

Job Description

Job Title: Chief Operations and Financial Officer

Location: Hewett campus, Central offices, with travel across Trust locations

Job title	Chief Operations & Financial Officer
Salary Scale	£110K - £120K
Hours of Work	Full time
Weeks Worked	Full year
Responsible to	Chief Executive Officer
Location	Hewett campus, Central Offices

Main purpose of the role

- Strategic financial and operational lead.
- Ensure that the Trust meets all statutory compliance regulations
- Ensure financial efficiency and effectiveness in terms of whole Trust budget planning.
- Deploy high-level strategic people skills in order to foster excellent working relationships, both within and outside the Trust, thereby developing and promoting the Trust's vision for business and operational excellence.
- Chief Financial Officer for the Trust and, as such, supporting the Accounting Officer in ensuring that the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) operates compliant and robust financial governance in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Lead operational functions of the Trust working to ensure that all business functions including Finance, Governance & Compliance, Estates, Procurement, Marketing and Information Technology are run efficiently, effectively and are in line with the Trust's strategic direction.

Organisational relationships

- Responsible to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Line management of Director of IT, Director of Estates, Director of Marketing, Company Secretary, Financial Controller and Finance Supervisor
- Direct liaison with senior managers and other staff within the Trust Academies.

Principal accountabilities and responsibilities

Strategic Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with the CEO and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to develop and implement the Trust's strategic plans • Lead the development of functional strategies across Finance, IT, Marketing, Estates, and Governance • Drive change management initiatives to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness
Financial Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring financial management and accounting processes are compliant with the Academy Trust Handbook • Ensuring key stakeholders are made aware of current factors impacting the sector to allow informed decision making • Responsible for accounting for all funding bids to ESFA, including completion of associated returns as required

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of annual budgets and other finance updates for presentation to Board and the Audit and Risk Committee • Ensuring efficient and effective management of accounting processes and implementation of internal controls, including following up findings from audits • Timely production of statutory and internal financial reports and forecasts • Financial modelling and analysis • Review of overall consolidation of the management accounts, including commentary and circulation to CEO and Chair of Trustees • Key contact for external auditors, responsible for review of the year end statutory accounts working papers and preparation of the draft accounts • Attendance at Executive Leadership Team meetings • Responsible for production and monitoring of financial management information for Inspiration Teaching School Hub, and associated areas • Production of VAT returns including requirements of Making Tax Digital • Liaise with internal and external auditors, bankers and other authorities • Review and approval of monthly payroll • Authorisation of staff recruitment requests outside of agreed budgets • Authorisation of purchase requests • Review of financial policies in line with annual review cycles • Review of contracts database to identify tender requirements, ensuring compliance with procurement guidelines • Oversee the financial planning, budgeting, and forecasting processes • Ensure compliance with financial regulations and reporting requirements • Provide strategic oversight of financial operations, including risk management and financial controls and procurement
<p>Business Planning & Performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide strategic and operational leadership to the central operating functions of Inspiration Trust, including, Estates, IT, Governance & Compliance, Procurement, Marketing, and Finance. • To support the Principals and Trust in compliance, and governance. • Support the CEO to implement the overarching Inspiration Trust strategic plan. • Establish policies and procedures to maximise efficiency whilst supporting sustained improvements. • Lead the acquisition, due diligence, and conversion processes for identified new schools. • Liaise with the CEO and phase Directors to coordinate the deployment of appropriate structural resource.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with, and monitor, Principals to ensure compliance with CLFP parameters during curriculum reviews. • Report and communicate with key stakeholders as required
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and develop the Trust wide risk assessment process • Present data in relation to risk management at a strategic level
Estates	<p>In conjunction with the Director of Estates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic leadership to the Estates directorate • Lead the strategic planning and management of the Trust’s estates and facilities • Ensuring all development and growth opportunities are maximised • Ensuring all activities are compliant with current legislation and best practice • Ensuring the Trust receives value for money in all transactions • Oversee capital projects, including new builds and refurbishments, ensuring they are delivered on time and within budget • Ensure compliance with health and safety regulations and best practices in facilities management • Develop a Net Zero Carbon strategy, by utilising available government financing opportunities.
Marketing	<p>In conjunction with the Director of Marketing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and execute marketing strategies to enhance the Trust’s brand and reputation • Oversee internal and external communications, ensuring consistent messaging across all platforms • Manage stakeholder engagement and public relations efforts • Provide strategic leadership to the Marketing directorate • Ensure schools receive an excellent service and Trust priorities are focussed upon to achieve maximum outcomes
Information Technology & Digital Strategy	<p>In conjunction with the Director of IT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic leadership to the IT directorate; Develop and implement the Trust’s strategy to support educational and operational goals • Oversee the management of IT infrastructure, ensuring data security and compliance with relevant regulations • Lead digital transformation initiatives to enhance operational efficiency and educational delivery • Monitor cybersecurity ensuring robust processes are in place and maintained • Support the development of Artificial Intelligence to progress efficiency and innovation
Governance & Risk Management	<p>In conjunction with the Company Secretary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide strategic leadership to the Governance function

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Board of Trustees and Academy Committees in fulfilling their governance responsibilities • Ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, including those set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Charity Commission • Lead on risk management and ensure robust governance frameworks are in place • Ensure the governance framework is maintained and communicated effectively to all stakeholders • Ensure staff, and Trustees are fully informed in regard to Trust and individual responsibilities • Support the development of Academy Committees to ensure the Trust benefit of the Academy Committee members is fully recognised • Ensure compliance in all Governance activities
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish constructive relationships and be supportive of, and sensitive to, the needs of colleagues, students, parents, carers and the wider Trust community • Encourage interaction and teamwork within the academies and Trust; attend relevant Trust meetings, as required, share ideas and new initiatives • Respect confidentiality and maintain professionalism at all times • Actively engage in relevant training opportunities, taking responsibility for own professional development • Participate in the performance and development review process, taking personal responsibility for identification of learning, development and training opportunities in discussion with line manager • Contribute to the overall ethos, work and aims of the Trust • Comply with all Trust policies and procedures, including the Code of Conduct and those relating to child protection, equal opportunities, health & safety, confidentiality and data protection, reporting concerns to an appropriate person.

