

**Finance Support Officer Application Pack**

Contents

[Letter from Cathie Paine, Chief Executive Officer 3](#_Toc139971818)

[Our Touchstones 5](#_Toc139971819)

[The role 6](#_Toc139971820)

[The application 9](#_Toc139971821)

[The application process and timetable 9](#_Toc139971822)

[Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment and Data Protection 10](#_Toc139971823)

[Job Description 11](#_Toc139971824)

[Person Specification 16](#_Toc139971835)

**Letter from Cathie Paine, Chief Executive Officer**

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in this role within the REAch2 Academy Trust.

This is a hugely exciting time for our family of schools. The Trust has been recognised by the Department for Education as being well placed to raise standards and achieve excellence for pupils in a growing number of schools nationwide. We are presented with a rare opportunity to make a real difference to the lives and life chances of so many primary school children – many of whom haven’t previously received the educational opportunities they deserve.

The Trust includes schools at all stages of development, from those requiring significant improvement through to existing outstanding schools. As a Trust we are clear about the importance of achieving long term sustainability for our schools. Our vision is to enable individual academies to flourish with real autonomy, whilst also ensuring a strong ethos of support and collaboration across our schools.

Employees within REAch2 belong to a national community of professionals, and benefit from a wide range of networks and development opportunities across the Trust. In time, our best teachers are able to work across schools, develop specialisms and step up to leadership roles within and beyond their own academy. The Trust provides a strong culture of collaboration and support, together with high expectations for staff and pupils alike.

Those we recruit are able to demonstrate that they share our values, are highly motivated to work with colleagues within and beyond their school to continuously develop their skills and pursue professional excellence and are committed to providing the highest standards of teaching for all children. If that is you then we would be delighted to receive your application.

**Cathie Paine**

**CEO**

# Our Touchstones

REAch2 is defined by the values of **excellence, quality, delivery and standards** – these features give the Trust its enduring attributes and its inherent reliability.

However, what gives each REAch2 Academy its uniqueness are the Touchstones of the Trust (seen on the right). Just as 500 years ago Touchstones were used to test the quality of the gold they marked, so too our touchstones find what is precious and set these things apart. They are used to express the values and ethos of the Trust and describe what the Trust wants to be known for and how it wishes to operate.

With good **leadership**, we aspire to develop children academically, emotionally, physically and spiritually. We notice talent and spot the ‘possible’ in people as well as the ‘actual’. Developing potential across our Trust becomes a realisation that there is a future worth pursuing for everyone.

Children deserve **enjoyment** in their **learning** and the pleasure that comes from absorption in a task and achieving their goals. Providing contexts for learning which are relevant, motivating and engaging, release in children their natural curiosity, fun and determination.

**Inspiration** breathes energy and intent into our schools: through influential experiences, children can believe that no mountain is too high and that nothing is impossible.

REAch2 serves a wide range of communities across the country and we celebrate the economic, social, cultural and religious diversity that this brings: embracing **inclusion** ensures that we are a Trust that serves all, believing that everyone can succeed.

We take our **responsibility** seriously. We act judiciously with control and care. We don’t make excuses, but mindfully answer for our actions and continually seek to make improvements.

REAch2 is a Trust that has a strong moral purpose, our **integrity** is paramount. Our mission is to change children's lives by providing the very best quality education we can. Through this, children can fulfil their potential, become happy, successful adults and contribute effectively and meaningfully to society. We welcome the fact that all our decisions and actions are open to scrutiny. You can learn more about REAch2 at our website: [www.reach2.org](http://www.reach2.org)

**About the Role:**

Responsible to the Finance Business Partners, REAch2 Academy Trust is seeking to recruit an exceptional Finance Support Officer to join our growing organisation. The post holder will cover a defined cluster of schools in our North and South regions, providing support to the Finance Business Partners in their oversight of school’s finances, the application of processes within schools and their financial sustainability and helping to manage risks and opportunities. Supporting the Finance Business Partners, you will be assisting in their oversight of the performance of school-based staff and their adherence to financial processes and best practice.

Providing timely and accurate reporting, you will also support on Trust initiatives with the wider finance team and assist in delivering a seamless Finance service to the Trust, including support to schools without school-based finance staff.

You will be able to demonstrate excellent communication and interpersonal skills, be inspiring through your disciplined financial approach, your people skills and be a role model for the REAch2 Touchstones. You will also be able to develop strong working relationships with our senior leaders in the education teams; Directors of Education, Deputy Directors of Education, Headteachers and school office staff.

Travel to school sites will be required therefore you will need to be flexible with working hours and in your willingness to travel.

