



**Northern
Lights**

LEARNING TRUST

**St Aidan's CE Academy
SCHOOL BUSINESS AND
OPERATIONS MANAGER**



Northern Lights



We are a Multi-Academy Trust currently comprising ten schools – primary and secondary – and over 4,200 children and young people in an area stretching from Teesside through to Wearside.



We are a Teaching School Hub, one of 87 DfE centres of excellence for teacher training and development, focused on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts in the country.



We are an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub, set up by the DfE to provide advice, share good practice and offer evidence-based professional development for early years practitioners.

OUR SCHOOLS



Benedict Biscop CE Academy
Sunderland



Dame Dorothy Primary School
Sunderland



Grange Primary School
Hartlepool



Hart Primary School
Hartlepool



Holley Park Academy
Washington, Sunderland



Ian Ramsey CE Academy
Stockton-on-Tees



St Aidan's CE Academy
Darlington



St. Helen's Primary School
Hartlepool



St. Peter's Elwick CE Primary School,
Hartlepool



Venerable Bede CE Academy
Sunderland

Every Northern Lights school has its own values and its own vision and that's really important to us because all of our schools are there to serve our community but equally, our Trust is there to serve each other.

We do that with humility and with an openness because at Northern Lights it's not all about the academic – that is really important to us – but we know, as a Trust, we are successful if we have ensured that in an holistic way our children and young people have had every opportunity to experience, to flourish, to thrive, to understand the wonder and the joy of the world around them.

– Jo Heaton OBE, Chief Executive, Northern Lights Learning Trust



Welcome from the CEO

Thank you for your interest in the position of School Business and Operations Manager within Northern Lights Learning Trust.

We are a growing Multi-Academy Trust that is currently made up of 3 secondaries and 7 primaries across Wearside and Teesside, with our central offices based in Seaham. We educate over 4200 pupils and employ over 600 members of staff and serve a diverse range of schools and communities. Each of our schools have their own individual ethos, values and vision, which sit together as part of our Northern Lights vision of 'Shining Together and Stronger Together'. As a CofE MAT, our schools are a mixture of Church and non-Church schools that range in size and levels of disadvantage. We see this diversity as a real strength to learn from and work with each other.

As a Multi-Academy Trust, we are at the heart of the current educational landscape, as a designated DfE Centre of Excellence as a Teaching School Hub and DfE Early Years Hub, responsible for teacher development across all ages and phases of education, working with over 300 schools. We are collaborative in our approach and value professional development highly in all we do.

We are looking for someone whose values align with us as a Trust and has the drive and ambition to work collaboratively to provide the best opportunities and outcomes for our young people.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully

Jo Heaton
Chief Executive Officer



Welcome from the Headteacher

Thank you for your interest in the post of School Business and Operations Manager at St Aidan's CE Academy, where it is my privilege to serve as the Headteacher. We are an 11-16 secondary school serving our local community in Darlington.

St Aidan's is part of a wider family of schools called Northern Lights Learning Trust. Our Trust has 3 secondary academies and 7 primary academies which are located across the North East of England. As a Trust, we believe that we 'Shine Stronger Together' and to achieve this, secondary academies are now aligning some of their systems and processes to share the very best practice to support our students.

At St Aidan's, our school vision is 'Life in all its fullness', John 10:10. We endeavour to give the students the best possible educational experience both in and outside the classroom. Our dedicated staff go above and beyond for the students, and due to the size of the school, there is a real family feel to the with a focus on that sense of belonging.

Following my recent appointment to Headteacher, we have reset our core values. Through student and staff voice, we selected our new core values which are Integrity, Perseverance, Patience and Courage and these now permeate everyday life at the academy.

We want all our students to reach their full potential. With guidance and support from their families and our staff, we hope each one will be able to develop their individual talents and fulfil their lifelong goals. We set high expectations of behaviour, conduct and, most importantly, learning and progress regardless of the students' background. We strive to remove any barriers so children experience success at school.

Thank you again for your interest in our academy. Visits to the academy are welcome by prior arrangement. Please contact Leanne Brownsword on 01325 373770.

