

A photograph of two young children on a playground. A boy in the foreground is smiling broadly and holding onto a yellow metal bar. A girl is partially visible behind him, looking towards the camera.

Make a difference to
the lives of children
and young people
every day

Trust Finance Manager

Information
& Person Specification

Pride Passion Partnership Professionalism Positivity



"We are a family. There is so much teamwork and collaboration - each person has got something to bring."

Staff Member

The Bridge Trust

The Bridge Trust is an ambitious family of schools which embraces the individuality of everyone, both children and adults. We are committed to get learning right and we're always looking for new and better ways of doing things. Everything is about doing the best for our children and young people.

We place children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

We improve lives through innovative and integrated approaches.

Our five values – the 5 Ps underpin our work:

Positivity Passion Pride Partnership Professionalism

These values are central to the success of our family of schools.

Our family of schools

The Bridge Trust currently oversees a diverse family of schools and services. In London, it has five schools, including three special schools and two mainstream primary schools, alongside a Training and Development Centre and an Outreach Service. The Trust's reach extends beyond the capital to Norfolk, where it oversees The Bridge Easton in Norwich and Fen Rivers School in King's Lynn, and to Essex, where it oversees The Bridge Columbus in Chelmsford and The Bridge Pioneer School in Basildon.



The Bridge School is a large special school which provides for pupils with severe learning difficulties and/or autism. It is based on two sites, a Primary site and a Secondary site. The Bridge School has been judged outstanding by Ofsted in its last three inspections. A key focus of the primary curriculum is to offer a wide range of educational experiences. The secondary curriculum focuses increasingly, as the pupils progress through the school, on preparation for life after school, looking at accreditation options, independence and belonging and contributing to the community.

We have always been committed to supporting staff and pupils in other schools and sharing the knowledge we have. It was a natural progression for the CEO/Executive Headteacher to become a National Leader of Education in 2009 and the school to become a Teaching School in 2011. This has enabled us to offer a wide variety of training opportunities to our own staff and staff from other schools, develop an initial teacher training programme through School Direct, support other schools who may be facing challenging circumstances through facilitating our staff and staff from other schools to provide advice and support, and to develop and promote research in our own school and across the network of schools we work with.

Through partnership with the Local Authority, we provide advice and support to all the mainstream schools in the borough of Islington on addressing the needs of pupils with autism or severe learning difficulties. This support is provided by a highly respected, small dedicated team of professionals who aim to work with schools to pass on their knowledge and develop skills in school-based staff.

"This is an innovative school. We have new school buildings, sensory rooms, cutting edge technology...

Also, practice is innovative. We try out new ideas and support each other"

Member of Staff at a Trust School



Two boys are captured in mid-air, jumping over a yellow hurdle in a brightly lit school hallway. The boy on the left is wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts, while the boy on the right is wearing a grey t-shirt and dark trousers. Other students are visible in the background, also engaged in the activity.

Positivity

Passion

Pride

Partnership

Professionalism

The leadership team of The Bridge recognised that there was a small group of pupils whose needs meant that they were often being placed in residential schools, many miles from their homes. We felt given the right approach we could meet the needs of these pupils. We used the opportunities provided by the opening of Free Schools to develop a new provision for pupils with extremely complex needs which often included sensory overload and behaviour which challenges. This school opened in January 2015 and is called The Bridge Integrated Learning Space (ILS). Staffing at The Bridge School is typically one member of staff to every two pupils, whereas at the ILS it is at least one member of staff per pupil. Each pupil is assigned to a class team, however many of them have individualised timetables. The focus of much of the work at the ILS is to support the pupils to feel safe in the school and community and to develop appropriate independence skills. This allows them to access other learning opportunities. In October 2017 Ofsted considered the school to be outstanding at its first inspection.

In September 2017 we opened our second Free School. This school is called The Satellite School and it provides for pupils with autism who benefit from access to a mainstream curriculum but are not able to access mainstream education. This school is based on four sites, and each site is located adjacent to a mainstream school. This allows us to provide for the very special needs of these pupils whilst also accessing opportunities for inclusion. Three of these sites cater for primary age pupils, one for pupils in Key Stage 3.



Also in September 2017, The Bridge Trust was approved as a sponsor for Hungerford Primary School. The schools have a long-standing relationship as The Bridge Primary School is next door to Hungerford Primary School. Hungerford School was placed in special measures by Ofsted. We have recruited new staff to the school and put in place the leadership and coaching structures and systems which work in all of our other schools. We recognise that our expertise is special schools, but it is also running outstanding schools. We are implementing what can be transferred to a primary setting at Hungerford and also making sure that we ensure access to primary expertise. We have done this through setting up a School Improvement Board which ensures support and advice from local head teachers, from community and independent schools, and the Local Authority school improvement service. We appreciate that the school has a journey to undertake but our intention is for this too to be an outstanding school.

