

DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS Candidate Pack



**EPPING FOREST SCHOOLS
PARTNERSHIP TRUST**

Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust (EFSPT) as our first Director of Operations, a newly designed role replacing that of Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

We are very proud of the collaborative organisation we have built together. Spanning three infant, one junior, eleven primary schools and one special school, our Trust is defined by the relentless pursuit of the best possible education for every one of the pupils we are privileged to serve. Our ethos is rooted in a deep sense of community, mutual support, and high aspirations for every child in our care.

Leading in a Multi-Academy Trust In 2026, the role of a Director of Operations is transformative, and this is an exciting time for you to be joining us. We are moving away from School-based finance and operations to a centralised service, ensuring our Headteachers are able to focus on continued school improvement while you focus on the long-term sustainability and innovative resource management of the Trust.

In light of the recent White Paper, our Trust will be actively encouraging additional schools to join us to flourish. This, with increased income generation and possible sponsorship, will help in achieving financial security for our Trust.

You are not just a manager of budgets, but a strategic architect of our educational mission.

Within EFSPT, we have worked hard to create what we call the "Trust Dividend." For you, this means leading a centralised, high-performing finance and operations team that removes the administrative burden from our Headteachers, allowing them to fully realise our vision.

We recognise that to attract the best, we must be the best. We have fully embraced the Employment Rights Act 2026, not as a compliance exercise, but as a blueprint for a healthier workplace. As our Director of Operations, you will benefit from:

Day-One Rights:

- **Immediate access** to our enhanced wellbeing and family-friendly provisions.
- **Flexible Working by Default:** We trust our leaders. We offer autonomy over your working patterns to ensure that your professional impact is matched by your personal wellbeing.
- **A nurturing community:** A safe, respectful environment where professional boundaries are protected, and every voice is valued.
- **Continuous professional development:** The role will provide an opportunity for professional growth

We are offering an exciting opportunity for a forward-thinking and innovative financial leader. The ideal candidate will be strategically astute and bring a strong sense of empathy to their leadership style; someone who can balance commercial insight with emotional intelligence to drive sustainable growth and inspire those around them.

We encourage a visit to the trust, and we are holding two open sessions on **Wednesday, 25 March at 9:30am and 1pm**. Please call 02083254547 and ask for Tammy Eaton or Jenny Gevertz to book a slot.

All applications must be made through the **My New Term Portal**. I look forward to the possibility of working alongside you.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Clifford
Chief Executive Officer, EFSPT

About the Trust

Welcome to The Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust, a Multi-Academy Trust consisting of sixteen schools, including one special school, all based in the Epping Forest District.

Along with our SCITT (School-Centred Initial Teacher Training), School Improvement Team, Wellbeing Service and SEMH provisions based in two of our schools, we are a leading educational organisation in Epping Forest. Our Trust structure utilises the expertise in our schools and therefore we have developed a range of school improvement hubs and networks to support this.



Our Vision

Mission

To provide an exceptional education that is inclusive and challenging for all and which provides wider opportunities for the children within the EFSPT to flourish.



Vision

We have an uncompromising ambition to use The Power of Collaboration to provide outstanding provision through:

- An inclusive, unrelenting focus on high quality first teaching
- A rich, broad and stimulating curriculum
- A high aspiration for all children regardless of their background to achieve their best possible outcomes
- A wide range of experiences to develop the whole child
- An environment where good mental health and wellbeing is nurtured
- A safeguarding culture to respond to our local context and the needs of our pupils
- Strong foundations for the next stage of education or employment

Values

We will uphold the following values:

