



Chief Finance &
Operations Officer

July 2024



Together we are ...

COURAGEOUS

INNOVATIVE

EXCELLENT



Fay MacRitchie

CEO

Welcome!

Thank you so much for your interest in becoming our CFOO! I hope the information contained within this pack gives a flavour of the role and the culture of the Trust.

Please do get in contact with any questions you may have.

These last few months have been an exciting time for growth. It is certainly a great time to be a part of our Trust team, as we pool our collaborative energy and expertise to maximise positive impacts and transform outcomes for our children, families and communities.

ABOUT US

Authentic Education (formerly Ambitions Academies Trust) was created in March 2012 and now operates with 6,100 students and 1000 members of staff with a budget of £52 million.

We are fully inclusive and committed to transforming under-performing schools, especially those in disadvantaged communities, in line with our values: Together, we are: Courageous, Innovative, Excellent.

Empowering and developing our staff, providing opportunities across our Trust, with an excellent CPD offering has been a significant area of focus; alongside introducing cutting edge digital systems in academies, HR, and Finance.

Improving student outcomes and becoming an employer of choice are our two strategic objectives. The latter centred on on attracting and retaining the very best talent. We value all contributions from our people and implement changes that have a positive impact across the organisation.

Governance at all levels of the Trust has seen rapid improvement. Recruiting highly skilled Trustees and strengthening the local tier at academy level have been, and will continue to be, areas of focus.

VALUES WORKSHOPS

Collaborating to create shared values for our Trust

Following the Edurio staff experience survey (see page 6), it was great to have so many people volunteer their time in May to create a new shared vision and values for our Trust. Distilling responses from the survey, stakeholder and student workshops, we are proud to share our new values:

Together, we are:

Courageous

Innovative

Excellent

Everyone expressed how much they enjoyed the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues from different academies. Also, across the workshops, there was a resounding desire to think about our Trust's name.

Students talked passionately about adults valuing their uniqueness. About how they are encouraged to champion individuality. And about being empowered to bring their whole selves to school.

Colleagues across the Trust - teachers, catering professionals, education support, trustees, academy committee chairs - shared the importance of authenticity in all forms. Being bold, brave and courageous enough to be you. Delivering world-class educational and enhancement services that springboard our students and prepare them for the workplace of the future. Becoming both digital and sustainable to the core: enabling us to deeply invest in relationships, our community and our planet.



Through this work, our new name just shone through. It is a name that encapsulates all that we are; all that we do; and all that we will be. Keenly listening to the voices of colleagues across the Trust, both our Boards of Trustees and Members unanimously endorsed our change of name.

Collectively, we will set ourselves a holistic and high bar. We will need to be **Courageous**, **Innovative** and **Excellent** to get there. There will be spectacular achievements and failures along the way, which we will learn and grow from, authentically.

It felt like the sessions were a genuine consideration of all staff views, an opportunity for staff to feel valued as well as share in a collective vision.

WORKSHOP FEEDBACK

After the workshops, we asked colleagues to anonymously log on to Menti.com to share their thoughts ...



PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW YOU FELT AFTER THE WORKSHOP?



ABOUT OUR NATIONAL AWARDS

Our Trust is a dynamic organisation, delivering on its commitment to ensure every pupil reaches their potential through outstanding governance.



WEY VALLEY SHORTLISTED FOR NATIONAL AWARD

Wey Valley Academy has been shortlisted as a finalist in the national Queer Student Awards 2024 for its commitment to LGBTQ+ diversity and inclusivity. The Queer Student Awards are an annual celebration recognising talented students and allies, who are proudly leading in their lives and the communities around them.



Headteacher, Mr Neill said:

I am delighted with this news and I would like to congratulate all of our staff and students for making Wey Valley such an inclusive place to learn at the heart of the Weymouth community.

We wish Wey Valley the best of luck at the finals held in Birmingham on 26th June!

ESTATES UPDATE

MANORSIDE ECO
GARDEN PHASE 1 -
READ MORE ABOUT
THIS EXCITING
PROJECT IN OUR
NEXT NEWSLETTER



JAMES TREBLE

DIRECTOR - ESTATES
AND SUSTAINABILITY

In April alone we generated an average 3,998 kWh per site from roof mounted solar panels. This is enough energy to power an average 4 bed house for one year.

The Estates team had an extremely busy half-term with an incredible week of progress across our academies. From LED lighting and suspended ceilings to sensory gardens and long jump pit renovations, our team has been working tirelessly to bring new ideas to life. The team are incredibly proud to be continually developing our academies in a positive way.

