



academies for character and excellence

Recruitment Pack | **Chief Finance Officer**





Welcome from Cheryl Weyman, CEO

The Academies for Character and Excellence

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining The Academies for Character and Excellence. I hope the information provided will interest you and help with the application process.

The Academies for Character and Excellence is a charitable Trust with a mission of Achieving Excellence through Cultivating Character, Sharing Talents and Pursuing Innovation. Our Trust is an exciting and diverse mix of Church of England and Community Schools within Torbay, Devon and Somerset. We are growing a family of schools that prioritises working together in collaborative partnerships which are mutually supportive and share great practice. We truly value the distinctive character of our schools and believe they should be rooted in the communities which they serve.

Our commitment to Character Education is at the heart of our work across the Trust. We are uncompromising in our belief that every child fulfils their academic potential whilst also flourishing in and at life. Relationships are central to the way we work together and I am proud to work with colleagues who are passionate about making a positive difference to our children and families. Simply, we are uncompromising in our desire to grow an exceptional Trust. It is a privilege to lead the ACE Trust where learners are at the heart of all we do.

So, what are we looking for? Being a leader in our Trust means making a positive difference to others, especially our children. You will be highly driven to perform with excellence delivering on Trust priorities. Collaboration and being a strong communicator are crucial. We have a fantastic finance team, and you will develop and inspire them to flourish in their roles. You will be passionate, highly driven and will have the opportunity to play a significant role in the next exciting phase of the Trust's development.

We wish to appoint people who understand and believe in our guiding principles and values. If successful, you will be joining our Trust at an integral time of growth and your involvement with these key projects will bring its own personal rewards.

I hope this introductory letter and information pack provides a sense of our culture and ethos as well as our direction of travel. We very much look forward to receiving your application.

Cheryl Weyman CEO



Recruitment Pack | **About Us**



We work together in collaborative partnerships to achieve excellence through cultivating character, sharing talents and pursuing innovation.

Our Schools & Pre-Schools



[Click here to visit the ACE website where you can access the websites of individual schools](#)

Our Mission

Achieving excellence through cultivating character, sharing talents and pursuing innovation

Core to our offer is a better life experience for everyone in the Trust - staff, children, families and community.

Pursuit of excellence remains central to the ethos and culture of all schools within the Trust. We see it as our obligation to be a self-improving organisation.

Our Values

- Community
- Collaboration
- Equity
- Uncompromising Excellence
- Integrity



Simply, our vision is to be an Exceptional Trust



Job overview | Chief Finance Officer



Employer:	The Academies for Character and Excellence
Location:	South Devon – Totnes St. Johns C. of E. Primary School
Job Title:	Chief Finance Officer
Salary:	L21 £81,441 – rising to L26 £92,052pa + Benefits
Accountable to:	The CEO and working closely with Trustees
Leadership of :	Finance Team

Contract:	Permanent
Hours:	37 hours – full time
Closing Date:	8th September 2025
Start Date:	1st January 2026 or as available

Job overview | Chief Finance Officer

Chief Finance Officer:

Context:

The Academies for Character and Excellence is a charitable Trust with a mission of Achieving Excellence through Cultivating Character, Sharing Talents and Pursuing Innovation. Our Trust is an exciting and diverse mix of Church of England and Community Schools within Torbay, Devon and Somerset. We are growing a family of schools that prioritises working together in collaborative partnerships which are mutually supportive and share great practice. We truly value the distinctive character of our schools and believe they should be rooted in the communities which they serve.

The Trust is passionate about educating its pupils ensuring every child has an equity of opportunity through the rich holistic character education it provides. The values of the Trust, which are Community, Collaboration, Equity, Uncompromising Excellence and Integrity, are embedded in everyday practice both operationally at board level and also within our teams across the Trust. We are passionate about the innovative curriculum we offer and our collaborative approach to working. Our network of Teams enables our people to have opportunities to develop and flourish within their own field of expertise.

We now have an exciting opportunity for someone to join the Executive Team as the Chief Finance Officer. We are seeking to appoint an innovative, qualified and resourceful CFO to join our Central Services Team based in the beautiful town of Totnes in South Hams. We are looking for a CFO who is experienced and professionally qualified to join our growing Trust and who wants to make a difference.

