



# **Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust**

**Chief Financial Officer Recruitment Pack**

**Closing date: 18th September at 12 noon**

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust  
Company number: 15822004

Claire Gaskin, CEO



## A WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### SCHOOLS IN OUR TRUST

- WORFIELD ENDOWED CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
- ST. MARY'S BLUECOAT CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
- BECKBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY
- CHRIST CHURCH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
- MEOLE BRACE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY
- BICTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY
- ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST CE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY
- BOMERE HEATH CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust (SCEAT) is a joint partnership between Hereford Diocese and Lichfield Diocese. Incorporated in July 2024, with the founding group of eight primary schools joining in February 2025, the Trust's vision is to provide high quality, fully inclusive learning opportunities to children across the early years and primary age ranges. Sharing our Christian values, being warm and welcoming to all, knowing our children and their families well and a strong emphasis on meeting the pastoral needs of pupils are at the heart of our Trust's ethos."

Dear Prospective Candidate,

I am delighted that you have expressed an interest in the post of Chief Financial Officer at Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust and hope that after considering all information you will make an application.

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust seek an experienced and highly skilled Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to join our Executive Leadership Team. This position has become available following the planned retirement of our current CFO who has been instrumental in supporting our CEO in establishing our new Trust, ensuring strong foundations on which the new CFO can build.

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As a newly established trust, we are looking to appoint a highly motivated and experienced Chief Financial Officer to join our leadership team. This individual will play a key role in shaping and driving the financial strategy of the Trust, ensuring the financial health and sustainability of the organisation as we continue to grow. The CFO will be responsible for overseeing the financial operations of the Trust, including budgeting, financial planning, forecasting, and reporting. As an executive leader, the CFO will work collaboratively with the CEO and Board of Directors to ensure that the Trust's resources are being used efficiently to support our educational vision. You will play a vital role in developing robust financial processes, ensuring compliance, and providing strategic advice to support decision-making across the Trust. relationships with the Trust's senior leaders and central team, as well as establish effective partnerships with external bodies and the Trust Board.

The successful candidate will be passionate about ensuring the financial sustainability of our Trust while supporting our mission to help every pupil achieve their potential. You will be expected to uphold the highest standards of financial integrity and accountability, ensuring that safeguarding is central to the financial systems, processes, and strategies we implement across the Trust. We are looking for an individual who resonates with our vision and values, someone who is committed to leading us in a way that enhances both educational and financial outcomes for all our learners. I hope you are excited by the prospect of this post and will submit an application.

Kind regards,

*Malcolm J Maclean JP*

Chair of the Board of Directors



## THE ROLE

Job title	Chief Financial Officer
Responsible to	Chief Executive Officer (Accounting Officer)
Hours of work	Full Time, Permanent (52 weeks per year) 37 hours per week (Monday to Friday)
Salary	Shropshire NJC scale point 49—53 (£61,154—£65,602) (Salary to be kept under review in-line with Trust growth)
Start date	As soon as possible but ideally no later than January 2026
Base	Usual place of work: St. Mary's Bluecoat CE Primary School, Bridgnorth, WV15 5EQ  The Trust is based at St. Mary's Bluecoat CE Primary School, Bridgnorth however some remote/home working is possible as well as a requirement to travel to schools within the Trust or those considering joining us.

We are seeking a dedicated and strategic financial leader to guide the Trust through its next phase of development. The CFO will play a pivotal role in ensuring financial excellence and long-term sustainability across our multi-academy trust.

### As CFO, you will:

- Provide expert financial leadership and strategic advice
- Ensure sound financial governance and compliance
- Oversee all aspects of financial management across the Trust
- Work closely with the CEO and small finance team to support informed decision-making
- Be a key member of the executive leadership team, contributing to the Trust's overall vision and success

### The ideal candidate will have:

- Proven experience in financial leadership at a senior level, preferably in an education or a public sector setting
- A recognised professional finance qualification (e.g. ACCA, CIMA, ACA, CPA)
- Excellent communication and strategic planning skills
- The ability to work collaboratively across teams and provide high-quality financial insight and direction



## MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Main purpose

The CFO is responsible for the financial development and sustainability of Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust, and for the financial probity of the organisation.

