

Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO)

June 2026





Dear Prospective Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining our Trust at what is, without question, one of the most exciting and defining moments in our journey. As I prepare to take up the role of Chief Executive Officer in September 2026, I am energised by the scale of our ambition and the extraordinary potential that lies ahead. We are not simply evolving as an organisation; we are setting the stage for a bold new era that will reshape what a Trust can be, how it can lead, and the impact it can have on children, families, and communities.

Our vision reaches far beyond delivering exceptional educational experiences within our schools - though that remains at the heart of everything we do. We are building a Trust that is outward-facing, collaborative, and influential; a Trust that contributes to the wider system, sparks innovation, and leads conversations about the future of education. We want to be a place where ideas are tested, where creativity thrives, and where leaders come to make a lasting difference.

To help realise this ambition, we are seeking an exceptional **Chief Financial & Operations Officer**; a strategic, imaginative, and courageous leader who is excited by the opportunity to shape something transformative. This is a role for someone who sees the future not as something to respond to, but as something to define. Someone who is energised by complexity, inspired by possibility, and motivated by the chance to build a legacy of excellence from the ground up.

This is more than an operational leadership role. It is a platform for innovation, influence, and system-wide impact. Working closely with our leadership team, the CFOO will help design the culture, infrastructure, and strategic direction that will power our Trust into its next era. You will play a central role in creating a modern, agile, and future-ready organisation - one capable of delivering exceptional outcomes for children while also shaping the wider educational landscape.

Whether full-time or hybrid, this is a rare opportunity to join a Trust, at the moment, its future is being written. A moment where your ideas, your leadership, and your vision will genuinely matter. We are looking for someone who wants to think differently, challenge convention, and help us build a Trust that leads with purpose, confidence, and creativity.


If you are excited by the prospect of joining a growing organisation with bold ambition and a deep commitment to children's lives, we would be delighted to hear from you. Together, we can create something remarkable - not just for our Trust, but for the communities and sector we serve.

Warm regards,

Jo Harrison

Jo Harrison

Chief Executive Officer (from September 2026)



About The Trust

Create Partnership Trust was founded in Birmingham in September 2016 and is made up of four primary schools across the city. Greet Primary and Conway Primary—federated in 2009—were the first schools to form the Trust. Hodge Hill Primary joined in January 2017, followed by Brookfields Primary in November 2018.

While each school has its own unique identity, the Trust celebrates these differences and works collaboratively to share best practice, address common challenges, and move forward as a collective. At the heart of all our work is a commitment to ensuring that children's opportunities, experiences, and outcomes remain our highest priority.

Our mission is based on an innovative approach to supporting schools:

- To create the **best opportunities for our children**
- To create the **best education**
- To create the **best teachers**
- To create the **best leaders**

Our aim is to create the best possible education for children in Birmingham, by:

- Creating ambitious schools with aspirational outcomes for children
- Creating a culture of integrity between the Trust and the schools where every person is valued; people work with kindness and a moral purpose and each school's unique character is celebrated
- Creating a collaborative approach to school improvement with a strong partnership between the Trust and the schools and between the school staff across the Trust
- Creating an innovative central team with capacity to support school leaders with all aspects of school



Benefits offered by the Trust

Commitment to family

- We are a family friendly employer – we always give proper consideration of requests to visit family special occasions
- We provide all staff with access to the childcare voucher or tax free childcare voucher scheme

Commitment to wellbeing

- We provide Employee Assistance for all staff and family with access to a 24 hour helpline including GP assistance; one to one fact-to-face counselling and online health portal
- We provide all relevant staff (Headteachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads and other leaders) with regular, free psycho-dynamic supervision
- We are committed to considering flexible working requests
- We offer all staff access to Trust Occupational Health

Commitment to Health

- We provide a contribution to cost of eye tests
- We provide access to Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund

Commitment to working ethically

- We contribute to the Teacher and Local Government Pension scheme.
- We are committed to national pay scales and terms of conditions
- We are a living wage employer
- We offer generous annual leave for support staff
- We are committed to supporting the cost of living pay rises each year

Commitment to continuous professional development

- We provide all staff have a CPD pathway with relevant, accredited training or apprenticeship

Our schools

There are 4 schools in the Create Partnership Trust Family; Brookfields Primary, Conway Primary, Greet Primary and Hodge Hill Primary.



