



DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Finance Manager Information Pack

Challenge with reward



DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Finance Manager

Start date: preferably March/April 2026

Contract	Permanent
Salary (plus access to generous LGPS pension scheme)	£41,388 - £51,702 pa fte (salary shown assumes 37.5 hrs/week; for hours less than 37.5 this will be pro rata'd)
Hours per week/weeks per year	30 – 37.5 hours per week; 52 weeks per year

Are you a detailed-oriented, qualified finance professional who thrives on creating efficient systems, ensuring watertight compliance and managing robust daily operations? Do you want your expertise in control and accuracy to directly enable brilliant teaching and learning?

Due to the forthcoming retirement of our current Finance Manager, we are seeking a proactive and highly skilled individual to take the reins of our financial operations within this large Academy Trust and Teaching School Hub. This critical, hands-on role is about ensuring the seamless, compliant and efficient flow of all Trust finances.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School is an 11-18 grammar school for boys with a co-educational Sixth form, and is regarded as one of the leading grammar schools in the country. You will be responsible for the day to day delivery of our financial function, ensuring compliance with internal and external regulations whilst ensuring that our staff are empowered to focus on educating our students. You will lead our experienced finance team, driving best practice in internal control and serving as the primary lead for the annual external audit.

This role would be suitable for either an experienced Finance Manager or a Financial Professional looking to take the next step in their career.

Informal enquires can be directed to Sean Kennedy, Chief Finance and Strategy Officer (skn@challoners.org)

Closing date: Monday 26 January 2026 12 noon

Interviews are expected to take place on Tuesday 3 February

To apply for the post, please email a completed application form to the HR Department Email: employment@challoners.org

Early applications are welcome; we reserve the right to interview suitable candidates before the closing date.

At Dr Challoner's Grammar School we ensure breadth of opportunities for all and actively promote open and outward facing attitudes to diversity and inclusion. As such, we actively encourage suitably qualified people from all backgrounds to apply for roles at our school. If there are any issues which you feel could be barriers to your application, as part of this process, please let us know.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School is committed to safeguarding and successful candidates will be required to complete an enhanced DBS check.

A warm welcome...

From Mr David Atkinson, Headteacher, Dr Challoner's Grammar School



Dear Applicant,

I hope that the information which follows will help inform your decision about whether to make a formal application for this post. Like most job applicants you will want to find out a bit more about us. These days there is a wealth of data about schools which you may wish to look at. Proud though we are of that data, such research never tells the whole story and you will only be sure that you want to work here when you get 'that feeling' within the first few minutes of walking through the door.

When you do your research you'll find that our Ofsted inspections, in 2019 and 2024, graded the school as outstanding in every respect. We believe this is an accurate reflection of the school as a genuinely special place. The reports echo what many visitors tell me - that we have a distinctive ethos of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration, with the well being of staff and students at the heart of what we do. Our students are intensely proud of coming to school here, and our staff feel similarly about their place of work. The relationship between staff and students is a very special one, and we see ourselves as running the school with the students rather than for them.

Our motto - Excellence with Integrity - demonstrates the purpose behind this ethos. We also highlight three key values which we believe can underpin the effective education of all our students. These are Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience. Our staff demonstrate these characteristics in their own ways, and inculcate the same attitudes in our students. This is not an attempt to produce a 'standard Challoner' student, but a means of encouraging our young people to find their own ways of demonstrating those crucial characteristics to help them flourish in the future.

Despite its impressive academic record, Challoner's is not an examination hothouse, it's a place of genuine creativity, fun and comradeship. In staff we appoint, we look for that much undervalued quality of humanity, along with an acceptance that young people will always make a few mistakes and that it's our job to ensure that they learn from them. Two of the most immediately noticeable qualities of the people who work here are their humour and their sense of proportion. Even on the dullest of days, laughter pervades the school and reflects a genuine warmth and professional respect amongst colleagues. Sharing a laugh and a joke with the students is the norm and serves to brighten our daily work no end. One of the reasons our staff are prepared to give up so much of their time to run educational visits (we do more than any school I know) and other extra-curricular activities is that spending time with our students is so rewarding and enjoyable.

