



ADVANTAGE
SCHOOLS

WHY WORK FOR ADVANTAGE SCHOOLS?

ABOUT US

- At Advantage Schools, we aim to provide all children with the highest quality of teaching of an excellent curriculum, which enables them to become highly educated and active participants of society.
- You'll be working alongside a collaborative, forward thinking, friendly and supportive trust
- Unparalleled CPD opportunities with The National College catered to your development needs
- Excellent opportunities to develop and grow in a successful and expanding trust
- Fantastic children with a wonderful desire to learn
- Employee of the month scheme, winning shopping vouchers
- Fantastic staff benefits that make a difference to your work-life balance

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU

Please read the information in this pack. If you are interested in this job opportunity, please apply online today via our career site on: www.advantageschools.co.uk/join-us/work-for-us

If you have any questions about our vacancies or would like to visit our trust, please contact **HR Recruitment, Jay Powell on 01582 211 226** or j.powell@advantageschools.co.uk

If you decide to apply, you should include a letter with your application form on no more than two sides of A4, giving your reasons to for applying for the post, addressing information you have read in the pack with particular reference to the person specification and outline any relevant experience you would bring to the trust. Please do not send a generic letter; we really are looking for someone who is prepared to respond to us as an individual trust. You can be sure we will take time and care in reading your letter; we appreciate how much energy goes into it.

SAFEGUARDING

"We believe in the safeguarding and welfare of children and expect all staff to share this view."

The academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service. We are an equal opportunities employer.

The Department of Education (DfE) has set out statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' for schools and colleges on safeguarding.

Safeguarding is defined in paragraph 4 as: "Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes."

The definition of 'children' includes everyone under the age of 18.



OUR LEADERSHIP

Thank you for taking the time to read our information pack and finding out more about Advantage Schools.

I am very proud of our family of schools. Together we are determined to maximise educational provision in this region, ending educational disadvantage.

At Advantage Schools, we 'punch above our weight'. Despite being a medium-sized trust we have been involved in national policy. We are a delivery partner for the National Professional Qualifications, the Early Career Framework. We deliver very large amounts of bespoke training via the Advantage Schools Knowledge Exchange. We share our work with other like-minded schools and trusts, and work towards being an 'outlier' organisation

Our collaborative partnership of schools provide exceptional educational provision inside and outside of the classroom for all of our children. Our schools ensure that pupils are supported, monitored and encouraged, ensuring that their learning experience will be challenging, rewarding and memorable. Pupils enjoy their time at our academies and give back to the wider community.



Stuart Lock,
CEO

I am one of the Department for Education's National Behaviour Advisors, and at Advantage Schools, we have a national reputation for excellent behaviour and a focus on strong outcomes. We take behaviour and curriculum really seriously. Our teachers must be able to teach, and pupils able to learn. Our curriculum is an entitlement for all – we do not make exceptions in our high aspirations. But our families, colleagues and trustees are hungry for more. We will, therefore, recruit a colleague who is hungry for the school and trust to be better still; who will not tolerate mediocrity; who will challenge when required and inspire regularly. This will be underpinned by substantial knowledge about education.

We expect hard work, but we support and manage workload so that you can do the job sustainably.

If you are interested in the post but are unsure whether you have the skills and expertise that would make you ready to apply, please do get in touch for an informal, honest conversation. We can arrange tours of our schools and are happy to put you in touch with relevant colleagues. We will ensure that the right candidate is fully supported with training and through our established support network.

I very much hope that we receive your application.

With best wishes, Stuart Lock



VALUES



INTEGRITY, AMBITION, EXCELLENCE

We are a unique family of schools, sharing our practice and beliefs to enable young people to achieve the very highest standards.

At Advantage Schools, we provide exceptional opportunities for all to be knowledgeable with experiences that broaden horizons. We ensure our children, students and adults cultivate a strong self-belief so that they can flourish and develop into successful, well-rounded, self-respecting people.

Our commitment to this vision can be demonstrated by our values.



INTEGRITY

We provide a caring, nurturing environment where children and young adults feel happy, healthy and supported. Our academies will be places of safety, enabling pupils to develop courage, strong ambition and be the best that they can be.