Please do read through our information pack for further information on the Trust and about the role.



Job overview | Chief Finance Officer

Purpose

As CFO, you will work across the business functions and will be the CEO's strategic partner in maximizing value creation. You will help shape strategy, undertaking financial decisions and communicating with key stakeholders – all while leading a multi-talented and technologically savvy finance team. You will be responsible for building credibility for the strategic direction of the Trust. The CFO and finance team will model good financial and team-building practices for teams across the Trust.

Another critical aspect of the CFO role is dealing with risk. Managing risks linked to the strategy remains core to the role. Working closely with the CEO on the Trust direction of travel and the overall strategic plan towards achieving the vision is critical to this role. It is important to understand the educational sector, the challenges with funding and bring an open-minded creative approach to working within this landscape. As well as working with the CEO, collaborative partnerships with the Executive Team will ensure success in this role.

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.
- Oversee the monthly preparation of compliant and timely Management Accounts, highlighting issues that require attention by Trustees and recommending actions.
- 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.
- Prepare for approval by the Board annual estimates of income and expenditure and monitor and report performance against budgets.
- Advise the Board on investment and financial policy, prepare appraisals for particular projects, and develop a business plan and long-term financial strategy for the future development of the Trust.
- Advise the Board on the impact of changes to national funding and opportunities for grants and other funding.
- Provide financial leadership to major business change projects, investment and capital expenditure.
- Identify and present potential income generation projects to the Board, upon approval providing hands-on leadership to deliver approved projects.
- 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.

Job overview | Chief Finance Officer

- Maintain both the asset register and the risk register and provide regular reports to the Board and its committees, the CEO and Executive Team.
- Ensure annual accounts are audited satisfactorily and filed in a timely manner.
- Ensure all areas of Trust governance are adhered to and the Trust is compliant.
- 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.
- Be responsible for the leadership, induction, performance management and continued professional development of the Finance Team.

Budget planning and management:

- Support the CEO to ensure viability of the Trust and appropriate resourcing of education provision.
- Oversee the annual production of a three-year budget plan in line with the financial strategy and reserves policy.
- Oversee budget management arrangements across the Trust.
- Prepare a monthly summary of income and expenditure, and forecast out-turn across the Trust, highlighting risks and opportunities, for discussion with CEO and reporting to Trustees.

Management of income and expenditure:

- 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.
- Support with securing funding for capital works and in the monitoring and oversight of capital budgets.

Job overview | Chief Finance Officer

Internal control:

- Lead on the development and implementation of Trust finance policies, ensuring compliance with all relevant statutory procedures and reporting requirements, and lead on the effective management of financial risk.
- 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.
- 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 onboarding in respect of financial management and accounts.

External:

- Oversee the preparation, approval and submission of annual accounts and statutory returns.

Leadership & Collaboration:

- Attend the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (FARC) and Trustee meetings 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 Director of Operations 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 Director of Operations to ensure adequate resources for capital projects and support for capital funding and bidding to facilitate the Trust's long-term development and growth.
- Leadership and management of the Trust Finance Team, including continued professional development and training.
- Contribute to the strategic leadership of the Trust as a member of the Senior Executive/Leadership Team.
- Ensure core financial systems are secure, fit for purpose and provide value for money, with appropriate (internal and external) training for key staff and oversight of effective use.

Job overview | Chief Finance Officer

- Respond to queries from central and school colleagues and outside agencies.
- 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 Trust's needs.
- Identify opportunities for automating financial processes and improving efficiency through technology.
- Ensure data accuracy and integrity in financial records and reporting.

Procurement:

- Develop commercial practices and processes and ensure commercial risk controls are in place; 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 and secure buying; deliver high quality commercial agreements.
- Identify risks in our supply chain and collaboratively work on strategies to manage those risks through robust ongoing due diligence practices in alignment with existing guidance and processes.

Health and Safety:

- As an employee of the Academies for Character and Excellence, 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.

Job overview | Chief Finance Officer

Safeguarding:

- To be aware of, and follow, the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to ensure that children are safeguarded.

Safer recruitment:

- The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment.
- The post holder will be required to undertake a DBS Enhanced Disclosure.

Further information about Disclosure & Barring is available from www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs.