Since 2022, the Trust has grown considerably beyond its London roots, expanding into the East of England through the addition of four special schools. This includes The Bridge Easton and Fen Rivers School in Norfolk, alongside The Bridge Columbus and The Bridge Pioneer School in Essex. This growth marks an important milestone in the Trust's development, enabling it to support a greater number of pupils, families and communities while strengthening its specialist educational provision across multiple regions.

The Bridge Trust is unique, but not only in the collection of provision we have. We also have a set of fundamental principles which drive and inform us.

We are driven by our values – the five Ps – pride, passion, professionalism, positivity and partnership. All decisions and developments are anchored on these values. When recruiting we look for staff who will buy into and uphold these values.

We put children at the heart of everything we do. Whenever looking at new ways of doing things we consider the impact this will have on the children. We believe in developing staff, not constraining them. Our staff are the greatest resources our pupils have. We recognise that there are no absolute answers in the best ways to educate our pupils, so we look to encourage staff creativity. We want people to try new ways of working (within safe parameters). We give staff a framework to work within but encourage appropriate risks to be taken.

We want to learn from others and encourage staff to engage with the research literature. This is supported by our Training & Development Service. We also recognise that when working with the pupils in our schools it is not always about engagement with the evidence, but sometimes about informed creation of the evidence. Our research officer will support staff to create and share evidence using appropriate, well-considered methodologies.

As a part of this commitment and desire to learn from others we actively engage in school improvement networks. The Trust is a part of Challenge Partners, a national school improvement network where schools support each other to improve. We lead a hub of over 30 special schools who network and learn from each other. We are also members of Maamulaha, a local network of schools, mostly mainstream. There is some overlap of these schools with our Teaching School Alliance (TSA) but there are other schools in the TSA who we also work with.

We have always been committed to engaging positively with our pupils and this is one of our values. We have recently worked with the British Institute of Learning Disability (BILD) and the Windesheim University of Applied Sciences, Amsterdam to introduce Positive Behaviour Support to all of our schools, mainstream and special. We are committed to working with all our pupils with a positive focus.

What next? We do not stand still. We want to continue improving what we do, so that we can improve the offer to our pupils. We are not maverick in our approach to improvement, it is done in a considered way, but creativity and 'thinking outside the box' is encouraged. Each of our schools continually looks at how it can develop further. Being part of the Trust allows students to learn across our schools and support implementing some new strategies. We feel that 'together we are greater than our parts'. We learn from each other. We challenge each other. We support each other.

We have also considered how the Trust will further develop. We would welcome other schools and organisations joining us. But this needs to be a partnership that both the present schools in the Trust and the new organisation would benefit from.



Job Description

Post Title: Trust Finance Manager

Location Central Team, The Bridge Trust (London) with work at and for education provisions across the Trust.

Department: Based at the Trust's Central Office with a requirement to undertake work at and for education provisions across the Trust.

Contract: Permanent - Full time (35 hours a week); AYR

Responsible to: Head of Finance

Responsible for: Finance Officers and Finance Assistants

Core Purpose

The Bridge Trust is seeking an experienced Finance Manager to take responsibility for the day-to-day operation of its central finance function. Working closely with the Head of Finance, the post holder will help ensure that financial services are consistent, accurate, compliant and responsive across the Trust.

This is a hands-on management role for a qualified accountant, combining technical finance expertise with people leadership, operational delivery, and practical problem-solving. While a recognised professional accounting qualification is preferred, we will also consider candidates with AAT Level 4 qualification and significant relevant experience who can demonstrate a strong track record of successful financial management.

You will translate the Trust's financial framework into effective day-to-day practice, ensuring that month-end, reporting, cash management, VAT, reconciliations, procurement, systems and financial controls are delivered to a high standard

Key Focus

The Finance Manager will take ownership of the Trust's operational finance cycle, ensuring that financial processes work effectively from transaction processing through to month-end reporting, cash management, compliance and supporting audit preparation. Other focuses will be operational finance leadership, management accounting, compliance, systems, cash management, team development and school support.

What makes this role important?

Operational leadership Manage the central finance team and coordinate delivery against clear deadlines and service standards.	Reliable information Produce accurate management accounts, forecasts, cashflow information, reconciliations and financial analysis.
Consistency across schools Ensure Trust finance procedures are applied consistently and that school finance colleagues receive practical support.	Compliance Maintain strong adherence to the Academy Handbook, Charities SORP, VAT requirements and Trust financial procedures.
Systems & improvement Maintain the finance and integrated budget planning systems and support improvements to processes and controls.	People development Coach, support and develop finance staff and provide training to school-based colleagues.

