Job Description

Job Title:	Director of Finance & Chief Financial Officer	**Reports to:**	Chief Executive Officer
Accountable to:	Trust Board	**Remuneration:**	£90,000 to £114,225 per annum, depending on experience, skills and knowledge pending 3.3% pay award.
Base:	Remote Working Regular travel required to London and the South West	**Working Hours:**	Full time, all year round

Principle Purpose of the Role

The Director of Finance is the Trust's Chief Financial Officer and Executive Lead for Governance, holding strategic accountability for financial sustainability, governance effectiveness, and regulatory assurance.

The postholder provides strategic direction, robust financial management and executive leadership, ensuring high-quality financial and governance assurance across the Trust, including oversight of governance effectiveness, statutory compliance, risk management, and board assurance.

Strategic Finance and Governance Leadership

- Act as the Trust's Chief Financial Officer, providing executive leadership for financial sustainability, stewardship, and long-term strategic planning across the Trust.
- Serve as the Trust's Executive Director for Governance, holding strategic accountability for governance effectiveness, statutory compliance, risk assurance, and board confidence.
- Work in close partnership with the Chief Executive Officer, Chair of Trustees and Members to ensure that finance and governance arrangements collectively support the Trust's vision, strategy, and educational outcomes.
- Contribute as a senior member of the Executive Leadership Team, ensuring that financial and governance considerations are fully integrated into Trust-wide decision-making.

Governance Leadership, Compliance and Assurance

- Hold executive accountability for the Trust's governance framework, ensuring the effective operation of the Board of Trustees, Committees and Local Governing Bodies.
- Ensure the Trust meets all statutory and regulatory responsibilities in relation to governance, including compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook, Companies Act 2006, Charity Commission expectations and other relevant regulations.
- Provide executive oversight of governance risk management and assurance processes, ensuring that the Board receives accurate, timely and well-evidenced assurance.

- Act as the senior executive sponsor for continuous improvement in governance practice, maturity, and effectiveness across the Trust.
- Ensure that governance arrangements support effective challenge, transparency, accountability and high-quality decision-making at all levels.

Board and Committee Leadership and Support

- Support the Board of Trustees and Members in fulfilling their statutory and fiduciary responsibilities through high-quality financial and governance assurance.
- Ensure that Board and Committee structures, terms of reference and reporting cycles are fit for purpose, regularly reviewed and aligned to best practice.
- Oversee the quality and integration of financial, governance and risk reporting to the Board and relevant Committees.
- Represent the executive team in dealings with auditors, regulators and external agencies on matters relating to finance and governance.

Line Management and Executive Oversight of Governance

- Provide direct line management, leadership, and performance management of the Head of Governance, setting clear strategic priorities, objectives, and expectations.
- Ensure effective partnership between finance and governance functions, with clear accountability and respectful professional challenge.
- Oversee the capacity, capability and effectiveness of the wider finance and governance workforce through senior leadership and delegation.
- Support the professional development and succession planning of senior staff within finance and governance functions.

Financial Strategy, Controls and Value for Money

- Provide executive oversight of the Trust's capital strategy, estates-related funding and long-term financial resilience, ensuring resources and investments are aligned with educational priorities and sustainable growth.
- Lead the development and delivery of the Trust's long-term financial strategy, ensuring sustainability, resilience, and value for money.
- Maintain robust systems of internal control, financial management and audit, providing assurance to the Board and regulators.
- Ensure the Trust's financial policies, procedures and reporting meet statutory, regulatory, and best-practice requirements.
- Oversee budget setting, forecasting, monitoring, and financial risk management across the Trust.

These responsibilities are delivered through effective leadership of a senior finance team and appropriate delegation of operational financial management.

Risk Management and Audit

- Hold executive accountability for the Trust's risk management framework, ensuring financial and non-financial risks (including governance risks) are identified, assessed, and mitigated.
- Oversee internal and external audit arrangements, ensuring timely completion of audit plans and effective follow-up of recommendations.
- Ensure the Audit and Risk Committee receives comprehensive, integrated assurance to support effective scrutiny and challenge.

