomes for all our learners, with:

- An unshakeable belief in the intrinsic value of every individual within our community
- Exciting and creative climates for learning within a safe and supportive environment
- Sustainable collaboration and sharing of best practice
- Personal and professional development for all members of staff
- Accountability based on honesty and responsibility in all our relationships

Who's who?



Central Management Team:

- CEO – Susannah Edom- Baker
- Chair of the Board of Trustees – Matt Savage
- Head of Finance - CFO Designate
- COO – Karoline Elwood
- Strategic Lead – Natalie Hawkes
- Governance Professional - Heather Hasmuja
- Lead for Learning & Development - Tracy Goodway
- School Excellence Adviser - Keith Pullen

How We Work

United by our core values, aims and ethos core values, all academies work together to create one learning community. Each academy, however, retains its local distinctiveness and appropriateness in order to serve its community.

Strategic planning

The Trust's work is underpinned by our five year Business Plan which sets out our key priorities year by year. This plan is developed and monitored by the CEO and Trustees, in consultation with the headteachers.

Support from the central team

To enable Headteachers and their schools to focus on their core purpose of providing the highest quality teaching and learning, the Trust provides centralized systems and support in relation to

- Finance
- HR
- ICT infrastructure
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding
- Utilities

We have also recently introduced a new MIS system (Arbor) which is also used for assessment.

Support structures and meetings

Headteachers and staff have access to a wide range of support structures, both formal and informal. There are regular meetings of Headteachers, leaders of specific subjects, SENDCos, finance assistants and other staff groups.

Trust Schools have six non-pupil days per year. Two of these are set as joint annual closure days. These November and February closure days are used as whole Trust development days with an agenda set by the CEO and Headteachers.

Pupil Forum

We also have a very active Pupil Forum which enables pupils from across our academies to have a voice in developing the Trust's vision and practice, as well as forming meaningful, collaborative cross- school relationships.

Attaining Excellence

Every school in Attain is on a journey of continual improvement, aspiring for excellence year on year, for pupils and staff. We have already taken many valuable steps on that journey.

To achieve the next stage of our aspirational evolution, we believe the keys to unlock the full potential of our schools lie in:

- a shared understanding of excellence,
- a commitment to continuous, coherent staff and leadership development and
- enabling meaningful collaboration, at all levels.

To achieve this vision, we have developed the Attaining Excellence staff development framework.

It is underpinned by a Professional Standards Framework which describes aspirational standards of excellence for all leaders and staff, including support staff.

How We Work *continued*

Alongside this sits the Staff Development Statement which outlines the Trust's commitment to providing development for its staff, its expectation of their active role in this, and a description of the range of opportunities the Trust provides. It also includes a career progression map, reflecting the Trust's commitment to identifying and nurturing potential.

Every member of staff will also have a Personal Professional Portfolio to record their professional learning journey. Attain Specialist Practitioner (ASP) status is an opportunity open to all staff, whatever their role. ASPs are nominated by their schools to be recognised as leaders in their particular area of expertise. This enables the very best practice in our schools to be shared more widely across the Trust.

Staff Well-being Charter

As a Trust we place a strong emphasis on the well-being and mental health of our staff and make it a key consideration in our strategic decision making and our practice. As part of our commitment to establishing and maintaining a long-term strategy for promoting and improving staff well-being we have jointly developed the Attain Staff Well-being Charter which details our core well-being principles of care, involvement, support, balance, recognition, feedback and trust.

Curriculum

Each school makes decisions about how it will design and tailor its own curriculum to meet the needs of the pupils and community in its own unique context. The Trust uses the National Curriculum as a core entitlement.

There is, however, an agreement that White Rose Maths and Jonathan Bond's English Toolkit will be used as a framework for the mathematics and English curriculum respectively.

In regular meetings, Curriculum Leads and Subject Leaders are encouraged to explore and share effective and innovative practice. This also provides a forum to seek guidance or support.

Research and Development

In Attain, we believe passionately in the central role of research in ensuring our pupils have access to the highest quality education. Via the Attaining Excellence Framework we encourage and enable staff to access and apply the latest research and also to carry out collaborative school-based enquiry, for the benefit of all Trust schools via our annual 'Innovation Team' programme.

