



**Woodland
Academy Trust**

Ignite the spark, reveal the champion

Chief Finance and Operations Officer Application Pack



AMBITION



COLLABORATION



COMPASSION



EXCELLENCE



INCLUSIVITY

Ignite the spark, reveal the champion

Welcome from the CEO

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for expressing an interest in the Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) opportunity at Woodland Academy Trust. Woodland Academy Trust is a small but ambitious Trust that puts the children and community first. We are on an exciting journey to achieve the best possible outcomes and excellence for all.

As a key member of our Trust team, this role will play a vital part in supporting our journey and we welcome applications from skilled and committed applicants who have vision, drive and ambition. We seek to attract staff who have a growth mindset, strong values and work ethic and care deeply about serving communities and would be keen to hear about your experiences and skills you can bring to this role.

This is an exciting time to join Woodland Academy Trust as we further strengthen our Trust offer including expansion and growth across a collaborative network of schools. You will benefit from working with a strong team, receive the very best professional development and have the opportunity to make a real difference to the daily learning experiences of our wonderful children.

We look forward to your application.

Yours faithfully,

Nav Sanghara,

Trust Leader (CEO)



About Woodland Academy Trust

Woodland Academy Trust was formed in September 2011 and consists of four primary schools, three of which are located in the London Borough of Bexley and one in Kent, with a further primary free school opening in September 2023.

All our schools share the same mission; *ignite the spark, reveal the champion*. We are an inclusive and ambitious Trust, striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children. Our aim is to provide the highest quality learning experiences for every child by creating an ethical culture of empowerment and growth for all. We believe deeply in the importance of nurturing strong partnerships with our local communities and beyond.



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Our Schools

Knockhall Primary School



www.knockhallprimaryschool.co.uk



Lime Wood Primary School



www.limewoodprimaryschool.co.uk



Northumberland Heath Primary School



www.northumberlandheathprimaryschool.co.uk



Peareswood Primary School



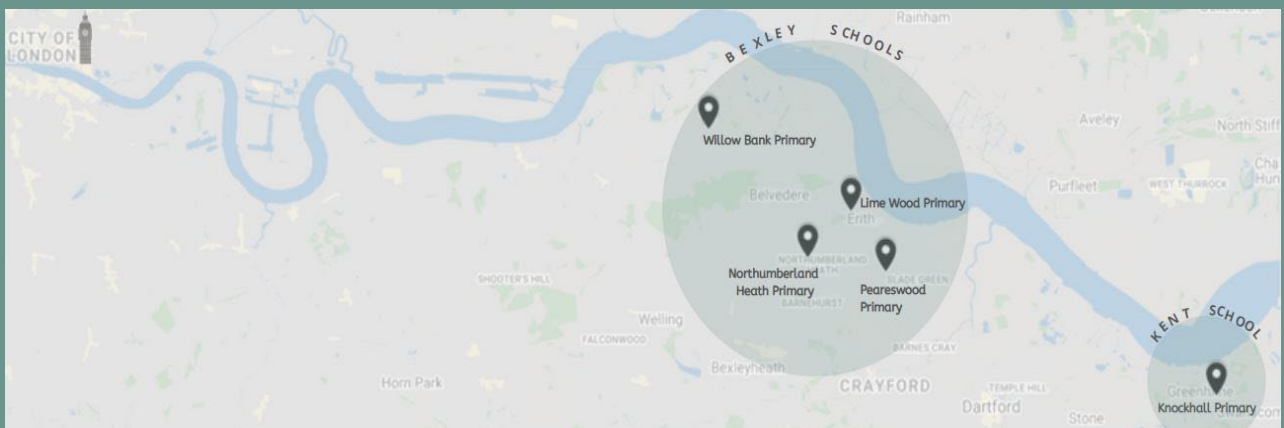
www.peareswoodprimaryschool.co.uk



Willow Bank Primary School



www.willowbankprimaryschool.co.uk



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The Vacancy

Job title:	Chief Finance and Operations Officer
Status:	Permanent
Hours:	36 hours per week
Working weeks per year:	52 weeks per year
Grade:	Hay Scale - £63,027 - £73,755
Post Start Date:	1 st August 2023
Application Closing Date:	28 th March 2023

We are seeking to appoint a Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) as part of the Central Trust Executive Team who will work in close collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer and Director of Education. The CFOO will provide financial and operational leadership; strategy; guidance and oversight to the Board of Trustees, Headteachers and other central Trust teams.

