



Recruitment Guide

Finance Operations Manager

Contract: Permanent, 36 hours per week, all year round

Location: King's Leadership Academy Warrington

Salary: £38,220–£40,777 FTE

Start: ASAP / negotiable





WELCOME TO THE GREAT SCHOOLS TRUST

“Excellence is not a destination – it is who we are, every day.”

Welcome to Great Schools Trust, where belief in every child's potential meets the daily habits that make success inevitable. In our schools, excellence is not left to chance. It is embedded through clear routines, ambitious teaching, compassionate leadership and a culture where character matters.



Our Mission:

To develop in every student the academic skills, intellectual habits, qualities of character, and leadership traits necessary to become a successful, healthy citizen in the global community.



Our Vision:

To build a family of outstanding academies where all students, irrespective of their starting points, flourish, are happy and achieve their full potential.



Our Values — ASPIRE

- Aspiration
- Self-awareness
- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Respect
- Endeavour

Our Pillars of Excellence:



People & Leadership –

Growing exceptional leaders who inspire, empower and deliver.



Character & Leadership –

Building resilience, integrity and aspiration through values-led education.



Educational Transformation –

Relentlessly improving teaching and learning for every child.



AI & Future Learning –

Harnessing innovation and technology to personalise and future-proof learning.



System Leadership –

Driving improvement across schools with trust-wide accountability and collaboration.



Educational Partnerships –

Working with families, communities and global partners to extend opportunity.

National Recognition:

- National Behaviour Hub Lead MAT
- Edurio Top 10 for Staff Satisfaction (2024)
- Most Improved MAT in the Northwest for Progress 8 (2023–24)
- Home to the IPCL: The Institute of People, Character & Leadership

WELCOME FROM THE CEO

Shane Ierston Chief Executive Officer



Thank you for your interest in the role of Finance Operations Manager.

This is a central role at Great Schools Trust, supporting the day-to-day financial operations that let our academies focus on what matters most: educating young people well. Finance may not always be the bit that gets the standing ovation; shockingly, purchase orders rarely do, but when it works brilliantly, schools run smoothly, suppliers are paid on time, colleagues are supported, and public money is used carefully and responsibly.

We are an ambitious and creative Trust with a strong moral purpose. Our central team works hard to support our schools with professionalism and accuracy, keeping financial systems clear, compliant, and helpful. This role will be key to maintaining high standards across purchasing, invoicing, supplier payments, income processing, contracts administration and financial records.

The successful candidate will lead and support colleagues within the finance team, helping to ensure that our transactional finance function is efficient, accurate and responsive. You will work closely with staff across the Trust, including Academy Operations Managers, Principals, suppliers, auditors and banks, building strong relationships and resolving queries properly and promptly. You will also play an important part in improving systems, supporting compliance and helping colleagues understand and follow our finance procedures.

We are looking for someone with experience of leading or supervising staff and managing a purchase ledger function, ideally within education or another complex multi-site organisation.

Most importantly, we are looking for someone who is organised, curious, resilient and committed to doing a good job. You will care about value for money, understand the importance of accuracy and confidentiality and enjoy building positive relationships with colleagues across the Trust.

If you are motivated by making systems work well, supporting schools and contributing to a high-performing central team, we would be delighted to receive your application.

Regards

Shane Ierston





About the Role

Contract: Permanent, full-time, 36 hours per week, all year round

Location: King's Leadership Academy Warrington

Salary: NJC Scale PO1, points 27-30: £38,220–£40,777 FTE (based on 37-Hours).

Actual: Pro-rata for 36 hours per week: £37,188 - £39,676

Reports to: Management Accountant

Start Date: ASAP / negotiable

We're looking for an enthusiastic and organised Finance Operations Manager to join our welcoming Finance team at Great Schools Trust.

Based at King's Warrington, you'll play an important part in helping our schools thrive by ensuring our financial operations run smoothly, accurately and efficiently. Working closely with colleagues across our academies and central team, you'll provide expert support, build positive relationships and help create financial processes that enable our schools to focus on what matters most – delivering an excellent education for every pupil.

This is a varied and rewarding role where no two days are quite the same. From managing purchase ledgers and processing payments to supporting budget holders, maintaining financial records and identifying opportunities to improve the way we work, you'll have the chance to make a real impact every day.

We're looking for someone who enjoys working with detail, takes pride in delivering a high-quality service and loves finding practical solutions to challenges. You'll be a great communicator, enjoy working collaboratively and be confident building positive relationships with colleagues across the Trust.