The schools work closely together - developing policies, sharing good practice and supporting and challenging each other. All our schools are committed to ensuring that every child receives a broad and balanced education, that they're happy, safe and well prepared for moving on to the next stage of their education.

Our schools have joined the Trust with different experiences and legacies. Each school serves its unique community and has the freedom to interpret the needs of that community and identify appropriate solutions. The Trust provides the value added – the support structure, the back-office systems and the opportunities for collaboration and shared endeavour.



The Central Team

Our schools are supported by create central, a growing team of specialists building the MAT's infrastructure. The Create Executive Team offers support in the following areas:

- Finance
- HR
- Estates Management
- Marketing and Policy Compliance
- Health & Safety

The Trustees

The Board of Trustees comprises highly skilled professionals with extensive experience across education, governance, finance, HR, estates and commercial operations. Collectively, they bring:

Educational Leadership & School Improvement

- Senior leaders from multi-academy trusts, including former headteachers, regional directors and trust executives.
- Strong track record in delivering school improvement, quality assurance and curriculum development.

High-Quality Governance

- National governance leaders, including former Chairs of Governors, National Leaders of Governance and senior figures from the National Governance Association.
- Significant experience in trust governance, interim executive boards and supporting governance in complex or challenging contexts.


HR, Workforce & Safeguarding Expertise

- Specialist knowledge in employee relations, workforce reform, recruitment and performance management.
- Board-level safeguarding leadership and experience in leading executive appraisal processes.

Finance, Procurement & Commercial Skills

- Professionals with deep procurement, contract management and commercial expertise from large, regulated industries.
- Experience overseeing high-value projects, budget assurance and audit processes.

Estates, Facilities & Health and Safety

- Senior estates leaders from education and higher education sectors with expertise in compliance, maintenance, capital planning and health and safety.
- 



Policy, Advocacy & Sector Influence

- Trustees with national-level policy, advocacy and advisory experience, bringing insight into governance best practice and regulatory expectations.

Commitment to Inclusion & Community

- Strong focus on ethical leadership, equality, diversity, inclusion and community engagement, ensuring decisions support positive outcomes for all children.





Appointment of Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO)

Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer
Location:	Hybrid with regular travel to schools
Contract:	Permanent
Pattern:	Full time *
Closing date:	Monday 7 th September 2026 **
Interviews:	Wednesday 16 th September 2026
Salary:	circa 85,000.00 negotiable dependent on candidate experience and qualifications

About the role:

We are standing at the threshold of an extraordinary new chapter; one that will redefine what our Trust can achieve and the impact we can have on children's lives for generations to come. To help lead this ambitious journey, we are seeking an inspiring, future-shaping **Chief Financial & Operations Officer** who sees possibility where others see limits, and who is energised by the opportunity to build a legacy of excellence from the ground up.

This role is more than stewardship; it is a launchpad for innovation. Working as part of a united and forward-thinking leadership team, the CFOO will help design the systems, culture, and strategic direction that will power our Trust into the future. With children's opportunities and outcomes guiding every decision, you will help create a central engine that is agile, modern, and relentlessly focused on impact.

Whether full-time or hybrid, this is a rare opportunity to shape a growing organisation at a pivotal moment — bringing vision, pace, and creativity to a Trust ready to accelerate into its next era.

****The CFOO role is designed as a full-time position. However, for an exceptional candidate, we are open to structuring it as a part-time or fractional CFO/COO arrangement.***

The CFOO will:

- Provide strategic leadership across finance, operations, estates, HR, ICT, compliance and risk
- Lead financial strategy, budgeting, forecasting and reporting in line with the Academy Trust Handbook
- Ensure value for money through effective procurement and strong financial controls
- Oversee estates strategy, capital projects, health & safety and facilities management
- Hold strategic responsibility for ICT, digital systems and cyber security
- Support Trust growth through due diligence, onboarding and external partnerships
- Act as a trusted advisor to the CEO, Headteachers and Trustees

The successful candidate will have:

- Senior leadership experience in finance and/or operations, with strong strategic and analytical capability
- Proven financial management and compliance experience, ideally within education or the public sector
- A collaborative, solutions-focused leadership style with the ability to drive improvement and lead change
- Excellent communication skills, with confidence working with Boards, senior leaders and external partners

How to Apply:

For further information, including the job description, person specification, and details of the application process, please refer to the attached pack.