HALF TERM PROJECTS:

- Air conditioning units installed
- Staffroom refurbishments
- Sensory garden creation
- Long jump refurbishments
- LED and suspended ceiling
- Fence rectification works
- Classroom redecoration
- Circulation area redecoration
- Access control installs



SHINING A LIGHT ON EFFICIENCY



As a Trust, we are dedicated to cultivating a green and sustainable learning environment that not only enhances the educational experience for our students and staff, but also contributes to a more environmentally responsible and socially responsible future. By prioritising efficiency, reducing waste, and promoting eco-friendly practices, we can create a healthier, more sustainable, and inspiring space for our community to thrive.

Over the last 5 years, we've taken a proactive approach to reducing our environmental impact by upgrading our lighting systems to LED. I have detailed our decision-making process behind our switch to energy-efficient lighting and outlined the impressive benefits we've achieved since making the change.

10 ACADEMIES
ARE NOW FULLY FITTED
WITH LED LIGHTING

We took the decision to replace our old batten fittings with energy-efficient LED 600x600 panels in the majority of areas (where possible). These panels provide a sleek, modern design while significantly reducing energy consumption and maintenance costs. We have done this in conjunction with new ceiling grid installs and tile replacements.

Since implementing the LED panels across our schools, we've seen a significant reduction in energy consumption and maintenance costs.

UP TO

75%

REDUCTION IN ENERGY
COSTS VS FLUORESCENT
TUBE LIGHTING!



ABOUT THE SCHOOLS

There are two all through special schools that support pupils with SEMH and ASC with campuses focusing on 5-11 or 11-16 age ranges. We have worked in partnership with the Local Authority to build capacity for SEND places with our most recent provision being an internship programme for post-16 pupils.

Our special schools are rated Outstanding and Good by Ofsted. The academies ensure that curricula meets the needs of pupils and that safeguarding and pastoral support allow pupils to thrive.

Supporting pupils who experience challenges in so many areas of their lives, and making their education experiences something that makes them feel happy and safe as well as allowing them to grow emotionally and academically, is something we are all proud of.

In the primary sector, there are six schools, one junior and five primary academies. Our school improvement model starts with developing strong leadership, quality teaching and improving provision for SEND.

We create environments where children are happy, safe and have the best quality of education. We ensure that there is a wide range of experiences and opportunities for all pupils as part of the taught curriculum, extra curriculum and in other areas.

Ofsted have rated two of the schools as Outstanding and four as Good. The academies are vibrant, successful schools where feedback from staff, pupils and parents is very positive.

With five schools in the secondary sector, we pride ourselves on maintaining a breadth of curriculum that ensures our pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects and have seen the real benefits that performing arts, sport and vocational subjects can bring to a school.

Four of our secondary schools are situated in areas of high deprivation with high levels of disadvantage and SEND.

Our approach is to face all challenges head on. We strive to create environments where pupils can build strong relationships with adults and have experiences and opportunities that ensure they leave us as rounded individuals who can go on to have successful adult lives.

We have worked hard to ensure that we are continually improving teaching and learning so that we have the best curriculum models with embedded reading strategies, robust attendance strategies and personal development programmes that support all of our young people.

Effective safeguarding teams and behaviour systems where respect is a shared value are key to creating a positive climate for learning.

Our Ofsted ratings are three schools rated as Good, two rated as RI.



ABOUT THE ROLE

POST: Chief Finance & Operations Officer

SALARY: Competitive

LOCATION: Authentic Education Head Office; with frequent travel amongst Trust schools a requirement of this role

HOURS OF WORK: Full time, full year

CONTRACT: Permanent

THIS PIVOTAL ROLE PRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO INFLUENCE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND MAKE A REAL IMPACT.

Authentic Education is seeking an experienced and driven Chief Finance and Operations Officer to oversee the strategic development and operational delivery of our professional services.

Reporting directly to the CEO, this role will not only provide valuable advice on organisational strategy and operations, but will also collaborate closely with leaders from various teams to ensure smooth day-to-day operations. As a leader in the Trust, the Chief Finance and Operations Officer will play a crucial part in defining and executing the Trust's strategy for operational effectiveness and long-term financial sustainability.

We are seeking a candidate with a relentless focus on school improvement, who is open to new ideas and innovations. An accountancy qualification from a relevant professional body, with at least five years' post-qualification experience, is essential for this role. Additionally, we are looking for someone with a proven track record in leading strategic financial planning and successful team leadership.

You will need strong analytical skills, excellent communication and leadership abilities, and the ability to think and act strategically. A commitment to continuous improvement and professional development is also necessary.

Furthermore, we require someone who possesses diligence, tenacity, enthusiasm, drive, self-motivation and is able to handle pressure while remaining accessible and consistent. Above all, we are seeking an individual who shares our commitment to transforming the life chances of children through education.

