



River Learning Trust

RIVER LEARNING TRUST

Finance Director

INFORMATION PACK, Nov 2017



About the River Learning Trust

The River Learning Trust (RLT) is a multi-academy trust responsible for a number of schools and a school centred initial teacher training provider within Oxfordshire. The schools and SCITT are united by their commitment to the principles of the trust and a common belief in the benefits of everything that is gained by working together.

The principles of the RLT The River Learning Trust is a community of children, young people and adults with shared principles including:

- Commitment to Excellence; striving for the best educational experience through continuous improvement.
- Everyone Learning; creating and taking opportunities that enhance lives through evidenced based practice supporting adult and pupil learning.
- Respectful Relationships; acting with care, integrity, and fairness in all we do

Schools in the Trust

The following schools are currently a part of the River Learning Trust:

- The Cherwell School
- Chipping Norton School
- Kingsdown School
- Wheatley Park School
- The Swan School (in pre-opening)
- Cutteslowe Primary School
- Edith Moorhouse Primary School
- Garsington Primary School
- Horspath Primary School
- New Marston Primary School
- Tower Hill Primary School
- Wolvercote Primary School
- The Cherwell OTSA SCITT

The Trust is also in discussion with a number of other secondary and primary schools as we jointly explore further growth.

Our Vision

Education has the power to change lives, communities and society for the better. At the River Learning Trust we believe that we can achieve more for our pupils, trainees, staff and communities by working together rather than alone. All of the schools in the River Learning Trust are united by a common belief in the benefits of working together, and by our commitment to our three shared principles.

Dear Candidate

Thank you for taking an interest in working with us at River Learning Trust. You will see from our website that we are a flourishing Multi Academy Trust and we are continuing to grow with like-minded schools joining us; we have a further four schools due to join us by September 2018.

Recruiting to this new role is a really key part in enabling us to deliver against our Business Development Plan; we have come a long way in the last 18 months and we have more work to do, all in support of our aim to achieve brilliant outcomes for the children that come to RLT Schools.

We have a dynamic, engaged and committed Central Leadership Team and this role will be a key part in that. You will be a first class qualified accountant, but we are looking for more than just that. We need someone who will contribute to the formulation of Trust Strategy, so can bring experience of contributing at a Senior level, bringing a financial perspective but to a much broader context and debate.

Most importantly at this juncture, we need someone who brings the ability to work in an engaging, collaborative way. Most of your work for us will only be possible by working through and with other RLT employees who you do not have direct line management responsibility for, so the ability to develop trusting, collaborative relationships is key. You will be the subject matter expert, but you need to be able to convince people to follow you.

Finally, like all jobs within our Central Team, we are looking for someone in this role who can stretch from being very hands-on, so you'll need to be systems and excel savvy, right through to developing our strategic financial plans.

We ask a lot of the people that work with us, and we think we offer a lot in return. We have a generous pension scheme, flexible working arrangements and most importantly, a real commitment to training and professional development for everyone that works with us. It's busy, it's stretching, and it's incredibly rewarding.

If you think this might be for you, then we would love to hear from you.



Lisa Hughes
Chief Operating Officer



Paul James
Chief Executive Officer

Job Description

Job Title:	Finance Director
Purpose:	To provide leadership and professional management in the financial services of the Trust, and a member of the Academy leadership and central team.
Accountable to:	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible for:	The post holder will be responsible for the staff in the central Finance team (Finance officers). The post holder will need to build strong and effective professional, supportive relationships across the Trust with school based colleagues where they have no direct line management authority. Currently this is particularly Finance and Business Managers and School Business Managers, and managing the School Bursar service. See organisation structure at the end of this document for more detail.
Working time:	Full time (37 hours/week, 29 days holiday plus bank holidays). At times there will be a need to work a flexible pattern to meet the demands of the role, including possible occasional attendance at evening meetings
Salary:	£64 - £68k, plus LGPS Pension (currently 16.5% employer contribution)
Disclosure Level:	Enhanced DBS

1. Role Summary

The Finance Director is directly, and through leadership of the Finance team, responsible for:

