

St Helen's School

St Helen's School

Financial Controller – Job Description



JOB DESCRIPTION

Financial Controller

Job Purpose

The Financial Controller plays a pivotal role in the financial leadership of the school, ensuring robust financial management, compliance, and reporting. Working closely with the Business Director and Senior Leadership Team, the postholder will oversee management accounting, accounts payable, statutory reporting, audit, and budgeting, while providing high-quality financial insight and business partnering across the school.

Key Responsibilities

Financial Management & Reporting

- Lead the preparation of monthly management accounts with clear, insightful commentary tailored to a school environment.
- Monitor income streams including fee income, bursaries, and other revenue sources.
- Ensure accurate reporting of expenditure across academic and support departments.
- Support in the delivery of financial reports to Governors.

Accounts Payable Oversight

- Oversee the accounts' payable function, ensuring timely processing of supplier invoices, including those relating to estates, catering, and educational resources.
- Maintain strong supplier relationships and ensure value for money.
- Ensure adherence to internal financial controls and approval processes.

Statutory Reporting & Compliance

- Prepare annual statutory financial statements in accordance with the Charities SORP and UK accounting standards.
- Ensure compliance with relevant regulations including charity law, HMRC requirements, and independent school reporting obligations.
- Support any regulatory returns required for the education sector.

Audit Leadership

- Lead the annual external audit process, liaising with auditors and coordinating internal preparation.
- Ensure all audit schedules and supporting documentation are accurate and delivered on time.
- Address audit findings and continuously improve internal controls.

Budgeting & Forecasting

- Lead the annual budgeting process in collaboration with the Finance team and department heads.
- Support departments in preparing and managing their budgets.
- Produce regular forecasts, including pupil number sensitivity and scenario planning.
- Provide detailed variance analysis and financial insights.



Financial Analysis

- Deliver high-quality financial analysis to support strategic decision-making, including capital projects and staffing models.
- Develop financial models to support long-term planning.
- Identify efficiencies and cost-saving opportunities while maintaining educational standards.

Finance Business Partnering

- Act as a trusted financial advisor to academic and operational leaders.
- Support non-financial colleagues in understanding budgets and financial performance.
- Promote financial awareness and accountability across the school.

Team Leadership

- Manage and develop the finance team, including accounts payable staff.
- Foster a collaborative, professional, and service-oriented finance function.
- Ensure continuous professional development within the team.

Person Specification

Qualifications

- Fully qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, or CIMA).

Experience

- Significant experience in a senior finance role, ideally within an independent school or charitable organisation.
- Strong experience in management accounting, statutory reporting, and audit.
- Experience of working with fee-based income structures is highly desirable.

Skills & Competencies

- Strong knowledge of Charities SORP and UK financial reporting standards.
- Excellent analytical and financial modelling skills.
- Ability to communicate complex financial matters clearly to non-finance stakeholders.
- High attention to detail and strong organisational skills.
- Advanced Excel skills and experience with finance systems.

Personal Attributes

- Commitment to the values and ethos of an independent girls' school.
- Professional integrity and discretion.
- Proactive, flexible, and able to manage competing priorities.
- Strong interpersonal skills and a collaborative approach.

Key Relationships

- Head and Senior Leadership Team
- Governors (Finance/Estates Committees)
- Department Heads
- External Auditors and Advisors
- Parents (in relation to fee queries, where required)