Duties and responsibilities:

Leadership and Management

- Provide day-to-day line management of the central finance team, including Finance Officers and Finance Assistants.
- Oversee development of new finance system and account payable package
- Allocate work effectively, monitor performance, manage priorities and support colleagues to meet agreed deadlines and service standards.
- Conduct performance management, identify development needs and promote a culture of accuracy, accountability, continuous improvement and professional service.
- Provide training and practical support to school-based finance colleagues where required

Management of Accounts and Reporting

- Manage the month-end and year-end close processes, ensuring transactions and adjustments are completed accurately and on time.
- Assist in producing timely monthly management accounts, cashflow information, variance analysis and clear financial commentary.
- Review school management accounts before submission to the Head of Finance and investigate significant variances or unusual movements.
- Prepare journals, accruals, prepayments, deferred income and other month-end adjustments, together with robust balance sheet reconciliations.
- Maintain accurate and useful financial summaries and management information for the Head of Finance and relevant budget holders.

Budgets and Budget Holders

- Support budget holders across the Trust with financial information, interpretation and practical guidance.
- Assist with budget monitoring and the identification of emerging overspends, underspends and financial risks.
- Support the preparation and review of forecasts and financial scenarios within the Trust's budget planning systems.
- Help school leaders understand their financial position and take timely corrective action where required.

Financial Controls and Compliance

- Ensure financial procedures are applied consistently across all schools and central functions.
- Support compliance with the Academy Handbook, Charities SORP, VAT requirements, HMRC requirements, Trust financial procedures and procurement regulations.
- Review purchase orders and procurement activity for compliance with agreed processes and delegated authorities.
- Maintain accurate records and documentation to support internal controls, audit trails and year-end requirements.
- Prepare relevant DfE, HMRC and VAT returns and supporting schedules as required.
- Prepare payroll reconciliations and ensure payroll-related financial information is accurately reflected in school budgets and accounts.

Banking and Treasury Management

- Maintain accurate bank reconciliations and support cashflow reporting.
- Monitor cash balances, receipts, payments, aged debt and supplier performance, escalating issues promptly.
- Support the operation of appropriate payment controls and ensure high-value payment processes follow Trust authorisation procedures.

Financial System Management and Process Improvement

- Maintain the Trust finance system and integrated budget planning system, acting as a key system administrator.
- Support system improvements, process redesign and the implementation of practical finance solutions.
- Help ensure finance systems provide accurate, timely and accessible financial information to users.
- Identify opportunities to simplify processes, strengthen controls, improve reporting and increase efficiency.

Audit & Compliance

- Support in the preparation of audit files, schedules and supporting documentation for internal and external audit activity.
- Promote value for money and identify opportunities for cost improvement across the finance function.

Other Specific Duties:

- To attend team meetings and maintain confidentiality inside and outside the workplace.
- To continue personal and professional development as required.
- To actively engage in the performance review process.
- To work in the best interests of the Trust, students, parents, and staff.
- To adhere to the Trust's policies and procedures with specific reference to Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, and Health and Safety.

The Role in Practice

A strong operational partner to the Head of Finance

The revised role deliberately separates operational Finance Manager responsibilities from the strategic Head of Finance remit. The Finance Manager will be a key operational leader, ensuring that the Trust's financial processes are executed consistently and that the Head of Finance receives reliable, timely and well-supported information.

You will be expected to

- Turn financial policies and procedures into consistent day-to-day practice.
- Maintain a disciplined month-end and year-end timetable across the finance function.
- Provide accurate information that enables the Head of Finance and school leaders to understand financial performance.
- Spot issues early, investigate them thoroughly and escalate material matters appropriately.
- Build strong working relationships with Headteachers, budget holders, central services colleagues, suppliers and auditors.
- Develop the finance team and create a professional service culture based on accuracy, responsiveness and continuous improvement.
- Deputies for the Head of Finance where appropriate and lead operational finance projects delegated by the Head of Finance.

What success will look like

Timely close Month-end and year-end processes are completed accurately and to agreed deadlines.	Trusted reporting Management accounts and reconciliations are complete, understandable and supported by robust evidence.
Strong controls Financial procedures are consistently applied and exceptions are identified and addressed.	Confident schools School leaders and budget holders receive practical, responsive finance support.
Effective systems Finance and budget-planning systems remain reliable, well maintained and continuously improved.	Developing team Finance staff are clear about priorities, supported in their roles and encouraged to develop.

Special conditions of employment

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

- This job is exempt under the Exceptions Orders to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Appointment to this job is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure being obtained, and any relevant cautions, convictions, bind over orders and warnings being considered.
- If the jobholder is arrested, summonsed for an offence, or receives a conviction, a bind over order or a warning given by a police force, they are required to inform the Headteacher of this fact immediately. Such information will be treated in confidence, as this is consistent with the safety of children, compliance with statutory child protection procedures and the Academy's relevant policies. Failure to disclose such information may result in disciplinary action which could lead to the termination of the jobholder's employment.

Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young People

- The jobholder is required to follow all of the Trust's policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding at all times, and to adhere to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. The jobholder must take appropriate action in the event that they have concerns, or are made aware of the concerns of others, regarding the safety or wellbeing of children or young people.

Health and Safety

- The jobholder is required to exercise their duty of care by taking responsibility for their own health and safety, and the health and safety of other people who may be affected by their acts or failure to act. Full guidance regarding health and safety is set out in the Trust's Health and Safety Policy, and in any risk assessments relevant to the jobholder's role or circumstances. Both can be accessed via the jobholder's line manager, and the jobholder is required to comply with these and to use any protective clothing or equipment as instructed at all times.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

- The jobholder is expected to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation. Any information they have access to, or are responsible for, must be managed appropriately and any requirements for confidentiality and security observed. Information must not be disclosed to any person or Authority, for example a parent or the Police, without observing the correct procedure for disclosure as set out in the Trust's Data Protection Policy. Nothing shall prevent the jobholder from disclosing information that they are entitled to disclose under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 as amended, provided that the disclosure is made in accordance with the provisions of that Act/s.

Equality and Diversity

- The Trust and its Schools are committed to equality and value diversity. As such the Trust and its Schools are committed to fulfilling their Equality Duty obligations and expect all employees to share this commitment. Duty requires the Trust to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share characteristics, such as age, gender, race and faith, and people who do not share them. The jobholder is required to treat all people they encounter, with dignity and respect, and is entitled to expect this in return.

Training and Development

- The Trust has a shared responsibility with the jobholder for identifying and satisfying training and development needs. The jobholder is expected to actively contribute to their continuous professional development and learning, and to attend and participate in any training or development activities required to assist them in fulfilling their role and meeting their safeguarding and general obligations.

The Trust Operates a Strictly No Smoking or Vaping Policy

- This applies to all Trust premises and those where its services are provided.

The above-mentioned duties are neither exclusive nor exhaustive, duties and responsibilities of the post may change as requirements and circumstances change. The post holder will be required to carry out duties as requested by management that are broadly within the level of the post.

Person Specification

The successful candidate will meet the following person specification. Please note that the listed criteria will form the basis of the selection process. Applicants should address all elements of the Person Specification, indicating experience and where appropriate citing supporting examples within their application.

Education and Experience

- Qualified accountant (ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or ACA). Candidates holding AAT Level 4 will also be considered.
- Relevant experience in an Academy Trust with SEND
- Strong management accounting, budgeting, and financial reporting experience.
- Good working knowledge of VAT and experience preparing or supporting VAT and HMRC returns.
- Experience supervising or line-managing finance staff and supporting staff development.
- Experience producing and reviewing management accounts, variance analysis, reconciliations.
- Strong Excel skills and confidence working with financial systems and integrated budget planning tools.
- Experience of maintaining effective financial controls and working within formal financial procedures and regulatory requirements.

Knowledge and Technical Abilities

- Good understanding of the Academy Handbook and the financial governance environment of academies.
- Working knowledge of Charities SORP and as applicable to the Trust's reporting environment.
- Understanding of procurement controls, value for money and supplier/service-level monitoring.
- Ability to manage month-end and year-end close processes and prepare high-quality audit evidence.
- Ability to interpret financial information, investigate variances and communicate the implications clearly.
- Ability to learn new systems quickly and contribute to finance system and process improvements.

Skills and Personal Abilities

- Meticulous attention to detail, strong organisation and excellent time management.
- Able to work under pressure, meet deadlines and take responsibility for delivering agreed outcomes.
- Confident communicator with the ability to build effective relationships at different levels of the organisation.
- Discreet, trustworthy and able to maintain confidentiality and high standards of data protection.
- Positive, collaborative and solutions-focused approach.
- Able to work independently while contributing positively as part of a wider team.
- Commitment to professional development and to developing others.
- Commitment to equality, safeguarding, health and safety and the Trust's five values.
- Reliable, respectful, responsible & conscientious approach
- Flexibility to deal with the diverse needs of the post including some travel across the Trust
- Establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships

- Able to always maintain Integrity and confidentiality
- High level of initiative and ability to work independently or as part of a team with a range of staff
- Strategic and analytical thinking
- Organisational wide holistic approach
- A professional role model who is committed to their own professional development and to developing others

Equal Opportunities

- Commitment to implementing the school's Equal Opportunities Policy



www.thebridgetrust.academy

The Bridge MAT

Limited 251

Hungerford Road

London

N7 9LD