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST: Chief Finance & Operations Officer

REPORTS TO: Chief Executive Officer

PURPOSE: The Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) will oversee all aspects of the strategic development and operational delivery of key Trust professional services. The CFOO will report to the CEO, acting as a key advisor on organisational strategy and operational matters. The CFOO will work closely with other leaders within and beyond the executive and professional services team to ensure that day to day operations run effectively.

MAIN DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

The CFOO will play a pivotal leadership role in defining and delivering the Trust's strategy for operational effectiveness and long-term financial sustainability, specifically:

- Discharging the duties of CFO as defined in the Academy Trust Handbook (annually revised).
- Providing vision, strategic direction and leadership in the planning, management and development of effective operations across the Trust's professional services teams.
- Ensure the Trust's operational infrastructure is equipped to grow with and adapt to forecast expansion as a financial and operational organisation and as an employer of an increasing number of staff.
- Working as part of the Trust Executive Leadership Team to ensure that the revenues and resources of the Trust are managed efficiently and cost effectively in support of educational and organisational objectives.
- Leading and developing an effective, high- performing team across non-teaching functions. This includes finance, administration, buildings and estates, health and safety, facilities management and ICT. Working closely with Trust Professional Services and corporate governance.
- Identifying and securing additional sources of funding for the Trust and maximising asset utilisation and value for money.
- Working within an infrastructure and culture that promotes excellence, equality and high expectations for pupils and staff and compliments the Trust vision.

STRATEGIC & LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES:

- As part of the Executive Leadership Team ensure that the Trust and School plans are financially and operationally viable.
- In conjunction with Headteachers, ensure that each school has in place suitable processes to care for Finance, ICT and Facilities Management.
- Lead and manage the key personnel within the function which they oversee.
- Manage the development of effective relationships with external advisors, contractors and suppliers to the short and long term benefit of the Trust.
- Support the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee to enable suitable and appropriate processes to be in place as required from the Academy Trust Handbook.
- Oversee all procurement of contracts for services required by the Trust.
- Ensure appropriate legal support is in place for all potential issues affecting the Trust and be the main link with solicitors for all Trust legal matters e.g. contracts, licences, conversions, procurement and day to day issues.
- To support the CEO in implementing the agreed growth strategy, on-boarding new academies and ensuring that due diligence and risk management drive decision making.
- To support the CEO in assessing the impact of the specific local, regional and/or national educational environment and positioning the Trust to respond positively.
- To represent the CEO or the Trust to regulatory authorities, the media or other key stakeholders and the public as required.
- To look beyond the Trust, working with other MATs and 3rd parties to collaborate and develop sector leading models of service delivery.

FINANCIAL PLANNING & MANAGEMENT:

- Provide leadership to the Trust Board and Executive Leadership Team to facilitate the successful financial, management, operation and development of the Trust.
- Develop robust financial management policies, processes and reporting systems to ensure full compliance with both governance and financial regulations.
- Prepare annual and multi-year income and expenditure budgets for the income and expenditure of the Trust with due consideration of the assumptions, probabilities and risks of those budgets.
- Oversee the development of a suitable Risk Management Strategy for the Trust that is in line with guidance from the Finance Audit and Risk Committee.

To include:

- Ensure that Risk Management procedures and processes are adequate to mitigate reasonably foreseeable risks.
- Support the development of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans for individual academies and the Trust as a whole.
- Ensure necessary arrangements for all required insurance cover is in place for the Trust.

FACILITIES & ESTATES MANAGEMENT:

- To achieve the successful sustainable management of the Trust sites, buildings and facilities.
- Work with the Board of Trustees and Executive Leadership Team to oversee the preparation, review and update of a strategic Estate Management Plan for the Trust sites, buildings and facilities.
 - To lead and manage a team of professionals to ensure:
 - An asset management plan is developed, implemented and updated in line with agreed priorities including risk management;
 - All sites, buildings and facilities are compliant with relevant legislation and procedures such as health & safety and child protection;
 - Caretaking, cleaning, grounds maintenance and building maintenance programmes are fulfilled to the agreed quality standards by staff and contractors;
 - Catering is managed to agreed standards of nutrition, delivery criteria and within agreed budgets;
 - Sites and buildings are secure and all entry/exit arrangements are effective and compliant with safeguarding policies;
 - Policies and procedures for contractor and supplier access to site and their management on site is aligned with the Trust's safeguarding policies.
- Monitor the policies concerning procurement to demonstrate compliance and value for money.
- Monitor all contracts and keep under regular review to ensure quality and best value.
- Ensure due diligence and commercial disciplines have been applied to the award of Academy and Trust contracts.
- Liaise with SLT, and if appropriate lead, over issues relating to Capital build and support procurement of Capital projects that demonstrate value for money.
- Ensure the Trust has in place appropriate Health and Safety procedures and practices.

