



Kingfisher  
Schools Trust  
Achieving Success Together



# Chief Finance Officer (CFO) Candidate Pack



## Letter from our CEO

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Finance Officer at Kingfisher Schools Trust – this is a new post at a very exciting time in the development of our trust.

I started as CEO just over a year ago, in July 2023, and much change has already taken place. The trust was previously known as Waveney Valley Academies Trust and originally grew out of Sir John Leman High School in Beccles. Whilst the trust grew from one to seven schools, progress was not secure.

We renamed the trust as Kingfisher Schools in January 2024. The change in name reflects the seriousness with which we approach the journey of rapid change and improvement – in effect, we see Kingfisher as a new trust to support schools in the East of England.

Our ambition to set off on this new journey has been supported by the DFE, who are keen to see us succeed: they back the ambitions set out in the strategic plan we published at the same time as our change of name.

The trust is guided by three key principles of Opportunity, Community, and Excellence. We have two strategic objectives that may appear simple at first glance but commit us to the changes required.

By 2025, we have pledged to:

- Secure clear improvements in the Quality of Education and outcomes across the trust
- Redesign the organisation to be highly effective and efficient in meeting our aims

To support our first aim, we have made significant investment in new leadership to support better education. We appointed an excellent Director of Education and several new headteachers to complement strong colleagues already in post. Our work to align key practices and build meaningful collaboration and professional development in the coming 12 months will further improve outcomes. We have already seen stronger KS2 test results this summer.

Our work to redesign the organisation to date will assist you as the new CFO as we steer the organisation to a strong and sustainable future.

This post emerges from a trust-wide review of support services aimed at strengthening and simplifying what we do. The CFO remit is currently split between two posts of Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director, both of which will be removed from the structure through this review. The new CFO role indicates the

importance of strategic leadership of finance in the next phase of our work.

Our review has also led to centralising the Finance and HR functions of the trust from September, bringing colleagues in schools into new posts in trust-wide teams. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring in better ways of working and make the resources we have go further.

We have improved trust governance through a redesign of our scheme of delegation, Board committees, and local governance. We have an excellent and experienced MAT Chair, several recent trustee appointments, and a governance professional newly in post.

A further strategic objective is to grow in time, to strengthen the trust and develop our capacity and resilience. You will be a key partner with me in making this happen. Whilst this is an appointment to a trust of seven schools with a new name and plan, I am clear that I need to make an appointment for the future, to find a CFO who is excited to be part of growing our organisation to be a flourishing trust. As well as growing our trust through bringing more schools into our community, we are in the fortunate position that six of our schools are full and there is opportunity for expansion, with one high school due to have new accommodation built for 2026.

The exact background and work history you bring to the role is less important than your personal skills and credibility in offering clear and actionable plans to help us strengthen and grow as a trust. The plans and steps you recommend must be high-leverage, moving our trust and each school forward so that they become more efficient, whilst also becoming more focused and effective in their educational aims.

Alongside tailored work with each school, the emphasis will be upon developing sustainable improvement across the trust, collaborating with trustees and key partners such as the ESFA. I want to find a colleague who will relish building the culture together, putting collaboration at the heart of everything.


The scope to make an impact and to shape a great role are fabulous. I hope that this opportunity excites you and that you will consider applying. I would be delighted to speak with you in more detail ahead of your application.

Yours Sincerely

Craig Morrison, CEO



## There are four key dimensions to our new approach




### Foundations and minimum expectations

No trust can meaningfully make progress without a core of practices all schools and leaders can commit to. At Kingfisher, these foundations will begin with minimum expectations for high quality teaching and learning and an ambitious curriculum, leading to improved outcomes for children and young people.

An annual cycle of stakeholder surveys will test whether we are meeting the needs of young people, parents and our staff and inform our plans.

In October 2023 we held a trust conference to launch our Principles for Teaching and Learning and to begin our collaboration across the trust. Teaching for literacy was identified as a key issue to pursue, especially at secondary level.