The CFOO will be directly responsible for financial management, budget control and operational best practice and efficiencies that enable the Trust to continue to drive educational aspirations and outcomes.

This is an ideal opportunity for a candidate who is committed to systems-leadership, developing and empowering others with a logical and evidence-based approach.

The ideal candidate will have experience of leading at a senior level, overseeing a range of teams and areas.

What you will need to succeed:

- A passion for working in the education sector and commitment to our vision
- Ability to think strategically as well as have a good understanding of the wider context beyond education
- To lead with integrity and ethics
- Ability to inspire confidence and think creatively
- A commitment to lead through others and empower teams
- Ability to problem-solve with good organisation and prioritisation skills
- A drive to contribute more widely to securing excellence educational outcomes across our Trust.

The successful candidate will be required to travel to all our schools within the Trust and will have the opportunity for some home working. We are a family friendly employer and start and finish times will be discussed at interview.

Applications

We want to ensure that our recruitment process is accessible to all. If you would prefer the application form and material in an alternative format or you would like to know more about our recruitment process, please email recruitment@watschools.org.uk

Please apply by visiting our recruitment page at: [Woodland Academy Trust- Join Us](#)

Application Deadline: 28th March 2023
Interviews: 5th and 6th April 2023

Suitable candidates are invited to discuss this role in the first instance with members of the Trust Executive Team either in person or via telephone call. This can be arranged by contacting recruitment@watschools.org.uk.

To apply for this position, please complete an application in full by visiting our website or contacting us if you require a word version of the application form.

Please note that due to the volume of applications we receive, we reserve the right to close this position early should a suitable candidate be found. Therefore, early application is advised.

For further information or to arrange an informal chat about the role, please contact recruitment@watschools.org.uk

For more information about Woodland Academy Trust please visit: [Woodland Academy Trust](#).

Diversity and Inclusion

Woodland Academy Trust values and cares about the lived experience and backgrounds our colleagues can bring to their roles. We believe a diverse team strengthens our organisation and encourages innovation.

We welcome applications from all backgrounds and ensure our colleagues feel respected and valued for being themselves.

Our Offer

Woodland Academy Trust seek to appoint colleagues who share in our values and mission to *ignite the spark and reveal the champion*. We recognise that in order to offer the best outcomes for our children, our staff teams need the opportunity to be the very best they can be too. We do this by ensuring we have in place for all staff:

- Continuous professional learning focusing on core areas;
- Collaborative working with agencies around us and offering formal training opportunities, bespoke and targeted professional development as well as in-house, bespoke training from our many experts and coaching and mentoring;
- Embedding initiatives to support with reducing workload;

- Having a strong supportive ethos with dedicated line management structures and clear communication channels;
- Offering wellbeing assistance and support including a dedicated employee assistance helpline and occupational health;
- Opportunities to take part in exciting initiatives and projects that help shape the way our children will learn in the future;
- A wide range of family friendly policies in place for staff;
- Recognising national terms and conditions for staff;
- Local Government pension schemes;
- Cycle to work schemes.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

Woodland Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff and volunteers are therefore expected to behave in such a way that supports this commitment. Appointment to this post will be subject to the following satisfactory pre-employment checks:

- Health
- Identity
- Relevant work qualifications
- Right to work in the UK
- Barred List Check (previously List 99)
- Disclosure & Barring Service Check (for all staff and volunteers)
- References



JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE	Chief Finance and Operations Officer
RESPONSIBLE TO	Chief Executive Officer
GRADE	HAY Scales 21.1 – 21.4
HOURS	36 hours per week / 52 weeks per year
ALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To live our Trust values, demonstrating ambition, collaboration, compassion, excellence, and inclusivity in your everyday work life. • To value professional development and welcome any training opportunities to develop personal skills and knowledge • To agree to follow the school and Trust’s policies and procedures.
MAIN PURPOSE OF THE ROLE	<p>The core purpose of the CFOO is to lead on developing and maintaining secure, compliant and efficient financial and operational functions that enables the Trust as a going concern to deliver educational aspirations and outcomes.</p> <p>The CFOO is the most senior non-educational post within the Trust and is a central and essential strategic role, being part of the Educational Executive Team developing the future vision for the Trust and providing professional expertise in decision making, always taking a balanced view on affordability, best value, risk and impact.</p> <p>The CFOO will lead the Trust Central services team, who will work collaboratively with the CFOO to deliver their core purpose. The team includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust Business Manager • HR Manager • Compliance, Asset and Risk Manager • Marketing and Communications Officer • IT Manager • Data and Administration Officer