If you would like to discuss the role or the application process in more detail, please contact Collette O'Connell (People Lead) at collette.oconnell@createpartnershiptrust.org.uk.

Prospective applicants are also encouraged to arrange an informal conversation or visit prior to applying. To do so, please contact either Collette O'Connell collette.oconnell@createpartnershiptrust.org.uk or Joanne Harrison, CEO (from September 2026), at jo.harrison@create.org.uk.

*****Please note that this vacancy may close early if a high volume of suitable applications is received. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, and we reserve the right to interview, appoint, and close the vacancy ahead of the advertised deadline.***

Create Partnership Trust 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 required for all successful applicants.

Online searches are carried out on all shortlisted candidates for positions at Create Partnership Trust. The searches are carried out to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the Trust might want to explore with the candidate at interview.

Please find a link to our safeguarding policy <https://www.create.org.uk/governance/policies-documents> you are encouraged to read this policy prior to applying to work with us.

Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFO) JOB DESCRIPTION

Responsible to:	Chief Executive Officer
Direct Reports:	Head of Estates and Operations, People Lead.
Contract:	Permanent
Pattern:	Full Time
Salary:	Determined upon appointment, dependent on experience and qualifications

Main purpose of the role

- Ensure the long-term financial and operational sustainability of the Trust and good management of risk
- To lead the central office function of the Trust Providing strong and effective vision, strategic direction and leadership in order to maintain a secure overview of the management of operations and finances within all Trust schools.
- Provide financial advice and support to Headteachers, the Chief Executive Officer (who is the Accounting Officer) and the Trust Board
- To be responsible for all non-academic Trust services, with particular oversight of finance, estates management and human resources (HR)
- To support the Chief Executive (CEO) in the operation of the Trust and its strategic development, acting as a trusted partner.

Duties and Responsibilities

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Support leaders and Trustees in the development of strategy and improvement plans.
- Lead on finance, operations, health & safety, estates operations & risk and ICT & digital strategies.
- Be the main contact with the external DPO provider.
- Lead operational and financial efficiency, maximise use of resources and support fund raising across the Trust.
- In conjunction with the CEO, lead on due diligence relating to future growth prospects for the Trust
- Identify opportunities for innovation and manage change diplomatically and positively so that staff understand its rationale and are fully engaged.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Develop and implement robust financial strategies that support the strategic objectives of the Trust and its schools.
- Prepare, manage and monitor annual budgets and forward financial forecasts, producing accurate financial and operational reports to support Trustees in effective oversight and decision-making.

- Ensure timely, accurate monthly management accounts and financial reporting, fully compliant with the Academy Trust Handbook and all relevant statutory and non-statutory guidance.
- Implement best practice to optimise financial resource allocation and value for money across the Trust.
- Maintain oversight of risk management through appropriate insurance arrangements,

BUSINESS /OPERATIONS

- Develop and implement operational strategies aligned with Trust and school priorities.
- Identify operational challenges and deliver effective, sustainable solutions.
- Lead and oversee procurement activity, embedding best practice to ensure efficiency, compliance and value for money.
- Lead on estates management, including estates management competency frameworks, and all Trust capital projects.
- Hold strategic responsibility for ICT, ensuring alignment with DfE Digital and Technology Standards, effective cyber-security risk management, and appropriate use of IT by staff and pupils.
- Provide oversight of legal, contractual and compliance matters relating to services across the Trust.
- Have an overview of all HR systems and services, working with the HR Manager to ensure they meet statutory guidance and are fit for purpose

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- Act as an advocate, ambassador and the public face of the Trust, actively facilitating effective partnerships and furthering external relations and growth.
- Maintain an outward facing role on behalf of the Trust in order to further its external relationships and implement the growth plan.
- Coordinate the due diligence of any school joining the Trust, including those to be sponsored.
- Implement effective processes to convert or sponsor new schools into the Trust.
- prepare the Trust for external review.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974


This post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Appointment is subject to an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) disclosure and any relevant convictions, cautions and reprimands being considered.

