



## Job Description

**Job Title:** Head of Finance

**School Group:** George Abbot, Sandfield Primary and Shalford Infant School

**Responsible To:** Directly responsible to the George Abbot Headteacher

**Responsible For:** All finance staff within the 3 schools (team of 7, with 5 direct reports)

**Salary:** LPT-10

### School Group:

Learning Partners is a multi-academy trust, comprising of 16 schools. The trust operates a grouped finance model, each group consisting of 3-4 schools. Finances are managed by a joint team working across a specific group of schools, with each group overseen by a qualified accountant. This post oversees the group comprising the following schools:

- George Abbot School: Secondary and Sixth Form (revenue budget > £12m)
- Sandfield Primary School: Primary School (revenue budget > £1.2m)
- Shalford Infant and Nursery School: Infant and Nursery School (revenue budget > £0.7m)

The post holder will primarily be based at George Abbot School, with circa 1 day per week at Sandfield School and circa 1 day per month at Shalford.

### Job Purpose:

- To provide a comprehensive strategic and operational support service for all three schools, utilising high-level specialist knowledge and training.
- To lead the Finance team, providing an effective and efficient coordination of diverse and complex services, driving change and embedding new ways of working across areas of responsibility, ensuring sound financial control, managing financial risk and overseeing end-to-end finance operations within Trust procedures.
- To identify value-adding opportunities around cost savings, collaboration, income generation and business enhancement across the schools, including ways to work effectively with schools within the wider Trust.
- To work with the Headteachers, Trust and governors to develop and implement each school's budget and three-year financial plan, ensuring sound budget management and enabling achievement of the school's financial KPIs.
- To work with the Headteachers and SLT to ensure limited resources are deployed to areas with the biggest impact on pupil outcomes.
- To deliver a service of timely and informative management reporting, enabling all internal stakeholders to monitor performance, (re)allocate resources and plan effectively in delivering the school's SDP.
- To develop and lead the promotion of good financial management, regularity and propriety across the schools within the context of the Trust's financial systems and processes as well as within the frameworks set out by company's act, charities commission, Academy Trust Handbook and Accounts Direction, the Learning Partners Scheme of Delegation, master and supplementary funding agreements.
- To be responsible for leading the day-to-day accounting procedures and recording of all financial transactions accurately and robustly.
- To work with the central finance team and finance leads throughout the trust to ensure a cohesive, collaborative approach to financial management across the trust.
- To actively promote the vision, values and ethos of the schools and the trust, influencing and motivating others, assisting the Headteachers to ensure that the school meets its educational aims to improve the outcomes and wellbeing of its students.
- To promote the highest standards of the Nolan Principles within the business function of the school and strategically ensures the most effective use of resources in support of the school's learning objectives, keeping up to date with the latest relevant developments and legislation.

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## **Main Duties:**

The principal accountabilities of the role are set out below, but they are not intended to reflect an exhaustive list of duties.

### Financial Resource Management and Reporting

- Ensure that an effective and efficient financial service is provided to the school's governors, SLT, budget managers and staff.
- Prepare annual and three-year budgets for each school in the group, taking into account school improvement priorities, future funding projections and trust wide context.
- Ensure management accounts are proactively monitored, monthly forecasts developed, corrective actions taken, including cost reduction plans, where required, and any variances are understood, explained and addressed as necessary.
- Ensure a robust payroll and staff absence process, liaising closely with outsourced providers, the HR leads at each school and the Headteachers to ensure HR and payroll changes are fully aligned.
- Oversee and manage all day-to-day financial activities for the schools, ensuring they are undertaken within agreed Trust timelines, are effectively prioritised and fit within the compliance framework.
- Work with the Headteachers to lead school policy in the best possible use of resources through effective planning and benchmarking, consider all financial and resource implications.
- Identify and implement value-adding opportunities at school, school group, and trust level around cost savings and business enhancement/income generation, targeting limited resources to areas with the biggest impact on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure funding available to disadvantaged and vulnerable students is maximised, working with members of SLT to ensure these funds are utilised appropriately.
- Provide accurate and thorough financial reporting and analysis support to various stakeholders utilising, where available, the Trust's reporting templates.
- Work with the respective Premises leads to ensure capital project budgets are managed effectively and reported correctly.
- Attend SLT meetings as required, presenting relevant reports, providing professional expertise and recommendations to support decision making to ensure the financial impact of key decisions are considered, and, where appropriate, reflected within school budgets and forecasts.
- Provide effective team leadership, ensuring that team members are suitably tasked and motivated, accomplishing the finance department objectives by effectively managing staff and planning & evaluating department activities.
- Ensure team skills are kept up to date through the identification and delivery of training and development opportunities for the finance team.
- Lead, develop, train and provide technical advice to budget managers and colleagues across the schools involved in financial activities.
- Ensure financial performance measures as set out within the Trust framework are monitored and tracked, to enable corrective action to occur.
- Ensure appropriate benchmarking processes take place, such that internal operations are challenged to drive the best value for money.
- Ensure procurement processes conform with Trust policy and deliver value for money for each school.
- Research into technical areas to address queries arising – liaising with the Trust to obtain advice, share own knowledge and research and agree outcomes.
- Monitor cashflow and manage funds to ensure that cashflow requirements are met and investment income maximised.