We act honestly and transparently, advocating for pupils even when this causes difficulties.

We work together to share innovative practice and to provide a wealth of opportunities for all pupils and staff.

We focus on the development of all our colleagues through quality recruitment and retention, with excellent opportunities for clear and dynamic career progression.



AMBITION

We provide exceptional lessons enabling our pupils to be highly successful.

We share the most impactful approaches to teaching, curriculum and assessment, ensuring an interesting, inclusive and challenging education is on offer in each of our schools.

Our aim is to guarantee excellent 2-19 provision, with clear progression routes for all. You can expect excellent behaviour and conduct at all times, allowing all to make progress and achieve.

EXCELLENCE

We enable all of our pupils to develop and flourish, through close working and regular communication with our families and local community.

Our Cross-Trust focus is to ensure children are supported to meet ambitious targets and to provide exciting opportunities both inside and outside of the classroom.

STAFF BENEFITS

We offer a fantastic range of benefits across our trust, supporting our staff in a variety of ways. Ranging from an extensive **Wellbeing package**, to free tea and coffee, you can be reassured that we have your best interests at heart.



Whole trust training events



Free eye test vouchers



Staff recognition with reward shopping vouchers



Enhanced pension employer's contribution & death in service payment



Refer a friend £500 bonus scheme



Support for all staff with an experienced licensed counsellor



Cycle to work scheme



We are in the process of a big benefit review. Watch this space!

CAREER PROGRESSION

At Advantage Schools, we are committed to helping every colleague grow, thrive, and achieve their full potential. Supporting career progression is at the heart of what we do.

To empower our staff, we provide fully funded opportunities to study for NPQs, along with tailored middle leader training for eligible colleagues. Additionally, we offer a wide range of CPD training through various platforms, including The National College, giving all staff access to an extensive selection of professional development courses.

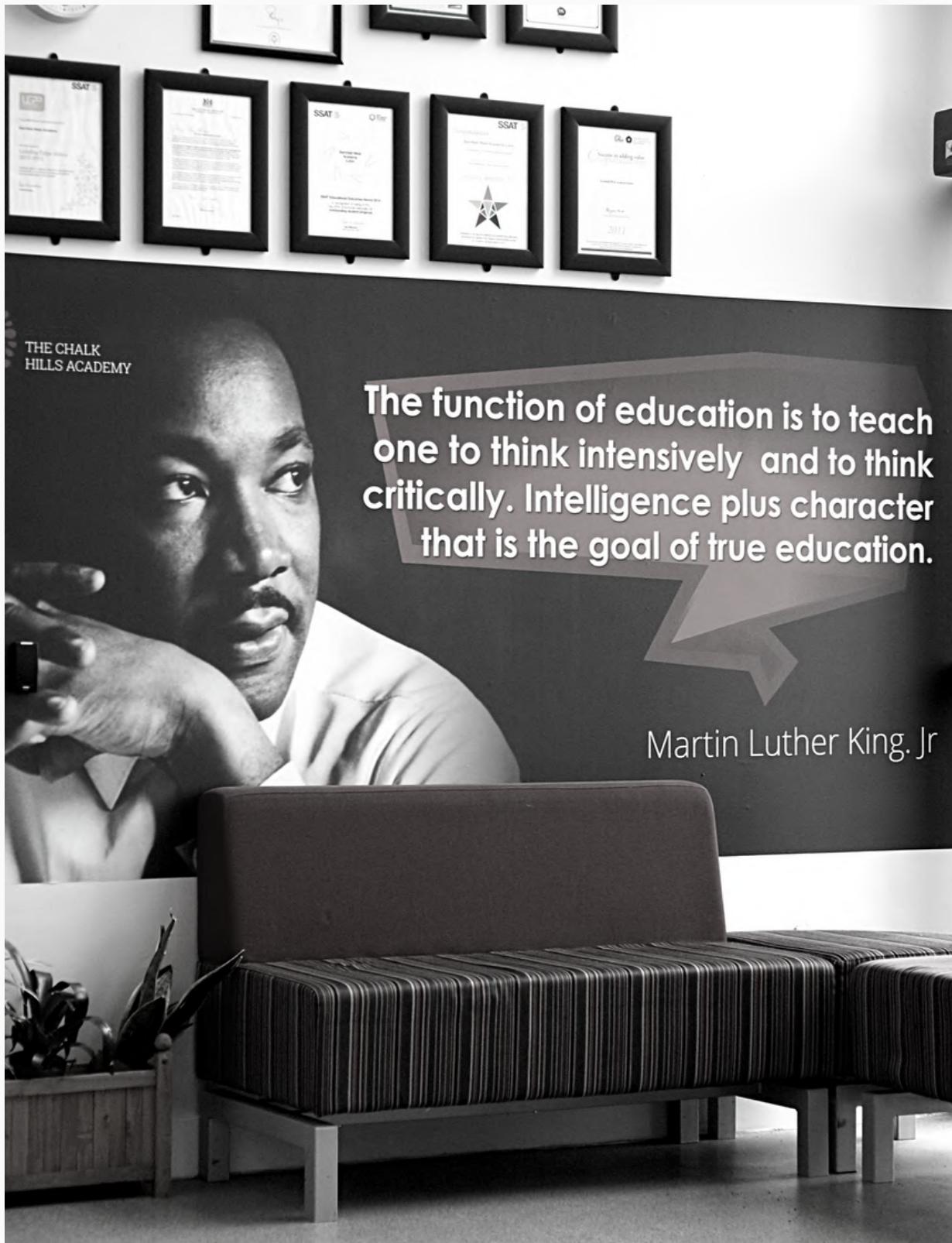
Join us and take your career to the next level with our exceptional development opportunities!