We believe that the next generation of leaders will be drawn both from among our staff and our students and we take our responsibility for their development very seriously. We do our very best to promote good mental health at work through the way we organise things, and the way we relate to each other. This kindness for others, not just students, is one of the hallmarks of our ethos. Over the last decade we have developed an approach to looking after our people that has been informed by MIND's work, and by listening carefully to staff views on how we can make Challoner's as good a place to work as possible.

You'll find a lot more information about the school on our website www.challoners.com (which we hope encapsulates that intangible 'feel' of the school) and about the Astra Teaching School Hub and SCITT at www.astrahub.org. If you would like further clarification or just an informal chat with someone, please feel free to contact us by phone or email. I enclose some general information about the school, a Role Profile and a Person Specification. When I read your application, I will be trying to assess whether you would be a 'good fit' for our school, so I hope that some of the things I have said will be useful to you in writing your supporting statement.

I do hope that you will decide to make an application to join us and that we will have the chance to welcome you to our school.

With best wishes.

Mr D Atkinson,
Headteacher

Challoner's is the Teaching School Hub for Buckinghamshire, a function we fulfill through the Astra Teaching School Hub. As a result we offer a wide and diverse range of professional development opportunities for staff. Astra is also a School Centred Initial Teacher Training provider (SCITT) ensuring Challoner's is at the cutting edge of curricular and pedagogical developments in education. Now leading the delivery of the ECF and NPQ programmes across the county, colleagues at Challoner's are able to contribute to, and benefit from, our leadership of high quality teacher training and CPD across over 200 schools in the local area.



'The facilities are outstanding in many respects. The forward-thinking management and leadership ensure learner-led environments are possible'.

Why work for Dr Challoner's Grammar School?



- Outstanding modern facilities, including recently modernised sports, music, arts and science facilities
 - High staff retention
 - A friendly working environment with supportive and caring colleagues
 - Culture of teamwork, loyalty and aspiration
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- Engaging, able and well-motivated students
 - An innovative approach to learning
 - Outstanding facilities in every subject
 - Access to an Employee Assistance Programme including financial and legal advice, counselling and health programmes
 - Preferential admission for qualified children of staff (some restrictions apply)
 - Access to onsite cardio fitness and weights room
 - Free onsite parking
 - Access to Blue Light card benefits
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- Generous pay based on the London Fringe Allowance
 - Staff Buddies - all new staff are allocated a staff buddy
 - Hero of the Week! - recognition for staff who go above and beyond
 - Opportunities for flexible working, where possible
 - Access to join the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). The LGPS is a Career Average Related Earnings ("CARE") Defined Benefit Pension Scheme
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- A successful and well recognised professional development scheme, which all colleagues have access to and are encouraged to make use of
 - Staff are issued with a Chromebook computer for use during their employment at Challoner's
 - An extensive induction programme for all staff joining the school, with components tailored to individual requirements, such as for those new to the teaching profession



Our commitment to Character Education

Character Education



As well as our enviable track record of academic performance, we are equally proud of our focus on character, and our development of young people who will go on and improve their lives and our society with their education. Our core vision, to deliver education of excellence with integrity, is underpinned by values of Aspiration, Kindness and Resilience. We want to support students so that they develop their own well informed aspirations for their futures. We help our students understand how to flourish as young adults, with the resilience to adapt and be flexible while also helping others. We emphasise the need to be kind by looking after yourself, and through positive and productive personal relationships with others.

We encourage our staff, whatever their job, to play a part in this. This may be through classroom teaching, but role modelling good habits in these areas is something we expect of all our colleagues. As a result we have a cohesive staffbody with a shared belief in the school's purpose, to develop thoughtful young people who can make a noticeably positive impact on society as a result of their education at Challoner's.





