



**GREAT
HEIGHTS**
ACADEMY TRUST

Achieving excellence together

Chief Finance Officer

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK



► Welcome

Dear Colleague

I am delighted that you are considering the position of Chief Finance Officer at Great Heights Academy Trust.

As our Trust continues to grow and strengthen, we are seeking an exceptional Chief Finance Officer to join our senior leadership team and play a pivotal role in shaping our financial strategy, sustainability and long-term impact. This is a unique opportunity to work closely with the CEO, Trustees and school leaders, using financial insight and strategic leadership to support school improvement and ensure the Trust remains resilient, compliant and future-focused.

The successful candidate will be supported by the Trust's central finance team; including our Deputy CFO; our finance team values incorporate five pillars of: Teamwork, Accuracy; Respect; Support; and Integrity.

Great Heights Academy Trust focuses on meaningful collaboration between Trust schools and designations for the benefit of all the children in the Trust. The Chief Finance Officer role will be pivotal to supporting the aims of the Trust via delivery of strategic and effective financial operational and support services to all academies within the Trust.

This is a great opportunity for an experienced and passionate finance professional. We are looking for an individual who will be prepared to be a key member of the team and one that will bring business and financial acumen, diligence, dedication, high attention to detail as well as possessing excellent interpersonal skills.

We hope that the candidate pack provided will give you all the information that you require.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Amanda Bennett OBE, CEO Great Heights Academy Trust

► Overview of the Position of Great Heights Academy Trust

- The Trust Board are seeking a highly driven and talented individual to join our thriving Multi-Academy Trust which is fully committed to making a difference to the life chances of our pupils. We are keen to hear from candidates who have a successful background in financial management and who are capable of playing a key role in our evolving plan to deliver exceptional 2-18 provision for the pupils in our growing MAT.

The post would suit an experienced finance leader. We want to hear from individuals who have the leadership qualities and drive to make the most of this unique moment in time. The successful applicant should have a proven track record of impact and share the Trust's vision. You will need to be an articulate and strong communicator with the appropriate finance experience to evidence effective finance leadership and delivery in a multi-million-pound organisation.

► About the Trust

The Trust currently comprises of seven primary schools: three in Calderdale (The Greetland Academy, West Vale Academy and Bowling Green Academy), one in Leeds (Raynville Academy) and three in Kirklees (Carlinghow Academy, Marsden Junior School and Niels Academy). We currently have two secondary schools (The Mirfield Free Grammar and Colne Valley High School). We also have a Trust Head Office based at Riverside Mills in Elland.

To find out more about our Trust, please view our [Business Plan](#).

Great Heights Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974: pre-employment checks will be carried out; references will be sought, and successful candidates will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, an online search, and other relevant checks with statutory bodies.



Our Trust Vision

Our Trust vision has school improvement at its heart that will benefit all children in Trust schools.

We aim to

- ✓ Develop an effective partnership of schools that share a commitment to raising standards.
- ✓ Strengthen the partnership by valuing the uniqueness of each school and expecting all schools to contribute.
- ✓ Foster relationships based on mutual respect with a balance of autonomy and accountability.
- ✓ Share expertise – both best practice and best practitioners.
- ✓ Develop all teachers and leaders through effective professional development.
- ✓ This Trust vision drives both our School Improvement Strategy and our Strategy for Growth.

Our Vision and Values Statement

The Great Heights Academy Trust strives to always provide an inspirational, positive and welcoming environment where there is a sense of pride and fun and where everyone works together with confidence, enthusiasm and mutual respect. We aim to nurture academic, personal, spiritual and social development in a caring and professional manner so that all achieve their full potential and all can reach GREAT heights.

Current Trust Academies and Designations

Our mantra across our partnerships embraces the following themes:

- G** Great teaching and learning opportunities for all in the partnership
- R** Real life opportunities to develop an understanding of the wider world
- E** Enthuse a love of learning and mutual respect
- A** Academic development to nurture potential for all
- T** Thorough accountability

GHAT has access to a wide support network through our designations. These offer support to all of our schools.