RECRUITMENT BOOKLET



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SEE MORE AT

WWW.ADVANTAGESCHOOLSUK



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Financial Controller

Advantage Schools is seeking an experienced and committed Financial Controller to join our hardworking and dedicated Finance Team. You will oversee and manage all financial operations across the Trust including line management of team. Reporting to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the role requires a highly skilled and motivated manager with extensive experience in managing staff, financial and management reporting, and operational activities within the educational sector. This position is crucial for ensuring the financial stability, accountability, and efficiency of the Trust, in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.

You will be joining a diverse finance team made up of experienced professionals, newer team members, and colleagues progressing through their finance qualifications, all contributing to a collaborative and supportive culture.

The successful candidate will have

- ACA, ACCA, CIMA, or equivalent qualification with significant experience in a financial management role.
- Proven experience as a Financial Controller or similar role, with specific experience in financial management within a Multi-Academy Trust, educational setting, or non-profit sector.
- Strong understanding of financial regulations, accounting standards, and the funding framework for academies (including DfE requirements).
- Strong leadership and team management skills.
- Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to interpret complex financial data.
- High proficiency in financial software and Excel; experience with MAT-specific financial systems (e.g., PS Financials, Sage, FMS) is an advantage.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage effectively with internal and external stakeholders.

JOB SPECIFICS

Start date: asap

Salary: AS 46-52 £58,079-£64,464 dependent on experience

Job role: Permanent, Full time, 52 weeks, 37 hours per week

Location: Trust Central Office at The Vale Academy, Dunstable LU5 4QP

The Trust reserves the right to interview and appoint a suitable candidate before the deadline date.



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JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Financial Controller

Location: Trust Central Office at The Vale Academy, Dunstable

Reports to: Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Job Type: Full-time, Permanent

Salary: AS 46-52 (£58K - £64K)

Job Summary:

The Financial Controller will oversee and manage all financial operations across the Trust including line management of team. Reporting to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the role requires a highly skilled and motivated manager with extensive experience in managing staff, financial and management reporting, and operational activities within the educational sector. This position is crucial for ensuring the financial stability, accountability, and efficiency of the Trust, in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.

You will be joining a diverse finance team made up of experienced professionals, newer team members, and colleagues progressing through their finance qualifications, all contributing to a collaborative and supportive culture.