### Cycle of continuous improvement

Each term there will be a cycle of review and support. Senior leaders in each academy will meet with the Headteacher, trust leaders and the Chair of the academy council to explore key issues. This meeting will inform a bespoke agenda for a follow-up in-depth school support day, the results of which must move the school forward.

We will differentiate the level of support required and have already formed school improvement boards where more rapid progress is needed.

### Working in partnership

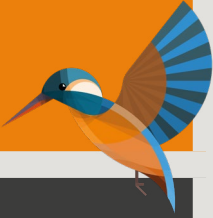
Partnerships add capacity and perspective to our work. We know that collaboration is an intrinsic part of the trust system and this support is especially important to us as our own team begins to grow. We will work with three types of trust partners:

**National/System MATs** – to draw on significant capacity and learn from best practice in the wider system, e.g. United Learning

**Local MAT Partners** – to collaborate on trust reviews and mutually beneficial projects, e.g. Gippeswyk Community Educational Trust, Enrich Learning Trust

**Specialist MATs** – to offer expertise in specific areas of school improvement, e.g. Olive Academies

Networking will challenge leaders to see best practice through programmes such as Challenge Partners.



### Capacity and leadership development

We have made a significant and swift investment in our capacity for school improvement by securing a full time Director of Education with a strong track record to assist the CEO and then build an excellent team.

Sustainable improvement is crucial and we will therefore focus upon leadership development activity, including the new NPQs.





## Our Values

Our values drive what we do; they explain what is important to us.  
Our vision captures our ambitions for the future and what we are all working towards.

<b>Our core values</b> We believe in:	<b>Our vision</b>
<b>Opportunity</b>	<p>We are ambitious for every child in our trust schools and we are dedicated to success for all.</p> <p>The decisions we make as a trust and the way we work is built upon what is right for the young people in our care.</p>
<b>Community</b>	<p>Each school will be a distinctive community that builds confidence in young people.</p> <p>Pupils will grow as individuals, work together and develop an understanding of the world around them.</p>
<b>Excellence</b>	<p>Every child will thrive in a strong school.</p> <p>Expert teachers, supported by strong leaders, bring to life a curriculum that gives pupils the knowledge and skills to succeed.</p>

# Our Schools



Kingfisher Schools Trust  
Prospect House, Loddon Business Park  
Little Money Road, Loddon  
Norfolk  
NR14 6JD



Sir John Leman High School & Sixth Form  
Ringsfield Road  
Beccles  
Suffolk  
NR34 9PG



Roman Hill Primary School  
Avondale Road  
Lowestoft  
Suffolk  
NR32 2NX



Stowmarket High School  
Onehouse Road  
Stowmarket  
Suffolk  
IP14 1QR



Alde Valley Academy  
Seaward Avenue  
Leiston  
Suffolk  
IP16 4BG



Northgate Primary School  
Northgate Street  
Great Yarmouth  
Norfolk  
NR30 1BP



Southtown Primary School  
Tamworth Lane  
Southtown, Great Yarmouth  
Norfolk  
NR31 0HJ



Snape Primary School  
Church Road  
Snape  
Suffolk  
IP17 1QG



## Job Description

Job Title:	Chief Finance Officer (CFO)	Location:	Loddon, Norfolk
Salary:	Competitive	Responsible to:	Chief Executive

### Job Purpose

The CFO is expected to provide strategic leadership to ensure the Trust's financial stability, operational effectiveness and compliance with regulatory requirements. The CFO is a key leader within the trust and a partner to the CEO and Director of Education, working together with the Board to determine and realise the values and ambitions of the Trust.