▶ Chief Finance Officer

Achieving excellence together

Position:	Chief Finance Officer (CFO)
Department:	MAT Leadership Team
Pay Range:	L24-L29
Hours of work:	Full time
Responsible to:	CEO
Responsible for:	MAT Finance Team

Prime Objectives of the Post

The CFO will be a member of the senior leadership team and will contribute to strategy and policy development to support the Trust’s aims and objectives. The CFO will provide strategic management and leadership of financial and commercial operations. The postholder will ensure the provision of management information for the Trust’s planning and monitoring systems and will ensure the completion of statistical returns to external agencies. The postholder will provide strategic advice to the chief executive officer, trust board and senior managers on all issues relating to financial matters.

The postholder will undertake meaningful financial analysis and robust and impartial interpretation in relation to performance management, asset management, investment appraisal, risk management and control.

Statutory Requirements

It is aligned to the Local Government Terms and Conditions, set out in the statutory guidance.

Membership of the Trust

- ▶ To be an ambassador for the developing MAT, ensuring both internal and external colleagues are aware of the vision, culture, and ethos within the trust.
- ▶ To contribute to the delivery of the MAT school improvement offer and subsequent gains of being in Great Heights Academy Trust.
- ▶ To ensure all trust systems, processes and procedures are adhered to as requested from the Trust post holders.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic Management

- To prepare the Trust’s annual financial forecasts, forecasts for corporate strategies and plans in consultation with the chief executive officer and senior colleagues and developing and implementing strategies for maximising the Trust’s current finances and to support the continuing school improvement journey of all academies for all stakeholders.



- To be accountable to the chief executive officer for the proper financial operations of the Trust and to ensure that financial risk implications of policy initiatives are analysed and appropriately addressed:
 - Agreeing the financial framework and planning delivery against strategic and operational criteria.
 - Maintaining a long-term financial strategy to underpin the institution's financial viability within the agreed performance framework.
 - Implementing financial management policies to underpin sustainable long-term financial health and reviewing performance against them.
 - Developing and maintaining an effective resource allocation model to deliver business priorities.
 - Leading on asset and balance sheet management.
 - Leading on the planning and budgeting processes.
- Leading and developing the finance team and overseeing the development and maintenance of financial systems and procedures, including appropriate IT systems.
- To participate in the management of major Trust projects as required by the chief executive officer.
- To provide strategic financial direction within the Trust's senior leadership team, working with colleagues to secure financial compliance across the Trust.

Operational

- For governance requirements the postholder will establish a medium-term business and financial planning process to deliver the Trust's strategic objectives, including:
 - a medium-term financial strategy to ensure sustainable finances
 - a robust annual budget process that ensures financial balance
 - a monitoring process that enables this to be delivered
 - to ensure timely and accurate provision of all Trust external reporting, which includes, but is not limited, to:
 - Annual accounts and reports, including taking a lead on the development of the accompanying governance report
 - Academies Accounts Return
 - Budget Forecast Return
 - Budget Forecast Return Outturn
 - Other financial and grant assurance returns.
- To provide the financial lead to the strategic planning process, including: annual budgets, periodic forecasts and funding requirements.
- To prepare the annual Trust budget, working closely with senior managers and budget holders to ensure consistency with the Trust's strategic and financial objectives.
- To monitor the income and expenditure budgets across the Trust and Teaching School activities, and giving early warning of difficulties.
- To ensure that effective financial structures and controls are in place to support robust financial management and to meet legal and tax requirements; compliance with the Funding Agreement and Academy Trust Handbook, including audit and risk management.



- To maintain the Trust's accounts in accordance with the funding agreement and Academies Financial Handbook and best practice in terms of financial governance and ensuring the integrity and suitability of all control mechanisms (audit and risk management).
- To liaise with both internal and external auditors to enable them to operate effectively.
- To liaise on behalf of the chief executive officer, with the funding bodies on financial matters.
- To plan and co-ordinate all tax and treasury management practice and policy, with particular reference to charitable status and cash management.
- To ensure that the Trust achieves value for money across all its activities, including the delivery of services and successfully manage the Trust's procurement processes (including support in preparing bids and generating new income streams).
- To provide high quality financial information in a timely manner to all stakeholders.

Line Management

- To lead manage and develop staff within the finance team and promoting a strong customer service ethos and high professional standards. The postholder will ensure that the finance team works in collaboration with other Trust functions.
- To ensure that managers' roles and responsibilities for monitoring financial performance/budget management are clear.