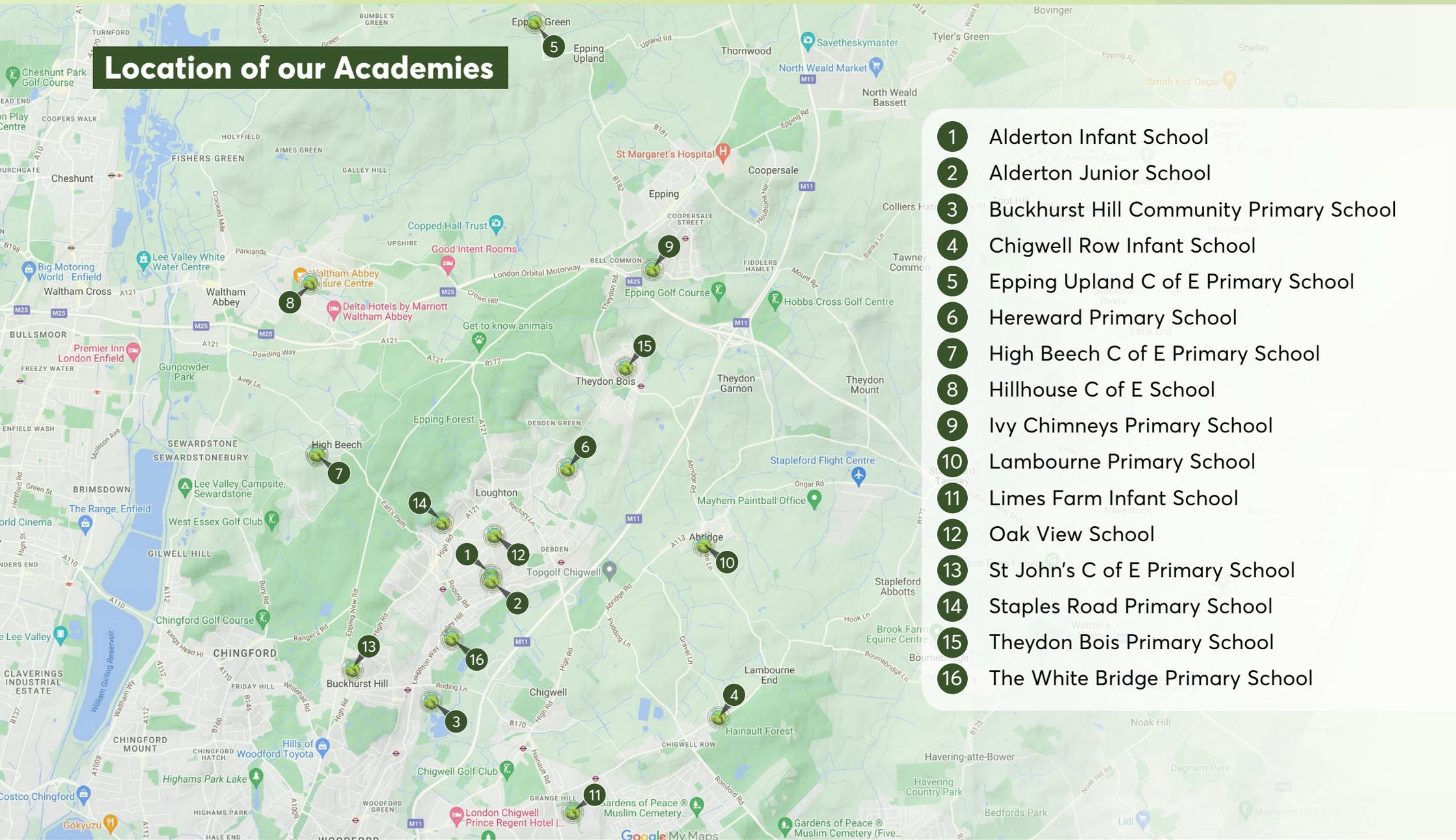
Personal: confidence, a sense of achievement, enjoyment, resilience, ambition, curiosity

