

Job Description: Regional Finance Director (North London)

Reports to: Ark Schools Finance Director

Direct Reports: 3x Senior Finance Managers and a wider regional finance team (Finance Managers/Officers/Assistants) totalling 16 across 9 schools (as of February 2024)

Location: North London region

Contract: Permanent

Pattern: Full Time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm). Will consider 0.8 FTE

Salary: £70,000 to £80,000 (depending on experience)

About the role:

The Regional Finance Director will provide the overall leadership and management for all aspects of finance to Ark Schools in the North London region. The role will be focussed on ensuring processes are embedded across all schools; supporting schools new to the network (or with new staff structures) with transition as well as leading, with regard to finance, on strategic projects within the schools.

Our ideal candidate will be able to demonstrate:

- Experience in the implementation of financial processes, planning and reporting
- Extensive experience in successfully managing and motivating a team
- A highly organised and proactive approach to work

Key Responsibilities

Overall

- To be a member of the Ark Central Finance Team, ensuring that the network financial strategies and processes are being carried out at all Birmingham schools, including those planning to join the network
- To be a member of the North London Senior Leadership Team, with responsibility for strategic financial management and financial performance
- To be responsible for all aspects of finance at the academies and developing the in-school finance teams to provide a high-level service to their principals and operations leads
- To be entrepreneurial, developing income generating and cost reducing strategies
- To take the lead, financially, on strategic projects within the region
- To assist with finance requirements for transitioning new schools to the network, including systems set-up, staff training and implementation of policies & procedures
- To contribute to the achievement of the educational vision for Ark academies
- To work with Ark Central, and other academies in the Ark network, to develop, implement and embed standardised processes and procedures
- To pilot new ways of working and project manage implementation of new technologies to improve efficiencies and benchmarking across all schools
- To develop relationships with key financial partners, including local authorities

Financial

- To be responsible directly to the Schools Finance Director for the strategic financial management in all schools in the region
- To be responsible to the North London Regional Director, Principals and Local Governing Bodies for all financial and accounting procedures, including the Scheme of Delegation
- To control, monitor and evaluate the academies' finances, ensuring compliance with financial requirements and value for money
- To be responsible for salary forecasts, preparing annual plans of the regions' priorities in consultation with the Principals and Regional Director, and the annual budgets for approval by Ark Central and review by the Local Governing Bodies
- To be responsible for including financial information to strategic projects and ensuring plans and approval processes are managed in line with regional and Central requirements
- To be responsible for managing financial inspections by internal and external audit and other bodies and ensure action is taken on any recommendations made

- To be responsible for the development and implementation of robust financial systems and processes, including their on-going review and opportunities for improvement
- To ensure clear and timely management and financial accounts as required for the Regional Director, Principals, Local Governing Bodies and Ark Central
- To ensure the effective implementation and operation of financial controls within the academies and support budget managers with budget reports and budget management
- To support the schools by preparing bids and claiming grants and other funding, ensuring all streams of revenue are fully secured and accounted for
- To ensure any tax obligations are discharged correctly and effectively
- To be responsible for the production, maintenance and review of the Academies' risk registers and take action to address any high-risk areas
- To implement and manage cash-flow forecasting to ensure that the academies' cash positions are consistent with obligations and surpluses invested prudently
- To line manage all finance staff in the region, either directly or through the Senior Finance Managers
- To ensure prompt and efficient completion of monthly, quarterly and annual returns, as required by the Regional Director, Principals, Local Governing Bodies, Ark Schools and by outside bodies including the ESFA, local authority, pension schemes and His Majesty's Revenue and Customs
- To maintain regular liaison with banks and auditors
- To ensure that effective credit controls are in place in respect of income, i.e. catering, lettings, etc.
- To assist the central finance team with finance requirements for transitioning new schools to the network, including due diligence and systems set-up. Responsible for staff training and implementation of policies & procedures

Purchasing & Contracts

- To support the Schools' Operations Leads to achieve the most competitive pricing for goods and services in compliance with current and relevant procurement legislation
- To work with the Operations Leads to negotiate, manage and monitor contracts, tenders and agreements for the provision of services to the Academies, to ensure that services are delivered to a high quality and support the operation of the Academies

Payroll & Pensions

- To work with the HR Business Partner to oversee all matters relating to payroll, including His Majesty's Revenue and Customs queries, National Insurance, benefits in lieu of pay (travel loans etc.), Give as You Earn scheme, and to ensure that appropriate controls are in place and robust checks are made in relation to the monthly payroll
- To work with HR Business Partner and school HR teams to ensure the region's processes for pensions management and reporting are in place. This includes monthly and annual returns as well as audit, however noting that the administration of payroll and pensions is outsourced and led by HR

Staff Management & Team Work

- To develop, enable and strategically lead a team of finance staff to deliver the vision for the region against its strategic priorities and timescales
- To support the Schools' Senior Leadership Teams in managing change
- To arrange or deliver finance training for staff in North London, maintaining an on-going review of need
- Input into, and lead, wider network finance trainings as necessary
- Travel to one of the other regions, typically in London once or twice a term

Other

- To work in collaboration with other operations staff at Ark Central, and counterparts in other Ark schools
- To take an active role, with other network Regional Finance Directors, to ensure network standardisation and priorities are rolled out to the Birmingham region

- To drive forward change and initiatives which promote regularity, propriety, value for money and best standards
- To carry out other reasonable tasks from time to time as directed by the Ark Schools Finance Director

Person Specification: Regional Finance Director (North London)

Qualifications

- Professional accountancy qualification, including significant post-qualifying experience
- A record of Continuing Professional Development activities

Knowledge & Skills

- Experience as a member of a senior management team
- Experience and/or knowledge of schools or education finance & administration would be desirable, but not essential
- Knowledge and experience of financial management systems and processes
- Experience of implementing financial policies and procedures
- Experience of leading and managing budgeting and reporting processes in an organisation
- Experience of strategic financial planning and supporting decision-making
- Experience of preparing and presenting financial reports and presentations for various stakeholders
- Experience of working with a range of internal and external partners including non-finance personnel
- Extensive experience of managing and motivating staff and monitoring performance against targets

Personal Qualities

- Ability to ensure confidentiality is always maintained
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Ability to interpret complex legislation regulations
- Ability to influence and participate in the academy management processes
- Ability to prioritise and manage conflicting demands
- Proactive and innovative demonstrable approach to work
- Strong people management skills, with highly developed interpersonal and motivational skills
- Strong organisational, project management and planning skills
- Strong financial management skills
- Evidence of well-developed ICT skills

Other

- Right to work in the UK
- Commitment to equality of opportunity and the safeguarding and welfare of all students
- Willingness to undertake training
- This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check

Ark is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its academies. In order to meet this responsibility, its academies follow a rigorous selection process to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.

Ark requires all employees to undertake an enhanced DBS check. You are required, before appointment, to disclose any unspent conviction, cautions, reprimands or warnings under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. Non-disclosure may lead to termination of employment. However, disclosure of a criminal background will not necessarily debar you from employment - this will depend upon the nature of the offence(s) and when they occurred. To read more about Ark's safer recruitment process, please click this [link](#).

We aim to build a diverse and inclusive organisation where everyone – staff and students – can do their best work and achieve their full potential. We want to reflect and represent diverse perspectives across our organisation because we know that doing so will make us stronger and more effective. To know more about Ark's diversity and inclusion commitments, please click on this [link](#).