Safeguarding

As part of your wider duties and responsibilities you are required to promote and actively support the Trust's responsibilities and policies towards safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

General

- To uphold the Nolan Principles of public life.
- The postholder will provide professional advice and objective financial analysis enabling decision makers to take timely and informed business decisions. To play the lead role in advising and supporting the leadership team by aligning financial planning with the vision and strategic objectives for the Trust.
- To support Trustees and governors with appropriate financial advice at the various Trust governance meetings.
- To take part in any CPD activities appropriate to the role.
- To support the development of initiatives and policies such as data protection, equality policy, safeguarding, health and safety.
- To undertake any other professional duties as required by the CEO/Board.

This job description is not intended to be comprehensive and the job holder may be asked to perform other duties commensurate with the post as directed, to meet the needs of the Trust.

**Person Specification:** Chief Financial Officer**Key to identification:** A = Application I = Interview R = Reference

Education and Training	Essential	Desirable	A/I/R
Professional finance of finance related qualification (i.e. ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA, MAAT or equivalent).	✓		A/I/R
Qualified Accountant		✓	A/I/R
Six GCSE passes including English and Maths (Grade C/4 or above) or equivalent level 2 qualification	✓		A/I/R
Experience	Essential	Desirable	A/I/R
A minimum of three years' experience in an accountancy/finance office	✓		A/I
Experience providing excellent customer service	✓		A/I
Experience in undertaking service and financial planning processes including detailed budget setting	✓		A/I
Experience in undertaking budget monitoring processes and preparing management accounts	✓		A/I
Experience in maintaining an accounts system and processing day-to-day transactions	✓		A/I
Experience in producing year end accounts and meeting audit and statutory deadlines	✓		A/I
Excellent financial planning, risk management, and strategic leadership skills.	✓		A/I
General and Specialist Knowledge	Essential	Desirable	A/I/R
Senior financial leadership experience in education, public sector, or multi-site organisations (funding requirements, budget monitoring, sector challenges)		✓	A/I
Strong knowledge of academy funding, governance, audit, and compliance		✓	A/I
Experience of Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP)		✓	A/I
Can communicate complex financial information clearly to non-financial leaders	✓		A/I
A good level of computer literacy, including being an expert with Microsoft Office software, especially Excel.	✓		A/I



Full UK Driving Licence and own vehicle	✓		A/I
Personal Qualities	Essential	Desirable	A/I/R
Proactive and forward thinking	✓		A/I
Ability to work as a team member and use own initiative	✓		A/I
Able to work with minimal supervision	✓		A/I
Rigorous and methodical with the ability to manage own workload and meet deadlines	✓		A/I
Ability to multi-task is essential as is the ability to prioritise and effectively manage large volumes of requests	✓		A/I
Structured and organised	✓		A/I
Confident in providing training, advise and support to colleagues	✓		A/I
Additional Requirements	Essential	Desirable	A/I/R
Operate with the highest standards of personal/professional conduct and integrity.	✓		A/I
Willing to work flexibly in accordance with policies and procedures to meet the operational needs of the Trust	✓		A/I
Willing to undertake training and continuous professional development in connection with the post	✓		A/I
Work in accordance with the Trust's values and behaviours	✓		A/I
Able to undertake any travel in connection with the post	✓		A/I
Able to demonstrate sound understanding of equality/diversity in the workplace and services provided especially in the access to delivery of the education of pupils and of own non-discriminatory practice and attitude	✓		A/I
Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children, young people and vulnerable adults.	✓		A/I
A commitment to safeguarding and promoting welfare for all.	✓		A/I



► Reasons to work at Great Heights Academy Trust



A fantastic team

A highly skilled, loyal and supportive team of staff and senior leaders.



Professional development

Bespoke professional development to ensure that you as an employee, 'reach great heights'.



Career Opportunities

Career opportunities across the MAT.



Cycle to work scheme

Tax free cycle scheme.



Holiday package

The Trust provides staff with a generous holiday entitlement.



Pension scheme

Contributory pension through West Yorkshire Pension Fund/Teachers' Pensions.





Great Heights Academy Trust staff benefit from access to a range of practical and emotional help 24/7 through Education Support.



Practical and emotional support just when you need it

Your Employee Assistance Programme



Support for issues at home and at work



Financial guidance



Legal enquiries



Support and coaching for managers



Signposting and general help