



**WANDLE  
LEARNING  
TRUST**

Appointment of  
Director of Finance  
and Resources

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wandle Learning Trust was founded in 2018 by the leaders of Chesterton Primary School and Chestnut Grove Academy in Wandsworth. Harnessing the power of the successful and longstanding partnership between their two schools, Mark Siswick and Christian Kingsley have gone on to grow a unique multi-academy trust; the only one in the country to feature a Teaching School, plus Maths, English and Early Years Hubs.

Paxton Academy joined the Trust in July 2019 and Ravenstone Primary is due to join this year. The Trust will continue to grow in a managed and sustainable way to create a community of outstanding schools with the highest expectations of all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or starting points.

With growth comes complexity and the need to appoint a new Director of Finance and Resources. The successful candidate will be expected to bring a wealth of strategic thinking, problem solving and commitment to equality of education and inclusion to the role. Working directly with Mark and Christian the successful candidate will share their belief in the need for clear lines of accountability and transparent leadership.

We're looking for someone with a demonstrable record of success in finance and resources leadership, with a proven ability to introduce and roll out new systems and work with multi-functional teams. The candidate will be creative in their thinking and adaptable in their approach and be guided by the question that guides all of us within the Trust – 'What will the impact of my decision-making be on the outcomes and opportunities for the children and young people in our schools?'





# AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR TRUST

At the heart of our work is a strong moral purpose and belief in doing what is best for children and young people. Our vision is:

To create a community of outstanding schools with the highest expectations of all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds or starting points

A firm commitment to the belief that every child should be given every opportunity to fulfill their potential

To develop a learning culture where bold and innovative teachers can make a difference

To sustain excellence and growth across our community of schools

To deliver high quality professional development for all members of staff

To secure accountability based on transparent leadership



Chesterton Primary School is one of Wandle Learning Trust's founding academies. An Ofsted Outstanding 2 Form Entry inner city primary school situated in the heart of Battersea, 49% of pupils qualify for Pupil Premium funding and 58% have English as an Additional Language. Pupils achieve extremely well with 87% of Early Years pupils considered to have a good level of development and 95% of Key Stage 2 pupils reaching the expected level in Reading, Writing and Maths (against a national average of 65%). Chesterton's excellence in particular curriculum areas has led to it being awarded English Hub, Maths Hub and Early Years Hub funding.



Chestnut Grove Academy, the second of Wandle Learning Trust's founding academies, is a high-achieving, forward-thinking and caring community. A tradition of academic rigour, combined with creativity, characterises the school's ethos. In January 2019 Ofsted described the quality of leadership as 'exceptional', going on to say, 'The Headteacher and his team are unwavering and unstinting in their drive to improve the school.' In Year 11 47% of students gained at least a strong pass in English and Maths (England average 43%). Chestnut Grove's Sixth Form has recently been placed in the top 10% of schools nationally for the progress of students between Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5.

