

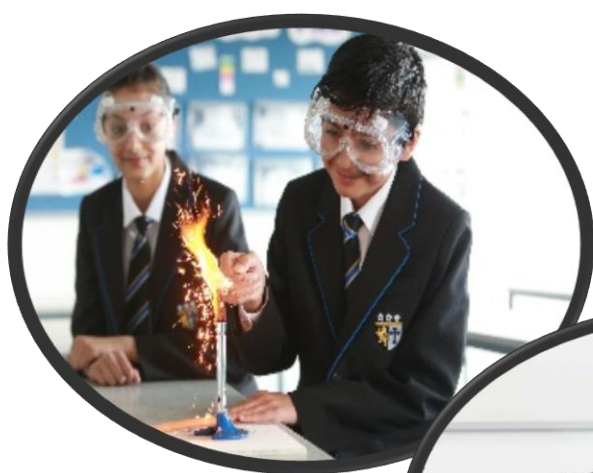


ASPIRE
LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP

EXCELLENCE THROUGH COLLABORATION

Head of Finance

Applicant Information Pack





July 2024

Dear Applicant,

Head of Finance

Thank you for your interest in the post of Head of Finance with Aspire Learning Partnership. This is a very important appointment for us, especially given we are in our infancy as a multi-academy trust and now starting to shape our central finance team.

Aspire Learning Partnership initially comprises of two large secondary schools, with over 3000 students, and with ambitious growth plans to include primary schools as well as secondary. The Trust has been a long time in the making and has been established with real thought given to the purpose, the vision, values and ethos, information about which is included in this pack. It grew out of one school supporting another, and also a desire to establish something a bit different for the city. We very much aim to have a mutually supportive culture, one where we all learn from each other, and which also allows schools to retain their individuality and to reflect their particular communities - and I am proud to say that there is already demonstrable success!

We appointed a Chief Financial Officer shortly after our formation last year, and have established policy and procedures very rapidly, but also successfully. We now seek a suitably qualified and committed individual to support the CFO in all financial matters, enabling him to take on more of the wider aspects of his role. We have an excellent finance team which the successful candidate will oversee, with personnel from both schools coming together very effectively.

I hope the information provided in this information pack is useful. Visits and informal discussions about the requirements of the role are also welcomed and, should you wish to do so, please contact our CFO, Tehzeeb Sattar, on tsattar@aspirelp.uk

I do hope we have sparked your interest in this post and look forward to receiving and reading your application by the closing date, Wednesday 31 July 2024. Applications can be received via either the eteach or TES platforms, links for which are on the trust website, www.aspirelp.uk

Yours sincerely,

Julie Robinson
CEO

Trust Information

Welcome to our Trust, a relatively new partnership of schools in Leicester forming in June 2023. The name, Aspire Learning Partnership, came after extensive discussion, and we believe it perfectly sums up what we are about, being specifically chosen to reflect our core values.

'ASPIRE to be the best you can be' is the core message for our Trust, and for everyone involved with it in any way. Our aim is for all to have high aspirations, to want to succeed and constantly improve, and then to do so!

LEARNING is at the heart of all we do, transforming individual lives and the success of our communities. Our schools support all children to attain the highest standards possible in the academic, but also much more. Our schools provide rich opportunities for children to be successful and prepare them for their next steps. Our biggest resource is the people working in our schools. They are highly valued for the contribution each one makes and will be supported to continue to learn and develop in their role.

We believe that **PARTNERSHIP** working is the key to significant and sustained change and leads to the highest levels of achievement and for all and excellence in all aspects of our work. Each school serves a unique community and will retain its individuality whilst working collaboratively, supporting, and challenging others to constantly improve. Schools and the Trust are led with integrity and mutual respect for all.

Although in our infancy, we have been working behind the scenes on the Trust for several years and have taken the time to make sure it is set up well. We have recruited an excellent Board of Trustees, all with the 'right' ethos, and who will ensure the Trust remains committed to its values.

