



Finance Controller

Introduction to The Dean Close Foundation (The Foundation)

The Dean Close Foundation consists of Dean Close Senior, Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory Schools based in Cheltenham, St. John's Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory Schools in Chepstow. There are two subsidiary trading companies; Dean Close Services Ltd, which, is the commercial arm of the group and Dean Close Nurseries Ltd which operates five (52 week care) separate Nursery businesses. The nurseries are based in Chepstow, St Arvan's, Newport, Cheltenham and Gloucester. There are approximately 740 members of staff in the Foundation.

The Dean Close Foundation is a Christian school community which aims to uphold the Christian faith as a positive force for all, including those who do not share this faith. The School seeks to treat every member of its family as unique and equally valuable. The ethos challenges selfishness and holds community, respect for others, relationship and service at the heart of the School.

The Dean Close Foundation welcomes pupils with a broad range of abilities, aiming to give each and every one a well-rounded education, blending good academic performance with real achievement in their individually-discovered talents.

The School encourages independent thinking and the self-confidence to challenge the status quo.

Dean Close School is renowned for focusing on individual development. Small classes, excellent learning facilities, floodlit astro-turfs, indoor pools, climbing wall, indoor rifle range, dance studio and fully equipped gymnasium all help to nurture each child's strengths and talents.

St. John's is a happy co-educational preparatory school with a strong musical tradition having excellent choirs and a range of musical performances. The children are delightful; the staff warm and enthusiastic and the location is stunning.

The Nurseries are run by dedicated and committed staff and provide a wonderful first step in a child's educational journey.

The Foundation is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Turnover is over £29m with a substantial and growing surplus. There is a new and exciting strategic plan with a capital investment programme planned for the next 15 to 25 years.

Dean Close Service Limited (DCSL)

Dean Close Services Ltd is the commercial arm of the School, generating income to reinvest in the School through year-round and wide-ranging business activity.

The overarching objective of DCSL is to expand its operations and to significantly increase profit over the next five years; building annual profits up to £350,000 - £500,000.

It is intended to increase resources, improve cohesion across all areas of business and to create a new portfolio of Dean Close owned and managed businesses and products.

The Role of the Finance Controller

The Finance Controller will be responsible for the financial management of The Dean Close Foundation in an exciting period of growth. Reporting directly to the Bursar, the successful applicant will have a formal accounting qualification and be experienced in managing a finance team, delivering tight monthly control of departments to enable the production of timely management and statutory accounts and credit control. Knowledge of charity accounts is highly desirable. The three teams reporting to the FC are Billing, Purchase ledger and Payroll. Candidates should have excellent ICT skills, a strong eye for detail and confident with communications. The Foundation has experienced significant investment and growth over the past two years and experience of managing change and growth to achieve scalability is most desirable. The Bursar is keen to increase investment in technology and systems to increase efficiency and so experience in project management and / or system integration/workflow automation is highly desirable.

Team Building

It is important to us and a prominent KPI for all managers that all staff maintain high standards of customer service at all times. We want all stakeholders, and most importantly, parents, to experience a polished service from our centralised services. Our ethos and our service ethic should be foremost in our staffs' minds when dealing with any stakeholder.

The Finance Controller must ensure that he/she and all team members keep up to these high standards.

Key Performance Indicators:

- To manage the department through robust monthly routines and controls
- To improve the financial results of The Dean Close Foundation, through tight monitoring of budgets and to achieve cost savings, and efficiencies in work flow where possible.
- To keep up to date with changes to Charities SORP/ Accounting and VAT/Pensions and Payroll legislation and commercial company rules and regulations.
- To provide accurate, timely and coherent information for the Bursar including Annual Statutory Accounts and Debtors analysis
- To manage the Audit process.
- The smooth running of the Bursary (Finance Department) on a day to day basis
- Company Secretary to each of the three companies.
- Delivering excellence in Customer Service.

Key Tasks will include:

- The preparation of accurate and timely financial and other management information
- Maintenance of strong financial controls including
- Maintenance and development of the Foundation's accounting systems.

- Supervision of the payroll and pension systems
- Identification of potential savings and negotiation of some supply contracts
- Accurate billing and timely collection of fees, including debt collection.
- Line management of a team, currently, 9
- Working closely with the Bursar and the Management Accountant using workflow analysis and investment in suitable new systems, improve the automation and efficiency of the department so it can move from purely a control department to one which adds demonstrable value through initiating and driving innovation and appropriate projects.