We also seek opportunities to work on regional and national research programmes, and with national partners. Recently we have been fortunate to have worked with Paul Hamlyn Foundation who have funded research into School Readiness and Musicianship in the Early Years. We have also recently worked with the Royal Opera House Bridge to develop the role of 'Cultural Champion' in each of our schools.

Our Partners



Job Description

Job Title:	Head of Finance – CFO Designate
Salary:	£54,495 to £77,701

Role overview

As Head of Finance – CFO Designate, you will work across the business and operational functions of the Trust and will be the Chief Executive Officer's strategic partner in maximising value. You will be instrumental in determining the strategic direction of the Trust, helping shape our strategy, undertaking and being accountable for financial decisions and being a clear and effective communicator, engaging with a wide variety of key stakeholders. As our Head of Finance – CFO Designate you will role model good financial and team-building practices for teams across the Trust.

You will work closely with the CEO and our Central Team on the Trust direction of travel and the overall strategic plan. Your stewardship and strategic insight will support achieving the Trusts vision. As part of this it is important to understand the educational sector and the challenges with funding and bring an open-minded creative approach to working within this landscape.

Key Responsibilities:

- Financial Accountability: Support the CEO in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of the business plan and financial strategy that ensures viability of the Trust. In doing so, prepare for approval by the Board annual estimates of income and expenditure and monitor and report performance against budgets.
- Oversee the monthly preparation of compliant and timely Management Accounts, highlighting issues that require attention by Trust Officers and recommending actions where appropriate, and report consolidated financial performance to the Trust Board, meeting the requirements of the Academies Trust Handbook.
- Ensure the CEO and Board are kept abreast of all legislative changes and proposals that could affect the business, financial and resources management of the Trust, including advising the Board on the impact of changes to national funding and opportunities for grants and other funding.
- Advise the Board on investment and financial policy, prepare appraisals for projects, and develop a business plan and long-term financial strategy for the Trust.
- Lead the Finance Team (recruitment, induction, performance management and continued professional development etc.) and advise on the appropriate structure for the Team as the Trust changes over time.
- Provide financial leadership to major business change projects, investment and capital expenditure. Support with securing funding for capital works and in the monitoring and oversight of capital budgets.



Job Description **continued**

- Provide oversight of and maintain both the asset register and the risk register and provide regular reports to the CEO, Central Team and the Board and its committees.
- Oversee the preparation, approval and submission of annual accounts and statutory returns. Ensure annual accounts are audited satisfactorily and filed in a timely manner.
- Ensure that there is an effective process of benchmarking expenditure and the use of resources to inform evaluation of operational practice and strategic planning. Ensure that resources are employed in the most efficient and effective way to support the aims of the Trust.
- Ensure arrangements for ordering of goods and supplies and approval of invoices for payment are in line with Trust policies and procurement strategy. Ensure that the correct procedures are in place for the timely recovery of VAT.
- Oversee credit control, ensuring that any outstanding sums are received as swiftly as possible. Oversee banking arrangements and controls.
- Operate all bank and deposit accounts, ensuring that a full reconciliation is undertaken at least once a month, and to review and manage the Trust's investments in line with the Trust's investment policy.

Leadership & Collaboration:

- Be the lead officer for the Finance, Risk, Audit and Premises Committee (FRAP) and Trustee meetings, providing papers and ensuring attendance as required.
- Ensure that the financial position and procedures within the Trust support and are in harmony with the Trust vision and values and promote the best interests of each child.
- Contribute to and demonstrate the overall ethos and aims of the Trust. Work collaboratively with the Trust Chief Operating Officer to ensure the Trust has a strategy for using technology aligned with overall vision and plans, ensuring value for money and effective outcomes.
- Collaborate with the Trust Chief Operating Officer to ensure adequate resources for capital projects and support for capital funding and bidding to facilitate the Trust's long-term development and growth.
- Lead and manage the Trust Finance Team, including supporting their continued professional development and training.
- Contribute to the strategic leadership of the Trust as a member of the Central Team.
- Foster a collaborative work environment that encourages teamwork, innovation, and continuous improvement.
- Act in a professional and confidential manner regarding all Trust and individual school information.
- Work collaboratively with others and play an active part in the Trust Central Team.
- Promote the image of the Trust in all contact with the local and wider community.