We are starting small, with two secondary schools – although that is already over 3000 students! Our ambition is to be cross-phase, working with those across the primary, secondary, and possibly tertiary sector too. For now, the two secondary schools at the start of this journey are:

Soar Valley College - An 11-16 Ofsted rated Outstanding school, with 1560 students on roll and excellent outcomes at Key Stage 4, Soar Valley prides itself on its ethos of 'effort is everything'.

www.soarvalley.leicester.sch.uk

The City of Leicester College – an 11-18 school, currently Requires Improvement in Ofsted terms, but with rapid improvement over the last two to three years, and now very impressive Progress 8 figures at Key Stage 4 over the last two years, and excellent results post-16 too.

www.cityleicester.co.uk

More information is available on our Trust website www.aspirelp.uk

Job Description

Head of Finance

Job Title	Head of Finance	Department:	Central Finance Team
Salary	LGS Grade 12 Range: £52,775 - £56,555	Report to:	Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Weeks per year:	52 weeks (34 days annual leave, rising to 39 after 5 years, including Bank Holidays)	Hours per week:	37 hours per week

Safer recruitment statement:

Aspire Learning Partnership shares a committed to safeguarding and promotes the welfare of children and young people. Our commitment is underpinned by robust processes and procedures that seek to maximise opportunity, minimise risk and continuously promote a culture that embraces the ethos of safeguarding amongst our workforce. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and subject to a DBS check for the successful applicant.

Overall purpose of the role:

As the Head of Finance, the post holder will play a significant role in ensuring that the finance and audit requirements outlined within the Academies Trust Handbook (ATH), Master and Supplemental Funding Agreements, Accounts Direction, Statement of Recommended Practices (SORP) of the Charities Commission and the Trust financial policies and Scheme of Delegation are fully met, and maintaining financial probity across the Trust.

The post holder will be responsible for the consolidation of the Trust accounts, provide accurate, timely and reliable financial information in the form of suitably detailed reports for review by the CFO and prepare all statutory financial returns for review of the CFO and subsequent submittal to the ESFA.

This is a key role for the schools within the academy trust as it is a key point of contact and support for advice on financial and management accounts, budgets, payroll and other finance related matters. The post holder will support school leadership teams and finance staff within the Trust's schools, and the Chief Financial Officer.

All staff at Aspire Learning Partnership are required to:

1. Uphold and promote the Trust's vision and aims.
2. Support and contribute to the achievement of our students academically and pastorally.
3. Support and contribute to the school's responsibility for safeguarding students.
4. Undertake professional training to enhance personal development and job performance.
5. Comply with all Trust policies and procedures including safeguarding, child protection, health, safety and security, confidentiality, and data protection including GDPR.
6. Maintain high professional standards of attendance, punctuality, appearance, conduct and positive relationships with all pupils, parents/carers, colleagues, and trustees and governors, treating everyone with dignity and respect.
7. Share best practice, expertise, and skills with others.

All leadership staff in the Trust are required to:

1. Inspire, challenge and support others to enable them to be the best they can be.
2. Model and drive the Trust's vision, values, and expectations to have a significant impact on students' life chances.
3. Be an outstanding leader and role model for all.
4. Have a proven track record of leadership at senior level.
5. Nurture a culture of professional development.
6. Have the ability to project presence and articulate our vision to all members of the Trust's community.
7. Demonstrate high level inter-personal skills to work successfully with a wide range of audiences.
8. Show a commitment to modelling the highest professional standards.
9. Be committed to equality of opportunity and inclusive education.
10. Have the energy, enthusiasm, personal warmth, and humour to remain resilient and deliver the above.

Principle responsibilities and duties:

It is anticipated that there will be a higher demand for work during school term time with an ongoing need for work in the school holidays. There will be a requirement to attend events such as training and meetings that may take place outside normal working hours. The post holder will be required to travel to and from site and flexibility will be needed to accommodate the demands of the post.

As part of this role the post holder will work closely with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trust.

Principle responsibilities and duties:

1. Provide advice and support to all schools, Trust Executive Team and Trust Board and prepare financial reports (management accounts, budgets and other relevant financial reports) for internal and external stakeholders. Including leading on period close down.
2. Meet regularly with the individual school's leaders, oversee the budgets and financial monitoring procedures and prepare monthly management accounts, including a detailed written overview of the variances.
3. Ensure that correct and efficient processes are in place to ensure that all schools comply with the Trust's finance policy and scheme of delegation.
4. Be proactive in the support of a value for money culture at the schools, identifying areas that require further investigation which can be reported back to the Trust Executive Team and Trust Board.
5. Lead on the banking arrangements for the Trust, including co-ordinating and approval of the central payment function.
6. Liaise with internal and external auditors, taking responsibility for ensuring management actions relevant to the schools have been actioned.
7. Support the Trust Executive Team in the maintenance of the Trust risk register.
8. Prepare long term financial forecasts for the Trust to the Trust Executive Team.
9. Prepare detailed monthly financial reports to the Trust Executive Team to specified deadlines.