In return, you'll be joining a supportive team that values collaboration, continuous improvement and shared success. If you're looking for a role where your skills will be appreciated, your ideas welcomed and your work will make a genuine difference to our schools and communities, we'd love to hear from you.

Hours of Work

8.00am - 4.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.00am - 3.00pm Friday

Job Description

1) Leadership & Team Management

- Lead, support and supervise finance operations staff to ensure high standards of administration, accuracy and customer service.
- Provide clear guidance, training and support to colleagues within the finance team and across the wider Trust.
- Promote a culture of professionalism, accountability, continuous improvement and positive working relationships.
- Support the development of finance procedures and ensure colleagues understand and follow agreed processes.
- Monitor team workload, deadlines and performance to ensure the smooth running of day-to-day finance operations.

2) Accounts Payable & Receivable

- Oversee the purchase ledger function, ensuring that purchasing, invoicing and supplier payment processes are completed accurately and in line with Trust policies.
- Liaise with staff across the Trust to ensure purchase orders are raised correctly and in accordance with authorisation limits and financial procedures.
- Support colleagues in securing value for money when placing orders and working with suppliers.
- Ensure income and expenditure is coded consistently and accurately.
- Organise, oversee and check supplier payment runs.
- Oversee debtor and creditor reconciliations.
- Produce debtor and creditor analysis for inclusion in management accounts reports for academies, senior leaders and trustees.
- Support the resolution of supplier, staff and school finance queries in a timely and professional manner.
- Oversee the accurate and timely processing of Trust business accounts, including charge cards, fuel cards, Amazon Business accounts and staff mobile phones.
- Prepare the monthly VAT return.

3) Accounting, Compliance & Reporting

- Support the Management Accountant and Chief Financial Officer during budget setting, month-end, year-end and audit processes by providing accurate and timely information.
- Ensure month-end deadlines are met and that financial information is complete, accurate and properly recorded.
- Produce, monitor and follow up exception reports to identify where colleagues may require further guidance, training or support.
- Produce and report on key performance indicators relating to finance policy compliance, processing times and transactional accuracy.
- Maintain accurate, complete and confidential financial records in line with Trust policies, GDPR, Department for Education requirements and the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Support internal and external audit processes by providing documentation, records and explanations as required.

4) Procurement & Contracts

- Maintain the Trust-wide contracts register, ensuring that information is accurate, up to date and properly recorded.
- Liaise with the finance team and wider Trust colleagues regarding contract renewals, notice periods and supplier arrangements.
- Support colleagues with procurement processes, ensuring that Trust policies and authorisation procedures are followed.
- Maintain appropriate records relating to contracts, purchasing decisions and supplier information.

5) Systems & Process Improvement

- Support the improvement and implementation of finance systems, processes and procedures across the Trust.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, accuracy, compliance and service within finance operations.
- Work with colleagues to ensure finance processes are clear, practical and consistently applied.
- Contribute to the development of training materials, guidance documents and process notes for finance procedures.

6) Relationships & Communication

- Build effective working relationships with key colleagues and stakeholders, including Academy Operations Managers, Principals, suppliers, auditors, banks and central team colleagues.
- Provide clear, helpful and professional communication when dealing with finance queries.
- Support colleagues through group and one-to-one training in finance procedures and systems.
- Maintain confidentiality and professional discretion at all times.

7) General Duties

- Undertake training and development relevant to the role.
- Comply with all Trust policies, including finance, safeguarding, health and safety, GDPR, equality and professional conduct policies.
- Contribute positively to the wider work and culture of the Trust.
- Undertake any other duties appropriate to the role as reasonably required by the Chief Financial Officer or senior leadership team.

8) Safeguarding

- Follow Trust safeguarding and child protection policies.
- Report concerns in line with agreed procedures.
- Maintain professional boundaries with children and young people.
- Handle confidential information securely.
- Act in accordance with the Trust Code of Conduct and key policies.

