

FAITH ● HOPE ● LOVE



Chief Financial Officer Candidate Pack



St Thomas
Catholic Academies Trust

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Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Candidate,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to our family of schools.

St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust exists to serve the children and communities within our care. Our mission is clear:

"The glory of God is a human being fully alive."

This is not simply a statement of intent — it shapes everything we do. We are committed to ensuring that every child flourishes: academically, spiritually and personally. Our schools are places where children are known and loved, where they feel safe, and where they are supported to discover and develop their God-given gifts.

As a Trust, we have grown significantly — now serving over 10,000 children and 1,400 staff across multiple regions. With that growth comes both opportunity and challenge.

Together, as a Trust, we have achieved:

- A collaborative culture where people belong
- High academic performance, with outcomes above national averages
- All of our schools judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or better
- Secure financial stewardship across our schools

Despite these successes, we are ambitious to continue to develop as we mature as a Trust. We recognise that there are areas where we can improve to better serve our communities.



At a time when the sector faces significant financial and structural challenge, this role will play a critical part in ensuring that our schools remain sustainable, strong and places of choice.

The role of Chief Financial Officer is central to the future strength and sustainability of the Trust.

We are seeking a leader who understands that finance is not an end in itself, but a means of enabling our mission — ensuring that our resources are used wisely, sustainably and in service of the children we serve.

This is a strategic role — one that requires clarity of thought, strength of character and a deep commitment to service. It is important to note that you do not need to be a Catholic or of any particular faith tradition for this role; however, it is essential that you can support the mission, values and ethos of our Trust.

As you consider this opportunity, the most important question is this:

Do you share our belief that every child deserves to flourish — and that the work we do truly matters?

If so, we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Mark McLaughlin
Chief Executive Officer



About St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust

St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust is a family of Catholic schools serving communities across Luton, Central Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Slough as part of the Diocese of Northampton.

We are united by a shared mission and a commitment to delivering high-quality Catholic education. Our schools are rooted in the belief that education is about forming the whole person — developing mind, body and spirit.

We work together as a Trust because we believe we are stronger together — that through collaboration we can provide greater support, wider opportunity and improved outcomes for all.

Our ambition is not simply to be good, but to ensure that every school is a school of choice for the communities it serves.



St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust



[Click to view our Trust Video](#)

Our Vision, Values and Culture

Our work is shaped by the values of:

- Love — ensuring every child is known, valued and cared for
- Faith — lived out through service, relationships and community
- Hope — a belief that every child can succeed

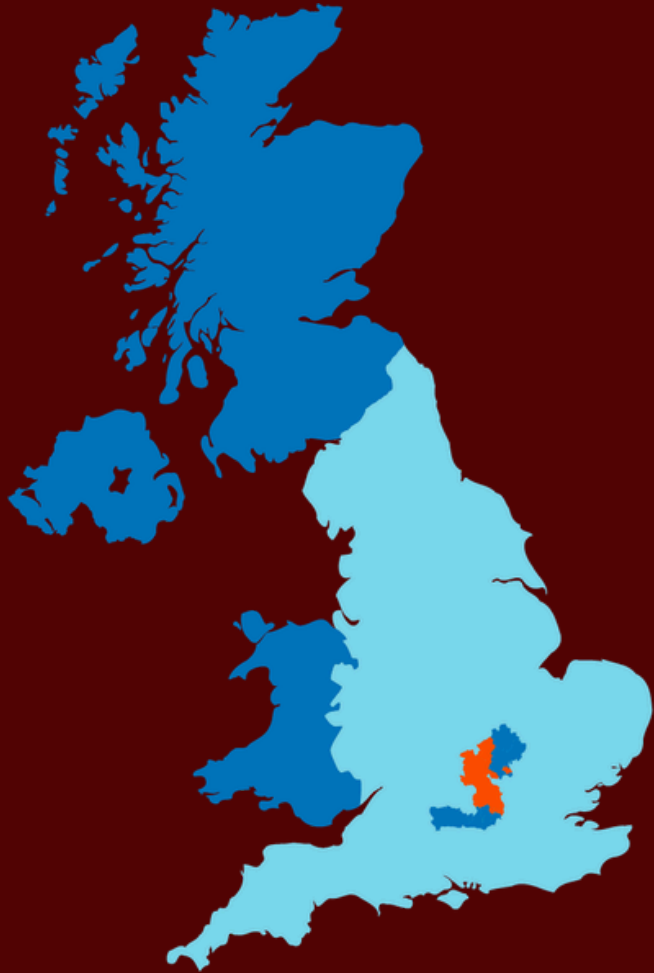
We are committed to:

- Creating warm, inclusive and welcoming school communities
- Supporting staff to grow and develop
- Maintaining high expectations for all
- Working with integrity and trust

It is our ambition that every person in our Trust is supported and nurtured to be fully alive.