**Line Management:** Finance Manager and Finance Team; Operations Director; IT Network Manager

**Liases with:** Chief Executive; Trust Board and Chair; Trust Senior Leadership Team; Headteachers; Senior leaders in schools; external agencies and stakeholders, e.g. ESFA; colleague trusts and CFOs

### Key Responsibilities

#### General

- Maintain a secure overview of the management of all financial issues within the Trust and within each of the individual schools.
- Ensure compliance with the requirements of The Academies Handbook and stay abreast of the annual changes, amending our practice as appropriate.
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the Trust, making accurate long-term forecasts and putting in place programmes of change as appropriate.
- Advise the CEO and the Board on all matters relating to the financial strategy, on the impact of their decisions on the financial position of the Trust and on strategic matters, within the framework for financial control determined by the Board.
- Uphold good governance and ethical behaviour including good accounting practices in the finance function and to ensure the Trust upholds good accounting, reporting and internal control systems.
- Act as the lead point of reference for commercial and financial issues, as well as participating in the management of major academy projects, which may include potential growth, as required by the CEO.





## Job Description Continued

- Prepare the consolidated financial statements in the statutory format specified by the ESFA, Companies Acts and Charity Commission for auditing by the external auditors. Ensure the audited statutory accounts are filed by 31st December.
- Prepare monthly management accounts and other ad hoc reporting as required.
- Evaluate information, consult with, and report to, the CEO, Headteachers, and Trustees to prepare a realistic and balanced budget for the successful and sustainable achievement of strategic and operational functions at Trust and school level.
- Submit the proposed budget to the CEO and Trustees for approval and guide the overall financial planning process.
- Maintain a strategic financial plan including (a minimum) 3-year budget plan for the organisation.
- Develop and implement risk management policies and procedures to safeguard the trust's assets and reputation. With the CEO, manage the Trust's risk register and ensure that this is a live, working document.
- Notify the CEO and the Board (if the CEO is implicated) if fraudulent activities are suspected or uncovered.
- Receive, analyse and interpret financial reports, communicating findings in a simplified manner when necessary.
- Research additional funding, revenue/ income opportunities and additional business opportunities.
- Prepare appropriate bids or tender documents to acquire identified additional funds or grants.
- Monitor all control accounts and reports.
- Be a catalyst for driving efficiencies across the Trust – including leading on the year-on-year reduction in spend across key categories such as utilities, consumables, insurances, external support contracts and other unfunded discretionary spends.
- Monitor all bank accounts and cash flow, establishing and managing a 'trust treasury' function to ensure that there is adequate cash flow to meet Trust requirements, taking advantage of interest bearing accounts where appropriate.
- Procure and administer schools Insurance, including all claims.
- Execute the duties of a senior strategic leader, modelling excellent leadership behaviours, in line with our Trust Leadership Charter.
- Perform other ad hoc duties and assignments as may be determined by the CEO.



## Job Description Continued

### Leadership and Strategy

- Attend Trust Board and relevant sub-committee meetings. Prepare accounts, papers and presentations for these meetings as required.
- Negotiate and influence strategic decisions alongside other senior leaders to ensure financial propriety and best value principles are consistently applied.
- Plan and manage change in accordance with the Trust Strategic Plan.
- Lead and manage Finance support staff within the Trust.
- Line manage key colleagues, especially where there is a significant finance/capital dimension, i.e. Director of Operations (Estates/Health and Safety) and Trust Network Manager (IT).

### Compliance

- Liaise with external regulators such as the ESFA/DfE, Charity Commission, Companies House, external auditors and internal auditors as required.
- Develop and maintain the in-house Finance Handbook that sets out the Trust's operational procedures, combining best practice with the latest
- Act upon the Accounts Direction issued by the ESFA.

- Ensure all forms and returns required by the ESFA and the Trust Board are prepared and submitted in the formats specified by the ESFA/DfE and filed by the relevant filing deadline.
- Maintain effective systems of internal audit control.
- Review Trust policies, processes and procedures to ensure compliance with various external regulations including filing deadlines regarding VAT, PAYE, ESFA, DfE, HMRC, Charity Commission and Companies House.
- Ensure principles of best value are adhered to.