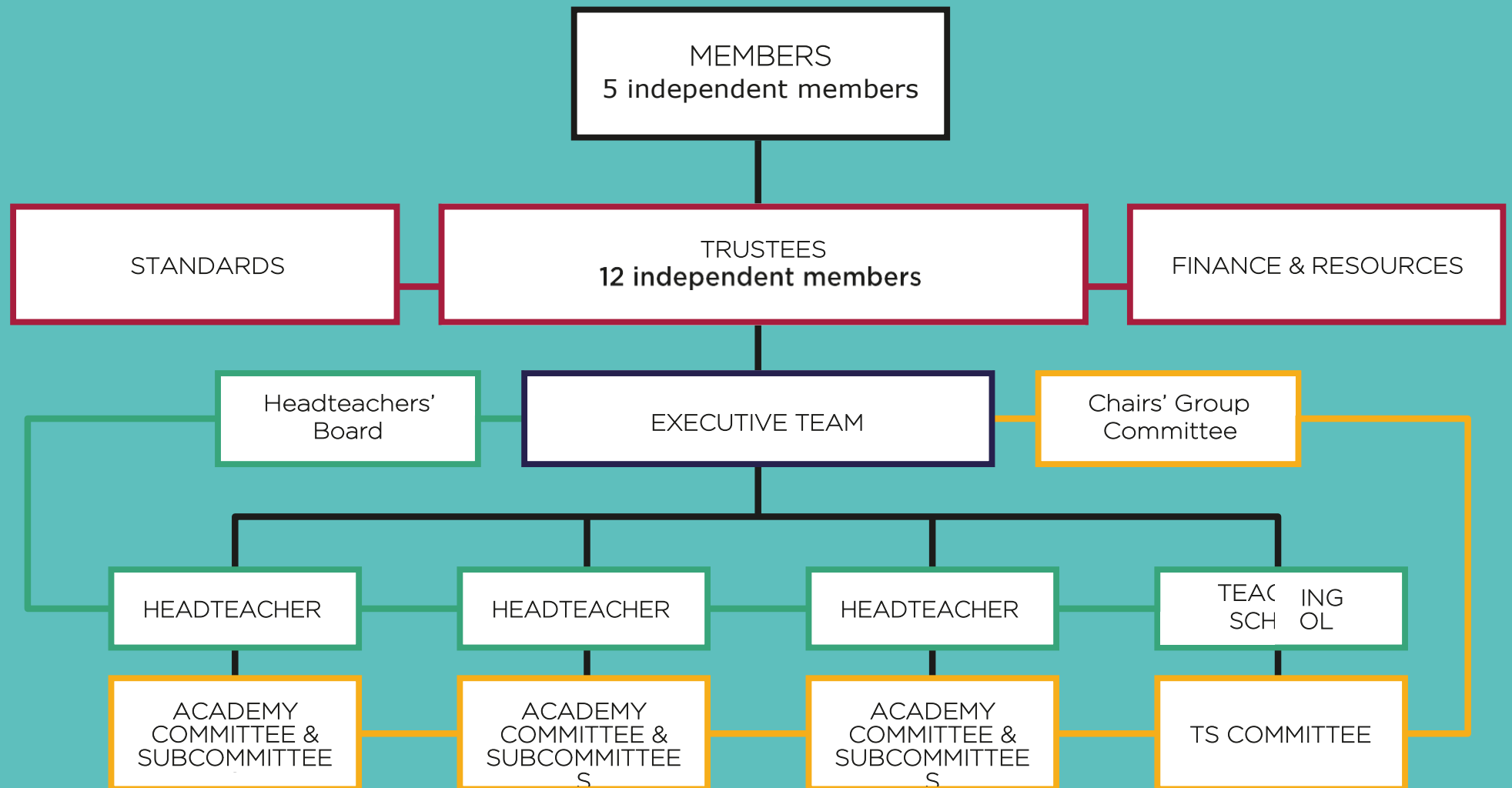


Paxton Academy joined the Trust in July 2019 and is set to move into brand new purpose-built primary school premises in Thornton Heath in time for the new academic year. A new Headteacher will also join the school in September 2020. As a school rated Inadequate by Ofsted, Paxton is on a rapid school improvement journey. In its inspection report of November 2019 Ofsted noted, 'The new Trust leaders' ambition is high... Trust leaders provide excellent expertise and support... They have a thorough understanding of what needs to improve and have the skills to do this. They are rightly acting with urgency.'



The Teaching School and Hubs are based at Chesterton Primary School and provide professional development and school improvement services to hundreds of individuals and schools every year. The Teaching School also runs a full programme of bespoke teacher training courses. Funding comes via a mix of fees, grants and Department for Education and The Mayor of London's Office awards.

# LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



## LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE



### Leadership

Wandle Learning Trust is led by its Joint Executive Heads, Mark Siswick and Christian Kingsley.

The Director of Finance and Resources will report directly to Mark and Christian and will be appraised by them with Trustee oversight.

Mark and Christian work closely together on the strategic development and educational outcomes of Wandle Learning Trust and they also have individual responsibilities within the Trust.

### Governance

The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees chaired by Sian Mathias. Please refer to the chart on page 5 for full details of the Leadership and Governance Structure.





## JOB DESCRIPTION

Wandle Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students. It expects all staff to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check. The Director of Finance and Resources will be expected to comply with and uphold, in all respects, all the Trust's policies including those on safeguarding, equality and diversity.

Working time: Full time.

Location: TBA

Reporting to: WLT Joint Executive Heads

### Core Purpose

The Director of Finance and Resources will deliver strategic leadership to the Trust, securing its long-term financial sustainability, optimising its resources and ensuring it maintains regulatory compliance in order to deliver maximum impact for the pupils and students in its care.

As a key member of the Trust's senior leadership team, you will be responsible for all strategic financial, resource and operational issues for the Trust, including HR, ICT, facilities, Trust expansion, governance and legal matters.

As Director of Finance and Resources you will work with the Joint Executive Heads (one of whom is the Accounting Officer) to ensure the proper financial conduct of the Trust.