### Governance and Compliance

- Ensure compliance with the Learning Partners Finance Policy, Academy Trust Handbook, and other frameworks, guidance and funder requirements.
- Represent and communicate each schools' financial priorities, needs and objectives at trust level to ensure continued alignment between the school and trust on key financial matters.
- To represent each school in influencing key financial decisions at trust level, including attendance at School Business Manager meetings.
- Build strong, effective relationships with members of each schools' Finance Committee, disseminating and communicating key financial information to enable the Committee to effectively discharge their financial responsibilities as school governors.
- Produce and present specialist management reports to each schools' Governing Body, ensuring reporting is focused, relevant, accurate and timely.
- Liaise with the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee / Governor Finance Lead to agree meeting agendas and discuss key priorities for upcoming meetings.
- Ensure all school specific financial policies are updated and approved in line with changing regulatory, quality and professional standards.
- Lead on the production, monitoring and reporting of a central risk register for each school, ensuring effective controls are identified and implemented in order to best manage key risks.
- Ensure that all personnel involved in financial matters are aware of any legal, regulatory or policy requirements that impact their role.
- Support the implementation of a strong and effective control environment within the Finance area, including compliance with financial regulations, setting quality and professional standards for all activities within the scope of the role.
- Have an in-depth knowledge of accounting, financial regulations and internal policies and apply and interpret these on a frequent basis, referring queries to the trust where appropriate and working with the trust to agree approaches that are effective at both school and trust level.
- Facilitate Internal Audit, ensuring actions arising are addressed in a timely manner.
- Facilitate the External Audits, ensuring that deliverables are provided to auditor, requirements are met and arising issues are acted upon.
- Produce statutory returns, as required, to the DfE and Surrey County Council.

### Income Generation

- In conjunction with the relevant Heads of Department, identify potential funding opportunities, including charity, agency and government initiatives, ensuring grant funding and income generation from both diverse and obvious sources.
- Maintain accurate records of all fundraising activity, including the management of Gift Aid.
- Work with the Heads of Premises to maximise external income generation and financial growth.

### Other

- All employees of LPAT are expected to follow the employee code of conduct and are thereby required to have due regard for safeguarding, data protection, health and safety in the workplace regulations, promote equal opportunity, exercise professionalism and uphold the values of member schools and LPAT.

June 2024



## Person Specification

	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Qualifications/ Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Qualified Accountant (ACA/ACCA/CIMA or equivalent) or significant relevant experience demonstrating clear professional development</li> <li>▪ Significant work experience at management level</li> <li>▪ Significant experience of leading and managing a finance department and ensuring effective collaboration</li> <li>▪ Resource management and procurement</li> <li>▪ Proven experience of financial and budgetary controls</li> <li>▪ Experience of leading and managing budgeting and reporting processes</li> <li>▪ In depth experience of the management of month end processes and management accounts reporting</li> <li>▪ Extensive and comprehensive knowledge of accounting systems, such as Access</li> <li>▪ Experience of presenting financial reports at a senior level to both finance and non-finance executives</li> <li>▪ Significant external and internal audit experience</li> <li>▪ Experience in managing capital project budgets</li> <li>▪ Ability to work across multiple sites, namely, George Abbot, Shalford and Sandfield, as well as other schools within the trust.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Degree qualified</li> <li>▪ Financial management and accounting in an educational and/or charity setting</li> <li>▪ Experience of contributing at a strategic level within the senior management/ leadership team of an organisation</li> <li>▪ Experience of securing additional funding from a variety of external sources</li> <li>▪ In depth knowledge of Charity SORP and/or financial regulations related to the education sector</li> <li>▪ Grant and restricted fund accounting</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Qualities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge of external and internal audit requirements</li> <li>▪ Extensive knowledge of the principles of change management, project management and continuous improvement and their practical application.</li> <li>▪ Ability to manage complex projects.</li> <li>▪ Ability to build effective relationships.</li> <li>▪ Experience of successfully leading, coaching, mentoring and developing of staff.</li> <li>▪ Ability to lead, support and motivate team members.</li> <li>▪ Demonstrate proven written and oral communication skills, and interpersonal skills with the ability to gain credibility quickly at all levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experience of risk management and reporting</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive knowledge of computerised business systems.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Well-developed analytical, strategic planning and organisational skills.</li> <li>▪ Advanced problem solving and analytical skills with the capacity to devise and implement innovative solutions for strategic change.</li> <li>▪ Established and high-level negotiation and influencing skills and the ability to work collaboratively with internal and external partners.</li> <li>▪ Ability to plan, monitor and manage relevant budgets</li> <li>▪ Ability to understand, meet and exceed stakeholder expectations</li> <li>▪ Able to prepare, evaluate and present financial data, and implement appropriate strategies to promote improvement, raise standards and deliver greater value for money for the school</li> <li>▪ Ability to formulate ideas and solutions and present them effectively.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Personal Qualities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vision and personal drive.</li> <li>▪ Dedication and commitment to the role and the schools.</li> <li>▪ Aptitude to learn new skills.</li> <li>▪ Attention to detail and accuracy.</li> <li>▪ Ability to work independently and proactively, anticipating problems and recommending solutions</li> <li>▪ Personal presence, confidence, patience, sensitivity and maturity of approach.</li> <li>▪ A professional approach supported with a due regard for discretion and the need for confidentiality and diplomacy</li> <li>▪ Ability to evaluate and meet changing priorities, responding flexibly and working well under pressure.</li> <li>▪ Able to evaluate personal developmental needs and seek learning opportunities to address them.</li> <li>▪ Work with autonomy and discretion within operational policies and guidance</li> <li>▪ Proactive approach to keeping up to date with local and national educational developments and financial legislation</li> <li>▪ Ability to simultaneously manage a range or projects through to completion.</li> </ul>	