Duties & Responsibilities	<p><i>Strategic duties and responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape, implement and deliver the strategic plan as part of the Executive Team • Deputise for the CEO in all aspects of work that do not require an educational background • Provide advice and guidance to the CEO and Trust Board on all aspects of the Trust’s non-academic operations • As part of the Executive team, provide accurate and reasoned analysis of cost implications and option appraisals for strategies and proposals affecting staffing structures
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- Work collaboratively with the Executive Team to prepare the annual and medium-term business plans that consider educational improvement objectives, funding projections, opportunities and risk factors
- Deliver line management for non-educational colleagues responsible for Trust Operations, developing a culture of high performance
- Ensure effective communication and collaboration which enhances the value that the Trust brings to its schools
- Ensure non educational support structures within the Trust reflect the best practice from business and from the emerging research into successful academy trusts
- Provide clear information, advice and recommendations to the Executive Team, Trustees and school leaders regarding the strategic development of business support services and back-office systems to ensure the most efficient and effective school environment
- Ensure that the Trust is represented in national, regional and local networks so that the Trust influences and is alert to new trends and is familiar with current best practice in the developing education sector
- Establish a high level of credibility, visibility and professionalism and manage strong working relationships with internal and external partners
- Promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils

Financial duties and responsibilities

- Effectively lead the Finance function, such that:
 - Sufficient resources are maintained and deployed to enable the most positive educational outcomes for pupils whilst securing financial stability
 - The Board, Executive Team and schools are provided with accurate, timely and actionable financial and management information
 - Financial systems are managed and developed effectively to expedite the Trust budget cycle, fulfil the end of year financial reporting requirements and support decision making across the organisation
- Develop a strategic plan for robust financial management of the Trust's activities, resources and assets in line with the Academies Handbook, Academies Accounts Direction and Company House requirements
- Ensure robust and effective financial controls are in place, understood and complied with by all staff with financial responsibilities and/or input
- Develop and maintain effective budget preparation, monitoring and forecasting tools and records for income and expenditure to enable the provision of timely and accurate financial data to all relevant parties including the Executive Board, School Leaders, the Board of Trustees and external funding agencies and auditors
- Develop and maintain effective and relevant staffing budgets to inform the annual budget and monitoring, forecasts, payroll, management accounts, recruitment and strategic planning
- Maintain pupil forecasts and grant income projections to inform budget setting and strategic development
- Lead on ensuring the accurate and compliant month end processed and lead on the preparation and timely distribution of monthly management accounts

- Represent the Trust on the Members AGM, Trust Board and relevant Trustee Committees including Audit and Finance providing relevant and timely reports and information
- Use appropriate data to make financial forecasts to facilitate good strategic forward planning
- Ensure robust budgetary control arrangements are in place to enable monitoring of income and expenditure against budgets and ensure corrective action is taken where appropriate
- Oversee benchmarking to review best value for money and to make suitable recommendations
- Ensure the timely submission of all statutory financial statements and returns to DFE, ESFA, Local Authority and other statutory bodies
- Lead on the preparation of the year end reports, completion of external audit year end checks and processes and the successful closure of finance systems and opening of new financial years
- Lead on the provision of support, guidance, challenge and information to budget holders
- Ensure that the financial and management accounting systems for the Trust are up-to-date and support all accounting and reporting needs
- Oversee and engage with the annual finance audit cycle and implement audit requirements and recommendations throughout the Trust
- Ensure best value through effective procurement and challenge of existing licences and services at renewal
- Lead on driving trust wide efficiencies in procurement and capital bid preparation working in collaboration with central team and school colleagues
- Lead on income generation opportunities (revenue and capital)
- Ensure that any funds received from successful bids are spent appropriately, within budget and timescales
- Lead on the development of finance policies and procedures
- Lead on teacher and local government pension procedures, audits and reporting, working in liaison with the Trust payroll provider, pension providers and Local authority actuaries.

