



Central RSA Academies Trust

Director of Finance

Introduction

This short paper aims to accompany the job description and person specification for the position of Trust Finance Director offering further information on our team, systems and ways of working. It also maps out our journey to date and future growth plans.

Growth of the Trust and Finance function to date

The present incumbent joined the Trust in early 2014 when Trustees recognised the need for a suitably qualified finance professional to lead the team and shape our strategy ready for future growth. The MAT (then named Redditch RSA Academies Trust) was 2 schools at that point (Arrow Vale & Ipsley). The schools were using legacy local authority (LA) finance systems (SAP) and utilising LA processing services for the payment of invoices. There were finance staff in both schools.

In autumn 2014 we switched to using SAGE and pulled away from dependence on LA finance. Staff numbers were reduced as we established Arrow Vale as our Finance processing centre.

In early 2016, Church Hill Middle & Abbeywood First schools converted from maintained status (comprehensive due diligence was performed) to join the MAT. Again, there were staff in both schools, with a reduction in the number on conversion. The schools had been using SAP, and again were converted to SAGE from day 1.

RSA Tipton joined the MAT in autumn 2017 with an established finance team. The school continues uses the Civica Resource 32000 Finance system

The Centralised Finance Function & systems

The function for the Redditch schools is partly centralised at Arrow Vale: all processing for Arrow Vale & Ipsley and Central Office, and payments & management accounts preparation and banking management for all Redditch schools are carried out at the centre. Order and invoice processing for Church Hill and Abbeywood are done on site at Church Hill.

Staff in any of the Redditch schools can view SAGE accounts for any school (subject to permissions) with SAGE (line 50) installed on local servers, but accessible via Dashboard technology.

Because of the different accounts system, RSA Tipton remains “stand alone” under the management of local finance staff.

Systems – future plans

The successful candidate will oversee a project to switch the Tipton system to SAGE and this work will include an assessment of the feasibility of upgrading SAGE 50 to a cloud based version more suited to MAT use. We have targeted this switch to be completed by September 2019

All schools use HCSS budgeting and we are currently introducing HCSS People (HR software). Integration of payroll information systems and provider will follow in early 2019.

Our Team

Across the 5 schools we employ 10 staff (FTE 7) with most staff working term time only with part time hours. Some have other non-finance responsibilities in the schools. The skill levels and experience are high (including qualified accountants). We aim to provide and encourage flexible working patterns which are mutually beneficial to staff and the Trust. Staff at each Redditch location are expected to work at any other site where practical and this engenders team work and sharing of best practice. We have also been able to extend this to a member of the Tipton staff working regularly at Redditch.



Other Finance

Our Arrow Vale team are responsible for the accounting for the Arrow Vale Sports centre (turnover approx. £80k pa) and for the RSA teaching School Alliance

Audit arrangements

The Trust's auditors are Haines Watts (due for re-tendering 2019) Birmingham office and the successful candidate will work closely with them to lead the annual audit. The team are collectively proud to have produced accounts each year with very few material adjustments or management responses required.

Our internal auditor also carries out finance audits (as part of wider work) that complement the work of the external auditors.

We hope that this information is helpful to you and gives you the context of the role.