



Financial Controller

The Good Shepherd Trust



Candidate Information Pack
April 2026



Financial Controller

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the post of **Financial Controller** at the Good Shepherd Trust. The Good Shepherd Trust is a multi-academy trust consisting of 24 schools in the Diocese of Guildford, across Surrey and Hampshire.

We are seeking a highly organised and proactive Financial Controller to provide senior professional leadership within the Finance Team and robust financial oversight across our academies. The postholder will play a key role in ensuring strong financial governance, accurate management reporting and effective financial control, supporting decision-making at both academy and Trust Board level. You will lead on the resolution of complex financial issues, helping to secure sustainable and effective use of resources to achieve the best outcomes for our pupils. If you are a proactive finance professional with a positive and solutions-focused approach, we would be delighted to receive your application.

At The Good Shepherd Trust, our vision is clear: **flourishing together**, to build communities where all children and adults flourish. High-quality financial stewardship is central to achieving this. By providing timely, accurate and insightful financial information, our finance team enables school leaders and Trustees to make well-informed decisions that support strong outcomes for pupils and sustainable, resilient schools. We believe that high expectations, underpinned by robust financial management and continuous professional development, raise aspirations across our Trust. Working closely with Headteachers and School Business Managers, this role plays a key part in supporting bespoke, ambitious provision in each school and ensuring resources are used effectively to enhance learning, opportunity and life chances

We strive to build strong and effective partnerships with parents and the local and wider community because the engagement of parents/carers is vital to children's educational achievements. The Trust values that children's personal development grows through membership of a community and enables them to become contributing citizens.

Why join the GST Finance Team?

- A growing MAT with a clear finance strategy
- Genuine influence over systems and processes
- Supportive central team culture
- Opportunity to shape best practice across multiple schools

We are working hard to become a more diverse organisation – which is key to our commitment “to be better, together”. We welcome applications from everyone committed to this ethos and would particularly welcome applications from black and minority ethnic candidates, who are currently under-represented in the Group as a whole. We always appoint on merit.

We are very excited about the opportunities this role will create to drive our Trust forward. We look forward to hearing from you and receiving your application.

Paul Kennedy
Chief Executive Officer



Job Title: Financial Controller

Location: Central Trust Office, Guildford. This is an office based role, with travel to schools within the Trust as needed.

Grade / Salary: GST Grade K (£60,342 - £67,120 FTE) (6 scale points within banding for progression)

Hours / Working Pattern: 36 hours, All Year Round

Contract Type: Permanent

Reporting to: Chief Finance & Operating Officer (CFOO)

Responsible for: Management Accountant x 3 & Finance Operations Team Leader x 1

The Financial Controller is a pivotal leadership position, responsible for the financial control, compliance, and stewardship of the Trust's finances. The role ensures that all statutory and regulatory requirements are met; that cash and banking arrangements are robust; and that financial systems, processes, and controls operate effectively across the Good Shepherd Trust (GST).

1. Purpose of the Role

- Responsible for overseeing the preparation and accuracy of financial records and statements that are produced by the Management Accountants, presenting the monthly accounts to Trustees, Heads, and other stakeholders.
- Lead the finance team to enable them to work smarter instead of harder by developing the technology and reporting platforms.
- Ensure compliance with accounting standards, including tasks such as auditing, budgeting, tax returns, and financial reporting.

2. Key Responsibilities

Team Leadership & Process Management

- Line manage central finance staff responsible for transactional finance and reporting, including conducting annual reviews
- Providing mentorship, coaching, and performance management to ensure high performance and professional development.
- Set clear standards, deadlines, and quality expectations
- Provide a consistent and approachable point of contact for stakeholders

Financial Control & Assurance

- Maintain and operate a robust framework of financial controls and processes across the Trust
- Lead on internal control documentation, financial procedures, and segregation of duties
- Maintain oversight of risk relating to financial processes and controls

Financial Processes

- Oversee and collate the preparation of monthly management accounts for review by the CFOO, providing commentary for Trustees and Heads
- Provide accurate reports to budget holders in a timely manner, and to work with budget holders to explain actuals and question over/underspends
- Ensure compliance with accounting principles, standards, regulations, and internal controls within both the finance team and wider Trust
- Work with the CFOO to design, develop, improve and test internal financial management reports, dashboards and business intelligence queries to better inform the Trustees
- Assist the preparation of the annual budget for the Trust and Academy schools
- Oversight of monthly payroll and associated reports

Statutory & External Reporting



- Act as the primary liaison for the external auditors
- Manage audit timetables, deliverables, and audit queries
- Implement all audit review findings into the Trust's controls and procedures
- Support internal audit activity and monitor implementation of recommendations
- Ensure timely completion of: Annual accounts return; Budget forecast return (BFR); Any other DfE statutory returns

VAT return

- Authorise submission of monthly VAT return, including the partial exemption calculation
- Act as the Trust's technical lead on VAT and tax matters, escalating complex issues where required