### Other

- To play a full part in the life of the Trust, to support our guiding principles and vision, and to encourage staff and students to follow this example.
- To actively promote the Trust's policies.
- To pursue own personal professional development.
- To comply with the Trust's Health and Safety Policy and undertake risk assessments as appropriate.
- To comply with the Trust's procedures concerning safeguarding and to ensure that training is accessed.

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task undertaken may not be identified and a flexible attitude to work is essential.



# Person Specification



	Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	Professional Accountancy qualification, e.g., ICAEW, CIMA, ACCA or CIPFA	•	
	Either Level 7 in Academy Financial and Operational Leadership, or Certificate in the Financial Reporting of Academies (CertFRA) or Masters in Business Administration		•
Experience	Must have experience gained in the education sector, ideally a MAT		•
	Senior resource management and strategic leadership experience, with accountability for complex resource base	•	
	Proven track record of successful leadership and building effective teams	•	
	Significant experience of leading and managing budgets; working with stakeholders to develop strong financial understanding across an organisation	•	
	Experience of developing and managing external relationships with professional and regulatory bodies	•	
	Evidence of entrepreneurialism and innovation, with an ability to identify commercial opportunities to maximise income	•	
	Experience of working within an educational setting		•
	Experience of working with Governors, Trustees, or similar		•
	Experience leading one or more business service disciplines such as IT, Finance, HR, Estates and Administration	•	
	Experience in obtaining additional funding		•
Knowledge	Detailed and up-to-date knowledge of accountancy and professional codes of practice evidenced by meeting CPD requirements	•	
	Advanced knowledge of statutory requirements and funding strategies	•	
	Substantial knowledge and experience of managing pro-procurement and contracts	•	
	Proven awareness and respect for the highly sensitive status of information and its confidentiality	•	
	Understanding of employer pension responsibilities		•
	Up-to-date knowledge of Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts		•
	Knowledge of HR policy, practice and legislation	•	
	Demonstrable commercial acumen	•	
	An understanding/experience of working with external auditors and agencies	•	

# Person Specification Continued



	Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Skills and Qualities	Proficient in the use of MS Office applications and Financial Information Systems	•	
	Strong judgement and the ability to look at risk analysis through a commercial as well as a financial lens	•	
	Excellent analytical skills and sound judgement	•	
	Ability to direct a multi-disciplinary team effectively and demonstrate excellent leadership skills at the forefront of educational practice	•	
	Ability to interpret complex financial information, advice, and statutes and to devise policy/practice autonomously considering these	•	
	Ability to manage own workload without direction, having the ability to prioritise to meet tight deadlines	•	
	Highly effective communications skills and ability to influence and negotiate effectively	•	
	Ability to present complex information to a varied audience	•	
	High ethical standards, strong moral purpose and influencing skills with the ability to engage effectively with all staff across the Trust and Board of Trustees	•	
	Ability to persuade, motivate, negotiate and influence	•	
	Excellent written and presentation skills	•	
	Comfortable and confident to represent both the Board of Trustees and CEO at external meetings and in the wider community, using initiative and discretion as required	•	
	Ability to work autonomously and flexibly	•	
	Ability to influence strategic decision making	•	
	The jobholder maybe required to apply resilience when dealing with emotions/challenges from staff, suppliers, and contractors on an infrequent basis	•	
	A belief that every one can benefit from, and has entitlement to high quality education opportunities	•	
	A personal commitment to lifelong learning and continuous professional development	•	
	Commitment to high standards, best value, and continuous improvement	•	
	Ability to be reflective and self-critical	•	
	Proactive and self-motivated	•	
Resolution-focussed and problem solving	•		



## How to Apply

If you wish to discover more about this exciting opportunity, need any further information or would like to have an informal discussion, please contact Rebecca Beach at Academicis, our recruitment partner, on **rbeach@academicis.co.uk** or by phone on **07733 628155 / 01223 907979**.

To apply please use the link below

**[www.mynewterm.com](http://www.mynewterm.com)**

### **Closing date:**

Thursday 19th September 2024

### **Shortlisting:**

Friday 20th September 2024

### **Interviews:**

w/c 23rd September 2024

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