We offer a competitive salary and LGPS pension, with 29 days holiday (rising to 32 days after 5 years), plus bank holidays

**You will:**

* Bring experience of working in a similar or related finance role, including preparation of budgets and management accounting information, gained ideally within a successful educational establishment, or primary school, federation or Multi-Academy Trust
* Be capable of working collaboratively with colleagues and key staff within schools, and have an ability to positively affect performance improvement
* Demonstrate a high level of organisational skills, and be able to successfully manage conflicting priorities and deadlines
* Demonstrate excellent communication skills, both written and spoken
* Be able to travel around your region as required.

**About the Trust**

The Trust has academies based across England and includes schools at various stages of development, from those requiring significant improvement through to existing outstanding schools. As a Trust we are clear about the importance of achieving long term sustainability for our schools. Our vision is to enable individual academies to flourish with real autonomy, whilst also ensuring a strong ethos of support and collaboration across our schools.

We are presented with a rare opportunity to make a real difference to the lives and life chances of so many primary school children – many of whom haven’t previously received the educational opportunities they deserve.

In order to deliver our vision, we need exceptional staff across the organisation, and we believe that the quality of our staff sets us apart.

~~T~~he role will provide effective support to our Finance Business Partners in proving oversight of, guidance to, and reporting on our academies within their clusters, ensuring the effective management of budgets, risks and opportunities.

The role is also expected to assist with wider work programmes and projects across the Trust and support the wider finance team during key and busy work periods.

Being able to act with discretion and absolute confidentiality is a pre-requisite along with being highly organised and with meticulous attention to detail, whilst also working within tight deadlines is essential.

Those we recruit must be able to demonstrate that they share our values, are highly motivated to work with colleagues within and beyond their role to continuously develop their skills and pursue professional excellence and are committed to providing the highest standards of teaching and support for all children. If that is you, then we would be delighted to receive your application.

We offer a competitive salary plus LGPS pension, 28 days’ annual leave (rising to 31 days after 5 years) plus bank holidays, great career progression and development opportunities in this role.

For an informal discussion about the role please contact **Rachel Young 07387 411653**

**Application Process:** Please send all completed application forms to;

Email: [**recruitment@reach2.org**](mailto:recruitment@reach2.org)

**Closing date: Tuesday 28th May 2024**

**Interviews & Assessment: TBC**

*REAch2 is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is essential for this role.*

# Safeguarding, Safer Recruitment and Data Protection

At REAch2 we recognise that those who work in an academy are in a unique position in their care of children. The responsibility for all staff to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare, as stated in Section 175 of the Education Act (2002) is one that is central to our ethos, our policies and our actions. All children are deserving of the highest levels of care and safeguarding, regardless of their individual characteristics or circumstances, and we are committed to applying our policies to ensure effective levels of safeguarding and care are afforded to all our pupils.

We will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job based on the abilities, qualifications, experience as measured against the job description and person specification. The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

All information is stored securely and any information supplied by unsuccessful candidates will be destroyed through a confidential waste system six months after the decision has been communicated, in accordance with our information and records retention policy.

The Trust ensures all applicant data is stored and processed appropriately. For further details on how your information will be managed during the recruitment process please refer to our [Privacy Notice for Job Applications](https://reach2.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Privacy-Notice-Job-Applications.pdf).

**Finance Support Officer – Job Description**

**Salary SCP 29 (£37,841) – SCP 35(£44,008) 37.5 hours FTE - dependent on experience and professional qualifications**

**Reports to** Finance Business Partner

**Job Purpose**

This role, along with the Finance Business Partner (FBP) is responsible for providing support to schools on finance matters and monitoring such requirements to effect a culture of continuous improvement within the team and the wider Trust.

It will also ensure the provision of timely and accurate reporting, whilst supporting Trust initiatives and the wider Finance Team to provide a range of Finance services to the Trust.

**Key responsibilities**

**School Oversight**

* Provides support to the FBP in the oversight of individual school finances, the application of processes within schools and their financial sustainability, helping to actively manage risks and opportunities
* Provides support to the FBP in the oversight of the performance of school-based staff and their adherence to finance processes and best practice, providing feedback and guidance as appropriate
* Assists FBP with monthly review of allocated schools’ management accounts and follows up on any unexpected changes
* Carries out review of month end reports of allocated schools
* Oversees schools’ adherence to process during detailed reviews, and reports concerns as appropriate to FB.
* Drives a culture of financial prudence and sustainability within schools, ensuring that sufficient reserves are in place and budgeted for to meet the school’s short, medium, and long-term needs
* Reviews school’s financial assumptions, ensuring a reasonable balance between opportunity and risk within forecasts/budgets and raise any concerns with FBP
* Assists FBP with review of school’s budget/reserves in light of the investment needs of the school
* Escalates concerns to the Finance Business Partner as appropriate
* Establishes strong collaborative partnership with the Trust’s Education teams, taking the role of ‘critical friend’ on finance related issues
* Shares experience and best practice across school and central teams
* Contributes to the continued development of Trust policies, procedures and toolkits that are required to ensure compliance and financial sustainability