Relationships: hope, compassion, kindness, connection, belonging

Teamwork: respect, tolerance, working together for excellence

Service: being a responsible citizen in our community

Location of our Academies



- 1 Alderton Infant School
- 2 Alderton Junior School
- 3 Buckhurst Hill Community Primary School
- 4 Chigwell Row Infant School
- 5 Epping Upland C of E Primary School
- 6 Hereward Primary School
- 7 High Beech C of E Primary School
- 8 Hillhouse C of E School
- 9 Ivy Chimneys Primary School
- 10 Lambourne Primary School
- 11 Limes Farm Infant School
- 12 Oak View School
- 13 St John's C of E Primary School
- 14 Staples Road Primary School
- 15 Theydon Bois Primary School
- 16 The White Bridge Primary School

Our Academies

Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust is a Multi-Academy Trust which consists of 16 schools: 11 primary schools, 3 infant schools, 1 junior school and 1 special school.

Our schools vary in size from a three form entry primary school to a single form entry infant school. Our special school, Oak View, is an all age (3-19), specialist provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs. This includes those with severe and complex needs and pupils within the autistic spectrum.



Alderton Infant School

www.alderton-inf.essex.sch.uk



Epping Upland C of E Primary School

www.eppinguplandcofeschool.co.uk



Ivy Chimneys Primary School

www.ivychimneys.net



St John's C of E Primary School

www.st-johns-school.com



Alderton Junior School

www.aldertonjunior.co.uk



Hereward Primary School

www.herewardprimary.co.uk



Lambourne Primary School

www.lambourne.efspt.org



Staples Road Primary School

www.staplesroad.essex.sch.uk



Buckhurst Hill Community Primary School

www.bhcps.efspt.org



