



**THE  
COWPLAIN  
SCHOOL**

**APPLICATION PACK:**

**Chief Financial Officer**



## Chief Financial Officer

Grade G (£46,140pa to £51,445pa) *pay award pending*

37 hours per week, 52 weeks per year (Full-time)

The Cowplain School wishes to appoint a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to replace our existing colleague who is retiring after a long and successful career with the academy.

As your role is leading finance in a single academy trust, you will have responsible for the overall performance of finance within the academy, ensuring long-term financial sustainability. Working with the Principal in his role as Accounting Officer, you will deliver operational rigour and strategic direction, providing accurate and effective information to the Principal, SLT and Board of Trustees.

You should be someone who has a strong financial background and who can think strategically, creatively and innovatively, whilst being commercially astute. As you will be working with young people, you also need a passion for working in an educational environment and must be able to form positive relationships with key stakeholders, including trustees, staff, parents and children.

This is an exciting time to be joining the school as we continue to expand and build on the success of the last few years during which we have significantly invested in the school site. Our intake each year has increased as more and more families choose Cowplain for their child and with this increase in students comes an increase in income and subsequent investment.

We have some exciting projects in the pipeline which will require your expertise and commercial acumen to deliver successfully and you will play a key role in ensuring they are delivered successfully and on budget.

The job description and person specification contained in the application pack detail the skills, aptitudes and experience required to succeed in the role. We realise that the role may be a promotion for you and are happy to invest in training and continued professional development so that you are able to fulfil the role confidently and effectively.

The core hours for this post are Monday to Thursday 8.00am to 3.30pm, Friday 8.00am to 3.00pm. The successful candidate should be prepared to work flexibly at key times of the year. 25 days holiday are provided initially, plus bank holidays. (*Due to the academy's financial year, 10 days must be taken in the summer holiday, 5 days in the Christmas holiday*).

To request an application pack please email Mrs Amanda Simmons via [a.simmons@cowplainschool.co.uk](mailto:a.simmons@cowplainschool.co.uk) or access via [www.cowplainschool.co.uk/about-us/vacancies/](http://www.cowplainschool.co.uk/about-us/vacancies/). If you wish to apply for this post you will need to return a fully completed The Cowplain School application form to Mrs Amanda Simmons, PA to the Principal, via email or post to The Cowplain School, Hart Plain Avenue, Cowplain, Waterlooville, Hants, PO8 8RY.

The closing date for receipt of fully completed Cowplain School application forms is midday on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

*The Academy reserves the right to interview earlier should suitable candidates apply.*

*The Cowplain School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment. All successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks along with other relevant employment checks.*



## Join us on our journey to excellence!

Thank you for your interest in the post of **Chief Financial Officer** at The Cowplain School. I sincerely hope that you will continue your application and wanted to share with you a few words that I hope will convince you to apply.

The position of CFO is an extremely exciting opportunity to play a key role in the continued financial stability of the academy. You will lead two other members of the finance team and will work closely with myself and the trustees to make key financial decisions and ensure that the school meets its statutory financial and compliance duties.

I know that applying for a new position is a big decision so I thought it would be useful to explain why I think The Cowplain School is the right choice for your career.

Firstly, the school has a long track record of financial stability and has also demonstrated commercial acumen in delivery major infrastructure projects. We expect this to continue and require a CFO who can play a significant part in the school's continued success.

In addition, the school is part of a community that values it and parents and students enjoy attending Cowplain and are very proud of it. The school provides a caring and inclusive environment that values each child. Staff are committed to ensuring the best outcomes for young people.

Like all schools, we have an exciting challenge ahead of us to raise the standards of attainment and achievement in the school. Results have already improved dramatically but we want to improve them even further and I am looking for staff who can help raise standards. I am extremely ambitious for the school and its students and require colleagues who share this ambition. The CFO will play a significant role in ensuring financial stability so that the school is able to continue to effectively invest in our young people.

The desire to accept the challenge should, I trust, be one that inspires and motivates you to apply; if you are successful I can offer you the opportunity to play a big part in the continued and future success of The Cowplain School through the chance to enhance the whole school experience for each child.

For more information about the school, please consult our website [www.cowplainschool.co.uk](http://www.cowplainschool.co.uk). To receive more information or ask any questions that may inform your application, please contact Mrs Amanda Simmons, PA to the Principal:

[a.simmons@cowplainschool.co.uk](mailto:a.simmons@cowplainschool.co.uk)

Once again, thank you for your interest in the post.

Ian Gates  
Principal



## Information for applicants

Pay scale – Grade G (range equates to £46,140 to £51,455 per annum) *pay award pending*

Hours of work - Monday to Thursday 8.00am to 3.30pm, Friday 8.00am to 3.00pm.  
The successful candidate should be prepared to work flexibly at key times of the year.

25 days holiday are provided initially, plus bank holidays. (*Due to the academy's financial year, 10 days must be taken in the summer holiday, 5 days in the Christmas holiday*).