Best wishes,

Nikki Gibb
Headteacher

School Business and Operations Manager

Permanent

Required as soon as possible

NJC SCP 29-38

£38,626 - £47,754 FTE

4-point scale will be allocated dependent upon experience and qualifications

37 hours per week

Whole time preferable, however alternatives may be considered by negotiation

Working Pattern: Mon-Thurs: 8am-4pm, Fri: 8am-3.30pm

St Aidan's CE Academy is seeking a dynamic School Business and Operations Manager to join our senior leadership team.

You will play a pivotal role in ensuring the smooth running of the school's non-teaching functions. You will lead on finance, HR, premises, Health & Safety and administration, enabling our staff and students to thrive in a well-managed and supportive environment.

The successful candidate should:

- Demonstrate high expectations of yourself and others.
- Enjoy working collaboratively, being innovative and creative
- Have the skills and knowledge to ensure the school is a safe environment
- Possess excellent organisational skills
- Have an excellent understanding when dealing with children and adults
- Keep calm under pressure whilst maintaining confidentiality
- Have an enthusiasm which would allow you to be supportive of the Trust and school's ethos.

If so, we would really welcome your application.

In return you will receive:

- A supportive working environment that puts people at the heart of the organisation
- The opportunity to work as part of a growing Trust and shape this role
- Continuous professional development
- A range of Trust initiatives that improve wellbeing. Current initiatives include an annual wellbeing day.
- National Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Teachers' Pension Scheme/ Local Government Pension Scheme

Employee welfare and benefits package including:

- 24-hour GP access
- Nurse support service
- Mental health services, including stress management, mental health first aid training and bereavement support
- Free Flu vaccinations
- Counselling Services
- Physiotherapy
- Financial wellbeing coaching
- Maternity and Paternity support
- Menopause support
- Access to useful wellbeing resources
- Cycle to work scheme
- Lifestyle savings including discounts on shops, food and drink and days out

CLOSING DATE: Friday 3rd October 2025

Applications must be received by: Noon, 3rd October 2025

Short Listing will take place on: Monday 6th October 2025

Interviews will take place on: Thursday 9th October 2025

HOW TO APPLY:

Letters of application should be returned, along with a Northern Lights Learning Trust application form, to recruitment@nllt.co.uk or by post to Northern Lights Learning Trust, Spectrum Business Park, Lighthouse View, Building 2, Seaham, SR7 7PR.

Applications will only be considered on receipt of an application form, CV's and other forms of application will not be accepted. For further information, please contact the school on 0191 5239745.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: School Business and Operations Manager

Reports to: Headteacher

Location: St Aidan's CE Academy

Salary: NJC 29-38 (4-point scale allocated dependent upon experience and qualifications)

Contract: Permanent; whole time (alternatives may be considered by negotiation)

Hours: 37 hours per week. Mon – Thurs 8:00am – 4:00pm. Fri 8:00am – 3:30pm

Key purpose of the role:

To lead and manage the school's business, financial, and operational functions, ensuring the effective use of resources to support high-quality teaching and learning. The postholder will be a key member of the senior leadership team (SLT), contributing to strategic planning and decision-making across the school. The postholder will also contribute to Trust wide work, as requested by Central Team.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

Strategic Leadership

- Work with the Head of School and SLT to develop and implement the school's strategic and operational plans.
- Lead on business continuity, risk management, and compliance with statutory requirements.
- Provide strategic oversight of financial planning, HR, estates, ICT, administration and ensure smooth delivery of all projects.
- Liaise effectively with all stakeholders to ensure the school has a positive role in the community and complaints are managed effectively.
- To work alongside members of Central Team to develop and embed Trust wide initiatives.

Finance and Budget Management

- Prepare, manage, and monitor the school's capital and revenue budgets in collaboration with the Head of School and Governors.
- Ensure compliance with financial regulations and reporting requirements (e.g. Financial/Academy Trust handbook).
- Lead procurement and contract management to ensure value for money, identifying and implementing savings.
- Proactively seek and generate additional income for the school.

Human Resources

- Oversee HR processes including recruitment ensuring where appropriate efficient management of safeguarding processes, supply, payroll, attendance and punctuality, grievance, disciplinary and staff well-being.
- Ensure compliance with safer recruitment and employment legislation.
- Support performance management and professional development systems.