10. Responsible for preparation of annual returns to the ESFA.
11. Ensure the Trust is VAT compliant at all levels and returns are correct and in line with HMRC guidance.
12. Be responsible for the Trust payroll at a central level. Ensuring all Pension and NI contributions are accurate across the Trust and responsible for End of Year Certificate (EOYC) and actuarial valuations and deficits in accordance with FRS.
13. Ensuring that staffing costs charged to the schools are accurate and in line with budgets.
14. Manage the Trust's assets and inventory, including the balance sheet.
15. Support schools in all aspects of purchasing and tendering, ensuring process is followed compliantly where necessary.
16. Effectively and supportively manage the work of finance staff.
17. Providing cover for finance staff where required.
18. Support the Trust Executive Team with all funding bids.
19. Keep up to date with ESFA guidance and procedures and attend any relevant courses. If professional, postholder needs to ensure that CPD hours are maintained annually to maintain CCAB status.
20. Support in the financial due diligence of all potential schools wishing to join the Trust and advise Trust Executive Team and Board accordingly in an impartial and independent manner.
21. To attend appropriate internal and external meetings, as directed by the line manager.
22. Responsible for personnel development reviews and a continuous programme of training and development for Trust finance staff including the delivery of in-house training.
23. To deputise for the CFO in their absence.
24. To undertake such other duties as are agreed as being in keeping with the general nature of the job and its grade.

This job description reflects the current requirements of the post. As duties and responsibilities change and develop due to changes in organisational and other circumstances, so the actual duties and responsibilities will vary from the particulars of this job description. Job descriptions will be updated or amended from time to time to reflect such changes.

Last updated	July 2024		
Signed:			
Print Name		Date:	

PERSON SPECIFICATION			
Job title:	Head of Finance	Team:	Central Finance Team
CRITERIA			Essential/ Desirable
Personal qualities & professional dispositions	A passionate belief in the Trust's vision, and educational purpose		E
	A strong commitment to inclusion and overcoming barriers to learning and achievement		E
	A commercially astute, articulate, technically strong, dynamic, insightful, and influential leader with the ability to operate at both strategic and operational levels		E
	Strongly self-motivated and demonstrates personal resilience, persistence, and perseverance		E
	Exceptional levels of personal integrity, discretion, honesty, reliability, and self-awareness – following the seven principles of public life		E
	Strong intellect underpinned by a clear moral compass, instinct, and intuition		E
	Conscientious and diligent work ethic		E
	High standard of personal presentation with an excellent attendance and time-keeping record		E
	Exacting standards, with high levels of attention to detail and accuracy		E
	Creative, constructive, insightful, and innovative approach to problem solving		E
	Commitment to support the Trust's agenda for safeguarding and equality and diversity		E
	Ability to work under pressure, prioritising workloads to meet specified deadlines, in a situation with frequent interruptions		E
	Excellent communication skills (written and verbal)		E
	Strong numeracy, analytical and accounting skills		E
	Ability to work on your own using own initiative and as part of a team with a flexible approach.		E
	Ability to recognize when colleagues need support and take a proactive approach to support their needs		E
	Ability to support in a positive, professional, proactive manner and adopt a 'can do attitude'		E
	The ability to work under pressure and deliver at pace		E
	Commitment to the pursuit of continuous professional development by oneself and other		E
	Qualifications	Qualified accountant (accountancy qualifications from professional bodies such as the ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA or CIPFA (including CIPFA qualification developed in partnership with ISBL))	
If not yet fully qualified, currently undertaking accountancy qualifications as above, and nearing completion		E	
Experience of negotiating contractual agreements		D	
Experience & knowledge	A clear understanding of how finance can support the desired outcomes of the Trust.		E
	At least 3 years of experience working in an equivalent role.		E
	Experience of working in an educational environment		D