High Beech C of E Primary School

www.highbeechschool.org.uk



Limes Farm Infant School

www.limesfarminf.co.uk



Theydon Bois Primary School

www.theydon.efspt.org



Chigwell Row Infant School

www.chigwell.efspt.org



Hillhouse C of E School

www.hillhouse.essex.sch.uk



Oak View School

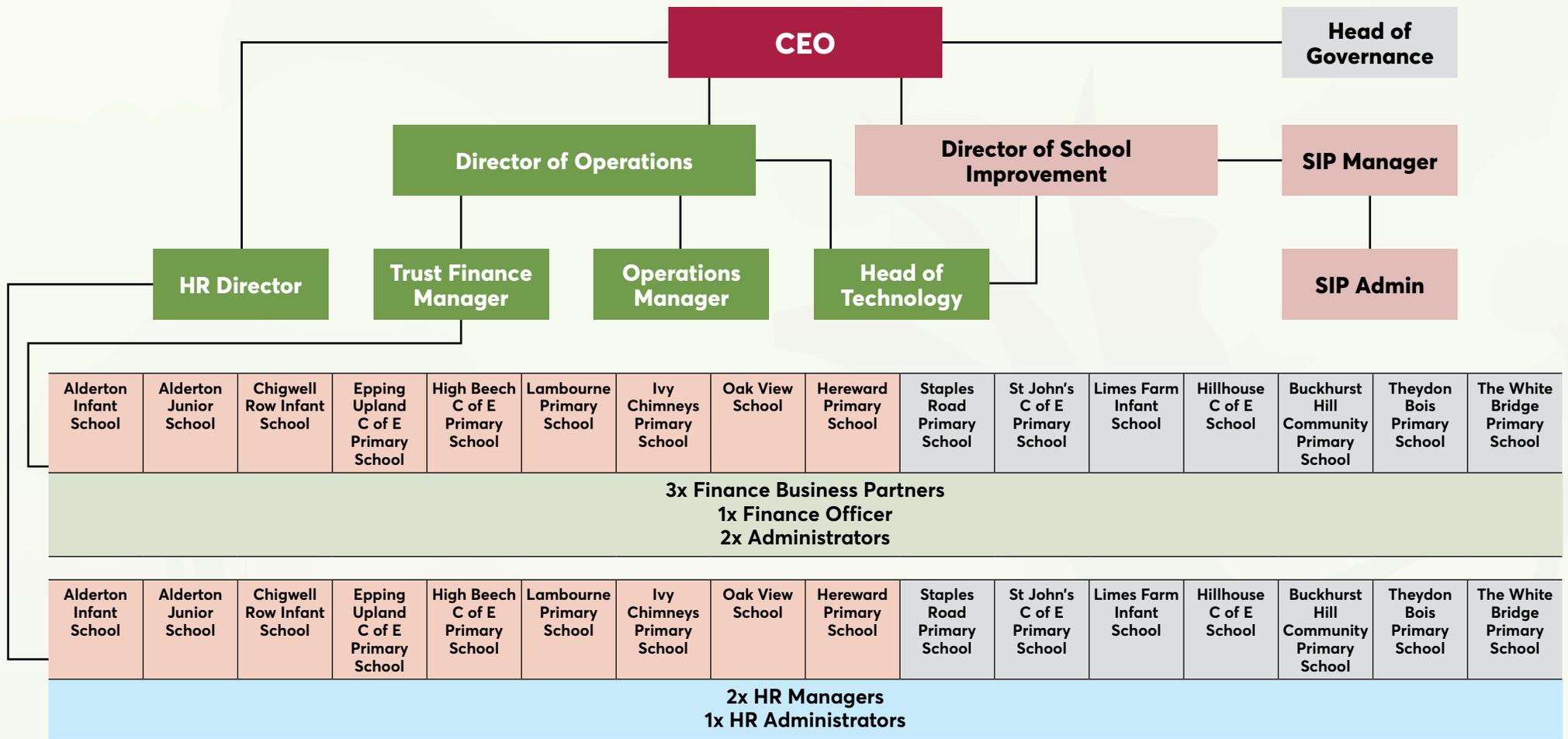
www.oakviewschool.org



The White Bridge Primary School

www.whitebridge.essex.sch.uk

Proposed Structure Under New Director Of Operations



Schools centralised as at April 2026

Our Central Team



Chris White
Chair of the Trust



Katie Toms
Head of Governance



Elizabeth Nunn
Clerk to Trustee



Graham Clifford
CEO



Karen Salmons
CFO



Sarah Rees
School Improvement
Director



Leah Dear
School Improvement
Manager



Donna Brown
School Improvement
Team & Central Team
Administrator



Tula Smith
HR Director



Jenny Gevertz
HR Manager



Tammy Eaton
HR Manager



Lorna Newcombe
Trust Finance
Manager



Nicola Valentine
Business Support Manager
(Appointment starts April 2026)



Lauren Andrews
Deputy Business
Support



Ann Marie Buckley
Finance Support
Administrator



Leanne Lilly
Finance Support
Administrator



Cagla Atiz
Finance Support
Administrator



Matthew Harrison
Head of Digital



Jenny Cope
Operations Manager



Susan Marbe
SCITT Director



Emma Squires
Deputy SCITT Director



Vanessa Smullen
SCITT Manager



Sarah Hurwood
Head of the Wellbeing
Service



Karen Bowden
Wellbeing Service
Family Support Worker

As well as our schools, we have a Central Team whose purpose is to ensure our Trust runs smoothly enabling our academies to focus on Teaching and Learning. The Central Team consists of School Improvement; Finance & Operations; HR; Technology; Governance; the Wellbeing Service and the SCITT.

