

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Interim Finance Transformation Lead
Reporting to:	Director of Finance and Operations and Regional COO
Location:	Redmaids' High, Westbury Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS9 3AW
Salary:	Competitive

Job Purpose and Summary

The Interim Finance Transformation Lead will provide dedicated senior leadership to strengthen the school's finance function following its recent integration into the GDST.

Working closely with the Director of Finance and Operations (DFO), the postholder will take ownership of a focused programme of finance stabilisation and improvement. They will address identified weaknesses in financial control, resolve issues arising from recent audit activity and ensure that accountabilities across the finance function are clear.

The postholder will work alongside the Finance Manager, who will continue to manage day-to-day finance activity. The Interim Finance Transformation Lead will provide senior oversight during the period of transformation, addressing areas of financial risk and ensuring that improved processes become embedded across the school. They will be responsible for implementing change and will be provided the sponsorship and full support of the Head, DFO and School Senior Leadership Team.

This is a senior, hands-on role requiring strong technical finance expertise and experience of improving finance functions through periods of change. The postholder will be expected to move quickly from diagnosis to implementation, resolving issues directly where required and leaving the school with a stronger finance function, with embedded processes/controls actively owned by the team by the end of the assignment.

Key Responsibilities

Finance Transformation

- Lead a focused programme to stabilise and strengthen the school's finance function, agreeing priorities and outcomes with the DFO and Regional COO.
- Review the structure and capacity of the finance team, making recommendations to the DFO where changes are required to establish a sustainable operating model.
- Review approval arrangements and delegated responsibilities across the finance function, resolving gaps or ambiguity.
- Address gaps in the implementation of GDST financial frameworks and ensure the required approaches are fully embedded.
- Review financial processes and implement improvements where required.
- Improve the use of financial systems, including through automation where appropriate.
- Investigate and resolve legacy or transitional issues where these affect the accuracy of financial information or the effective operation of the finance function.

- Ensure improvements are documented and capable of being sustained once the transformation programme has concluded.
- Ensure single person dependency within financial processes and controls is removed.

Financial Planning and Insight

- Strengthen the assumptions and methodology underpinning budgeting and forecasting, ensuring that the Head, DFO and Regional COO have a clear view of financial performance and the future outlook.
- Undertake detailed financial analysis to identify emerging risks and opportunities and flag these to the DFO for consideration into the short- and medium-term impact..
- Support the DFO in the development of financial models and scenario analysis to support significant decisions.
- Support the DFO to develop business cases for significant investment or organisational change where required.
- Implement improvements to drive up value for money.

Management Information and Reporting

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of financial reporting, addressing weaknesses to enable the DFO and senior leaders to understand the school's financial position and areas requiring action.
- Ensure management information provides meaningful insight into performance against budget and forecast.
- Improve the use of financial information in decision-making across the school.
- Support the DFO with financial reporting to the School Governing Board and the GDST as required.

Financial Control and Assurance

- Review the school's financial control environment and lead the remediation of weaknesses identified.
- Take ownership of finance-related audit action plans, ensuring actions are completed and improvements are embedded.
- Review payroll controls and accountabilities, addressing weaknesses and establishing appropriate oversight.
- Review financial controls relating to bursaries and fee-related activity, resolving issues identified and ensuring GDST requirements are followed.
- Investigate issues affecting the integrity of financial records and ensure they are resolved. This should include reconciling all balance sheet accounts and putting in place controls to ensure they are reconciled periodically (i.e. monthly, quarterly or termly) based on the complexity and risk associated with the balance sheet account.
- Ensure that financial processes operate in accordance with GDST policies and delegated authorities, implementing corrective action where required.
- Address complex accounting or control issues directly, working with the Finance Manager and Trust Office colleagues where required.
- Provide assurance to the DFO and Regional COO that agreed controls are operating effectively.

Financial Capability

- Work alongside the Finance Manager to embed improved approaches across the finance function.

- Provide technical expertise and support on more complex financial matters.
- Build capability within the finance team through the introduction of improved practice and targeted support.
- Clarify financial processes and responsibilities where required, ensuring effective handover into business-as-usual activity.
- Support budget holders to strengthen financial management across the school.

Change and Stakeholder Engagement

- Work closely with the DFO and Finance Manager to ensure that finance improvement activity is effectively coordinated with day-to-day operations.
- Build effective relationships with senior leaders and other budget holders, ensuring that changes to financial practice are understood and adopted.
- Communicate complex financial issues clearly to colleagues without a finance background.
- Manage finance improvement activity to agreed timescales, escalating risks or barriers to the DFO where required.

Other

- Work with the Trust Office and colleagues across schools to support consistent financial practice and share effective ways of working where required.
- Provide flexible support across the wider finance function as needed, in line with the level and nature of the role.

All GDST Staff are expected to

- Put the safety and wellbeing of pupils at the heart of everything they do.
- Work in line with GDST and school policies and procedures at all times, including those relating to safeguarding, staff conduct, health and safety, equality, diversity and inclusion, confidentiality, data protection and information security.
- Demonstrate professionalism in conduct, attendance and relationships with colleagues and external contacts.
- Take responsibility for their own professional development, including engagement with training, learning and performance review.
- Contribute to a positive, inclusive and solutions-focused working environment.
- Engage with the wider school community in a way that supports inclusion, collaboration and shared purpose.

This job description is intended to provide an overview of the main responsibilities of the role. It is not exhaustive, and the postholder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the level and nature of the post, as directed by their line manager.

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications

- Fully qualified accountant (ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA or equivalent).
- Evidence of continuing professional development and up-to-date technical knowledge.

Professional Experience

- Significant experience operating in a senior finance role within a complex organisation.
- Demonstrable experience of leading finance transformation or substantial improvement within a finance function.
- Experience of identifying weaknesses in financial controls and taking ownership of remedial action through to completion.
- Strong experience of budgeting and forecasting, with the ability to undertake complex financial analysis.
- Experience of improving financial reporting and management information to support effective decision-making.
- Experience of reviewing finance team structures and clarifying financial accountabilities.
- Experience of resolving complex accounting issues and improving underlying financial processes.
- Experience of working with internal or external audit and delivering resulting action plans.
- Experience of working effectively with senior leaders, providing credible financial advice and constructive challenge.
- Experience of working through significant organisational change would be desirable.
- Experience within education is highly desirable.

Skills, Knowledge & Understanding

- Strong technical accounting knowledge with a thorough understanding of effective financial control.
- Strong understanding of budgeting and forecasting within a complex organisation.
- Excellent analytical skills, with the ability to diagnose financial issues and implement effective solutions.
- Ability to develop financial models and use scenario analysis to inform significant decisions.
- Ability to translate complex financial information into clear advice for non-finance colleagues.
- Strong understanding of audit, assurance and financial governance.
- Ability to lead change and ensure improvements become embedded in day-to-day practice.
- Strong influencing skills and the confidence to challenge established practice where required.
- Ability to work at a detailed level when necessary while maintaining sight of the wider financial position.

Behaviours & Personal Qualities

- A hands-on approach, with the willingness to take ownership of issues and see them through to resolution.
- Reliable, organised and detail-focused, with a strong commitment to high standards of accuracy and financial integrity.
- Analytical and solution-focused, with the ability to use sound judgement and remain effective under pressure.
- Able to work independently and collaboratively, building strong working relationships across teams.
- Committed to the values of the GDST and to supporting girls' education.
- Alert to safeguarding and welfare concerns, with an understanding of when and how to take appropriate action.
- Committed to continuous professional development and to keeping knowledge and skills up to date.

Other

- Right to work in the UK
- Willingness to complete an enhanced DBS check