Key Responsibilities:

Team Leadership & Development:

- Day to day management and mentoring of the central finance team within the Trust, including finance managers and finance officers, ensuring high performance and professional development.
- Fostering a culture of continuous improvement, efficiency, and transparency within the finance function across the MAT.
- Ensuring accountability across the team by monitoring delivery, quality of output, and adherence to deadlines, and being accountable to the CFO for overall team performance.
- Building strong and effective working relationships to support clear communication, collaborative problem-solving, and the efficient operation of the finance function.

Financial Management & Reporting:

- Lead the preparation and submission of accurate monthly and annual financial reports for the Trust, ensuring compliance with all statutory requirements and regulations.
- Oversee the preparation of consolidated financial statements for the Trust, including balance sheets, income statements, and cash flow forecasts, in line with ESFA and Charity SORP requirements.
- Provide analysis and commentary on financial performance, highlighting areas of concern and recommending actions to the CFO.
- Ensure the timely preparation and submission of the Trust's annual accounts and statutory returns to the DfE (Department for Education) and other relevant bodies.
- Manage the preparation of budgets and forecasts for each school and for the Trust as a whole, ensuring alignment with strategic goals and priorities.



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- Develop and implement systems for monitoring and controlling the financial performance of each school within the MAT.

Accounts payable/receivable:

- Manage the accounts payable and receivable functions, ensuring systems are in place to provide a reliable service to our schools.
- Ensure supplier relationships are maintained, and necessary due diligence is carried out on new suppliers.
- Working along with the CFO to implement the procurement strategy that enables efficiency of purchasing and leverages our buying power to secure best value for money.

Cash Flow & Treasury Management:

- Manage cash flow across the Trust, ensuring that sufficient funds are available to meet operational and strategic objectives.
- Monitor and manage investment strategies to maximise returns while ensuring safety of funds.
- Oversee bank reconciliations, ensuring accuracy and compliance with Trust policies.

Financial Planning & Budgeting:

- Lead the budgeting process for the Trust and individual schools, including providing guidance and support to finance staff.
- Collaborate with senior leadership teams to ensure that budgets are realistic and aligned with the educational objectives of each school and the Trust strategic objectives.

Compliance & Governance:

- Ensure compliance with all relevant financial regulations and policies, including those set by the DfE, HMRC, and the Charity Commission.
- Work closely with the Trust's auditors to facilitate smooth and efficient audits, ensuring that all financial records are accurate and up to date.
- In the absence of the CFO, provide advice and support to trust committees and executive team on financial matters and ensure appropriate financial controls are in place.
- Advise and guide Principals and School Business staff in financial matters to ensure consistency and compliance across the Trust.

Systems & Processes:

- Continuously review and improve financial processes and systems, ensuring they are efficient, effective, and aligned with best practices.
- Oversee the integration of financial systems across the Trust, ensuring that all schools have access to up-to-date financial data and reporting tools.
- Ensure all financial data is accurately maintained and easily accessible for reporting and auditing purposes.



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Other Responsibilities:

- Lead on ad-hoc financial projects, including capital expenditure planning and funding proposals for new initiatives.
- Liaise with external stakeholders, including auditors, regulatory bodies, and financial consultants, to ensure the Trust's financial operations are transparent and compliant.
- Contribute to the strategic development of the Trust's overall financial and operational goals.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
Professional Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ACA, ACCA, CIMA, or equivalent qualification with significant experience in a financial management role.	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Proven experience as a Financial Controller or similar role, with specific experience in financial management within a Multi-Academy Trust, educational setting, or non-profit sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Experience with the development and implementation of financial strategies and policies in a multi-site organisation.
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong understanding of financial regulations, accounting standards, and the funding framework for academies (including DfE requirements).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Knowledge of payroll systems and HR-related financial processes
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Strong leadership and team management skills.Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to interpret complex financial data.High proficiency in financial software and Excel; experience with MAT-specific financial systems (e.g., PS Financials, Sage, FMS) is an advantage.Strong communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage effectively with internal and external stakeholders.	

Note:

Please note that the above list of duties is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the role. It is not a comprehensive list of all tasks the financial controller will carry out. The post holder may be required to do other duties appropriate to the level of the role, as directed by the Chief Financial Officer.