Job Description



Job Title:	Director of Operations (DOO)
Scale:	Scale 15 - £83,881 to £93,167
Contracted Hours:	37 hours x 52 weeks
Contract Type:	Full-time, Permanent
Reports to:	Chief Executive Officer
Performance Management:	Chief Executive Officer
Job Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the financial sustainability of our Trust. • Comply with all of our Trust's policies and procedures, working towards our core aims and ensuring confidentiality is maintained where appropriate, contributing to the ethos, development and success of our Trust. • Maintain a secure overview of the management of all financial issues within each of our Trust's academies, providing financial assistance to each academy, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Trust Board. • Keep the CEO and the Board up to date with the latest funding changes, company law and other statutory guidance. • Always ensure our Trust acts in compliance with relevant legislation and adopts guidance where it is in our best interests. • To lead the promotion and delivery of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively. • Establish and maintain a three-year rolling financial plan, to be updated annually, measured against KPIs and monitored effectively. • Annually produce a consolidated budget plan for the consideration of, and approval by, Trustees. • Uphold good governance and ethical behaviour, including good accounting practices and internal control systems. • Ensure our Trust's resources are managed efficiently, ethically and professionally. • Analyse and interpret financial reports, communicating findings in a simplified manner when necessary. • Co-operate with, initiate and manage audit procedures. • Attend governance meetings. • Retain oversight of Trust central operations.
Duties and Responsibilities: Strategy and Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with the CEO and the Leadership Team (LT). • Work alongside the CEO to implement the 3-year academy strategy business plans, including setting and managing budgets, KPIs, targets and outputs and reviewing progress against these. • Support other members of the LT with KPIs in the development of functional strategies and plans.

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Job Description *continued*

<p>Duties and Responsibilities: Strategy and Change <i>continued</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the CEO and LT to effectively manage change within our Trust. • Work with the CEO and other colleagues with relevant responsibilities on the strategies for premises improvements and health and safety across the whole Trust. • Work alongside senior colleagues in leading the facility management across the whole Trust, design specifications for new buildings, obtain tenders and planning permission, liaise with building contractors and architects to deliver building projects identified in the premises' strategy by working with the CEO, and leaders in schools. • Support the Operations Manager with Trust wide bid writing to secure external capital funding for building works. • Support with facilitating the design of new initiatives with the LT and implementation across our Trust.
<p>Duties and Responsibilities: Business planning and performance reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the annual and 3-year strategic business planning to produce an effective budget for approval by the Board of Trustees. • Manage the implementation and maintenance of strong strategic and operational financial planning processes and controls to safeguard our Trust's finances. • Ensure that all necessary monitoring and evaluation of finance and performance is undertaken across the Trust and reported to the Local Governing Committees (LGC) and Board of Trustees. • Direct the production of the annual report and accounts, including the statement of financial activities, balance sheet and associated notes to the accounts. • Maintain the Trust's Business Register.
<p>Duties and Responsibilities: Business management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead on effective risk management across our Trust, working closely with other SLT members and the schools. • Lead as the primary point of contact, inclusive of finance, VAT, risk and legal departments, to ensure Trust wide administration is efficient and effective. • Work alongside the HR Director to ensure Trust wide HR administration is efficient and effective. • To develop and lead a Trust wide income generation strategy, identifying and securing external funding, corporate sponsorships, and philanthropic partnerships to enhance educational resources and capital projects. • Develop relationships with suppliers and lead on supplier cost-effectiveness projects. • Lead the drive for efficiency throughout our Trust. • Understand the effects and implications of government policies, legislation and directives and develop effective strategies for current initiatives and long-term educational trends and developments. • Negotiate, manage and monitor contracts, tenders and agreements ensuring 'best value' at all times. • Ensure appropriate levels of insurance are in place to fully capture the needs of all the establishments within our Trust. • Develop and implement an effective procurement process for our Trust that achieves best value and is fully compliant.