**School Support**

* Provides feedback to FBP on finance related staff performance, including input to the probationary sign-off process
* Forge strong working relationships with the Director of Education, the Deputy Directors of Education, Headteachers and other school staff to deliver short term and long-term financial sustainability for individual schools and the Trust as a whole
* Promotes a culture of personal responsibility which recognises excellence and addresses under performance
* Promotes equality and diversity as part of the culture of the organisation
* Demonstrates an ongoing commitment to personal development and CPD
* Assists FBP with training, presentations and webinars on key finance topics
* Ensures that support to schools with need is provided at an appropriate level, and that the Trust Core Offer is met
* Identifies activities outside the Core Offer to be charged to schools as agreed in advance and as directed by FBP

**Helpdesk Support**

* Provides 1st line support to school finance staff via the Finance Helpdesk, answering simple questions and resolving simple problems to agreed deadlines - escalates issues as necessary
* Provides 2nd line support to school finance staff via the Finance Helpdesk, answering more complex issues, by telephone or via video conference - escalate issues as necessary
* Identifies issues requiring 3rd line (onsite) support, and liaises with other finance staff to determine the optimal approach to delivering this support in conjunction with the school
* Retains ownership for resolution of the issue until the school confirms it is solved
* Monitors and publishes response times to Finance Helpdesk queries and take a continuous improvement approach to issue resolution
* Monitors queries received by the Helpdesk, identifying trends to better inform future training, policy and procedure decisions

**Risk and Opportunity Management**

* Actively works to identify risks and opportunities within a school’s finances, in the short, medium and long term
* Proactively reports and resolves risks, sharing experience with colleagues
* Proactively reports and crystallises opportunities, sharing experience with colleagues
* Supports FBP with managing a termly and annual school financial oversight programme which reflects the state of each school’s finances, now and in the future, in particular in relation to their reserves management

**Governance and Reporting**

* Updates Trust financial reports with cluster and school financial data to facilitate reporting, as directed by FBP
* Contributes to the effective role of the Cluster Boards, providing information and reports as required
* Promotes the finance agenda with their clusters, keeping them informed on key issues, policy and risk
* Supports reporting on key finance matters across clusters, including pupil numbers, reserves, contingency and investments

**Systems**

* Promotes the use of the Trust intranet as a ‘first point of call’ for basic finance queries
* Reviews the use of all finance related systems, ensuring that best practice is shared across the Trust
* Supports on any financial system decisions, including the development of existing systems, selection of new systems and their implementation

**Other Duties**

* Upholds a mechanism of internal charging to schools for activities which are outside of the Trust’s Core Offer
* Supports the set-up of the financial systems and processes for all Free Schools
* Assists with the due diligence and transition of schools coming into the Trust
* Contributes to key Trust strategies, systems and policies updates, and ensures the effective roll out of theses
* Supports the wider team during peak workload periods (i.e. year-end and budgeting periods) holiday periods and other absences
* Deputises for the FBP as required

**Additional Information**

The duties outlined in the Job Description may be varied to meet changing demands at the line manager’s reasonable direction. This job description does not form part of the contract of employment.

**Finance Support Officer – Person Specification**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Right to work in the UK | **\*** |  |
| **Knowledge/Qualifications** | | |
| Finance qualification (AAT or higher), or similar | **\*** |  |
| Knowledge of the Academies Handbook and other public sector financial regulations | **\*** |  |
| **Experience and Skills** | | |
| Working in a finance role, including managing budgets and preparing management accounts | \* |  |
| Working in a finance role within Education | \* |  |
| Able to effect organisation performance improvement |  | \* |
| Using modern financial accounts systems | \* |  |
| Excellent user of Microsoft Office – including Office 365, Word, Excel, PowerPoint | **\*** |  |
| Highly numerate and able to analyse data, draw conclusions and communicate key messages effectively | \* |  |
| Ability to engage and influence at all levels of an organisation | \* |  |
| Excellent communication skills | \* |  |
| Excellent written and presentation skills | \* |  |
| Strong interpersonal and collaborative working skills | \* |  |
| Excellent organisational and time management skills | \* |  |
| Experience of line management of staff |  | \* |
| **Professional attributes** | | |
| Absolute confidentiality | \* |  |
| Attention to detail | \* |  |
| Can work independently | \* |  |
| Sensitive and empathetic when required | \* |  |
| Demonstrates personal and professional integrity | \* |  |
| Likes a challenge / takes initiative / ‘can do’ attitude | \* |  |
| Willing to learn and open to feedback | \* |  |
| Proven commitment to continuous improvement | \* |  |
| flexibility with working hours and a willingness to travel is required. | \* |  |

REAch2 is committed to the highest standards of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

An Enhanced DBS check is required for this role.