St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust Schools



Luton

	Cardinal Newman Catholic School
	Sacred Heart Primary School
	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
	St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Primary School
	St Martin De Porres Catholic Primary School
	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
	St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Slough

	Holy Family Catholic Primary School
	St Anthony's Catholic Primary School
	St Ethelbert's Catholic Primary School & Nursery
	St Joseph's Catholic High School

Buckinghamshire

	Our Lady's Catholic Primary School
	St Edward's Catholic Junior School
	St Joseph's Catholic Infant School
	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
	St Louis Catholic Primary School
	St Michael's Catholic School
	St Peter's Catholic Primary School



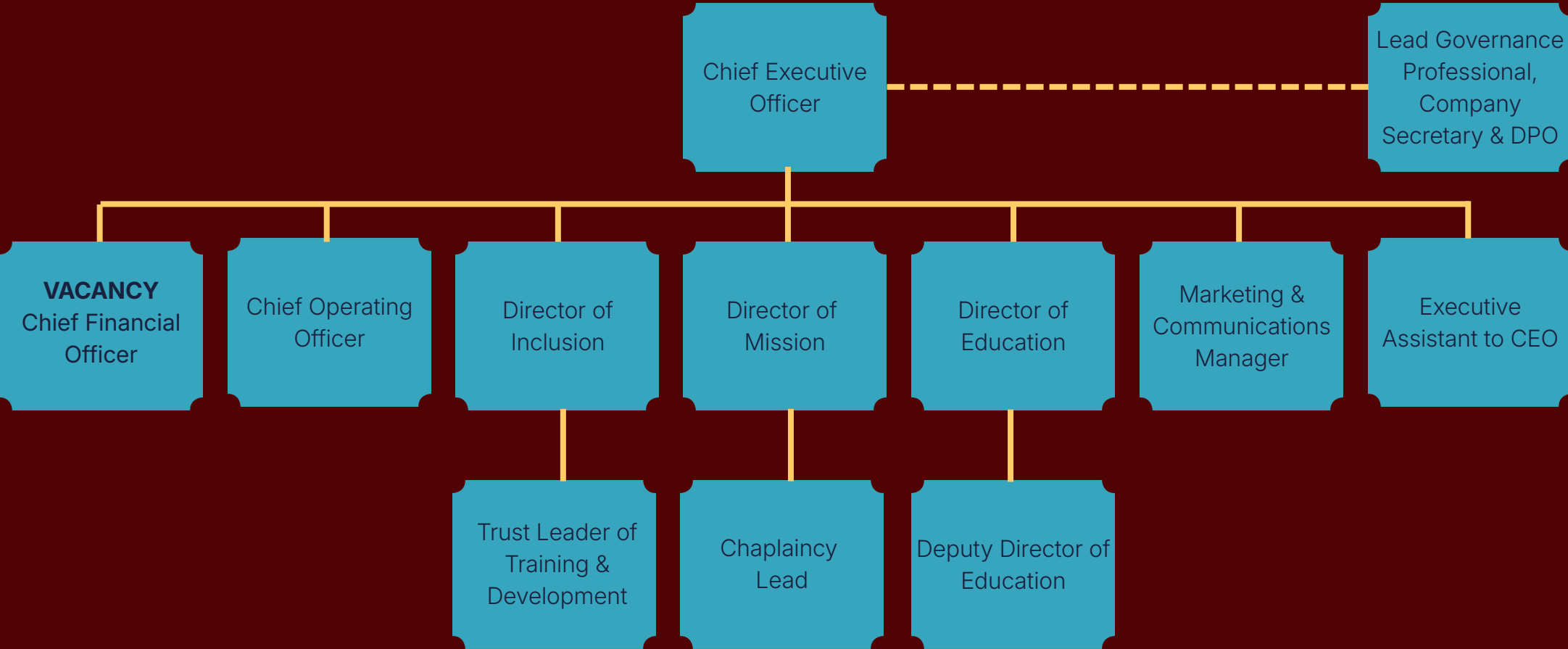
St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust

Organistational Chart Governance Team

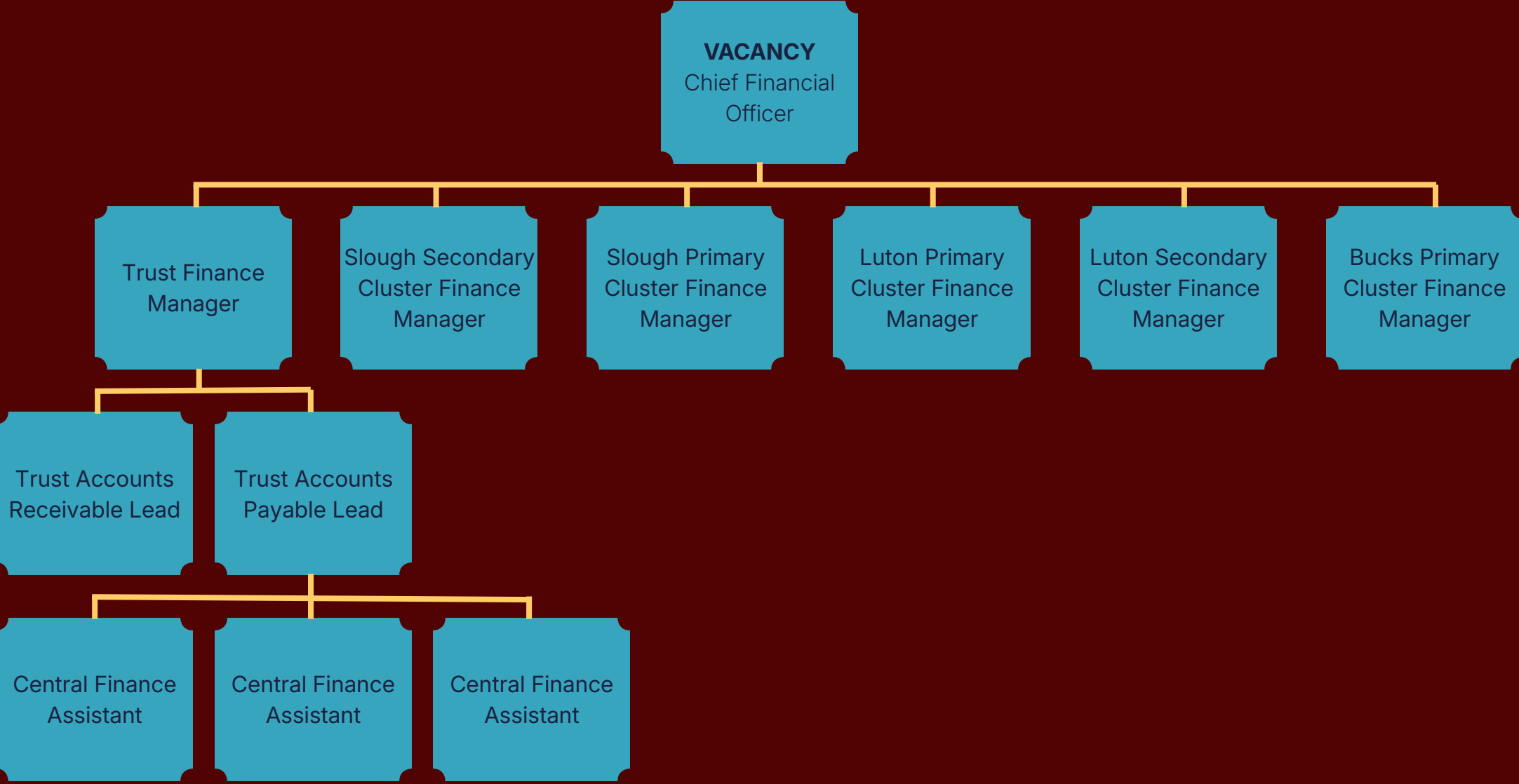


St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust

Organistational Chart Executive Leadership Team



St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust Organistational Chart Finance Team



Job Description:

Chief Financial Officer

As outlined above, our mission and values underpin this role.

The Chief Financial Officer is a key member of the Trust's executive leadership team and will play a central role in ensuring the financial strength and sustainability of the organisation.