The jobholder must disclose any convictions, cautions or reprimands which have been acquired after DBS clearance has taken place. If this does not occur, the jobholder may be managed in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Procedure.

Further information about the Disclosure and Barring Service is available from www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs.

Health and safety



The jobholder is required to exercise duty of care by taking responsibility for her/his own health and safety and that of others, who may be affected by their acts or omissions (failure to act).

Equality and inclusion

The Trust is committed to fulfilling its Equality Duty obligations and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Safeguarding

The jobholder is expected to observe her/his obligations in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and to report any concerns that they might have regarding any child's welfare to the appropriate person.

Staff code of conduct

The postholder is expected to observe the staff code of conduct and be a role model for others.

Security of information

The jobholder is expected to observe all legislation and professional guidance in relation to data protection and confidentiality.

Right to work

The jobholder must have permission to live and work in the UK.

Other

The duties and responsibilities listed are indicative of the tasks the CEO will perform and are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Reference must be made to the requirements and guidelines defined in the Academy Trust Handbook and the model set of core responsibilities for School Trust Chief Executive Officers (initially developed by the Confederation of School Trusts in November 2021 and as updated).

The post holder will be expected to take on additional responsibilities appropriate to the role as they arise.

This job description may be amended at any time in consultation with the postholder.

Signature of Chief Finance and Operations Officer	Signature of Chief Executive Officer
Date:	Date:

Chief Finance and Operations Officer

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Method of Assessment (M.O.A.)

A.F. = Application Form; I = Interview; T = Test or Exercise; P = Presentation

EXPERIENCE and KNOWLEDGE	CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL / DESIRABLE	M.O.A.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant senior leadership experience with responsibility for finance and/or operations. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven track record of financial planning, budgeting, forecasting and management reporting. 	E	AF/I/T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working with Boards or Trustees and supporting strategic decision-making. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of managing risk, compliance and internal controls. 	E	AF/I/T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership and line management experience, including managing and developing teams. 		AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience within the education sector, preferably within a Multi-Academy Trust or public sector organisation. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of leading estates, ICT, HR or wider operational functions. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of supporting organisational growth, mergers or onboarding of new organisations. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of capital project management. 	E	AF/I/T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong understanding of financial governance, accountability and value for money. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of risk management, insurance and compliance frameworks. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of procurement best practice and contract management. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of HR systems, employment frameworks and statutory obligations. 	D	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of ICT systems, cyber-security risk and data protection requirements. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of the Academy Trust Handbook and ESFA requirements. 	E	AF/I/T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarity with Department for Education guidance, including estates management and digital standards. 	E	AF/I
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of health and safety and facilities management within complex organisations. 	E	AF/I



Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic thinker with strong analytical and problem-solving skills. • Excellent financial and numerical capability, with the ability to interpret and present complex information clearly. • Strong leadership skills with the ability to influence, challenge and support at executive and Board level. • Highly effective communicator, both written and verbal. • Ability to manage competing priorities and deliver under pressure. • Strong organisational and project management skills. • Experience of leading organisational change and improvement initiatives. • Ability to contribute to fundraising or income-generation activities. 	E E E E E E E E E	AF/I AF/I/T AF/I AF/I AF/I AF/I AF/I AF/I AF/I
PERSONAL QUALITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of integrity, professionalism and discretion. • Collaborative, approachable and solutions-focused. • Resilient and adaptable, with a positive approach to change. 	E	I I I
TRAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to undertake job related training 		AF/I
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recognised professional qualification in finance, accounting or business (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent). • Evidence of continued professional development. • Leadership or management qualification. • Qualification or training in project management, risk or governance. 	E E D D	AF/I AF/I AF/I AF/I
OTHER	<p>Right to work in the UK</p> <p>Commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding and welfare of all students</p> <p>Willingness to undertake training</p> <p>This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check</p>		

Create Partnership Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its schools. In order to meet this responsibility, its schools follow a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.

Create requires all employees to undertake an enhanced DBS check. You are required, before appointment, to disclose any unspent conviction, cautions, reprimands or warnings under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Non-disclosure may lead to termination of employment. However, disclosure of a criminal background will not necessarily debar you from employment - this will depend upon the nature of the offence(s) and when they occurred.

To read more about Create's safer recruitment process, please click this [link](#).