- Leading and co-ordinating the Trust's budgeting and financial forecasting activities and producing timely and accurate reporting against those plans for the Trust Board;
- Ensuring that RLT schools receive regular, timely and accurate budget monitoring information;
- Ensuring that Schools-based staff working on Finance are well supported and trained;
- Management of the Trust's cashflow position
- Ensuring the Academy's finance function is properly resourced, in terms of people, knowledge, systems and procedures to ensure compliance with all appropriate regulatory, statutory and fiscal requirements;
- Developing and maintaining a financial regulations and procedures to ensure effective financial control and good practice financial management;
- Maintaining ethical and financial standards commensurate with the Trust's charitable status.
- Ensuring the smooth on-boarding of new RLT Schools

2. Strategic Leadership Role

As a member of the Trust Central Team, the post holder will:

- contribute to the strategic direction of the Trust;
- ensure the Trust makes the best possible use of resources through effective financial planning;
- prepare the Trust's annual and medium term consolidated financial plans, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and each school's Senior Leadership Team and Local Governing Body, taking into account performance improvement objectives, future funding projections, and other potential events and activities;
- provide clear information, advice and recommendations to the Chief Executive, COO, Trust Board regarding financial performance and the financial implications of operational decisions;

- understand and advise the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies on the financial implications of government and local authority policies, and wider trends and developments;
- ensure that educational outcomes for the Trust are supported by astute financial management;
- liaise with and (as appropriate) support Headteachers, Local Governing Bodies and SLTs with budgeting and monitoring advice;
- participate and represent the Trust in external events and bodies so that it is alert to new trends and is familiar with current financial best practice;
- establish a high level of credibility and manage strong, supportive working relationships with internal and external parties, including a wide range of academy staff;
- constantly monitor and evaluate progress against stated financial objectives and targets in the Academy Trust's plans, initiating and taking any additional action as may be agreed to be necessary;
- promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils.

3. Financial Management and Compliance

- prepare and submit statutory financial statements and annual returns;
- prepare and submit estimates and financial/annual returns as required by funding bodies, government departments, and Companies House;
- prepare annual budgets, forecasts and five year financial plans for approval the Trust Board;
- prepare monthly management accounts, and other financial reports for the Trust Board, CE and the COO;
- to ensure that Schools (and their Local Governing Bodies) receive accurate and timely monthly budget monitoring information – through co-ordinating the process between Finance and Business Managers, School Business Managers and Bursars
- provide first-class support, guidance and information to Finance and Business Managers and School Business Managers and Finance Officers;
- plan and actively monitor the cash flow of the Trust, setting and implementing creditor and debtor policies and procedures;
- develop and maintain appropriate financial regulations and work with schools to ensure compliance and the effective operation of all financial controls;
- advise Trustees, Governors and Headteachers on external and internal audit arrangements and implement audit requirements as they affect all financial activities;
- as required, assist with funding bids to external bodies to maximise the resources for the Trust, ensuring that any funds received from successful bids are spent appropriately and within timescales;
- maintain grant and restricted fund accounts in compliance with grant conditions, academy accounting and trust law requirements;
- manage the Trust's bank accounts and working relationship with the Trust's bank;
- manage the Trust's tax affairs and the submission of VAT, income tax, corporation tax, national insurance and other tax returns, and ensure that tax obligations are discharged correctly and effectively;