Stakeholder and External Engagement

- Act as a senior representative of the Trust in dealings with auditors, regulators, lenders, and professional bodies in relation to finance and governance.
- Build strong, trust-based relationships with Trustees, Members, senior leaders, Headteachers and central teams to promote effective governance and financial stewardship.
- Support a culture of openness, accountability, and continuous improvement across the Trust.

Professional Standards, Ethics and Continuous Improvement

- Model the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and ethical leadership, in line with the Nolan Principles of Public Life.
- Ensure that finance and governance practices reflect equality, inclusion, and fairness in decision-making and resource allocation.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of financial regulation, governance standards, and sector best practice, applying this insight to strengthen Trust systems and leadership.

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

The Director of Finance is committed to advancing diversity, inclusion and belonging across the Trust and recognises the critical role that executive leadership plays in promoting fairness, equity and inclusion for children, young people, staff and communities. As a member of the Executive Leadership Team, the postholder ensures that financial and governance decision-making actively supports inclusive practice, addresses disadvantage and contributes to improved outcomes for all pupils.

The postholder will provide executive oversight to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are embedded within governance arrangements, policy frameworks, risk management and assurance processes, in line with statutory responsibilities and Trust values. The Director of Finance will model inclusive leadership behaviours, champion a culture of respect and belonging, and ensure that financial and governance systems do not create barriers to participation, opportunity or achievement for any group within the Trust community.

Professional Development

- Work collaboratively with the Head of Professional Development to promote a culture of continuous growth among Trustees, Local Governors, and governance professionals. Set high expectations for governance capability and ensure that development priorities align with statutory requirements, good governance practice, and the Trust's strategic aims.
- Partner with the central Professional Development team to create and embed high-impact development pathways that strengthen the effectiveness of Trust Boards, Local Governing Bodies, and clerking teams. Ensure programmes build leadership capacity, enhance decision-making, and support succession planning within governance structures.
- Stay informed of emerging governance research, regulatory changes, national policy updates, and best practice from the wider education and corporate governance sectors. Use this knowledge to provide authoritative advice to senior leaders and Trustees, and to shape the evolution of governance practice across the Trust.
- Contribute to the effective implementation of the Trust's Performance Development and Improving Performance frameworks by ensuring robust governance self-evaluation, skills audits, and development planning. Promote accountability, high standards and continual improvement across all governance layers.

Personal Development and Performance

- The postholder will participate in a continuous performance development process, with regular check-ins throughout the year. These conversations will focus on progress, support needs, wellbeing, and professional growth.
- The postholder will work with their line manager to agree a dynamic development plan, outlining objectives, capability-building priorities, and professional development needs. This plan will be reviewed and updated regularly, ensuring it remains relevant and aligned with Trust priorities and the evolving requirements of the role.
- The Trust will support the postholder by identifying, agreeing, and enabling appropriate development opportunities. This includes ensuring the postholder has access to the professional learning, resources, and coaching required to achieve their objectives and uphold the standards expected of the role.
- The process emphasises reflective practice, professional dialogue, and continuous improvement, ensuring the postholder is supported to thrive in their role and contribute effectively to the Trust's governance excellence.

Generic Responsibilities

- Engage appropriately with Trust-wide executive, governance and strategic forums, contributing professional expertise, leadership judgement, and constructive challenge in support of effective decision-making and organisational assurance.
- Act at all times as a senior ambassador for the Trust, modelling the highest standards of professional conduct, ethical leadership, and values-led behaviour in all internal and external relationships.

- Maintain effective professional relationships with key internal and external stakeholders, ensuring confidence in the Trust's leadership, governance, and financial stewardship.
- Hold executive accountability for ensuring that information governance, data protection and information security obligations are embedded within delegated systems and leadership arrangements, in line with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements.
- Provide executive sponsorship and oversight of internal and external audit processes, ensuring openness, cooperation, and timely implementation of agreed recommendations.
- Promote a strong culture of safeguarding, health, safety and wellbeing, ensuring appropriate systems, policies and executive oversight are in place to meet statutory responsibilities.
- Ensure compliance with Trust policies, procedures, and governance frameworks, exercising executive discretion and judgement appropriate to the role.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and exercise appropriate professional judgement in relation to sensitive Trust, staff, and stakeholder information, consistent with executive responsibilities and data protection requirements.
- Champion continuous improvement in organisational quality, assurance, and risk management, including oversight of relevant quality and information security management systems.
- Escalate concerns regarding malpractice, risk, or non-compliance promptly and appropriately, in line with executive accountability and the Trust's governance arrangements.
- Undertake such other responsibilities as may be reasonably required, commensurate with the seniority, scope, and accountabilities of an Executive Director, as determined by the Chief Executive.

