



United Learning
The best in everyone™

Briefing Pack for Applicants

Finance Manager

October 2026

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Section 1 – Post Advertisement

Job title: Finance Manager
Location: Barnsley and Sheffield
Salary: Starting salary of £51,000 to £53,500 gross per annum dependent upon experience
Contract: Full-time, fixed-term to cover maternity leave
Start date: As soon as possible

We are seeking to appoint a highly skilled and experienced individual to manage Finance over the Yorkshire Cluster of United Learning academies.

The successful post-holder will undertake this role for the duration of a maternity leave cover arrangement. The anticipated duration of the appointment is 12 to 14 months, including handover periods.

The Yorkshire Cluster comprises four secondary academies based in Barnsley and Sheffield: Barnsley Academy, Fir Vale Academy, Sheffield Park Academy and Sheffield Springs Academy.

This is an exciting opportunity to take on a key leadership role within the Cluster, maintaining high standards of service delivery, overseeing financial systems and processes and leading the Finance Team.

This role requires a highly focused individual who is organised and passionate about making a difference to our academies and local communities. The successful candidate will be an efficient and proactive professional with exceptional attention to detail. This is a challenging and rewarding role offering the opportunity to make a significant impact across the Cluster.

We will offer you:

- Highly competitive pay above national average.
- 26 days annual leave plus 8 statutory bank holidays per annum.
- An additional day's paid leave awarded per annum (a personal leave day).
- Excellent facilities and resources.
- Access to an outstanding professional development programme.
- A respectful working environment.
- Supportive, friendly colleagues who are committed to each other's professional development.
- A chance to become part of United Learning, one of the largest groups of academies in the country.
- Opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues in each academy across the Cluster and United Learning.
- Excellent employee benefits which include a highly sought-after pension scheme with high employer contributions.
- Access to training through the Apprenticeship Levy.
- Benefits platform.
- Free on-site parking.
- Access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- We encourage open and regular conversations about work-life balance.

We are looking for:

- An experienced line manager with excellent communication and team building skills.
- A reliable, highly motivated and self-driven individual.
- A finance professional with significant and demonstrable financial management experience.

- Experience of managing finance within a multi-site organisation or in a comparable environment.
- Strong problem-solving capabilities.
- Strong stakeholder management skills, including the ability to set expectations and balance competing priorities.
- Excellent report-writing skills and the ability to present information to a range of audiences.
- Excellent IT skills.
- Ability to effectively contribute to the review and development of policies and procedures.
- You must have strong organisational skills, a keen eye for detail, high standards and take pride in your work.
- The ability to manage a varied and changing workload with autonomy, resilience and professionalism.
- A positive, proactive and professional approach at all times.

Please see the job description and person specification for further detail.

To apply, please click the 'Apply Now' button at the top of the advert on our website using the following link to our vacancies page: [Sheffield Park Academy Vacancies](#) and complete our online application form. Please note that CVs are not accepted. **The closing date for this post is midnight on the 25 October 2026. Interviews will take place soon after.**

If you would like to discuss this exciting opportunity, please contact hr@unitedlearningyorks.org.uk

United Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Employees will, in accordance with statutory guidance, be subject to a comprehensive checking process including references from current and previous employers, health, Right to Work in the UK, an Enhanced DBS check and a further check against the appropriate barred list.

Section 2 – United Learning

The Yorkshire Cluster is part of United Learning which is a large and growing group of schools aiming to offer life changing education to children and young people across England.

Our schools work as a team and achieve more by sharing than any single school could. Our Subject Specialists, Group-wide Intranet, our own curriculum and online learning portal all help us to share knowledge and resource, which supports simplifying work processes and managing workloads for an improved work-life balance.

As a Group we can reward our staff better, we provide good career opportunities, better pay, employee benefits and ultimately, the satisfaction of helping children to succeed. We invest in our staff wellbeing. Our academies each have at least eight INSET/training days per year (with three of those solely dedicated to planning) and an ongoing group-wide wellbeing programme. It is an ethos we call 'the Best in Everyone'.

