

Job Description: Financial Controller

Reports to: Director Finance and Procurement, Ark Schools

Location: West London (with flexible working available)

Contract: Permanent

Pattern: Full Time (standard hours 9am – 5.30pm)

Salary: £75,000 - £85,000, depending on experience

About the role:

To manage, and be responsible for financial processing and reporting, including statutory reporting and compliance of financial accounting data across our 39 academies (48 from September 2026) within Ark Schools and its related entities, ensuring the financial systems and controls are in place. They will also be responsible for the day-to-day treasury management, cash flow forecasting including the monitoring of major capital projects.

Key Responsibilities:

- Leading and motivating the central finance team of eight, with line management, including training and regular appraisals of 3-4 direct reports
- Responsible for providing up-to-date financial information and technical advice to Director of Finance and Procurement, Ark Schools management team and the wider academies network
- Working with the Director of Finance and Procurement and the wider finance team to ensure adherence to network finance policies and procedure, developing and improving the reporting and efficient running of both the school and central finance function

Financial

- Responsible for the co-ordination of the year-end audit files and preparation of statutory accounts for the Group and subsidiary entities in accordance with Charities SORP, Companies Act and FRS. Liaise with auditors to ensure timetable and deadlines are met
- Central compliance management meeting reporting requirements to the ESFA/DFE ie Academies Accounts Return (AAR) and Capital Spend Survey. Keep good knowledge of the different funding streams and mechanisms for monitoring grant expenditure. i.e. Annex G
- Assist with the preparation of an annual budget and forecasts for unrestricted and restricted investments and financing activities, and depreciation and amortisation of the Trust's assets and goodwill
- Annual review of profit & loss account and balance sheets for the trading subsidiary, Academy projects Ltd
- Full ownership of all central Balance sheets. Responsible for all control account reconciliations, the Trial Balance, and reconciliations of restricted and endowment funds
- Plan and manage the trusts VAT liabilities, overseeing the preparation of all VAT returns, inspections, and compliance for two entities. Provide advice as necessary
- Oversee the maintenance and consolidation of fixed asset ledgers, including year-end capital accruals, write offs, disposals, and capitalisation thresholds
- Review Corporation Tax returns completed by the external advisor and post any resulting adjustments for the trading subsidiary

- Responsible for monitoring and reporting capital expenditure, including expenditure that is managed by the central estates and projects teams.
- Reconciliation and forecasting of School Condition Allocation (schools' grant for capital)
- Responsible for the day-to-day management of the Trust's cash flow and treasury, including strategic cash investments
- Monitoring and preparation of reserves and cash flow reporting for the Risk and Audit Committee and Ark Schools management

Internal Controls

- To support the Director of Finance and Procurement in maintaining and developing an environment of robust financial control as the network develops
- Develop new and review existing financial systems in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Procurement
- Liaising with the Internal Audit team during central audit and data analytics. Taking feedback to improve policies and procedures
- Take responsibility for writing and maintaining relevant finance policies for the network
- Support the transition of new academies into the network ensuring due diligence is complete and alignment of policies and procedures

Other

- Setting the annual timetable for all areas of financial reporting
- Working with the Head of Finance Systems and Financial Accounting / Deputy Financial Controller, oversee and advise on the set-up and maintenance of all finance systems (Iris PS Financials (Sage Intaact from 1 September 2026)/Concur/IMP)
- Treasury and Banking lead for centre and schools including credit card management and investigating low risk investment opportunities. Responsible for opening any new, and maintaining existing, trust bank accounts and mandates
- Lead on accounts payable and receivable ensuring that all suppliers are paid on time and invoices raised appropriately. Responsible for processing Schools and Central departments weekly BACs runs with authorisations in line with the delegation policy
- Ensure appropriate stewardship and accountability for public and charitable funding received
- Liaise with relevant local authorities/ central government departments on matters relating to Ark Schools' finance as necessary
- Responsible for the management and performance of central finance team helpdesks
- Deliver training sessions to the regional and central finance teams as necessary, as part of the Finance Team Training program
- Provide business and financial support, including working on wider finance team tasks or additional duties as directed by the Director of Finance and Procurement

Person Specification:

Qualifications

- Educated to degree level or equivalent
- CCAB Accountancy qualification with at least 3 years post-qualified experience
- A record of recent and relevant Continued Professional Development

Knowledge & Skills

- Experience in building effective teams, developing staff and managing external business relationships (essential)
- Strong, hands on, statutory accounts experience. You will be expected to consolidate all academies within the trust (39 academies at June 2026, 48 from 1 September 2026) to a statutory level for the year-ended 31 August and lead the external audit schedule. The Department for Education (DfE) statutory filing deadline is 31 December (essential)
- Knowledge of the latest Charities SORP and Companies Act. Knowledge of the Academy Trust Handbook and Academies Accounts Direction 2025 is desirable (desirable)
- Audit and VAT experience with the latter ideally in a charity context (essential)
- Understanding of educational, preferably Multi-Academy Trust, funding mechanisms (desirable)
- Understanding and experience of the challenges presented by working across a large multi-site organisation with some devolved financial functions and autonomy. Ideally experience of working within another Multi Academy Trust, Local Authority or DfE
- Strong technical skills combined with a good grasp of service principles
- Highly developed skills in using accounts system such as PS Financials or Sage Intacct is desirable
- Must have advanced level IT skills and ability to make effective use of standard software packages, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Outlook
- Ability to use Excel at an advanced level including the use of macros etc. You will be an excel superuser
- Developed communication and training skills
- Strong administration skills and the ability to maintain effective systems

Personal Qualities

- High attention to detail, proactive, confident, enthusiastic with a 'can do' attitude, well organised, methodical with the ability to multi-task and prioritise workload to meet tight deadlines
- Flexible team player and ability use own initiative to work with minimum supervision is essential
- Excellent written and interpersonal skills, with the ability to communicate effectively with staff at all levels
- Ability to effectively present financial information at the appropriate level
- Strong and supportive manager, capable of getting the best out of a team

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](#).