	Strong technical knowledge	E
	Experience of using computerised accounting packages for both posting of transactions and the export of reports (experience of using SAGE intact and Access would be a significant advantage)	E
	Competent in using Microsoft office applications with highly developed Excel skills	E
	Experience of writing high quality financial reports	E
	Must have own transport	E
	Must be flexible and able to attend evening meetings when scheduled	E
	Demonstrate a track record of successful financial leadership	E
	Detailed knowledge and understanding of current legislation and the impacts on the education sector (including 6th Form – desirable)	E
Skills & abilities	Ability to win support for new ideas and concepts through effective advocacy skills	E
	A strong understanding of IT and its potential for the organisation	E
	A proven ability to successfully manage all resources effectively	E
	Ability to communicate verbally with, and write reports for, a range of stakeholders, including Trustees and external agencies	E
	Ability to set clear targets, track and manage progress and develop strategies to achieve desired outcomes	E
	The ability to translate a visionary/innovative concept into a practical implementation plan	E
	Ability to work autonomously, prioritise conflicting demands and thrive under pressure	E
	IT skills to manage and report to a range of audiences (External agencies, Trustees, parents, staff, and students)	E
	Excellent skills in stakeholder management and business partnering	E
	Proficient in data analysis	E
	Determination to hold people to account and challenge underperformance	E
	Commitment to fostering an open, fair, and equitable culture which encourages ideas and contributions from others	E
	Ability to manage and resolve conflict, to negotiate and provide appropriate support	E
	The ability to work under pressure and deliver at pace.	E
Confidentiality	To acknowledge the need to maintain confidentiality at all times and to be aware of the national and Trust policies on confidentiality and the management and sharing of information under GDPR	E
Safeguarding	Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people	E
	Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding procedures in schools.	D

Guidance Notes for Applicants

These guidance notes are designed to provide you with information on completing your application form and on our recruitment process and associated policies. You should read all the guidance notes prior to completion of the application form. If you would like any further advice regarding the vacancy or the recruitment process, please contact the Trust directly.

When completing the application form, please refer to the following information:

- **Job Description** – this describes the main duties and requirements for the post and provides an understanding of the role.
- **Person Specification** – this describes the skills, knowledge and experience required for the post
- **Advertisement** – this will give you brief details of the job and key dates of the recruitment process.

Please ensure you complete all parts of the application form. Curriculum Vitae (CVs) are not accepted. The application form will be used to assess your skills, knowledge, and suitability for the job against the criteria on the person specification, so please ensure it is accurate and complete. Late applications will not normally be considered. We reserve the right to contact any of your previous employers/educational establishments to verify the information provided.

Personal Details

Only personal information required for processing your application is requested in the main body of the application form, other personal details are not required until after shortlisting.

Disabled Applicants

As an equal opportunities employer we welcome applications from disabled people. Disabled applicants meeting all the essential criteria will be shortlisted for interview or test.

If you consider yourself disabled, **please indicate this on your application form**. This will be removed by a member of staff not involved in the recruitment process, prior to shortlisting, and will not be given to the recruitment panel at any stage of the process.

Where it is necessary to reduce the shortlist of candidates using desirable criteria, the equality monitoring section will be checked by a member of staff not involved in the recruitment process to ensure if you have declared yourself as disabled, and met all the essential criteria, you have been shortlisted for interview or test.

All candidates called for interview will be asked if they require any adjustments and/or adaptations in order to attend for interview or test, and we will, as far as possible, provide the adjustments and/or adaptations required.

For successful candidates, we will make reasonable adjustments to working conditions or physical environments and will provide aids, adaptations, equipment, and support where possible.

Job Sharing

We regard all posts as potentially open to job share. Pay will be pro rata to that which would apply if you filled the post on a full time basis. If you wish to be considered for job share, please indicate this on the application form. Should you be offered the post your request will then be considered.

Relationships/Canvassing

Canvassing of any employee, governor or trustee in relation to your application will disqualify you, or if discovered after appointment may result in dismissal without notice.