<https://unitedlearning.org.uk/>

Section 3 – Letter from the Regional Director

Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in the role within the Yorkshire United Learning Cluster. The cluster itself is a close-knit group of four Secondary Academies: Barnsley Academy, Fir Vale Academy, Sheffield Park Academy and Sheffield Springs Academy, who work alongside a number of local Primary Academies; all from within the United Learning Trust.

The cluster is well-established and has excellent support from locally based cluster central services. These cover Business Management, Finance, HR, IT and Site/Estate Facilities. They are led by an Executive Business Manager. This provides our Academies with excellent trained advice and support in these areas; this benefits the leadership and wider staff of every Academy.

United Learning Trust is a national organisation serving Primary and Secondary Academies, all-through Academies and Independent Schools. Our ethos is, “the Best in Everyone”. This is a useful phrase that sums up the work and focus of the organisation. Every decision taken is done with this aim in mind: for staff, for students and for the community. The Trust values of Respect, Determination and Ambition are driven through the Character Programme, which each Academy has carefully interpreted in their own way. The Trust attributes of Creativity, Confidence and Enthusiasm are demonstrated at every level.

United Learning, and Academies within the Yorkshire Cluster, demonstrate a strong commitment to staff CPD and staff wellbeing. If you join our schools you will be inducted, supported and developed in a deliberate way from before you even take up post. Our status as an Academy Trust enables highly competitive rates of pay progression and our employee schemes, such as our Westfield Health benefits package, are an attractive feature of employment.

Above everything, we put young people first and seek to recruit adults who share this view. We work with students, parents and families to provide a structured, supportive experience that enables them to achieve as well as they possibly can and become excellent scholars and rounded individuals. We insist on classrooms and corridors that are respectful, orderly places where everyone is expected to display positive and mature attitudes.

Applying for a new job is a huge investment of time and emotional energy. The recruitment decision has to be right for employee and employer. I would encourage you to seek out any information you need in order to make the important decision to apply and we welcome visits to our schools in advance of applications wherever this might be helpful.

I do wish you the very best with your application and thank you again for considering us.

Best wishes,

Laura Moore
Regional Director
United Learning

Section 4 – Letter from the Principal of Barnsley Academy



Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in joining Barnsley Academy. I am delighted to introduce you to our school and I hope that this application pack provides you with an overview.

Barnsley Academy and the United Learning academy trust are committed to teaching a knowledge-rich curriculum and education with character to all of our students. We believe in explicit instruction led by expert teachers. Our approaches are greatly influenced by Doug Lemov's 'Teach Like A Champion', with our lesson sequences underpinned by Rosenshine's principles. We are an outward-facing school, learning from outstanding schools both within the group and beyond. We are unapologetic about our high standards and unashamedly ambitious for all of our students and we are on a journey to becoming a great school with excellence as standard. As part of this journey, we are creating an academic culture that is warm and strict, disciplined and joyful, and ensures impeccable behaviour, so that teachers can teach and students can develop their knowledge.

If you are aligned with our mission and values, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Good luck with your application and thank you again for considering Barnsley Academy as the next stage in your career.

With best wishes,

Stephen Pitcher
Principal
Barnsley Academy

Section 5 – Letter from the Principal of Fir Vale Academy



Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in joining Fir Vale Academy. I am delighted to introduce you to our school and I hope that this application pack provides you with an overview. You are welcome to telephone and chat with me prior to applying and come and visit if you can.

Fir Vale Academy is a diverse and dynamic 11-16 school. We are delighted to be part of United Learning and we work closely with our Cluster schools.

We fully subscribe to the ethos and values of United Learning, they are very much values we subscribe to here at Fir Vale Academy.

Good luck with your application and thank you again for considering Fir Vale Academy as the next stage in your career.

Best wishes,

Danny Bullock
Principal
Fir Vale Academy

Section 6 – Letter from the Principal of Sheffield Park Academy



Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in joining Sheffield Park Academy. I am delighted to introduce you to our school, and I hope that this application pack provides you with a good overview of the type of candidate we are looking for. If you like what you have read or know about our school, I would advise you to get in contact with us either for a visit to the academy or a phone call (with me or one of my senior leaders) to find out more.