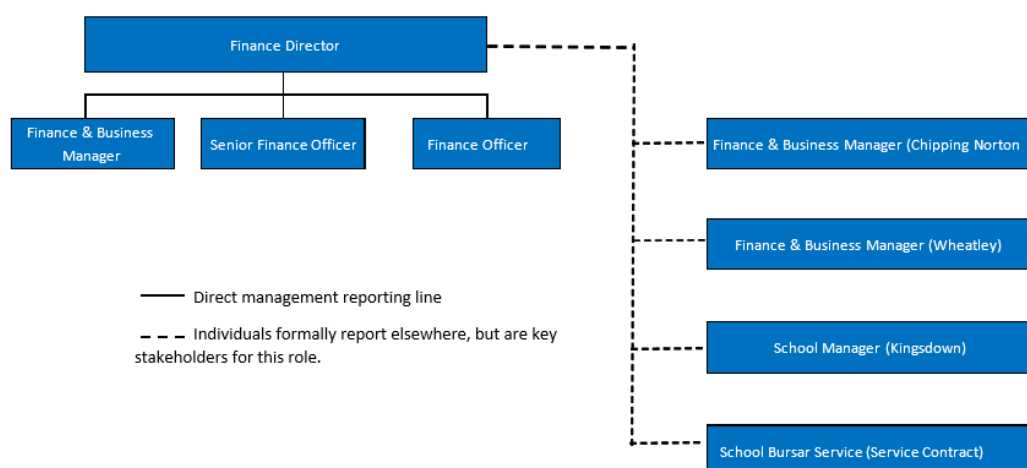
4. Management of Staff

- Provide leadership, motivation, support and performance management for the staff in the Finance team;
- Ensure that all staff in the Finance team are appropriately trained and developed;
- Ensure that high standards of professional behaviour, performance and customer care are achieved

5. Other duties and accountabilities:

- Keep up to date with legislation and guidance from funding bodies on finance, tax, VAT, NI and other relevant matters, and advise the COO of any material changes and any actions required;
- Being aware of and complying with policies and procedures relating to child protection, Health & Safety and security, confidentiality and data protection, reporting all concerns to the COO;
- Ensuring compliance with the Academy Trust's Equal Opportunities and Equalities Policies and taking an active role in promoting equality and diversity;
- Promoting the Academy Trust's policies on behaviour for learning, and demonstrating a commitment to providing a caring and stimulating environment and improving standards for all pupils within Trust;
- Undertaking such other duties as reasonably correspond to the general character of the post and commensurate with being a member of Trust Executive Team;
- Whilst every effort had been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified;
- Employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from a manager to undertake work of a similar level or nature that is not specified in this job description.

6. Reporting lines into Finance Director:



River Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and preventing extremism; all staff must ensure that the highest priority is given to following the guidance and regulations to safeguard children and young people. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and obtain any other statutorily required clearance. Employment will also be conditional on the receipt of at least two acceptable references (1 from current/latest employer) and evidence of the formal qualifications required for the role.

Person Specification

Experience	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of successful financial leadership – linked to overall strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. • Demonstrable experience of being part of a Leadership Team – having the ability, insight and interest to make a valuable contribution to wider strategic planning • Significant experience of delivering first class finance services with a really strong customer service ethic • Successfully leading and motivating a finance team • Producing, presenting and explaining complex financial information to a variety of stakeholders • Developing and implementing a robust system of internal financial control with the commensurate financial policies and procedures <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the national educational funding landscape, and the Academies Financial Handbook • Working with a geographically dispersed and/ or decentralised team
Qualifications/ Training	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCAB fully-qualified • Evidence of on-going professional development
Knowledge/ Skills	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent understanding of financial systems and financial compliance requirements – and the ability and willingness to be really hands-on when needed • IT savvy, especially advanced Excel • First class organisational and communication skills • Knowledge of PAYE and VAT regulations <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the national educational funding landscape, and the Academies Financial Handbook
Abilities	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work effectively with non-executives, senior management, non-financial managers and finance colleagues • Ability to interpret advice/statute and to devise policy/practice in light of these • A team player, understanding different roles and responsibilities and your own position within these • Ability to explain financial issues to non-finance people • Great peer influencing skills • Ability to plan, develop and oversee implementation of changes, both systems, procedural and people
Personal Qualities	<p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent at building supportive and productive professional relationships with colleagues • Have a positive, enthusiastic outlook with the energy, drive, enthusiasm and determination to succeed • Resilient, proactive, and calm under pressure • Ability to balance support with challenge • Commercially minded • Conscientious with a strong eye for detail • Access to transport to enable regular visits out to schools <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean driving licence and access to a car for school visits.

Applications

To find out more about our schools, for further information about the post and an application form , please visit our website www.riverlearningtrust.org or to arrange an informal chat with our COO, Lisa Hughes, please contact the central office on 01865 558727 or office@riverlearningtrust.org

To apply for this post, please submit to office@riverlearningtrust.org:

Completed application form. The section entitled Relevant Skills & Experience should be no more than two sides of A4 and demonstrate how you meet the Person Specification.

Covering letter. This should be no more than two sides of A4 and, given the context of the job description, provide an outline as to why you have applied for this post with examples of how your career thus far has prepared you for this role. Please also outline in this document your preference in terms of hours and location for this role.

The closing date for applications is 27 November 2017

Contact

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The River Learning Trust, which is an exempt charity and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with a registered company number 7966500.