Our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

At Challoner's, we strive to create a safe environment where everyone feels they belong, and kindness, respect and equity inform everything we do. Our school is a rich and diverse community, so we must develop thinking and attitudes appropriate for the global society in which we live.

Our DEI charter is for current and prospective students and staff, as well as the wider community, to understand the commitments of our school in this vital area, and to outline the expectations of all members of the school community:

Our key commitments:

Maintain a positive ethos: We stand for an atmosphere of empathy, inclusion and respect that empowers all members of the community.

Commitment to curiosity: We will retain a curiosity about others in our diverse community; whilst also remaining tolerant of others who might make genuine mistakes along the way.

Accountability: We will accept responsibility for our actions and any negative impacts our comments and actions have upon those close to us and the wider community.

Stand strongly against discrimination: We will actively oppose any form of discrimination including the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. This will be treated with the same protocols and rigour as other harmful acts.

Our DEI pledge:

Educate: Address problematic stereotypes and prevalent prejudices by showing each other how such intolerance directly affects individuals and society as a whole.

Encourage dialogue: Offer a safe space in which everyone can openly discuss issues they feel are important, share their own experiences and ask questions.

Set clear expectations: Make clear in the school's code of conduct that any form of prejudice and discrimination is unacceptable and detail the consequences. Breaches of these rules will be followed with swift action.

Promote diversity and inclusion: Encourage the celebration of diversity and sharing culture through activities that can be enjoyed by all.

Promote & empower upstanders: Encourage students and our whole school community to challenge intolerance and teach them how to support those affected by intolerance effectively.

Involve parents: Ensure that families are aware of the positive work being undertaken by school. Involve them in what students are learning and encourage them to reinforce the same messages in a more direct and personalised way at home.



Role Profile – Finance Manager



Job title

Finance Manager

Reporting to

Chief Financial and Strategy Officer (CFSO)

Job purpose

- **Line management of staff in the finance office and overall management of the day to day operations of the school's finance activities.**
- **To be the lead finance officer for the operation of the school's payroll and pension provision**
- **To be the lead finance officer for strategic change projects involving finance systems**

Principal areas of responsibility

- A Management of the Finance Office
- B Payroll and Pensions
- C Strategic Change Projects
- D Other

Key Tasks

A Management of the Finance Office

- Responsible for monitoring staff compliance (including finance staff) with finance manuals and procedure notes for the funds of the school and notifying the Chief Financial and Strategy Officer ("CFSO") of any significant issues in a timely manner
- Draft any amendments to the financial manuals and procedure notes for consideration by the CFSO
- Oversee the month end process in an accurate and timely manner to facilitate prompt budget monitoring reporting
- Significantly input into the year end processes including preparing documentation for the CFSO and auditors as required
- Co-ordinate the Finance Office in responding to requests from external auditors or internal scrutiny reviews, including those by the Responsible Officer
- Oversee accuracy of VAT and tax compliance for the trust, drafting the quarterly VAT returns for review
- Act as a signatory on the Academy Bank Mandate
- In conjunction with the CFSO manage user account access to bank and credit card funds held by the Trust in accordance with banking mandates and financial regulations
- Act as a key administrator for the Trust's other finance systems, including the general ledger
- Oversee cash flow management for the Trust
- Oversee credit control ensuring that the Trust invoices promptly for services it provides and collects income due in a timely manner
- Line management of finance staff including the undertaking of annual reviews (PDR's) to effectively manage performance of the finance office



Role Profile – Finance Manager



Key Tasks (continued)

