

Chief Financial Officer

Job Description and Person Specification



St Clare
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Job Description

Job Title

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Salary

£80,000 – £90,000 per annum (final salary range to be agreed based on experience)

Reports To

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Accountable To

Board of Directors

Direct Reports

- Director of Finance
- Finance Business Partners, Officers and Assistants

Disclosure level

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check

Location

Trust Central Office with regular travel to academies across the Trust

St Clare reserves the right to require you to work at such other place or places as it may reasonably require from time to time subject to the provision of reasonable notice.

Hours of work

37 Hours per week – Full Time (52.143 weeks).

Contract

Permanent

Job Purpose

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is a member of the Executive Leadership Team and serves as the Trust's strategic lead for financial management, sustainability and resource planning.

The CFO will provide professional leadership, financial stewardship and strategic advice to the Chief Executive Officer, Board of Directors and Trust leaders, ensuring that public funds are managed with integrity and transparency to support educational excellence, regulatory compliance and long-term organisational sustainability.

The postholder will contribute to and uphold the overall vision and ethos of CMAT.

The postholder will fulfil the statutory CFO function required by the Academy Trust Handbook and will ensure the Trust maintains robust financial control, effective governance and long-term financial sustainability. The role reflects responsibilities commonly expected of MAT CFOs and Finance Directors operating at executive level.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic Leadership

- Contribute to the overall strategic leadership and direction of the Trust in line with our mission and ethos as a Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- Advise the CEO and Directors on financial implications of strategic decisions.
- Develop and deliver the Trust's long-term financial strategy.
- Ensure resources are aligned with strategic priorities and school improvement objectives.
- Act as a trusted adviser to Headteachers and Principals.
- Lead financial risk assessment, scenario planning and mitigation strategies to support sustainability
- Support growth opportunities including mergers, transfers, conversions and school onboarding through development of financial strategy and oversight of high quality due diligence

2. Financial Strategy and Planning

- Lead the annual budget-setting process across all academies.
- Develop robust three-to-five-year financial forecasts.
- Monitor financial performance against budget.
- Ensure a sustainable reserves strategy.
- Provide scenario modelling and financial analysis to support decision-making.
- Benchmark performance against sector best practice and recommend improvements.
- Identify and evaluate opportunities to maximise income through grants, partnerships and alternative funding opportunities.
- Explore collaborative procurement and shared service opportunities.

3. Statutory and Regulatory Compliance

- Fulfil the responsibilities of Chief Financial Officer under Academy Trust Handbook requirements.
- Ensure compliance with:
 - Academy Trust Handbook
 - Companies Act
 - Charity Commission requirements
 - ESFA regulations
 - Financial Reporting Standards
 - Funding Agreements
- Oversee preparation of the Trust's annual accounts.
- Lead external audit processes.
- Ensure timely completion of statutory returns.
- Ensure payroll and pension services are best value and fully compliant with statutory requirements
- Ensure procurement activity leads to best value and is fully compliant with statutory requirements
- Ensure appropriate insurance is in place and oversee management of claim

4. Governance, Risk Management & Continuous Improvement

- Advise Directors, Audit Committee and Finance Committee on:
 - Financial performance
 - Strategic risk
 - Internal control
 - Value for money
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive risk management framework.
- Ensure effective systems of internal financial control.
- Present accurate and timely management reports.
- Support Directors and Headteachers in understanding financial performance and accountability.
- Oversee the Trust's programme of internal scrutiny and ensure timely implementation of recommendations.
- Lead continuous improvement initiatives to enhance efficiency and service quality.

5. Financial Operations

- Provide leadership of all finance functions.
- Ensure efficient transaction processing including:
 - Payroll
 - Accounts payable
 - Accounts receivable
 - Cash management
 - Treasury functions
- Ensure robust procurement processes.
- Drive operational efficiencies and continuous improvement.
- Develop financial systems and reporting tools.
- Lead enhancements to financial systems, management information and reporting capability.
- Develop KPI dashboards and financial performance reporting that support informed decision making across the Trust.

