



School Business Support Officer

Job Description & Person Specification

Context

The Diocese of Chester covers a number of Local Authorities, including Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Wirral and parts of Halton, Warrington, Trafford, Stockport, Tameside and Derbyshire. There are 116 Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) schools, ranging from small rural to larger urban schools.

A group of DBE schools (currently eleven) have become part of the Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT) as both sponsored and converter academies. The growth of CDAT has been undertaken in a measured way to ensure that its growth matches its capacity, but it is now ready to expand more rapidly as it takes on further schools, working within a regional cluster model.

It is envisaged that our School Business Support Officers will work specifically with a small group of schools, while also contributing to the overall effective running of the Trust.

Key issues to which CDAT is committed

Going forward as a growing trust, CDAT is seeking to build a staff complement (centrally and through academies) with the capacity to:

- Develop outstanding practice across every academy
- Intervene to support schools that are not providing the best outcomes for children
- Ensure that church schools within CDAT embed Christian distinctiveness and all schools live out the CDAT vision and values
- Understand that CDAT is built from the ground up and work with schools to develop necessary policy and procedures
- Support the development of the hub model
- Lead school to school collaboration and development both for individual academy improvement and the good of all
- Enhance the educational and business offer currently available to academies
- Improve communication both internally and externally
- Deliver leadership development and succession and development for all staff
- Demonstrate clear accountability in business functions, educational provision and governance.
- Provide clear information and guidance to the Board on the effectiveness of individual academies and the trust as a whole

Job Description

Chester Diocesan Academies Trust (CDAT)

Job Title:	School Business Support Officer
Salary:	£25,419 - £28,226 (NJC Pt 18-23)
Pension:	Membership of Local Government Pension Fund
Job Summary:	<p>The Trust envisages that the School Business Support Officer will be a key part of the trust's central team, providing high-quality support for schools, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the financial accounting systems across the trust, ensuring compliance with the Academies Handbook and other key financial guidance and legislative requirements • Monitoring and implementation of appropriate financial policies and procedures across the trust • Supporting financial management and reporting at school level • Supporting schools to comply with their statutory obligations in respect of business and operations • Supporting the transition process of schools coming into the trust, and providing sound financial knowledge and support to School Business Managers across the trust on all aspects of finance
Accountable To:	Trust Director of Finance & Operations
Key Relationships:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDAT Officers and staff • Headteachers and School Business Managers • Diocesan Board of Education Officers and Staff • Service providers • ESFA • DfE • HMRC • The Charity Commission
Hours & Location:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Time (but with potential for negotiation) • Blended working in place, involving some time in the trust office (Daresbury), some home working and regular visits to schools

Core Purpose

To support the provision of a forward thinking, responsive and professional finance and business operations service, while ensuring the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) remains compliant with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook, Companies House, the Charities Commission and other relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

Core Expectations

Staff should recognise that as the trust grows job roles will inevitably develop and change focus, and job descriptions will be reviewed accordingly. Staff need therefore to be flexible in their approach to accommodate the changing needs of the MAT and to participate fully in professional development to support this.

Key Accountabilities

1) Support the trust's DFO in ensuring that the trust's accounting systems are effectively and accurately maintained in compliance with the Funding Agreement, SORP, the Academies Financial Handbook, the Academies Accounts Direction and all relevant Companies and Charities legislation

- Support the development and monitoring of the trust's financial procedures and processes
- Participate in and support finance system administration tasks e.g. creating new periods and year end processes
- Participate in and support period end procedures for all academies and central function in a timely and efficient manner
- Identify and perform all necessary accounting adjustments for all schools and the MAT central function
- Support financial monitoring and reporting across the trust
- Support the VAT claims process each month from information provided by the School Business Managers, ensuring that the information is accurate and correct.
- Advising the DFO if fraudulent activities are suspected or uncovered
- Supporting schools to comply with their statutory obligations in regard to business and operations: e.g. ensuring compliance of website, single central record and required health and safety checks
- Supporting schools to comply with statutory requests as required: e.g. subject access

2) Responsible for ensuring that financial data produced is fit for purpose to support the school and trust-level financial reporting and strategic decision making

- Support the production of the annual budgets across the MAT
- Ensure all income and expenditure is accounted for and provide regular assurance to the DFO
- Proactively report budget variances and recommend key management actions
- Monitor and report local financial information to the DFO to support the consolidation for MAT financial reporting and strategic decision making
- Cover the finance functions in schools when necessary
- Monitor monthly outturns for the schools and report local financial information which supports the consolidation of the MAT financial reporting and strategic decision making
- Ensure that the School Business Managers are supported to meet the demands of their role so that they can play their key role in the academy and the MAT, including

month end close, journal adjustments control account reconciliation and outturn preparation

- Provide support for any capacity or capability issues identified in schools

3) Responsible for the production of information to support scrutiny, analysis, Audit and Statutory Financial Statements