Sheffield Park Academy is a flourishing 11-18 school and we really value working as part of the Yorkshire cluster alongside our sister schools: Barnsley Academy, Fir Vale Academy, and Sheffield Springs Academy. Our close collaboration across the schools is a real source of strength and support as is the wider support of United Learning, and particularly our Regional Director.

We fully subscribe to the ethos and values of United Learning and as Principal, I would thoroughly recommend working for the group. Our own academy character values of Community, Ambitions, Respect, and Endurance filter through everything we do as a school, and we aspire for all students, staff, and other members of our community to live these into being. We also subscribe to our academy strapline of 'One Community, One Park' to ensure our school is a place of strong values, together, and shared goals.

If you are aligned with our mission and values, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

As an academy, we will be relentless in our aim to provide ambitious and high-quality learning and education to the students of Sheffield Park Academy. To provide that, we are looking for colleagues who wish to make a strong and valuable contribution to positively shaping the lives of young people in our community.

Good luck with your application and thank you again for considering Sheffield Park Academy as the next stage in your career.

Best wishes,

Rob Watson
Principal
Sheffield Park Academy

Section 7 – Letter from the Principal of Sheffield Springs Academy



Dear Candidate

Thank you very much for your interest in the role at Sheffield Springs Academy. The school itself is a fantastic place to work and a brilliant place to learn. Our values are respect, excellence, ambition and pride; if you join our academy, you will see these demonstrated in all aspects of academy life and by all members of our wonderful team.

The team

I am extremely proud to be the Principal of Sheffield Springs Academy, I have worked at the academy for over 15 years and many colleagues have been here longer than this still; I believe this shows the team ethos and community-feel of our academy. The team are deeply invested in our students and new employees are warmly welcomed into this team.

Where we are and where we're going

Sheffield Springs Academy is an outward-facing school, learning from outstanding schools both within the group and beyond. We are unapologetic about our high standards and unashamedly ambitious for all our students and our staff team, we are embarking upon a journey towards becoming a great school. As part of this journey, we are creating an academic culture that is warm, disciplined and joyful and ensures impeccable behaviour. We aim for a culture that means teachers can teach and students can develop their knowledge.

We are committed to staff wellbeing and have a wide-reaching wellbeing programme in place, we listen to the views of our staff team and we strive to make Sheffield Springs a brilliant place to work. We hold celebration briefings, ensure early finishes on INSET days, have a realistic marking policy, calendar in meeting-free-weeks and host a range of wellbeing activities to make sure staff have the time and support they need to fully support our pupils.

Location

Our academy is located at one of Sheffield's highest points, with incredible views across our catchment area directly to Stanage Edge, Hathersage and beyond into the Peak District. We are less than 30 minutes from the beautiful Peak District National Park, only 15 minutes away from the M1 motorway network and just a 5-minute walk to the nearest Supertram stop which provides efficient links to all areas of the city. Sheffield is a vibrant and diverse city; we are incredibly lucky to be in such a fantastic location which offers so much.

Applying for a new job is a huge investment of time and energy. I would encourage you to seek out any information you need in order to make the important decision to apply and I welcome visits to our school in advance of applications wherever this might be helpful.

I wish you the very best with your application and thank you for taking the time to consider Sheffield Springs Academy as a place of employment.

Best wishes,

Claire Cartledge
Principal
Sheffield Springs Academy

Section 8 – Job Description



Job Description

Post title	Finance Manager
Salary	Band 5
Responsible to	Executive Business Manager
Responsible for	Finance Officers
Role purpose	To lead, manage and drive the finance support functions to ensure compliance to United Learning, legislative and regulatory requirements.
Relevant qualifications	Accounting qualification or proven and substantial financial accounting experience that supports the post-holder to apply the level of skills, knowledge and understanding required to fulfil the requirements of the role.