Financial Systems & Technology:

- Oversee the implementation and maintenance of financial systems, ensuring they meet the Identify opportunities for automating financial processes and improving efficiency through technology. Ensure data accuracy and integrity in financial records and reporting.

Internal control:

- Lead on the development of the Trusts Internal Scrutiny programme and the management of financial risk, providing assurance to the Trust Board on the soundness of the Internal Controls in place.
- Promote best practice and ensure compliance with the financial processes and procedures set out in the Trust Finance Policy, the Academy Trust Handbook and audit recommendations. o Undertake thorough financial due diligence on any school considering joining the Trust to assess the financial viability of the school and the level of risk, and oversee on boarding in respect of financial management and accounts.

Procurement:

- Develop commercial practices and processes and ensure commercial risk controls are in place, whilst achieving best value for the Trust; make informed commercial decisions and recommendations, understanding the impact of these upon the Trust as a whole.
- Communicate openly and effectively with stakeholders of all levels from across the Trust, translating complex commercial decisions into relatable concepts; promote an understanding of wider business needs when making and sharing decisions

Health and Safety & Safeguarding:

- As an employee of the Trust, you have a responsibility to prioritise the health and safety of yourself, your colleagues, and any individuals who may be affected by your work activities. In accordance with our commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment, you are required to adhere to the Trust's health and safety responsibilities.
- As an employee of the Trust you would be expected to be familiar with and adhere to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to ensure that children are safeguarded.



Person Specification

AREA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING/KNOWLEDGE		
Fully qualified accountant accreditation from one of the major accountancy professional bodies e.g. CIMA, ICAEW, ACCA, CIPFA. Note: applications may be considered by exception from professionals who qualify by experience (i.e., have no formal accreditation) and have relevant CPD to support them in their role	* see note below	* see note below
Experience of working under pressure to meet deadlines	✓	
Financial reporting and management skills in a multi-location environment	✓	
Evidence of ongoing professional development	✓	
Ability to demonstrate a track record of successful financial leadership and building effective teams	✓	
Prior experience of working within the education sector		✓
Awareness of the relevant current policies relating to educational developments		✓
Excellent knowledge of the funding, regulatory and legislative environment of academies		✓
Full UK Driving Licence	✓	
SKILLS AND ABILITIES		
Highly developed planning and prioritisation skills	✓	
Ability to communicate effectively to a range of audiences	✓	
Excellent analytical and problem- solving skills and sound judgement	✓	
Excellent judgment and decision-making skills	✓	
Readiness to accept and implement change, openness and willingness to learn and flexibility	✓	
Excellent presentation skills	✓	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT		
To effectively lead and work as a member of an Executive Leadership Team	✓	
Experience and track record as a strategic leader	✓	
Set high standards and be a role model for staff, taking responsibility for own and others professional development	✓	
Motivate all team members to ensure high performance	✓	
Deal sensitively with people and resolve conflicts	✓	
Liaise effectively with other organisations and agencies	✓	

AREA	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
PERSONAL QUALITIES		
Resilience and the ability to maintain an objective perspective	✓	
Reliability, integrity and stamina	✓	
Determination and the highest possible expectations of self and others	✓	
Flexibility to meet deadlines and respond to unplanned events	✓	
Ability to inspire confidence in all stakeholders	✓	
GENERAL REQUIREMENTS		
Commitment to the Trust's ethos and values	✓	
Commitment to providing a responsive and supportive service	✓	
Proactive in acquiring and understanding changes to Finance law and guidance, including training as required to benefit the role	✓	

*** PLEASE NOTE:**

Attain Academy Partnership would like to add they we would also welcome applications from candidates who are part qualified, or on the way to a qualification, for this role.





How to Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or 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.

CLOSING DATE:

Monday 19th January 2026

SHORTLISTING:

Wednesday 21st January 2026

INTERVIEWS:

Thursday 29th January 2026

We reserve the right to shortlist and interview earlier than the stated closing date, should an appropriate application be received.



Attain Academy Partnership
c/o Newlands Spring
Primary School,
Dickens Place,
Chelmsford,
CM1 4UU