Employee commitments

All employees will commit to the following key areas:

- [The vision, values and key principles of the Trust](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- In any way possible, in accordance with the role, support students to achieve their potential
- In any way possible, in accordance with the role, improve standards of education
- [Support the inclusion agenda](#)

Performance Management

Participating in the Trust's arrangements for performance management, professional development and the Trust's arrangements for quality assurance and internal verification.

Context

All staff are part of the whole Trust team. Each individual is required to support the values and ethos of

the Trust and Trust priorities as defined in the Trust Improvement Plan. This will mean focusing on the needs of colleagues, parents and students and being flexible in a demanding environment.

Miscellaneous

To undertake any further tasks which could be reasonably expected by the Trust. The Data Protection Act 2018 renders an individual liable for prosecution in the event of an unauthorised disclosure of information. The post is one that carries responsibility for the wellbeing and welfare of children and the post holder should be aware of this and the need to act accordingly. The Trust will endeavour to make any necessary reasonable adjustments to the job and the work environment to enable access to employment opportunities for disabled job applicants or continued employment for any employee who develops a disabling condition.

It is a requirement of the post holder to make positive efforts to maintain their personal safety and that of others by taking reasonable care, carrying out requirements of the law and following recognised codes of practice. The post holder is also required to be aware of and comply with policies on health and safety.

This is an Equal Opportunities post and is in accordance with the Trust's Equality and Diversity Policy. This job description can be altered, with the agreement of the post holder and will be reviewed on an annual basis. It is not a comprehensive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the Trust in relation to the post holder's professional responsibilities and duties.

The Inspiration Trust is committed to protecting the welfare of children and young people. Due to the nature of this role, it will be necessary for the appropriate level of DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) to be undertaken. It is essential you to disclose whether you have any pending charges, convictions, bind-overs or cautions and if so, for which offences. This post will be exempt from the provisions of Section 4, (2), of the Rehabilitation of Offenders 1974 (exemptions) (Amendments) Order 1986. Therefore, you are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are “spend” under the provisions of the Act.

Person Specification	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully qualified ACA/ACCA/CIMA preferably with a practice background Degree or equivalent level of education Excellent numeracy and literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project / Agile management qualification
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven experience in a senior financial and operational leadership role Experience of treasury management Experience of accounts payable Strong understanding of financial management, regulatory compliance, and risk management Strong knowledge of public sector procurement rules, ensuring best value for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working within the education sector Senior Leader experience as a Chief Financial Officer / Chief Operating Officer or similar role

	<p>money while remaining compliant with regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to negotiate contracts for services and goods across a broad range of areas, including ICT, facilities, and marketing. • Knowledge of managing educational estates, including facility planning, maintenance, capital projects, and compliance with statutory requirements. • Comprehensive understanding of health and safety legislation, risk management, and creating a safe environment for staff and students. • Expertise in overseeing ICT systems and infrastructure, particularly in implementing digital solutions to enhance educational delivery and operational efficiency. • Thorough understanding of governance frameworks, particularly in relation to the charity sector and educational bodies, ensuring adherence to legal, regulatory, and ethical standards. • Ability to manage communications during critical incidents or public relations challenges, particularly in relation to health and safety or governance issues. • Familiarity with the UK education system, especially the specific requirements for multi-academy trusts (MATs) or similar educational organisations • Comprehensive knowledge of UK legislation in education, estates, health and safety, data protection (GDPR), and procurement. • Knowledge of sustainability initiatives, including energy efficiency, waste reduction, and environmental impact, especially in estates management. • Experience in managing emergencies, particularly those related to health and safety incidents or significant operational disruptions. • Exceptional verbal and written communication skills to articulate the trust’s operational strategies, policies, and visions clearly to all stakeholders 	
<p>Skills, Knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent organisational skills • Ability to meet deadlines • Ability to develop positive working relationships • Solution focused • Pragmatic 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication skills • Approachable • Accurate and diligent work • Passion for learning and development • Able to exercise judgement and refer matters as necessary • Good knowledge and understanding of basic accounting principles • Good knowledge of bank reconciliations • Excellent knowledge of Microsoft office suite • Ability to manipulate data and produce meaningful reports • Excellent knowledge of data analysis and performance metrics • Track record of strategic planning and business development • Demonstrable ability to plan strategically and to lead, motivate, develop and inspire staff and colleagues and to manage change • Excellent interpersonal, written and oral communication and presentation skills • Ability to prioritise conflicting workloads • Strategic thinker with strong analytical skills. • Ability to build and maintain effective relationships with stakeholders. • Commitment to the values and mission of the MAT. • Innovative and proactive approach to problem-solving. 	
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Signature

Date