Person Specification | Chief Finance Officer

Person Specification

The Chief Finance Officer will play an important role in leading and strengthening the financial expertise within the Trust. Your knowledge and experience will enable you to influence and guide strategic decisions, whilst also delivering an efficient finance function.

We are looking for someone who is passionate about making a difference and who can demonstrate the following skills and experience:

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education to at least degree level (or equivalent).• Accountancy (ACA/ACCA/CIMA level) or School Business Manager qualification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Business Manager specific qualification i.e. Diploma in School Business Management.
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working at a strategic level.• Experience of working in an education setting.• Managing strategic financial plans, budgets, financial reporting, procurement and fixed assets.• Experience of capital project bid processes.• Experience of successfully managing, leading and developing staff.• Hands-on financial functions, including sound budget control and advice to Board level.• ICT literate to an advanced level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project/contract management including capital build projects. <p>Experience of working in a Multi Academy Trust.</p>
KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excellent analytical skills, including the ability to analyse data and use the analysis to monitor and support activities to promote solutions.• Strong communication skills, ability to produce evidence-based reports to support strategic decision making.• Extensive knowledge of financial management and accounting procedures.• Strong interpersonal skills and a committed team player able to make a positive contribution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of strategies for improvement of complex organisations.• Experience of using enterprise to attract funding opportunities.• Understanding of promoting positive relationships with the wider school community.• Knowledge and understanding of governance.
PERSONAL COMPETENCIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A solutions finder: not one to give up at the first barrier but able to think creatively to identify and implement business opportunities.• Resilient: capable of maintaining motivation and focus despite set-backs.• Strategic: high attention to detail and capable of seeing and communicating the big picture, and translating that into specific actions.• Strong on execution: able to bring together and orchestrate numerous moving pieces, and drive things forward in order to get the project delivered.• Financially literate and socially motivated: not 'in it for themselves' but still highly skilled in shaping solutions to best fit the goals and vision of the MAT.• Empathetic: seeing the other side of the story and yet also holding people to account.	

Benefits

The Trust offers a Local Government Pension Scheme.

Holidays

The post holder will be entitled to 31 days a year plus bank holidays. This will increase by one day a year for the first 5 years totalling 36 days. You are also entitled to a further day after 10 years' service.

Parking

There is on-site parking at Totnes St John's Primary School.

The Trust provides all employees with the following external services:

- Occupational Health Service
- Access to Well-being Charter
- Education Coaching

Employee Assistance Programme which offers the following to our employees and their families:

Life Support: Access to counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured therapy sessions.

Legal Support: For issues that cause anxiety or distress, including debt management, consumer, property or neighbour disputes.

Bereavement Support: Support from qualified and experienced counsellors who will help with grief plus legal advisors to help with related legal matters.

Medical Information: Qualified nurses are on hand to offer support on a range of medical or health-related issues.

Central Services Team

Our Central Services Team is based in the beautiful town of Totnes right by the river Dart. The offices are based within Totnes St. John's Primary School, which is a short 5-minute walk away from the town. We are a collaborative, passionate and resourceful team and are looking forward to welcoming and collaborating with the CFO when in post.



Next steps | Chief Finance Officer

Employment Vetting Checks

It is a condition of employment at The Academies for Character and Excellence that every applicant who accepts the offer of a job will be subject to legally required safer recruitment checks which will include criminal background checks, documentary evidence to confirm their identity and right to work in the UK and checks to ensure they are not prohibited from working in such a position within a school environment. The checks will be carried out at the Trust's expense.

References will be taken up, including those from previous employers.

Safeguarding Children

It is the post-holder's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons for whom they are responsible or with whom they come into contact with. The post-holder will adhere to and ensure compliance with the Safeguarding Policy Statement at all times. If, in the course of carrying out the duties of the role the post holder becomes aware of any actual or potential risks to the safety or welfare of children in the school they must report any concerns to the Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead, the Headteacher and/or DSL/DDSL.

If you decide to apply please complete an application form and return it to Rozel Ridgway rozel.ridgway@acexcellence.co.uk by 8th September.

We are looking to hold interviews within 10 working days of the post closing. We will also ask you to bring documents with you to your interview, as this supports our pre-employment checks.

We look forward to hearing from you.