The post-holder must, at all times, carry out their duties and responsibilities within the spirit of United Learning and academy policies and procedures, and within the legislative framework applicable to academies.

Role Summary

The Finance Manager will carry out their role and responsibilities in a manner which is in keeping with the values and vision of each academy within the Cluster. The post-holder will ensure financial management processes are compliant with United Learning's policies and procedures and statutory and regulatory requirements.

The post-holder will lead on the financial management of the Cluster's academies including overseeing finance operations, financial planning and analysis, looking to make improvements to procedures and controls as well as ad-hoc projects and requests as and when required.

Key Responsibilities

Although not an exhaustive list the following gives an indication of the role and associated responsibilities.

Main Responsibilities

- The post-holder is responsible for providing professional leadership and management of Cluster finance staff to enhance their effectiveness to achieve improved standards of learning and achievement.

- The Finance Manager promotes the highest standard of business ethos within the finance function of the academies and ensures the most effective use of resources in support of academy and Cluster objectives.
- To ensure all finance related matters are prioritised and dealt with in an effective and consistent manner, providing advice and guidance to colleagues regarding policy and best practice.
- Provide advice and support to senior leaders to ensure compliance to financial requirements.
- Responsible for overseeing the work of the Cluster Finance Team.
- Contribute to the development of an effective, customer focused finance support service which is characterised by high standards of delivery.
- The post-holder will be an integral point of contact for internal and external audit.

Leadership and People Management

- Manage the Cluster Finance function including the performance management of the team.
- Oversee and identify opportunities for development to support the ongoing needs of the Cluster finance staff.
- Lead on the performance development review cycle for the service in liaison with key personnel.
- Lead on the ongoing professional development of the Finance team, driving a culture of continuous improvement and ensuring all team members have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of current financial regulations and guidance.
- Work with academy leaders and the Executive Business Manager to improve and secure financial health and efficiency in the Cluster.
- Coach and mentor staff to ensure high-quality service provision is achieved.

Financial Management and Reporting

- Be the main contact for financial queries, providing advice and guidance on United Learning's Policy to academies as well as accounting regulations.
- Lead and manage financial processes ensuring that month end accounts are completed in-line with United Learning requirements.
- Support leaders with requests for financial information, analysis or costings.
- Lead and manage the completion of month end processes applying accounting knowledge to ensure transactions are recorded accurately in-line with United Learning and the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Academy Trust Handbook requirements.
- Produce month end returns investigating variances prior to submission to the Central Office.
- Oversee team routines delegating financial tasks to the team as appropriate.

- Oversee the effective administration of orders in a timely manner, ensuring accuracy and affordability to the academy's agreed budget. Ensure all records are recorded within finance systems by the Finance team.
- Ensure payments are processed in-line with policy by the Finance Team.
- Maintain financial records in-line with United Learning's financial policies and procedures.
- Ensure receipts, payments and expenses are recorded accurately by the team in-line with United Learning's policies.

Budget monitoring and forecasting

- Assist the Executive Business Manager and Principals in the preparation of the annual budget and five-year forecast for submission to the Central Office.
- Oversee the budgets of each academy in the Cluster including oversight of budget monitoring and reforecasting work.
- Oversee the preparation of the Business Modeller (Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning) and meet with key leaders on a regular basis to review this.
- Identify areas where expenditure efficiencies can be achieved.
- Assist the Executive Business Manager in reporting the budget and forecast position.
- Delegate tasks to the Finance team and assist with accounting queries.
- Contribute to the development of financial systems and processes within the Cluster as well as ensuring that the Cluster meets Central Office requirements.

Personal Competences

- The post-holder will be required to evidence through actions the level of knowledge of services within each academy.
- Actively seek to maintain and develop knowledge in appropriate areas including legislative areas affecting the financial activities.
- Advanced skills in the management and troubleshooting of finance related systems.

General

- Develop excellent working relationships with colleagues internally, centrally and externally.
- Be an effective and flexible member of the team.
- Ensure any documentation produced is to a high standard and is in-line with the in-house style.