Job Details

Salary: £90,000-£110,000*

Contract type: Full time, All Year Round

Reporting to: Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Direct reports: 6 – 8 | Indirect reports: 45 – 58

*Appointment above the range may be considered in exceptional circumstances, subject to further benchmarking and Board approval.



Responsible for:

Strategic leadership of the Trust's financial planning, management and compliance, including oversight of financial systems, payroll and risk management, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Trust.

This job description may be amended from time to time in consultation with the postholder and is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities. The role will continue to reflect the expectations set out in the most recent version of the Academy Trust Handbook.

Main Purpose

The Chief Financial Officer:

- Provides strategic leadership for the financial sustainability of St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust, ensuring that resources are managed effectively in service of the Trust's mission.
- Is responsible for the financial development and long-term sustainability of the Trust, ensuring strong financial stewardship, probity and compliance with all regulatory requirements.
- Leads the Trust's finance function, ensuring high-quality financial planning, reporting and control, enabling effective decision-making and supporting the delivery of the Trust's strategic priorities.
- Provides financial insight and challenge to the Strategic Executive Leader, Executive Leadership Team and Board of Directors, supporting the Trust to operate with clarity, discipline and ambition.
- Works in partnership with colleagues across the Trust to ensure that financial processes, including payroll and workforce planning, are delivered effectively and in line with statutory and regulatory expectations.
- Supports the Board of Directors through the effective management of financial risk and compliance, ensuring robust systems of internal control and assurance.
- Contributes to the wider strategic leadership of the organisation, building confidence, trust and clarity, and enabling others to work effectively in support of the Trust's mission.
- May, where appropriate, act as a Director of a Trust trading subsidiary, as determined by the Board of Directors.



Job Description:

Chief Financial Officer

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities outlined below are indicative and not exhaustive. The postholder will be expected to undertake additional responsibilities appropriate to the role as required. The Chief Financial Officer will ensure that all responsibilities are delivered in line with the expectations set out in the Academy Trust Handbook.

Strategic Leadership and Trust Development

The Chief Financial Officer will:

- Contribute to the development and delivery of the Trust's strategic priorities through high-quality financial planning and analysis.
- Provide financial advice and challenge to the Strategic Executive Leader, Board of Directors and wider leadership team.

- Support the Trust's growth and development, including financial due diligence relating to schools joining the Trust.
- Contribute to the identification and management of financial risk, ensuring appropriate mitigation strategies are in place.
- Ensure the Trust's payroll service and financial HR functions are effective managing opportunities and risks for the Trust.
- Develop and monitor the Trust's financial strategy and business planning, ensuring long-term sustainability.
- Ensure the smooth and seamless transition of schools joining the trust.
- Ensure the trust's risk management and risk register is highly effective, with strategic influence on the work of the Board and the trust team.



Job Description:

Chief Financial Officer

Financial Management and Control

The Chief Financial Officer will:

- Be accountable for the effective financial management of the Trust and its academies.
- Lead the Trust's budgeting and financial planning processes, ensuring alignment with strategic priorities.
- Work with school leaders to develop and monitor budgets, ensuring financial sustainability at both school and Trust level.
- Provide timely, accurate and insightful financial information to support decision-making.
- Ensure strong financial controls and compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and Trust financial procedures.
- Oversee procurement, asset management and value for money across the Trust. This may require active project management.
- Ensure effective financial oversight of contracts, insurance arrangements and financial commitments.
- Manage cashflow, reserves and financial forecasting to support long-term sustainability, including obtaining a high, secure return on deposits
- Manage the Trust's tax and National Insurance arrangements, including ensuring claims for VAT and business rates are managed effectively.
- Manage the external audit procedures for the Trust and its Academies and follow up on any recommendations resulting from audits, reporting appropriately to Directors.
- Support the development of income generation opportunities where appropriate.



Governance, Risk and Compliance

The Chief Financial Officer will:

- Ensure that the Trust meets all statutory and regulatory financial requirements.
- Lead on financial reporting to the Department for Education, ESFA, Companies House and the Charity Commission.
- Prepare and oversee statutory accounts, financial returns and internal management reporting.
- Support the Audit and Risk Committee, ensuring robust internal scrutiny and assurance processes.
- Oversee internal and external audit processes, ensuring timely response to recommendations.
- Maintain and develop the Trust's risk management framework and risk register, with a particular focus on financial risk.