Human Resources duties and responsibilities

- Lead and develop an effective Trust HR Service that provides professional and effective administration of personnel matters for staff, including appointments, contracts of employment, conditions of service, legal and other advisors, discipline and grievance matters and HR policy development
- Lead on the financial aspects and options appraisal for recruitment and retention and accurate financial data for appointments and contracts
- Lead on the timely implementation of cost-of-living awards, changes to pay and conditions affecting salaries and annual performance management outcomes
- Lead on the financial aspects of strategic changes regarding staffing models, restructures and growth in conjunction with the HR team

	<p><i>Estates and Health & Safety duties and responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and develop effective estates management, including asset management plans, Good Estates Management systems and condition appraisals • Ensure Health and Safety legislation is embedded across the schools estate and understood by staff • Lead on establishing effective systems of control and monitoring for premises management and Health and Safety <p>Compliance and Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and develop the Compliance and risk functions of the Trust to ensure they meet the needs of the ESFA, auditors and the Trust including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – GDPR and Freedom of Information – Governance and Companies House – Risk management – Safeguarding – Due Diligence – Ofsted readiness <p>Communication and Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and develop effective marketing and professional communication systems and processes across the Trust to ensure the Trust and schools maintain a valued and professional profile in local communities and nationwide networks. <p><i>Other duties and responsibilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership, motivation, support and performance management for all direct reports • Ensure that direct reports are appropriately trained and developed, and performance managed • Ensure that high standards of professional behaviour and performance are achieved, using systems of external accreditation and evaluation wherever possible • Contribute to and exemplify the values of the Trust • Contribute actively to the development of quality improvement programmes across the Trust • Undertake such other duties as reasonably correspond to the general character of the post and commensurate with being a member of the Executive Team
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Please note that we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expect all those who work with us to share this commitment. Successful applicants will need to undertake a DBS Enhanced Clearance check (Disclosure and Barring Service). We give high priority to promoting diversity throughout the Trust.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

<i>Qualifications</i>	Essential - E Desirable - D
Accountancy qualification at AAT level or higher	E
Evidence of continuous professional development	E
Master's degree and/or relevant professional qualifications	D
<i>Experience & skills</i>	
Track record of success of senior leadership and strategy development within a comparable organisation	E
Track record of successful leadership of support services and/or multi-disciplinary teams	E
High level of understanding regarding school/academy finances, risks and processes	E
Awareness and understanding of key requirements and risks in relation to HR, estates management, procurement and Health and Safety	E
Experience of efficient and effective budget, financial, risk and resource management to achieve accountability and a strong performance culture	E
Proven success in building effective partnerships and links with internal and external stakeholders	E
Knowledge and understanding of the safeguarding agenda and its application in the educational setting	E
Experience of working effectively with a Board/Governing body in an equivalent setting	D
Well-developed strategic planning capabilities with the ability to work with others to develop a compelling vision for the organisation, underpinned by a strong moral purpose	E
Ability to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and be an effective ambassador of the Trust	E
Ability to build a positive organisational culture, encourage reflection, delegate responsibility, build teams, strive for continuous improvement and inspire staff to achieve their full potential	E
Ability to think creatively, to work strategically, and to anticipate and solve problems	E
High level Excel and data manipulation skills in creating, updating and interrogating financial reports and scenarios accurately	E
Proven skills in writing professional reports and communicating to a high standard	E
Proven track record of developing business plans and managing the introduction of new initiatives	E
Ability to prioritise, plan, organise, and analyse/process complex information quickly and rigorously when under pressure, acting with decisiveness and determination when dealing with difficult situations	E
Ability to work effectively and efficiently within a paperless work culture of online data management and communication	E
Strong negotiation skills and the ability to influence others to the benefit of the Trust	E

An understanding of educational legislation and policy in relation to Academies	D
<i>Personal qualities and behaviours:</i>	
Wholehearted commitment to maintaining and developing the ethos of the Trust	E
Inspirational ability to motivate and empower others to carry the diocesan vision forward inside and outside the Trust	E
Resilience and persistence, but adaptability to context and people	E
Collaborative leadership – someone who can provide clear direction and shared purpose for all colleagues, external partners and stakeholders	E
Ability to translate a visionary/innovative concept into a practical implementation plan	E
Commitment to raising standards and optimising the opportunities that the schools can offer to its pupils and the community	E
Ability to challenge constructively the work of self and others to continually improve own and team performance	E
Visible presence at the Trust's Academies	E
Willingness to work outside normal working hours as required	E
Full clean driving licence holder with access to the use of a vehicle	E

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