- Participate in training and other learning activities as required.
- Participate in the Performance Management process.
- Provide appropriate guidance and supervision and assist in the training and development of staff as appropriate.
- Represent the academy at events as appropriate.
- Support and promote the academy and United Learning's ethos, contributing to strengthening relationships between academies in the Cluster and between the Cluster and central office.
- To be aware of and comply with United Learning policies and procedures relating to Child Protection, Health and Safety, security, confidentiality and Data Protection, reporting all concerns to the appropriate person.
- To actively participate in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and act as a positive role model across the academies and United learning.
- The above duties are not exhaustive and the post-holder may be required to undertake tasks, roles and responsibilities as may be reasonably assigned to them by the Executive Business Manager and Principals.
- This job description will be kept under review and may be amended via consultation with the individual, Executive Business Manager and Human Resources as required.

Information

The need to adapt working hours around the business need of the academies and Cluster is an expectancy of the job role.

The information contained above is to help staff understand and appreciate the work content of their post and the role they are to undertake in the organisation. However, it should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to outline all duties and responsibilities, a document such as this does not permit every item to be specified in detail. Broad headings have therefore been used in which case all the usual associated duties are included in this job description.

This job description will be reviewed annually as part of the performance management process and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post-holder. Elements of this job description and changes to it may be negotiated at the request of either the post-holder or the incumbent of the post.

I accept my job description and job title as detailed above.

Name (print)	
Sign	
Date	

Section 9 – Person Specification



Person Specification

Post title	Finance Manager
Salary	Band 5

Education and Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
Accounting qualification relevant to the role or proven financial reporting and accounting work experience to support the level of skills, knowledge and understanding required to fulfil the requirements of the role.	X	
Excellent literacy and numeracy to support delivery in the role.	X	
Excellent understanding of Microsoft Office and in particular, user of Excel at advanced level.	X	
Evidence of further professional development and training.	X	
Experience	Essential	Desirable
Experience in a similar role in financial accounting services.	X	
Experience of using finance systems.	X	
Experience of financial management and processes.	X	
Experience operating in a fast-paced environment.	X	
Previous experience managing and supporting a team including performance management.	X	
Experience of developing a high-quality finance service.	X	
Experience of using accounting and budgeting systems.	X	
Experience of report writing and presenting to a variety of audiences.	X	
Experience of working in an Education setting.		X
Five years minimum experience in an accounting and financial role with supervisory responsibilities.		X
Experience in financial reporting and complex accounting principles.		X
Knowledge and Skills	Essential	Desirable
Extensive knowledge of effective delivery of business services.	X	
A high degree of interpersonal skills to ensure effective communication at all levels.	X	
Excellent written and verbal communication skills.	X	
Ability to effectively use monitoring and reporting systems to ensure statutory and organisational reports are delivered and actioned.	X	

Understands and uses organisation systems to report on compliance and performance issues and action failures at the appropriate level in the organisation.	X	
Ability to effectively contribute to the review and development of organisational policy.	X	
Ability and confidence to coach and mentor colleagues.	X	
Ability to effectively use monitoring and reporting systems to ensure statutory and organisational reports are delivered and actioned.	X	
Leading and managing business service in a multi establishment organisation.		X
Management and Leadership	Essential	Desirable
Leads by example and acts as a role model for professional behaviour and good practice.	X	
Sets the pace for action and demonstrates commitment to achieving stretching goals.	X	
Translates broad strategies into clear objectives and practical action plans.	X	
Actively implements and encourages improvement processes.	X	
Teamwork	Essential	Desirable
Recognises the contribution and achievement of colleagues.	X	
Keeps colleagues, stakeholders and/or customers informed of progress.	X	
Treats others fairly, openly and consistently.	X	
Expresses disagreement or challenges views calmly, constructively and tactfully.	X	
Supports and cooperates with colleagues.	X	
Personal Attributes	Essential	Desirable
High levels of discretion, confidentiality, and awareness of Data Protection.	X	
High levels of personal and professional integrity.	X	
A facilitative approach to problem-solving and a 'can do' mindset.	X	
Good written and verbal communication skills.	X	
Ability to prioritise, multitask and manage workloads while maintaining a flexible response to urgent requests.	X	
Good interpersonal skills and ability to work with stakeholders at all levels.	X	
Organised and good attention to detail.	X	
Maintains high standards and takes initiative to make things better.	X	
Make recommendations for improvements to enhance quality of service.	X	
Ability and willingness to travel regularly to locations within the Cluster.	X	
Ability to drive and the use of a vehicle is advantageous.		X