Data Protection & GDPR

The information you provide on your application form and any subsequent information gathered in respect of your application will be held securely, in confidence and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

The information you provide will be used in the following ways:

- To assess your suitability for the post
- To confirm information you have supplied, with third parties, as considered appropriate.
- To promote, monitor, and take action to ensure our recruitment policies, procedures and processes comply with legislation, our Employment Equality Policy and associated strategies and plans.
- To answer requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or related legislation.
- It will only be disclosed where lawful obligation applies.

Applications and related information in respect of successful candidates will be held securely on computerised and/or manual filing systems in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Applications and related information in respect of unsuccessful candidates will be held securely for 12 months in line with our recruitment and retention policy, after which time they will be confidentially destroyed.

Feedback/Complaints

If you are not appointed to the post following interview, you may request feedback from the CEO, or the recruiting manager, as appropriate. You should contact the Trust directly who will arrange to provide helpful and constructive feedback.

If you wish to make a recruitment complaint, you should write to the CEO or recruiting manager as appropriate, at the Trust. If you are unsatisfied with the response, you may then write to the Chair of Trustees, care of the Trust.

Safer Recruitment Applicant Information

The Trust has a commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or young people. We have robust processes and procedures to reduce risk and continuously promote a positive culture of safeguarding amongst our workforce.

The post you are applying for involves working with children and/or young people and you will be subject to The Trust safer recruitment process.

Pre- Employment Vetting

As part of its safer recruitment and selection process, The Trust operates a strict pre-employment vetting procedure. All applicants will be required to undergo the checks outlined below.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Successful applicants seeking to work with children and/or young people will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure; this will include a check against the Protection of Children Act (PoCA) List and List 99. For posts working with vulnerable adults, this will include a check against the Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) List.

We will also retain, with the permission of the applicant, the DBS Disclosure documents of any 'hold' candidates. These documents will be destroyed once a decision (offer and acceptance) has been reached.

Where an applicant is not normally resident in the United Kingdom or has been resident outside the United Kingdom for more than 6 months, an additional police check will be carried out with the normal or most recent country of residence.

Rehabilitation of Offenders & Safeguarding Children and Young People

We are committed to keeping children and young people safe from harm and abuse and to promoting their welfare, and we expect that everyone who comes to work for us will share the same commitment. Fulfilling this responsibility includes making sure that our recruitment process includes a range of measures to identify those who may be unsuitable to work with children and young people.

All roles within the Trust are covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (formerly Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)) check. These posts may also be subject to further DBS re-checks at appropriate intervals. Further information about what the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 means for applicants is provided on the Application Form.

Declaration of Previous Convictions

The **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended** makes certain regulated activity (i.e. work with children and/or young people) exempt from the Act and therefore, requires individuals seeking to work with these groups to be subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure checks amongst others.

This post is classed as exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offender Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended. Therefore, you are required to reveal all convictions, both spent and unspent in your application. Please note that having a criminal record is not an automatic bar from working with us: whether or not your criminal record has a bearing on the post you have applied for will be carefully considered as part of the recruitment process. This may involve a discussion with yourself about the circumstances and background to your offences.

Supporting Documents

We **will not** be able to confirm an offer of employment until we have confirmed the following:

- Identity
- Enhanced DBS
- Right to work in the UK
- Qualifications if applicable
- 2 references
- Satisfactory Medical
- Qualified Teacher Status if applicable
- Confirmation of National Insurance Number
- Overseas reference if applicable

References

All applicants are expected to provide two referees, one of which must be your most recent or current employer. 'Open' references e.g. those addressed "To Whom It May Concern", will **not** be accepted.

If you have just completed full-time education the Trust will seek references from educational establishments. You will need to provide the name of your CEO or other professional as a reference. If you are self-employed you will need to provide details of individuals/businesses that can provide you with a professional reference.

If you have undertaken voluntary work with children and/or young people you should use the voluntary organisation as a referee.

If you have not previously worked with children or young people, you must provide a character reference from someone who is able to confirm your suitability to work with children. This would normally be someone in authority e.g. a lecturer, doctor, or community leader. Please note, character references are normally only accepted as a supplement to an employer's reference.

In all cases, The Trust will contact the referee prior to the interview, except if you have specifically indicated that you would prefer us to contact them only if you are made an offer of appointment.

Employment History & Gaps in Employment

To ensure our responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people are met you must ensure your employment history and reasons for any gaps are clearly detailed.