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Job Description *continued*

Duties and Responsibilities: Financial management and compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be an active member of the Leadership Team, taking a lead on strategic budget planning and management, providing oversight and guidance.• Provide strategic oversight and guidance to the Trust's Finance Team Leader.• Oversee the day-to-day financial and operational management of our Trust, including budgeting, monitoring and risk management, ensuring all establishments within our Trust are strategically planning and delivering.• Ensure that all financial regulations (specifically Academy Trust handbook SORP), schemes of delegation and financial procedures are fully adhered to, reviewed and updated as required by the DfE, Charity Commission, HMRC and other regulators.• Direct the preparation of budgets and monitoring in line with the Funding Agreements established between the Trust and the academies within our Trust.• Ensure the availability of timely financial information to Members, Trust Board, CEO and LT and support the Trust's finance team in the interpretation and reporting of financial information.• Lead the due diligence process for any future opportunities in terms of growth and expansion of our Trust.• Manage the co-ordination of the internal and external audits and the preparation of the statutory accounts for each establishment within our Trust and the preparation of the consolidated accounts for presentation to the Board of Trustees.• Implement appropriate audit and control measures and maintain relationships with auditors and bankers.• Ensure income is maximised and reserves generate interest in line with our Reserves Policy.• Line-manage the Finance Manager to ensure efficient procedures are being followed in terms of Trust accounts and associated reports.• Ensure all statutory returns to the DfE are completed, and deadlines met, e.g. Accounts return, self-assessment, Gender Pay Gap.• Ensure the risk registers are up to date, reflect the current position and risks are reported to the Trustees and all other relevant parties.• Lead the development and implementation of a Trust wide Digital Strategy to enhance educational delivery and operational efficiency.• Provide strategic oversight of ICT infrastructure, procurement, and high-value contracts to ensure "best value" and seamless connectivity.• Oversee the Trust's cyber security posture, data protection compliance (UK GDPR), and disaster recovery protocols to mitigate institutional risk.
Duties and Responsibilities: Estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the School Condition Allowance is allocated according to Trust priorities.• All funding is accounted for to the DfE, and no funding is reclaimed.• Line manage the Operations Manager.• Work with the DfE and relevant schools to ensure the RAAC school rebuilding programme is successful.• Lead the development and delivery of a Trust wide Sustainability Strategy and Carbon Reduction Plan to meet national "net-zero" targets and environmental standards.• Oversee estates management and procurement to improve energy efficiency, reduce waste, and ensure sustainable "best value" across all Trust capital projects.

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Job Description *continued*

Duties and Responsibilities: Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorise Payroll, ensuring all deadlines are met and pay is processed in line with conditions and employment law. • Work alongside the HR Director to plan and manage the professional development, appraisal and training for the support staff within our Trust's central team. • Ensure that academy-based finance staff receive timely, succinct and clear guidance to ensure that they are effective and efficient in the discharge of their duties. • Participate in the performance management process both as an individual and a line manager.
Duties and Responsibilities: Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend, participate and present in Trust Board and Committee meetings. • Liaise regularly with the Board of Trustees, attending meetings of the Board and committees as required and ensuring prompt and effective responses to issues emerging from meetings.
Duties and Responsibilities: Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the promotion of our Trust to different audiences and raise the profile within the Local Authority (LA) and local community. • Initiate collaborative working with other schools and LA departments. • Proactively seek opportunities to extend the reach of our Trust through local partnership work, i.e. Schools Forum representation.
Duties and Responsibilities: Ethics and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work with full regard for the 7 Principles of Public Life as defined in The Nolan Principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selflessness - Integrity - Objectivity - Accountability - Openness - Honesty - Leadership • To uphold the values of our Trust; to act as a role model for others within our Trust, and to always act in the best interests of our Trust. • To uphold a commitment to equality and diversity.
Duties and Responsibilities: Other Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other reasonable tasks commensurate with the role to include before, during and after-school duties as a member of the Executive Team to ensure the smooth running of our Trust. • Individuals have a responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people they are responsible for or come into contact with. • Ensure all tasks are carried out with due regard to Health and Safety.