6. Commercial and Resource Management

- Lead value-for-money initiatives across the Trust.
- Develop and oversee procurement and contract management strategy and process
- Evaluate major investments and capital projects.
- Oversee commercial contracts and supplier relationships.
- Ensure effective utilisation of Trust resources.

7. Leadership and People Development

- Lead and develop a high-performing finance team.
- Build financial awareness across schools and central services.
- Coach Headteachers and school leaders in financial management.
- Promote a culture of accountability, service excellence and continuous improvement.
- Contribute to wider leadership development within the Trust.

8. Stakeholder Management

- Build strong and productive relationships with Trustees, Headteachers, School Business Managers and central service teams.
- Act as principal liaison with auditors, regulators, banking partners and funding bodies.
- Support school leaders in effective resource planning and allocation.

9. Estates, IT and Business Services

In liaison with the Director of services, ensure that financial strategy and operation is fully aligned with:

- Estates and capital programmes
- Health and safety compliance
- ICT strategy and infrastructure
- Business continuity planning

General Responsibilities

- Promote values and ethos rooted in our identity as a Catholic Trust.
- Promote safeguarding and child welfare.
- Maintain confidentiality and GDPR compliance.
- Undertake other reasonable duties consistent with the level of responsibility of the post.

Person Specification

Essential Qualifications

- Qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA level 7 or equivalent).
- Degree-level qualification or equivalent professional experience.
- Evidence of continuing professional development.

Essential Experience

Strategic Leadership

- Significant senior leadership experience within a complex organisation.
- Experience of contributing at Board or Executive Team level.
- Evidence of developing and delivering organisational strategy.

Financial Management

- Responsibility for budgets exceeding £25m.
- Financial planning and forecasting.
- Financial reporting and management accounts.
- Audit and statutory accounts preparation.
- Treasury and cash-flow management.

Governance and Compliance

- Experience of risk management and internal control frameworks.
- Working with Boards, Directors or Governors.
- Experience of regulatory compliance.

People Leadership

- Proven ability to lead and develop professional teams.
- Experience managing change and organisational improvement.
- Ability to influence and challenge constructively.

Desirable Experience

- Experience within education, academy trusts or public sector organisations.
- Academy Trust Handbook compliance knowledge.
- Experience of trust growth, mergers or acquisitions.
- Capital programme management.
- Procurement and contract management expertise.
- Oversight of estates, ICT or wider business services.

Essential Knowledge

- Corporate financial management.
- Strategic financial planning.
- Financial governance and risk management.
- Internal control systems.
- Financial reporting requirements.
- Public accountability and value-for-money principles.

Essential Skills

Leadership

- Strategic thinker with strong commercial awareness.
- Ability to lead through influence.
- Highly credible with senior stakeholders.

Communication

- Able to communicate complex financial matters clearly.
- Excellent report-writing and presentation skills.
- Ability to build productive relationships across all levels.

Analysis

- Strong analytical and problem-solving abilities.
- Excellent financial modelling capability.

- Data-driven approach to decision-making.

Personal Effectiveness

- High levels of integrity and professionalism.
- Resilient and adaptable.
- Strong organisational skills.
- Attention to detail balanced with strategic perspective.

Personal Qualities

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- Strong commitment to Catholic Education and the mission of a Catholic Trust
- Commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion within a Catholic ethos
- Suitability to work with children and an understanding of and commitment to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of pupils
- Commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Strong moral purpose and public service ethos.
- High ethical standards.
- Collaborative and inclusive leadership style.
- Courage to challenge where necessary.
- Ability to balance support with accountability.
- Visible, approachable and values-driven leadership.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The CFO will be expected to deliver:

- Balanced annual budgets.
- Positive external audit outcomes.
- Full regulatory compliance.
- Timely submission of all statutory returns.
- Delivery of agreed efficiency targets.
- Strong reserves and cash-flow position.
- Improved financial understanding across school leaders.
- High-quality financial reporting to Directors.
- Effective support for Trust growth and sustainability.

St Clare Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Hallam Pastoral Centre
St Charles Street
Sheffield S9 3WU

T: 0114 478 5220



St Clare
Catholic Multi Academy Trust