This role is subject to the Trust's Code of Conduct and executive leadership expectations.

Person Specification

Education and Training			
Specification	**Essential (E) / Desirable (D)**	**Assess at application**	**Assess at interview**
Degree-level qualification or equivalent professional experience	E	X	
CCAB-recognised accountancy qualification (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent)	E	X	
Evidence of sustained and relevant continuing professional development at senior executive level	E	X	X
Postgraduate qualification (e.g. MBA, MSc, Level 7 equivalent or similar)	D	X	
Formal executive leadership or governance qualification	D	X	

Experience and Knowledge			
Specification	**Essential (E) / Desirable (D)**	**Assess at application**	**Assess at interview**
Significant experience operating at Executive Director C-suite level, with accountability for organisational financial strategy, sustainability, and assurance	E	X	X
Proven experience of providing high-quality assurance and advice to a Board, including Trustees, Non-Executive Directors, or Members.	E	X	X
Demonstrable experience of acting as, or equivalent to, an Executive Lead for Governance, including oversight of governance frameworks, statutory compliance, and board effectiveness.	E	X	X
Strong understanding of statutory, regulatory, and fiduciary responsibilities within a regulated environment (e.g. education, public sector, charity, or complex corporate setting)	E	X	X
Proven experience of leading organisation-wide financial strategy, long-term planning, value for money and resource optimisation	E	X	X
Experience of overseeing audit, risk management, and internal control frameworks, with direct engagement with external auditors and regulators.	E	X	X
Experience of leading and line-managing senior professional leaders, including successfully developing high-performing executive teams.	E	X	X
Strong knowledge of organisational risk management, including financial and non-financial (governance, compliance, reputational) risk	E		X
Experience of working effectively with Chairs, Chief Executives, and senior stakeholders in complex organisational environments	E	X	X
Executive-level experience within the education sector, public sector, or a multi-entity organisation	D	X	

Experience supporting Members / shareholders as well as a Board	D		X
Exposure to company secretarial, governance or board-effectiveness functions at senior level	D		X
Skills			
Specification	**Essential (E) / Desirable (D)**	**Assess at application**	**Assess at interview**
Strategic thinker with the ability to integrate finance, governance, and organisational priorities into clear, sound executive advice	E		X
Demonstrated ability to exercise professional judgement, discretion, and independence at Board level	E		X
Highly developed communication and influencing skills, with the ability to engage and command confidence across Boards, senior leaders, regulators, and professional advisers	E		X
Strong people-leadership capability, including coaching, mentoring and performance management of senior professionals	E		X
Ability to balance assurance, challenge, and support in a manner appropriate to an Executive Director role	E		X
Strong organisational awareness, political sensitivity, and an ability to navigate complexity and ambiguity	E		X
Ability to lead change, improvement and increased maturity in both finance and governance practice	E		X
Professional and Personal Attributes			
Specification	**Essential (E) / Desirable (D)**	**Assess at application**	**Assess at interview**
High standards of integrity, probity, and ethical leadership, with a clear commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the responsibilities of operating in a public-facing, values-driven education sector	E		X
A demonstrable commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people, with the ability to articulate how high-quality finance and governance enable educational excellence, equity, and inclusion	E		X
Strong alignment with the Trust's educational vision and values, consistently placing the best interests of pupils at the centre of executive-level decision-making	E		X
A calm, credible and authoritative presence, exercising sound judgement, discretion and emotional intelligence in complex, high-accountability environments	E		X
Resilient, adaptable, and effective in fast-paced environments, with a reflective and values-led approach to continuous professional and organisational improvement.	E		X

Collaborative and collegiate, demonstrating a strong commitment to collective leadership and effective partnership with Trustees, Members, and senior leaders	E	X	X
A strong understanding of safeguarding, wellbeing and inclusion, and a commitment to ensuring financial and governance decisions actively support safe, inclusive learning environments and address disadvantage	E	X	X