- Support the DFO to ensure that the school financial policies, procedures and structures meet each school's needs and maintain compliance with financial standards
- Quality-assure financial processes and procedures and report to the DFO as required
- Ensure that all financial data recording has a clear audit trail and meets audit criteria to adequately evidence the content in the financial statements
- Support the timely submission of all statutory returns
- Ensure resources are directed to provide the most positive educational outcomes for students
- Ensure financial systems are managed effectively to expedite the CDAT budget cycle and to support decision making across the organisation

4) Support the achievement of value for money across the MAT

- Support the DFO in securing best value through local purchasing, contract monitoring and benchmarking
- Contribute to the preparation of local bids and tenders for capital projects, grants and services

5) To keep professional knowledge up to date

- Attend briefings on financial matters and feedback to the DFO
- Ensure CDAT is represented in national, regional and local networks so that the trust influences and is alert to new trends and is familiar with current best practice in the developing education sector
- Establish a high level of credibility, visibility and professionalism and manage strong working relationships with internal (especially academies and Diocesan staff) and external partners

6) Upholding CDAT's Christian and professional values internally and externally by

- Acting always with integrity and respect for all
- Delivering day-to-day duties at a consistently strong level
- Acting as a champion for continuous improvement and quality enhancement
- Actively promoting and acting, at all times, in accordance with the trust's policies, e.g. Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding
- Making a commitment and contribution to improving the educational opportunities of CDAT pupils
- Contributing to the maintenance of a caring and stimulating environment for pupils
- Undertaking other duties commensurate with the job level
- Interact professionally with colleagues to ensure understanding and awareness of responsibilities of all colleagues and undergo any relevant training.
- Building close working relationships with Head Teachers, Chairs of Governors and the CDAT central team

Note

General

The postholder will comply with the general terms and conditions of service and undertake such other duties appropriate to the salary and content of the work as may reasonably be required. Therefore, the list of duties in this job profile should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive.

Data Protection

The post holder is responsible for ensuring that workplace responsibilities are carried out in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the Employment Practices Data Protection Code, especially concerning confidentiality, treatment of personal information and records management.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

With reference to all relevant advice and guidance, ensure each Academy complies with Health and Safety legislation and manage the security, upkeep and improvement its buildings to ensure an effective and safe environment that promotes the welfare of children and staff.

Equality and Inclusion

Chester Diocesan Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will require an Enhanced DBS check. We welcome all applications regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation. The post holder will take responsibility for behaving in ways that are consistent with fair and equitable treatment for all and take responsibility for their own learning and engagement with equality issues and actions and to consider the impact of their actions to ensure that they do not have a detrimental effect on achieving equality of opportunity. Any breaches may lead to termination of employment.

Disclosure Service Certification from the Disclosure and Barring Service

New members of staff will be required to apply for Disclosure Service certification as part of the School's staff recruitment process. Further information about the Disclosure and Barring Service is available from the DBS website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1075, applicants for this post are among those who are not entitled to withhold information about any previous criminal conviction.

Right to Work

Existing British law states that a person cannot be employed to this post if they do not have permission to live and work in the UK. Please advise if you require any guidance or further information on this.

Person Specification – School Business Support Officer

Qualifications/Background	Essential/ Desirable
Recognised qualification in accounting e.g. minimum AAT level 3 or comparable qualification* or qualified by experience <i>(*Degree in accountancy or similar also acceptable)</i>	E
<i>Proven experience of financial management and reporting in a Multi Academy Trust and/or stand-alone Academy</i>	D
<i>Qualification in School Business Management e.g. CSBM/DSBM or equivalent</i>	D

Knowledge, understanding and management experience	Essential/ Desirable
Experience of addressing financial/operational challenges in a calm and solution-focused manner, securing positive outcomes	E
Experience of managing significant financial resources with a good appreciation of relevant regulatory frameworks	E
Familiarity with financial processes and procedures	E
High level of IT competence, literacy and numeracy skills	E
Experience of using and supporting others in the use of financial software packages, e.g. Access	E
Good organisation and proven administrative skills	E
Appreciation of the importance of effective safeguarding practice in schools	E
<i>Good knowledge of statutory requirements, procedures and regulatory requirements relating to academies</i>	D
<i>Experience of advanced Excel skill including using pivot tables and macros.</i>	D
<i>Knowledge and understanding of procurement processes</i>	D
<i>Knowledge of the Academy Conversion process</i>	D
<i>Knowledge of charities and Companies House legislation</i>	D

Personal and professional qualities	Essential/ Desirable
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills: able to communicate clearly and confidently with different management levels within the organisation	E
Strong analytical skills, to allow the exploration, evaluation and interpretation of information and opinions and utilisation of management information systems	E
Capacity to work under pressure, to meet deadlines and organisational priorities	E
Commitment to continuing professional development	E
Flexible in terms of working patterns and evolution of the role	E
Team player, personable, emotionally intelligent with a sense of humour	E

Special requirements	Essential/ Desirable
Able to travel across the Diocese and beyond to carry out duties	E
<i>Supportive of the principles of the academies programme</i>	D
<i>Be sympathetic to the aims, values, ethos and distinctiveness of Church of England schools and academies</i>	D