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Job Description *continued*

General:

- Comply with policies and procedures relating to child protection, equal opportunities, health, safety, security, confidentiality and data protection, and report concerns to an appropriate person.
- Be aware of and support differences, and ensure all pupils have equal access to opportunities to learn and develop.
- Contribute to the overall ethos/work/aims of the schools.
- Establish constructive relationships and communicate with other agencies/professionals, in liaison with the CEO, to support the achievement and progress of pupils.
- To participate in the performance and development review process, taking personal responsibility for the identification of learning, development and training opportunities in discussion with the line manager.
- To comply with individual responsibilities, in accordance with the role, for health and safety in the workplace.
- Ensure that all duties and services provided are in accordance with our Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Adhere to UK GDPR requirements to safeguard data held across the Trust.
- The Trust and Local Governing Committees are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.
- EFSPT is committed to Trauma Perceptive Practice: the Essex approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional well-being. Being trauma-perceptive means that through our values, policies, and practice, we can effectively support the children, families, and communities in our Trust, creating spaces of belonging and safety that enable everyone to flourish, become resilient, and learn.
- The duties above are neither exclusive nor exhaustive, and the postholder may be required by the CEO to carry out appropriate duties within the context of the job, skills and grade.



Person Specification

Attribute	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Qualifications & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance degree, CCAB qualification (or equivalent). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management qualification or relevant professional accreditation in Operations or Estates Management.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of advanced Excel skills (e.g., pivot tables, macros). • Evidence of significant and relevant continuous professional development (CPD). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Workspace knowledge
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive experience in senior financial leadership within a school or Academy Trust. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience leading due diligence for MAT growth or expansion.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven track record of managing large, complex budgets and consolidated accounts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience managing large-scale estate projects (e.g., RAAC rebuilding programmes) or School Condition Allowance.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in strategic business planning and managing MAT-wide change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in commercial business or external fundraising/ bid writing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in line managing multi-disciplinary teams (Finance, Operations, Technology). 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful experience in risk management and internal/ external audit coordination. 	
Skills & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outstanding communication skills; able to influence and advise at CEO, Chair, and Board level. • Knowledge of educational finance software packages 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced financial planning and analytical skills to ensure long-term sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to interrogate school performance data alongside financial data.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to negotiate, manage, and monitor high-value contracts and tenders to achieve "best value". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic oversight of ICT infrastructure and services.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic oversight of HR and payroll administration. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work under pressure and manage conflicting priorities across multiple sites. 	

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Person Specification *continued*

Attribute	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive knowledge of Academy financial rules (SORP, VAT, Academy Trust Handbook). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of long-term educational trends and government policy implications.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of statutory guidance from the DfE and Charity Commission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of Local Authority departments and local educational partnerships.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of Health and Safety legislation and estates compliance. 	
Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to the 7 Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles): Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to act as a role model for others within the Trust.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proactive and resilient approach to leadership. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of humour and the ability to work flexibly within a central team. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation to work within an educational setting and a commitment to safeguarding children. • Driving licence and access to a car for travel between Trust sites. 	



Application

We encourage a visit to the Trust, and we are holding two open sessions on **Wednesday, 25 March at 9:30 am and 1 pm**. If you are unable to attend on this date, Karen Salmons will also be available over the Easter break from 30 March to 10 April 2026.

Please call 02083254547 and ask for Tammy Eaton or Jenny Gevertz to book a slot.

- **Advert Date:** 20 March 2026
- **Closing Date:** 23 April 2026, midnight
- **Interview Dates:** 5 & 6 May 2026

Those candidates who successfully proceed to the second day will be advised of a presentation theme the evening of the first day.

- This appointment is being supported by **ASCL's Leadership Appointment Service**. You will be contacted by **sancha.Maggs@ascl.org.uk** to discuss your application

Our Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.



EPPING FOREST SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP TRUST

CEO: Graham Clifford, email: gclifford@efspt.org | CFO: Karen Salmons, email: ksalmons@efspt.org

The Alderton Infant School
Alderton Hall Lane
Loughton IG10 3HE

www.efspt.org