Supporting the vision, values and policies of the Trust, you will lead and develop a high performing, multidisciplinary team, enabling colleagues across the organisation to meet challenging objectives, while also ensuring their well-being. You will play a vital role in developing the organisation's long-term strategies, working closely with the Board of Trustees.



CHESTNUT GROVE  
ACADEMY

## ABOUT YOU

Educated to degree level and ideally with a professional qualification in accountancy you will bring a forward-thinking, business-like approach to the leadership of the finance, resources and operations functions of the Trust, running them as highly competent and efficient services.

You will have a track record of leading the financial operations of a complex organisation in the education, charity or commercial sector and have experience of running at least one other major business support service (HR, estates, governance etc).

With a commitment to the core values of the Trust you will have the skills, diplomacy and strategic vision to develop effective partnerships across the Trust. In particular you will instil confidence in the Trustees and be able to create effective and efficient structures and systems that support the Trust's work and provide Trustees with appropriate advice and support.

You will be able to demonstrate your ability to operate as part of a senior team contributing to the wider success and development of the Trust.

Self-starting, and someone who understands the demands of being accountable for complex, sensitive and time critical issues, you will relish the opportunity of working in a fast-moving, growing organisation and one that is underpinned by a strong moral purpose.





# CORE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This is a senior leadership role. You will be expected to be responsive and proactive in the light of changing strategic priorities. The following sets out, but is not limited to, the duties and responsibilities you will be expected to undertake.

Strategic Leadership
Design, develop and measure the impact and efficiency of central services across the Trust, working with existing teams and resources to enhance provision and bring best practice into the Trust.
Partner with the Executive Heads and Trust Board on the strategic development of the Trust, offering creative solutions and commercial acumen.
Keep abreast of national and regional developments in the academy sector and education more broadly, seizing the opportunities presented by a rapidly changing sector.
As a member of the executive team, support the wider leadership of the Trust by demonstrating a commitment to its vision and agreed strategic direction, offering a can-do, solutions-focused approach to strategic planning and challenges.
Provide sound strategic advice to Joint Executive Heads, Trust Board, Local Academy Committees and Headteachers/senior managers on all issues relating to financial, resource and operational matters.
Build close and effective working relationships with key partners including local and national government, Trustees, Members, staff in the academies and the Teaching School and other external partners.
Manage major Trust and academy projects as required by the Joint Executive Heads.
Support the Joint Executive Heads in assessing the impact of specific local, regional, and/or national educational initiatives.
Lead the Trust's compliance processes, ensuring all non-educational legal and regulatory duties are met.
Ensure the Trust's exposure to and appetite for risk is agreed and understood at executive and non-executive level and is managed and mitigated throughout the organisation.

Financial and Commercial Leadership
Act as the CFO of the Trust.
Be accountable to the Joint Executive Heads for the proper financial management of the Trust and its academies and Teaching School, ensuring compliance at all times with the Academies Financial Handbook.
Prepare annual budgets for the Trust, its academies and the Teaching School by working closely with senior managers and budget holders, ensuring consistency with the Trust's strategic and financial objectives.
Prepare short and long-term financial forecasts in consultation with the Joint Executive Heads and senior colleagues.
Regularly monitor and scrutinise income and expenditure against budget, presenting the same to senior leaders and Trustees/LAC members and acting early to mitigate and manage over-spends.
Develop and implement strategies for maximising the Trust's current finances including commercial income generation, fundraising opportunities, additional grant streams and ensuring best value through procurement and cost control.
Lead, manage, and develop staff within the finance team, promoting a strong service ethos, high professional standards and collaboration across the Trust.
Oversee the development and continuous improvement of financial systems and procedures, including appropriate IT systems, to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controls are in place to support robust financial management that ensures the probity and legislative compliance of all financial transactions, including payroll, pensions, tax and National Insurance payments, cash handling, and the integrity and suitability of all control mechanisms (audit and risk management).</li> <li>• Effective income collection, PO and invoice processing and payment.</li> </ul>
Compile and maintain the Trust's accounts in accordance with the Funding Agreement and the relevant Academies Financial Handbook and Academy Accounts Direction and in accordance with the financial regulations and procedures of the Trust.
Ensure all ESFA, DfE and other financial returns are met in a timely and accurate manner.