They will be responsible for providing the leadership and management of the trust's finance and business functions, enabling the trust to work effectively towards its aims.

They will support the CEO in their role as the trust's accounting officer.

### Duties and responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities listed below are indicative of the tasks the CFO will perform, and are not intended to be an exhaustive list. The postholder will be expected to take on additional responsibilities appropriate to the role as they arise.

### Strategic leadership and trust development

The CFO will be accountable for supporting the trust's strategic development and aims through effective financial planning and management, in line with regulations.

The CFO will:

Advise the CEO, board and other trust leaders on all matters relating to financial strategy and operations

- Contribute to the development and implementation of the trust's strategy, providing financial analysis and guidance on all activities, setting financial objectives and monitoring performance
- Conduct financial due diligence on schools applying to join the trust, and report to the board and other trust leaders with recommendations
- Contribute to the trust's risk management efforts, including identifying strategic and operational financial risks, taking steps to mitigate these risks, and maintaining the trust's risk register
- Develop, implement and monitor the trust's business plan, using effective financial and budget modelling and benchmarking to support strong decision-making

### Financial management and control

The CFO will be accountable for maintaining robust financial management of the trust and its academies.

The CFO will:

- Manage the budget process, from planning through to approval, working with other trust leaders
- Work with school leaders and business managers within the trust to prepare and monitor individual academies' budgets in line with school development plans and the trust's strategic objectives



## MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Financial management and control (continued)

- Provide accurate and timely information to the board and other trust leaders to enable effective budgetary control
- Develop, implement and monitor the trust's financial policies and procedures on procurement, virements, asset management and disposal in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook, enabling robust financial management
- Take appropriate action to address financial risks, problems and irregularities
- Develop and maintain an effective internal audit procedure for the trust and its academies, including producing audit reports and making recommendations for improvement
- Manage the external audit procedures for the trust and its academies, and follow up on any recommendations resulting from audits
- Establish and monitor effective procurement procedures in order to achieve financial efficiencies, including overseeing the tendering process
- Oversee the trust's commercial contracts, ensuring they represent value for money
- Arrange and manage necessary insurance arrangements for the trust
- Manage the trust's tax and National Insurance arrangements, including ensuring claims for VAT and business rates are submitted and refunds are received and appropriately accounted for
- Manage the trust's cash position at all times, including overseeing bank deposits
- Support the income generation strategy for the trust and its academies

### Reporting and compliance

The CFO will be accountable for ensuring that the trust complies with its legal obligations, adheres to financial regulations, and submits accurate financial reports in a timely manner.

The CFO will:

- Complete and submit financial returns as required by the Department for Education, the Charities Commission and Companies House
- Prepare and submit the trust's financial returns and reports, including annual accounts and monthly management accounts
- Maintain the trust's accounts in line with the funding agreement and the Academies Financial Handbook
- Monitor developments to legislation around payroll, pensions and benefits, implementing changes and adapting processes as required
- Provide appropriate and timely reports to the trust board and other trust leaders to support effective leadership and governance



## MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Leadership and management

The CFO will be accountable for supporting the effective management of the trust and its academies, and for providing motivational leadership at all levels of the trust's organisation.

The CFO will:

- Take responsibility for the trust's financial management system (Access) including managing user access, providing training, considering future system developments and generating reports
- Manage the small central finance team, school business managers, and school administrators with financial responsibilities, taking responsibility for their professional development and ensuring best practice is observed at all times
- Develop the trust's central finance services, ensuring these are fit for purpose and provide a high-quality service to individual schools, helping the Trust achieve continuous improvement
- Work with our payroll provider (Hoople Ltd) to support the effective delivery of payroll services for the trust and its academies
- Develop effective relationships with the trust's stakeholders and partners in order to support its development and operation
- Act as a representative for the trust in external networks and forums, raising the profile of the trust, engaging with the wider sector, and ensuring that the trust is alert to information, changes and opportunities that could affect its work

This job description may be amended at any time in consultation with the postholder.



## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full CCAB, CIMA or equivalent accountancy qualification (e.g. ACA, ACCA, CIPFA)</li> <li>- Evidence of continuous professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Postgraduate qualification in finance, education leadership or business</li> <li>- School Business Leadership qualification (e.g. DSBM, CSBM)</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proven experience in a senior financial leadership role, ideally within a complex, multi-stakeholder organisation</li> <li>- Experience of preparing budgets, forecasts, and financial reports</li> <li>- Demonstrable experience of strategic financial planning and risk management</li> <li>- Experience of leading finance teams and developing financial capability in others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experience working within the education sector, preferably a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)</li> <li>- Experience of capital projects and estates funding</li> <li>- Familiarity with the Academies Financial Handbook and DfE funding mechanisms</li> </ul>
Knowledge and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong understanding of financial regulations, compliance, and best practice</li> <li>- Familiarity with governance and regulatory frameworks relevant to MATs</li> <li>- Knowledge of financial systems and reporting software</li> <li>- Understanding of the link between finance and educational outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding of charitable status and related financial structures</li> <li>- Knowledge of Church of England ethos and how it informs Trust culture and values</li> </ul>
Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excellent analytical and problem-solving skills</li> <li>- Ability to present complex financial information clearly to non-financial stakeholders, including Trustees</li> <li>- High-level leadership and interpersonal skills</li> <li>- Ability to manage competing priorities under pressure</li> <li>- Strong ICT skills, especially in Excel and financial management systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to influence and negotiate effectively at senior levels</li> <li>- Ability to support income generation strategies (e.g. bid writing, fundraising)</li> </ul>
Personal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Committed to the mission and Christian values of the Trust</li> <li>- High integrity, honesty, and ethical standards</li> <li>- Strategic thinker with a collaborative, service-oriented mindset</li> <li>- Resilient, adaptable, and proactive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Willing to support the Trust's Christian ethos in decision-making and culture</li> </ul>
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Willingness to work flexibly and travel between Trust schools</li> <li>- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowledge of the local education landscape in Shropshire</li> </ul>



## HOW TO APPLY

### How to Apply

Applications should be submitted using the official Trust application form, available alongside this document and on our website: [www.sceat.org.uk](http://www.sceat.org.uk). In addition you are invited to submit a letter of application structured around the key requirements of the role as set out in this application pack, providing relevant examples from your career to date which demonstrate why you are a suitable candidate for this role. Ideally this should be no longer than 2 sides of A4.

Completed applications should be emailed to [recruitment@hoopleltd.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@hoopleltd.co.uk)

### Informal Discussion

Prospective applicants are warmly encouraged to contact the CEO, Mrs Claire Gaskin, for an informal and confidential discussion about the role. To arrange a suitable time please email Mrs Erica Skidmore, PA to the CEO, using the email address [contact@sceat.org.uk](mailto:contact@sceat.org.uk)

### Closing Date

Thursday, 18th September 2025, by **12:00 noon**.

### Shortlisting Process

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. If you have not heard from us within **three weeks of the closing date**, please assume your application has not been successful on this occasion.

### Interviews

Interviews are anticipated to take place during the week commencing **Monday, 27th September 2025**, at **St. Mary's Bluecoat CE Primary School**, Bridgnorth.

### Safeguarding:

Shropshire Church of England Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils and expects all those working at the Trust or within its schools to share this commitment.

The Trust is required under law and guidance to check the criminal background of all employees. Decisions to appoint will be subject to consideration of an Enhanced Disclosure, including a Barred List check from the Disclosure and Barring Service. Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013 and 2020).

The successful applicant will be required to complete a confidential medical questionnaire. The Trust may carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of our due diligence and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which we may wish to explore with you at interview.

Academies Trust is committed to promoting equality, challenging discrimination and developing community cohesion. We welcome applications from all sections of the community.