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Mrs A Simmons  
PA to the Principal  
The Cowplain School  
Hart Plain Avenue  
Cowplain  
Waterlooville  
Hants  
PO8 8RY

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## Job Description

**Post Title:** Chief Financial Officer

**Grade:** G

**Responsible to:** Principal

### Purpose of role:

- Responsible for managing the finance operations of the school and leading the finance team
- Responsible for financial management and control, including accounting system, records, financial operations and financial management information in accordance with the Academies Trust Handbook
- Financial reporting
- Management of communications (e.g. Auditors, Education & Skills Funding Agency etc..)
- Support the Principal in his role as Accounting Officer
- Working strategically with the Principal in planning and budgeting for current and future financial investment

### Key Responsibilities

#### Finance:

- Month end control account reconciliations, including bank reconciliations, credit card payments, payroll control, VAT returns, accruals and prepayments, deferred income, sundry debtor additions and reversals. Monthly reconciliation of transactions imported from external systems, i.e. catering and school hire income.
- Monthly budget monitoring to update budgets and forecast.
- Produce monthly management reports for the Principal and Trustees' review and approval – reporting current revenue and capital position, balance sheet, cashflow forecast and KPI's
- Prepare three-year budget annually for review with Principal and presentation to Trustees for review, approval and submission to the ESFA
- Authorise purchase orders and invoices posted into the finance system in accordance with financial limits.
- Check and authorise all supplier BACS payments prior to posting in the bank.
- Authorise all bank payments set by the Finance Officer in accordance with financial limits.
- Authorise contract renewals in accordance with the Procurement Policy limits and seek new contracts when required.
- Review/approve school trips and activities on the Hampshire Evolve system.
- Preparing Benchmarking information annually for review and discussion with Trustees
- Attend Finance, Audit and Risk Committee meetings 7 times/year.
- Meet with the Chair of the Committee in advance of the meeting to discuss the agenda and outstanding items.
- Prepare all reports and other documentation required for meetings in accordance with the annual schedule of work identified in the Terms of Reference.
- Review and monitor investment options, reporting to trustees and recommending strategy and policy
- Check, upload and monitor Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) and other bids
- Engage with third parties to secure grants and subsequent tender bids
- Oversee tender processes and the effective and compliant procurement of major contracts
- Contribute to the development of major projects from conception to completion

**Compliance:**

Responsible for:

- Management of school accounting, budgeting and financial record systems, including coding structure and coding changes.
- Management of income and expenditure operational systems and procedures, including BACS, online payments in and out, cashless systems, cash procedures and banking.
- Review and maintaining appropriate and effective systems and procedures for financial control, in line with regulatory and audit requirements and agreed policies.
- Changes required to online banking processes and signatories
- Engaging with external auditors to provide all documentation required for the annual audit.
- Support Trustees in identifying areas for annual Internal Audit programme.
- Review and respond to any control weaknesses identified through Internal or External audits and ensure any recommendations/findings are implemented.
- Operate and amend the school's risk register and advise SLT and Trustees as to the school's risk liability
- Engage with third parties to secure tenders for capital projects
- Completion and submission of all approved financial reports and returns to the ESFA in line with agreed regulatory timetables, including:
  - Budget Forecast Return
  - Audited Annual Accounts
  - Annual Accounts Return
  - School Resource Management Self Assessment Return
  - Land and Buildings Collection Return
- Updating internal policies/documentation for approval by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, including:
  - Scheme of Delegation
  - Investment Policy
  - Expenses and Hospitality Policy
  - Fraud Policy
  - Risk Management Policy
  - Reserves Policy
  - Procurement Policy
  - Charges and Remissions Policy
  - Financial Procedures Manual
- Maintaining the Trustees Declaration of Pecuniary Interest Register, ensuring it is up to date reviewed at least annually and any interests are reported in accordance with the Academies Trust Handbook.

**Administration**

- Line management of finance personnel / annual reviews
- Day to day administration
- Meeting with other Academy Finance/Business Management personnel 3 times/year to discuss current topics and share best practice
- Liaise with parents re payments, catering, accounts etc...

**Other**

- Appointed Company Secretary – responsible for completing Companies House Annual Return and adding/removing Trustees in accordance with reporting requirements.
- Such other duties as may reasonably be allocated by the Principal within the purview of the post.

**Chief Financial Officer: Person Specification**

	Essential	Desirable
Formal Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountancy or financial management qualification</li> <li>GCSE English &amp; Maths C+</li> <li>Evidence of continuing professional development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of further/higher education (A levels/Degree)</li> <li>AAT Qualification or equivalent or working towards</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in a financial management role</li> <li>Managing multiple stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in school, specifically academy, financial management</li> </ul>
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a high level of financial management ability</li> <li>A very high level of proficiency with Excel and financial software programmes</li> <li>Ability to work to regulatory deadlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarity with Access Education Finance and Budgeting software</li> </ul>
Aptitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work independently and make decision without close supervision</li> <li>People management</li> <li>Excellent verbal and written communication and presentation</li> <li>Accuracy and attention to detail</li> <li>Numeracy</li> <li>Organisation</li> <li>Collaborative working</li> <li>Ability to work successfully in a school environment</li> </ul>	
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in education and achieving best outcomes for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interest in working with young people outside the parameters of the specific position</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexibility to meet the demands and time-commitments of the post, especially at key specific times of the year</li> </ul>	