Section 10 – The Appointment Process

These notes are intended to guide you when making an application.

The Application Form

The application form is accessible via the 'Apply' link on the job advertisement. Please complete the application form neatly, fully and accurately, including exact dates. You are requested to submit a concise application. CVs are not accepted.

Education and Training

State your qualifications and any training you have undertaken relevant to the post.

Present Appointment

Make it clear what your present post is, which establishment you work in and who your employer is.

Previous Appointment

When completing this section it is important that you offer a continuous record, or an explanation of any gaps to allow full account to be taken of your experience, for example, child raising, voluntary work.

Referees

Suitable referees are people who have direct, recent experience of your work and who are in responsible positions. References will be taken if the candidate is successfully short-listed for interview. We may need to contact them at short notice so please be specific with regard to contact addresses including e-mail and telephone numbers.

The Supporting Statement

The supporting statement is regarded as a very important part of your application. You should make statements that demonstrate how your qualifications and experience match the post.

Arrangements for Interview

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted as soon as possible after the closing date. Referees are contacted prior to the interview stage for teaching and support staff posts. We would ask that all shortlisted applicants read the safeguarding information on the academy website/s prior to attending the interview.

The Interview

Candidates will be invited to interview at the academy during which time they will have the opportunity to meet staff and students and see the academy at work.

Feedback

Feedback is offered to those candidates who are shortlisted, interviewed and not recommended for appointment. It is hoped that this information will help you with future applications.

Section 11 – Visitors/Contacts

The academies are located in thriving towns close to the beautiful Peak District



Barnsley Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Barnsley Academy
Farm Road
Kendray
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 3DL

Website: www.barnsley-academy.org

Email: enquiries@barnsley-academy.org

Telephone: 01226 284606

Barnsley Academy is an 11-16 secondary and is Ofsted rated 'Good'. As part of United Learning our aim is to bring out 'the Best in Everyone' and we continuously strive to ensure that students and staff have every opportunity to succeed, with their potential developed to the utmost.



Fir Vale Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Fir Vale Academy
Owler Lane
S4 8BG

Website: <https://www.firvale.com>

Email: enquiries@firvale.com

Telephone: 0114 2439391

Fir Vale Academy is an 11-16 secondary. As part of United Learning our aim is to bring out 'the Best in Everyone' and we continuously strive to ensure that students and staff have every opportunity to succeed, with their potential developed to the utmost.



Sheffield Park Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Sheffield Park Academy
Beaumont Road North
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S2 1SN

Website: www.sheffieldpark-academy.org

Email: info@sheffieldparkacademy.org

Telephone: 0114 2392661

Sheffield Park Academy is an Ofsted rated 'Good' academy. The academy is part of United Learning, a national group of schools and academies. Sheffield Park Academy is an 11-18 academy. As part of United Learning our aim is to bring out 'the Best in Everyone' and we continuously strive to ensure that students and staff have every opportunity to succeed, with their potential developed to the utmost.



Sheffield Springs Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

Sheffield Springs Academy
Hurlfield Road
Sheffield
South Yorkshire
S12 2SF

Website: www.sheffieldsprings-academy.org

Email: enquiries@sheffieldsprings.org

Telephone: 0114 2392631

Sheffield Springs Academy is an 11-16 secondary school and is Ofsted rated 'Good'. As part of United Learning, our aim is to bring out 'the Best in Everyone'. Our values are Respect, Excellence, Ambition and Pride, and these are demonstrated in all aspects of academy life by all members of our wonderful team.