Person Specification

Category	Essential	Desirable
Experience & Qualifications	• Experience of working in a finance, accounts or transactional finance role. • Experience of managing or overseeing a purchase and sales ledger functions. • Experience of leading or supervising the work of other staff. • Experience of working with financial procedures, authorisation processes and internal controls.	• Experience of working in an education setting, academy trust or school finance environment. • Experience of working in a complex multi-site organisation. • Relevant finance, accounting or business administration qualification. • Experience of supporting audit, budget setting, month-end or year-end processes.
Technical Knowledge & Finance Skills	• Strong understanding of transactional finance, including purchasing, invoicing, supplier payments, income processing and reconciliations. • Ability to code income and expenditure accurately and consistently. • Confident use of finance systems and Microsoft Office, particularly Excel. • Ability to maintain accurate, complete and confidential financial records.	• Knowledge of the Academy Trust Handbook and Department for Education financial requirements. • Experience of preparing VAT returns. • Experience of maintaining a contracts register. • Experience of supporting procurement processes and supplier management.
Organisation, Compliance & Problem Solving	• Excellent attention to detail and a strong commitment to accuracy. • Ability to organise workload, meet deadlines and manage competing priorities. • Ability to produce, review and follow up reports, including exception reports and basic finance analysis. • Ability to identify issues, resolve queries and improve processes.	• Experience of producing KPI information relating to finance processes or policy compliance. • Experience of developing or improving finance systems, procedures or guidance materials. • Experience of supporting colleagues through finance training or one-to-one guidance.
Communication, Relationships & Personal Qualities	• Ability to communicate clearly and professionally with colleagues, suppliers and external partners. • Ability to build positive working relationships with staff at all levels. • Calm, resilient and solutions-focused approach. • Commitment to confidentiality, professional conduct, value for money and high standards of service.	• Confidence working with senior leaders, auditors, banks, suppliers and operational colleagues. • Curious, reflective and willing to ask questions to improve practice.



What We Offer

A Trust That Prioritises Staff Wellbeing

- A culture where staff wellbeing is central to decision-making
- Strong pastoral support and leadership that genuinely listens
- A collaborative, family-like environment across all academies

Professional Benefits & Career Development

- Highly competitive salaries that reward excellence
- 30 days of annual leave for support staff plus bank holidays
- Access to CredimusAI, saving hundreds of hours each year and reducing workload
- Access to appropriate digital tools and equipment to support effective professional practice.
- Weekly leadership link meetings to support your growth and leadership development
- Career progression opportunities for the right candidate
- Trust-wide collaboration, sharing expertise and supporting other schools

Health, Wellbeing & Personal Support

Benenden Health membership (optional £15.50 per month), including day 1 access to;

- 24/7 GP and Mental Health Helplines
- Specialist advice lines for adult care, neurodiversity and disability
- Fast access to diagnostics, physiotherapy, mental health support and cancer advice
- Help for Tuberculosis and selected surgical procedures (subject to eligibility)
- No medical checks, excess fees or age-related pricing
- Option to add family members at additional cost

BUPA Employee Assistance Programme (Trust-funded), offering:

- Counselling and emotional well-being support
- Legal, financial and family care advice
- 24/7 confidential assistance

Good occupational sick pay, maternity/paternity schemes and family-friendly policies supporting life's key moments

Financial, Lifestyle & Community Benefits

- Cycle to Work salary sacrifice scheme
- Membership of either the Teachers' Pension Scheme or Local Government Pension Scheme
- Opportunities to work with the local community on fundraising and charity projects
- The chance to contribute to trust-wide culture, innovation and school improvement



How To Apply

Submit your application via [MyNewTerm](#)

For an informal conversation about the role or to arrange a tour of one of our academies, please contact: h.fenlon@greatschoolstrust.com

Appointment, Compliance & Safeguarding

Appointment, Terms & Compliance

The Job Description forms part of the contract of employment and may be reviewed as the role or organisational needs change, following consultation.

The Trust will make reasonable adjustments to support applicants and employees with disabilities. The Trust is a licensed Skilled Worker Visa sponsor and may offer sponsorship subject to eligibility and the requirements of the role.

Safeguarding & Pre-employment Checks

Great Schools Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff must share this commitment. As part of safer recruitment, interviews will explore motivation to work with children, ability to maintain professional boundaries, emotional resilience and attitudes to authority and behaviour management.

Pre-Employment Checks

Any offer of employment is conditional upon the successful completion of the following:

- Proof of identity, address and right to work in the UK
- Two satisfactory references, including the most recent employer
- Verification of relevant qualifications
- Enhanced DBS check with barred list check
- Prohibition from teaching check (where applicable)
- Section 128 check (for management roles)
- Overseas police checks (where applicable)
- Occupational health clearance
- Satisfactory completion of the probationary period

Ongoing Compliance

The postholder must comply with Trust policies, including the Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and Staff Communication and Social Media Policy. Responsibilities may be reviewed periodically in line with Trust and academy priorities.



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TRUST