Direct Reports

The accounts and payroll team number 9 staff. We have invested in new systems and the successful applicant will be required to review the processes, optimise and develop efficiencies further.

Role Details

The post-holder is required to work with the internal team, academic and administrative staff and will also have access to the Board of Trustees via the Finance and General Purpose Committee. This role carries significant autonomy and will report directly to the Bursar. The role is based in Cheltenham but will involve regular travel to other Dean Close Foundation sites.

The duties of this role will involve but not be limited to:

Financial Systems and Controls

- Maintenance and development of the Foundation's accounting systems and of all financial controls relating to the Foundation and its subsidiary operations
- Drive further the automation of processes and improving transparency
- Drive further in the direction of the 'paperless office'
- Improve the segregation of duties and oversight of normal processes.
- Liaison with the auditors and the preparation of accounts and records for audit
- Chair the monthly Budget Monitoring meeting.

Payroll

- Payment of all wages and salaries deductions and proper returns to HMRC, pension schemes and other statutory bodies
- Management of statutory pay for sickness, maternity, paternity etc.
- Oversight of salary sacrifice arrangements, including Childcare Vouchers

VAT and Gift Aid

- Preparation of returns and liaison with HMRC

Fees

- Supervision and checking of all fee accounts, ensuring prompt and accurate rendering to parents
- Income proofing
- Monitoring of debtors and ensuring prompt collection of overdue fees
- Operation of the Foundation's direct debit systems and capital fees in advance scheme

Banking

- Day to day management of the Foundation's bank accounts and negotiation of terms

- Treasury management of Foundation funds
- Assisting the Management Accountant with Cash flow forecasting

Purchase Ledger

- Monitoring ordering and purchase controls throughout the Foundation
- Ensuring prompt resolution of queries and payment of invoices on terms
- Monitoring of utility consumption and negotiation of contracts
- Insurance
- Determining requirements and negotiating contracts

Team Leadership

- Day to day line management and annual appraisal of the Accounts and Payroll teams.
- Management of holiday entitlement absences etc. with due regard to maintaining cover and the accounting/budgetary timetables
- Assess the team structures and processes and propose changes where appropriate

Other

- Understand the Foundation's Strategic Plan and ensure that all activities align with its best achievement
- The Finance Controller is a key member of the BMT (Bursary Management Team)
- Our standards of behavior and demands to serve our stakeholders are high. Customer service is of paramount importance.
- Company Secretary for the Foundation and its subsidiaries
- Completion of statistical returns as required
- Completion of statutory and Charity Commission returns
- Oversight of budgets for specific events, including Foundation trips
- Deputising for the Bursar as required
- Submit monthly progress reports and ensure data is accurate.
- Forecast sales targets and ensure they are met by the team.
- Assist Headmasters and Business Unit Managers to produce their business and financial reports in a timely and accurate manner.
- Ensure all team members represent the Foundation in the best light.
- Research and develop a thorough understanding of the Company's people and capabilities.

Education

This position requires the successful candidate to hold an accounting qualification and to have 3-5 years of accounting experience. An MBA is highly desirable as is some commercial and demonstrable experience of driving P&L growth. Line management and workflow experience is highly desirable. A clear understanding of, and belief in, the aims and ethos of independent education in general, and The Dean Close Foundation, in particular, will be desirable.

Other Skills and Qualifications

Networking, persuasion, professionalism, decision making, self-motivation, critical thinking, analysis, gravitas, team building, relationship building.

Terms and Conditions

A competitive salary will be available. The hours of work are 37.5 hours per week (Monday- Friday), with additional hours from time to time to meet the demands of the role. Some evening and week end duties may be required. Annual leave is 25 days per annum (pro-rata for the duration of the contract), plus statutory holiday and holiday to be taken with the prior agreement of the Bursar. The post holder will be eligible to join the Foundation's Administrative Pension Scheme. Lunch is available on the Foundation premises during School term time and there is ample parking on the Foundation premises and nearby.

Application Process

Completed application forms and a CV, together with a covering letter should be returned to the HR Manager, The Dean Close Foundation, Dean Close House, 67 Lansdown Road, Cheltenham, GL51 6QD. Tel 01242 258086, Email: hr@deanclose.org.uk by 12.00pm on the closing date.

The Dean Close Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Closing Date: 24th September 2018 at 12 noon

Interview Date: 3rd October 2018