ICT FUNCTION:

- Work with the Executive Leadership Team, and Trust IT Managers to develop a sustainable, cost-effective ICT plan that supports both educational and operational objectives.
- To lead and manage the Trust IT staff to ensure that:
 - The ICT plan is implemented within agreed budget, timescales and specification;
 - ICT policies, procedures and systems are aligned with the Trust's safeguarding and data protection policies and legislation;
 - ICT systems including hardware, software and connectivity are effectively managed to limit malfunction and reduce the risk of maluses by pupils, staff, volunteers, parents and other users;
 - The effective commission, procurement and management of external resources and services required for the ICT function.

LEGAL & STATUTORY:

- To ensure the Trust operates within UK and international law.
- To ensure the Trust meets the ESFA obligations outlined in the master funding agreement.
- To ensure the Trust meets capital obligations relating to new schools or the school condition allocation.
- To engage with legal representatives on any other legal issues relating to the Trust.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Undertake any relevant administration relevant to core responsibilities.
- Contribute to the Trust strategy.
- Contribute to a Trust culture which is positive, purposeful and professional.
- Develop and implement policies and practices, as appropriate, to ensure Trustees are well informed. Continue own professional development as agreed with the Trust.
- Treat pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a professional position.

- Have regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions.
- Show tolerance of and respect for the rights of others.
- To not undermine fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Ensure that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Throughout the Trust it is our practice to vary the specific responsibilities in line with the needs of the Trust. This will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

This is an outline job description only and the post holder will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from a manager to undertake commensurate work of a similar level, or any lesser duties, that are not specified in this Job Description.

The aim of the job description is to indicate the general purpose and level of responsibility of the post.

Please be aware that duties may vary from time to time without changing their character or general level of responsibility.

Duties may be subject to periodic review by the Chief Executive Officer or nominated representative (in consultation with the post holder) to reflect the changing needs of the Trust.

Authentic Education Group Limited is committed to providing a safe, supportive and stimulating environment for all its pupils following Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidelines. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Person Specification

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accountancy qualification available from a relevant professional body such as the ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA (including CIPFA qualifications developed in partnership with ISBL) 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualified with at least five years post qualification experience 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graduate or equivalent 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other relevant professional qualifications; Premises, Health and Safety etc 		*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masters level qualification 		*
EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading the strategic financial planning for an organisation or significantly sized team within an organisation 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful team leadership and management 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to work strategically 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High degree of analytical skills 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level leadership and communication skills 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good IT skills and ability to interpret performance data 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract management and monitoring 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successful working within a leadership or management team 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with a range of external partners 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk Management 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to continuous improvement and own professional development 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurial and creative 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable, honest, trustworthy and high degree of personal integrity 	*	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to demonstrate diligence, tenacity, enthusiasm, drive and self-motivation 	*	

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to respond positively to pressure, whilst maintaining accessibility and consistency • Working within schools or academies • Working with Governors, Trustees or equivalent Project management Working within schools or academies • Good knowledge of relevant health and Safety legislation 	*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * * *
OTHER		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to equal opportunities • Compliance and adherence to the document 'Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings' • Compliance and adherence to the document 'Guidance for Conduct' • Commitment to undertake further ongoing training and professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * * * * 	

Authentic Education Group Limited is committed to providing a safe, supportive and stimulating environment for all its pupils following Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidelines. This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Living on the South Coast



The South Coast boasts the title of being the sunniest place in the UK, offering over 400 miles of stunning coastline to explore. Dorset's coastal towns are vibrant and surrounded by areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Bournemouth stands out with its seven miles of award-winning beaches, diverse shops, and restaurants. The town is a hub for arts, music, and literature, making it a culturally rich place to live and work.

Poole, with its rich history and charming cobbled streets, leads to the impressive Poole Quay. The town is home to high-quality restaurants, traditional pubs, and Europe's largest natural harbour, attracting bird watchers and conservationists.

Weymouth, nestled on the Jurassic shoreline, features a picturesque seafront and a bustling fishing harbor. The town offers a range of water sports and coastal activities, thanks to its Olympic legacy from hosting the sailing events in 2012.

With a thriving economy, excellent schools, universities, and a variety of entertainment options, the South Coast is an ideal place for families to settle down and enjoy a high quality of life.



How to apply...

Thank you for your interest in Authentic Education.

To arrange an informal, confidential discussion regarding this role, please contact Mrs Tanya Hall, Executive Assistant to the CEO at tanya.hall@aat.education

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: MONDAY 22ND JULY 2024 AT 9AM

INTERVIEW DATE: WEEK COMMENCING 29TH JULY 2024

EARLY APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED AND THE TRUST RESERVES THE RIGHT TO CLOSE THE APPLICATION WINDOW EARLY.

CLICK [HERE](#) TO APPLY NOW

We look forward to receiving your application.

Discover more at www.ambitions-academies.co.uk