Cash & Banking

- Oversee cashflow forecasting and monitoring, ensuring effective cash planning
- Maintain strong controls over payment authorisation and banking access
- Review and approve high-value or sensitive transactions in line with delegated authorities

Systems & Data

- Lead system improvements, upgrades, and automation of finance processes
- Control user access, permissions, and system changes
- Own the integrity, accuracy, and confidentiality of financial data and information

Human Resources & Payroll

- Work with the Senior Leadership Team and the Head of HR to review staffing structures, restructures and workforce planning, providing financial advice and assurance as required

3. Safeguarding and Child Protection

The Good Shepherd Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are expected to:

- Share this commitment
- Adhere to Trust and school safeguarding policies
- Undertake appropriate safeguarding training
- Act in accordance with statutory guidance, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education*

4. Compliance, Policies and Professional Conduct

The postholder will:

- Work in accordance with Trust policies, procedures and codes of conduct
- Comply with GDPR and data protection requirements
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Demonstrate professional behaviour consistent with Trust values

5. Health & Safety

Take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others and comply with Trust health and safety policies and procedures.

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

GST is committed to equality of opportunity and to eliminating discrimination. The postholder is expected to promote and support this commitment in all aspects of their work.

7. Flexibility

This job description is not exhaustive. The duties and responsibilities may be reviewed and amended in consultation with the postholder to meet the changing needs of the Trust.

Person Specification (D – Desirable, E – Essential)

Qualifications / Experience

- Fully Qualified CCAB to an advanced level e.g., ACA, ACCA, CIPFA or CIMA (E)
- Evidence of ongoing professional development (E)
- Educated to degree level in a finance/business related discipline (D)
- Experience of working in the education sector (D)

Knowledge & Skills

- Strong technical accounting and financial control background (E)
- Works accurately possessing great attention to detail (E)
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to communicate financial and contractual information to both technical and non-technical audiences (E)
- Experience of line-managing and mentoring finance staff, building team capability and resilience (E)
- Ability to manage a complex set of priorities and tasks accordingly (E)
- Experience in a senior finance leadership role (E)
- High level organisational skills, with the ability to respond appropriately to conflicting demands and expectations (E)
- Able to adapt to new software systems and requirements (E)
- Advanced knowledge of Excel, Xero for Education (XFE) and IMP Planner (D)

Personal Attributes

- Able to seek out information, advice and guidance when required (E)
- High-level interpersonal skills, sense of humour, and ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders (E)
- Able to operate to the highest standards of personal/professional conduct and integrity (E)
- Excellent problem-solving skills – ability to work through complex scenarios and provide a range of solutions (E)
- The ability to remain calm under pressure and meet deadlines (E)
- A willingness, where necessary, to support/coach colleagues (E)
- Flexible in terms of working hours and duties (E)
- A commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people (E)

Additional Information

Pre-employment checks: Appointment is subject to satisfactory references, DBS clearance and other relevant checks.

Probation: In line with Trust policy.

Closing date: Sunday 26th April 2026

Interview date: Friday 1st May 2026

Start date: ASAP



About The Good Shepherd Trust

The Good Shepherd Trust is a multi-academy Trust within the Diocese of Guildford. We currently have 24 schools, 23 in the primary phases and 1 secondary school. The Trust has implemented school hubs for the purpose of collaboration to improve outcomes for children and is seeking to further streamline and centralise services in order to better support all the schools within the Trust.

Each Trust school is unique. The Trust is committed to celebrating the local context of each school and capitalising upon their strengths to the benefit of the wider Trust. The quality and commitment of our people is at the heart of all we achieve. The Trust values them, develops them, and is an employer of choice.

Educationally our consolidated outcomes (for schools that meet the 3-year criteria for inclusion) across the Trust are in line with national average for MATs and within the Trust community are demonstrated in outstanding, good and improving schools.

The Trustees are ultimately accountable for the performance of the Trust and have a key role in setting the strategic direction and managing risk. The Trustees delegate some responsibilities to local committees (LC's).

The Trust has an active central team, based in Guildford, who provide support for school improvement and educational outcomes, safeguarding, governance, admissions, human resource management, finance and much more.

There are exciting developments in the pipeline to further develop the central function, which will bring benefit to all our schools.

We are guided by our principles and it is these, along with our vision and values that create the culture of how we work together:

Our core GST Values:

- **Kindness:** The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate towards others. It involves showing compassion and empathy, often through small acts that make a big difference.
- **Integrity:** The practice of being honest and having strong moral principles. It means doing the right thing even when no one is watching and maintaining consistency between our words and actions.
- **Resilience:** The ability to recover quickly from difficulties and adapt to challenging situations. It involves maintaining strength and positivity in the face of adversity and rebounding from setbacks.

How to Apply:

Please complete your application form on MyNewTerm