Job Description:

Chief Financial Officer



Leadership and Management

The Chief Financial Officer will:

- Provide strong leadership to the Trust's finance function, ensuring a high-quality, responsive and effective service.
- Develop and lead central finance systems and processes, ensuring they are fit for purpose and support continuous improvement.
- Carefully delegate work to their direct reports to enable staff to improve their technical financial skills and interpersonal experiences
- Work collaboratively with school and Trust leaders to build financial understanding and capability.
- Build effective relationships with stakeholders, supporting the Trust's work and reputation.
- Contribute to the wider leadership of the Trust, modelling integrity, professionalism and a commitment to service.

Other Responsibilities

- Act as a Director of a Trust trading subsidiary where required by the Board.
- Participate in relevant networks and forums, representing the Trust externally where appropriate.
- Maintain a full driving licence and be willing to travel across the Trust as required.

Payroll and Financially Linked People Processes

The Chief Financial Officer will:

- Provide financial leadership and oversight of payroll, ensuring accuracy, compliance and efficiency.
- Work in partnership to support financially linked workforce processes, including workforce planning and financial modelling.
- Ensure payroll and related processes meet all statutory and regulatory requirements.



Job Description:

Chief Financial Officer

Dimensions

- The Trust continues to grow and develop as a multi-academy trust serving multiple communities.
- The role is Trust-wide, with a flexible base across locations, and regular presence required at the central finance office. The postholder may work remotely where appropriate maximising the benefit to the Trust and the employee.
- Any remote working must be undertaken in accordance with health and safety regulations. The postholder is responsible for ensuring that the working environment meets all requirements and that there is appropriate set up to facilitate efficient working.
- The postholder will work across schools and central teams to support effective financial leadership.
- Due to the nature of this post, following successful completion of a probationary period the notice period for resignation will be 3 calendar months.
- The role will evolve over time in line with the needs and development of the Trust.

Safeguarding

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to all appropriate pre-employment checks, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.



Person Specification: Chief Financial Officer

Qualifications

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Recognised professional accountancy qualification	✓	
Evidence of continued professional development	✓	
Member of a professional body	✓	

Experience

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Senior leadership in financial management	✓	
Leading financial strategy and planning including budget setting	✓	
Managing significant budgets and reporting systems	✓	
Financial governance and compliance	✓	
Payroll oversight	✓	
Multi-site / complex organisation experience	✓	
Successful management of teams, development of staff and their deployment	✓	
Knowledge of the Academy Trust Handbook and ESFA requirements for school finance.		✓
Knowledge of the Companies Act and Charity sector		✓
MAT experience		✓



Person Specification: Chief Financial Officer

Skills and Knowledge

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Strong financial analysis and planning	✓	
Ability to communicate complex information clearly	✓	
Strategic thinking and decision-making	✓	
Strong interpersonal and influencing skills	✓	
Ability to promote high standards and to motivate and lead others.	✓	
Ability to consistently build relationships of trust confidentiality and discretion.	✓	
Excellent technical skills in respect of accounting and financial management systems	✓	
Project management skills	✓	
Understanding of education funding		✓
Experience with IMP and IRIS		✓



Person Specification: Chief Financial Officer

Leadership and Values

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Commitment to Trust mission and values	✓	
Integrity, accountability and professionalism	✓	
Collaborative leadership style	✓	
Resilience and adaptability	✓	
Professional curiosity and reflective practice	✓	
Practicing Catholic		✓

This role is central to ensuring that our Trust remains:

- Financially strong
- Strategically focused
- Faithful to its mission

So that every child we serve can become: fully alive.

How to Apply

For more information about this attractive role, or for an informal discussion, please contact our retained consultants at Peridot Partners:

Eddie Caviezel Cox, Mobile:07951 920 768; or Kellie Gordon, Mobile: 07506 742 056

If it would assist you in your decision making, informal discussions with the Trust Chair, George Brzyski and/or the CEO, Mark McLaughlin, may also be arranged by Maxine Gilmartin, telephone 01582 361601/mgilmartin@stcat.co.uk

Closing date for application: Wednesday 10 June 2026, 5 pm

Longlisting date: Monday 15 June 2026

Interview dates: Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 June 2026

To apply for this role, please contact:

Eddie Caviezel Cox - Email: eddiec@peridotpartners.co.uk - Mobile 07951 920 768; or
Kellie Gordon - Email: kellie@peridotpartners.co.uk - Mobile 07506 742 056

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