B Payroll and Pensions

- Responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school's payroll provision, including being the lead officer with the payroll bureau
- Responsible for ensuring the controls regarding the payroll system comply with the school's financial frameworks and that these controls are continually reviewed to be seen as fit for purpose
- Draft any required amendments to procedures regarding how the school fulfils all its payroll obligations for consideration by the CFSO
- Ensure that compliance of staff with the payroll controls and procedures is effectively monitored
- Reconcile monthly payroll reports with the general ledger, personnel records, the BACs payments made and statutory pension returns
- To be the lead officer liaising with pension authorities
- Responsible for monitoring compliance with auto enrolment legislation
- Submission of monthly and annual pension returns
- Determine the IR35 status of new suppliers as to whether they need to be paid via the school's payroll

C Strategic Change Projects

- To represent the finance office on action teams set up to implement changes that are likely to have an impact on finance manuals and procedures
- To draft relevant procedure notes for the CFSO to consider in relation to any change project
- To draft relevant procedure notes for the CFSO to consider in relation to any new income streams / items of expenditure

D Other tasks

- Coordination of the training of staff with finance roles
- Support other members of the finance team in their roles as leads in administering other legal entities associated with the school
- Undertake any roles as assigned in the financial frameworks of the legal entities associated with the school (e.g. bank reconciliations, tax returns, etc.)
- Represent the Finance Team on the Support Staff Team Leader group
- Deputise as appropriate for the financial aspects of the CFSO Role
- Participate in all applicable aspects of staff development, attend relevant training courses and actively seek to broaden knowledge and skills relevant to responsibilities
- Assist occasionally in the invigilation of examinations at peak times
- Be aware of, and work within, the statutory frameworks relating to schools, including Safeguarding
- Undertake any other reasonable task required by the Headteacher or line manager

Line Management of:

Senior Finance Officer and Astra Business Partner

Finance Officer

Person Specification



FINANCE MANAGER

At DCGS we want to employ people who share our desire to deliver the best experience and outcomes for our students. This person specification is designed to show the personal and professional characteristics that we would like to see in a successful applicant for this post.

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
Qualifications/training			
Good standard of general education to A level/NVQ Level 3 standard or equivalent, or substantial successful experience in a similar role	Y		Application, Certificates
Evidence of continual professional development relevant to accounting or finance	Y		Application, Certificates
Book keeping/Accounting qualifications		Y	Application, Certificates
AAT/CCAB qualification		Y	Application, Certificates
Payroll qualification		Y	Application, Certificates
Previous work/school experience			
Experience of working successfully in a similarly demanding, complex and fast paced finance office environment	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of working in finance across a significant number of the areas of responsibility listed in the role profile	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of working effectively in an environment where attention to detail is critical	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Significant demonstrable experience of senior financial management in a similarly demanding, complex and fast paced finance office environment		Y	Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of working in an education setting		Y	Application, Interview, Reference
Application of financial skills in a school situation		Y	Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of successfully managing staff		Y	Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of the preparation and monitoring of budgets		Y	Application, Interview, Reference

Experience of banking procedures		Y	Application, Interview, Reference
Experience of academy/charity accounts framework		Y	Application, Interview, Reference
Professional skills, abilities and knowledge			
Able to effectively lead others	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Ability to use ICT effectively – in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accounting packages Excel Word Equivalent Google products 	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
High level of numeracy and financial understanding	Y		Application, Interview
Ability to work quickly without compromising accuracy	Y		Application, Interview
Ability and knowledge to produce accurate budget estimates, reports, cash flow and financial and statistical summaries to support strategic decision making	Y		Application, Interview
Ability to plan and prioritise work to manage competing demands	Y		Application, Interview
Ability to operate procedures and processes methodically and systematically	Y		Application, Interview
Able to work independently on own initiative	Y		Application, Interview
People management skills and experience			
Good communication skills, both verbally and written, when liaising with colleagues, parents and students	Y		Application, Interview, Reference
Ability to lead, manage and develop a high performing Finance team	Y		Application, Interview
Ability to communicate effectively to non-finance stakeholders in a clear and persuasive manner	Y		Application, Interview
Good interpersonal/communication skills with individuals from a range of contexts	Y		Interview
Evidence of ability to build good working relationships	Y		Interview, Reference
Friendly and customer focused	Y		Interview
Other Personal qualities			
High level of integrity and a clear understanding of, and commitment to, confidentiality	Y		Interview
Reliable and conscientious	Y		Interview, Reference
A self starter, able to work to and meet deadlines	Y		Interview
Ability to work within existing systems and procedures	Y		Interview