# CORE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Governance, Compliance and External Relations

Provide professional support to the Trust Board, including:

- Act as Company Secretary to the Trust, maintaining up-to-date records at Companies House and DfE in line with regulations.
- Provide accurate legal and procedural advice to the Board as needed.
- Maintain compliant and documented governance procedures, ways of working and financial and non-financial schemes of delegation across the Trust's governance structure.
- Attend the Trust Board, sub-committees and Local Academy Committee meetings, giving professional advice as necessary.
- Ensure the Board, its sub-committees and LACs receive appropriate support and advice through:
  - The co-ordination and production of agendas and papers.
  - Effective arrangements for professional clerking of all Board, sub-committee and LAC meetings.
- Produce and provide information as required by the Trust Board, sub-committees and Local Academy Committee Meetings.

Establish a presence in national professional networks, and through these and other means, maintain a current overview of sector policies and developments.

Manage and maintain non-financial compliance processes across the Trust, providing assurance of the same to the Trust Board and external regulatory bodies as necessary.

Engage and be the key point of contact with the Trust's legal advisers, seeking advice as needed while ensuring best value.

Manage the Trust's relationship with DfE/ESFA on all operational matters relating to the development, conversion and sponsorship of new schools and academies joining the Trust.

## Management Responsibilities

Lead and manage all support staff including:

- Operations Director
- Finance Staff
- Premises Staff
- HR and Senior Admin staff
- IT Network Management staff
- Catering and Cleaning Management staff

## Operational Leadership

Lead and develop a multidisciplinary, effective and efficient central business support service across the Trust including (but not limited to):

- Facilities Management: Develop a Trust-wide facilities management strategy to ensure all sites and premises are compliant with relevant health and safety legislation and that they are maintained appropriately and remain fit-for-purpose.
- HR: Oversee all HR processes for the Trust ensuring they are compliant with relevant law and regulations; and provide support to senior leaders and managers in relation to contentious/complex casework (disciplinary, grievance etc), liaising with the Trust's HR and legal advisors as necessary.
- ICT: Ensure all non-educational ICT systems are supported in line with the Trust's ICT strategy.
- Health and Safety
- Governance Support
- In-house catering
- Central Administration

Provide line management for all direct reports within the central service, in line with Trust procedures and ensure effective line and performance management processes are in place for all staff within the service.

Procure and commission additional, external business support services as necessary securing best value for the Trust.

Oversee all major capital and procurement projects, managing and monitoring contracts and contractors as appropriate in order to deliver best value for the Trust.

Provide project management for all relevant initiatives within the Trust including, but not limited to: academies joining the Trust, development of sponsorship arrangements for DfE-identified schools/academies, Free School applications etc.

Undertake and present effective financial and non-financial due diligence in relation to any projects and initiatives as appropriate.

Ensure all non-educational policies and procedures are compliant with relevant legislation and are operational across the Trust as a whole.



## DETAILED PERSON SPECIFICATION

The role of the Director of Finance and Resources calls for a finance professional with the necessary experience, skills and personal qualities to be able to operate as part of a close-knit senior management team. There is an important role to play leading the finance and operations teams, as well as an excellent opportunity to play an important and active part in the strategic direction of this forward-looking, successful and thriving Trust. The post holder:

- Will be expected to have a degree or equivalent qualification.
- Would benefit from a full qualification from a major accountancy body.
- Should be able to demonstrate a track record of successful financial and operational leadership and in one other area e.g. HR, change management, project management.
- Should have financial reporting and management skills, and experience of working with stakeholders to develop strong financial understanding and capability across an organisation.
- Would benefit from experience of management in an educational environment.
- Should have high ethical standards and influencing skills with the ability to engage effectively with all staff across the Trust and with the Local Academy Committees.
- Should show evidence of entrepreneurialism and innovation, with an ability to identify commercial opportunities to maximise income.
- Should have excellent analytical skills and sound judgment.
- Should have excellent communication and presentational skills.
- Should have experience of financial information systems and be computer literate.
- Should have a good knowledge of the funding, regulatory and legislative environment of academies and multi-academy trusts.





## APPOINTMENT PROCESS AND HOW TO APPLY

Applications should consist of a full CV, application form and covering letter addressed to Mark Siswick and Christian Kingsley, Joint Executive Heads, addressing the criteria presented in the job description and person specification, which can be downloaded from the trust website [www.wandlelearningtrust.org.uk](http://www.wandlelearningtrust.org.uk).

Completed applications should be emailed to [recruitment@wandlelearningtrust.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@wandlelearningtrust.org.uk).

The deadline for applications is 08.30 BST on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Longlisted candidates will be invited to a first round interview with Mark Siswick and Christian Kingsley on week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

The shortlist of candidates will be determined in the week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Formal interviews will take in the week commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020.

Wandle Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and the Board of Trustees expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful candidate must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post.





Wandle Learning Trust

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