Efficient, flexible and adaptable	Y		Interview
Ability to sense check outputs	Y		Interview
A desire to learn and develop	Y		Interview
Commitment to uphold the school's Child Protection Policy	Y		Interview
Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion	Y		Interview
Understanding of safeguarding in schools		Y	Interview
Commitment to continued professional development	Y		Interview
Commitment to the school's values of aspiration, kindness and resilience	Y		Interview

Making an application



The purpose of the selection process is to assess your suitability for the post and give both the panel and yourself an opportunity to gain further information before making a successful appointment. It is also an opportunity to seek clarification on information which you have provided on the application form and accompanying information. The interview will also assess your suitability to work with children and will include questions relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

How to apply

To apply for this position, you will need to complete an application form, which can be downloaded by following this link.

Completed applications should be sent to employment@challoners.org

Please note that only fully completed application forms will be considered.

CVs will not be included in the short-listing process

Short-listing

Applications will be assessed based on the information provided on the application form; only those best fulfilling the criteria for the role and the person specification will be short-listed.

Subject to the number of applications, short-listing may take place before the deadline for applications has passed.

If you have not heard from us within three weeks of the closing date, you can assume that your application is not being progressed on this occasion.

Interview

Selected candidates will be formally interviewed by the Headteacher and other members of the school management team.

The interview may also include an administration or practical task for support staff.

(Support Staff) Administration Task

The interview process for support staff may include a skills test which is relevant to the role for which you are being interviewed. This will be completed using Google docs and/or Google sheets, which are very similar to Microsoft Word and Excel.

As part of our safer recruitment process please find links here to our Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Statement and Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy.

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013 and 2020) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', are not subject to disclosure and cannot be taken into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found at DBS filtering guide. It is an offence to for any applicant to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE) guidance, we will conduct online searches to research information on shortlisted candidates, to determine suitability to work with children and keep them safe. This is not part of the shortlisting process; if there are any findings of concern, you will be given the opportunity to address them at interview.

DR CHALLONER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL



PURPOSE AND VALUES

We want our students to leave Dr Challoner's equipped for academic and career success, and ready to lead lives of integrity and service, contributing to a society that is fairer, kinder, and stronger for all.

This shared mission involves our whole community: staff, parents, governors, and students. By working together, we aim to shape a better future, one where our students make meaningful contributions as leaders in society, guided by their values and strengths.

All our staff are committed to preparing our students to flourish personally and professionally in adult life. To achieve this, we foster a rigorous school culture focused on two pillars: excellent learning & teaching and deep character development. Through this we ensure students gain the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to succeed, while also helping them develop resilience, empathy, and a clear sense of purpose.



DCGS Learning and Teaching Purpose

The classroom culture at DCGS is consistently positive and inclusive, with staff upholding the highest expectations for every student, without exception. This is reflected in learners who actively engage, build expertise, and show strong motivation across all areas of their learning.

DCGS Character Development Purpose

DCGS students develop into young adults with a sense of belonging, purpose and contribution, and an understanding of themselves and others. They demonstrate this through aspirations to use their education wisely and kindly, whilst understanding how they can flourish and feel personally fulfilled.

Dr Challoner's Grammar School, Chesham Road, Amersham, Buckinghamshire HP6 5HA

Headteacher: Mr D Atkinson Email: admin@challoners.com

General Enquiries: 01494 787500 Web: www.challoners.com