Premises and Health & Safety

- Line manage relevant site staff to ensure the maintenance and cleanliness, security, and development of the school site and buildings.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety legislation and policies.
- Ensure accident investigations are carried out in a timely manner with due regard for potential claims.
- Lead on sustainability and energy efficiency initiatives.
- Manage all lettings and community use of the school buildings and grounds.

ICT and Administration

- Oversee the school's ICT infrastructure and adherence to the Trust's digital strategy.
- Line manage administrative and support staff, ensuring efficient office systems and exceptional customer service.
- Ensure GDPR compliance and effective data management.
- Oversee the management and compliance of the school website and ensure a positive and effective social media presence for the school

Governance and Compliance

- Provide reports and advice to the Governing Body and attend relevant meetings.
- Ensure the school meets all statutory and regulatory requirements meeting all deadlines for financial and operational returns.
- Lead on policy development and review in business-related areas.
- Oversight and management of all business related internal and external audits.

The duties outlined above are the main ones considered essential to the role but are not exhaustive.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

School Business and Operations Manager

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
APPLICATION FORM	1. Completed application form		(A) E1
QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING	1. Educated to GCSE Standard at Grade A – C (or 9 – 4) including Mathematics and English or NVQ equivalent 2. Relevant professional qualification in Business, Finance or Management (e.g. CSBM, DSBM, AAT) 3. Willingness to undertake any further training and development, relevant to the role.	1. Degree in Business Management, Finance or related field	(A) E1,E2,E3. D1 (Q) E1,E2,E3. D1
EXPERIENCE	1. Proven experience in financial and operational management 2. Experience of managing budgets, procurement and contracts 3. Experience of leading and managing teams	1. Experience of working in a school or education environment 2. Experience of working with Governors or Trustees 3. Project management experience	A E1,E2,E3. D1,D2,D3 I E1,E2, E3, D1, D2,D3

KNOWLEDGE & UNDERSTANDING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong understanding of financial procedures and regulations. 2. Knowledge of HR, Health & Safety, and premises management 3. Excellent IT skills, including Microsoft Office programmes 4. Ability to interpret and present complex data clearly 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge of School funding and DfE guidance 2. Familiarity with School MIS and Finance systems (e.g., Arbor, FMS, SIMS) 	<p>(A) E1,E2,E3,E4 D1,D2</p> <p>(I) E1, E2, E3,D1</p>
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ability to lead and motivate staff 2. Strategic thinker with strong planning and organisational skills 3. Ability to manage change and drive improvement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience of contribution to strategic planning at senior level 	<p>(A) E1,E2,E3 D1</p> <p>(I) E2</p>
COMMUNICATION AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Excellent written and verbal communication 2. Ability to build effective relationships with a range of stakeholders 3. High level of discretion and confidentiality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience of delivering training or presentations 	<p>(A) E1,E2,E3 D1</p> <p>(I) E1</p>
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friendly, approachable and professional manner. 2. High level of integrity and professionalism 3. Resilient, adaptable and solution-focused 4. Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children 5. Commitment to continuous professional development 		<p>(A) E1,E2,E3,E4,E5</p> <p>(I) E1, E2, E4</p>

OTHER	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recommendation from both referees 2. Fully enhanced DBS clearance with children's barred list check 3. Ability and willingness to travel between sites as required 		<p>References E1</p> <p>Enhanced DBS certificate E2</p> <p>Interview E3</p>
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Key

A = Application

Q = Qualification certificates

I = Interview

St Aidan's CE Academy, part of the Northern Lights Learning Trust, is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

References:

References will be requested prior to interview, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and the applicant does not give consent to do so on the application form. Please contact us to discuss further if you do not consent.

DBS:

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An application for a DBS certificate will be submitted for all candidates once they have been offered the position. For posts in regulated activity, the DBS check will include a barred list check. During the recruitment process, any offences, or other matters relevant to the position will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure.

Safeguarding:

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Pre-employment occupational health:

Pre-employment occupational health checks are an essential part of the selection and recruitment process to assess if any reasonable adjustments are required. In some circumstances, an appointment with Occupational Health may be required to assess fitness for the role.

Equal opportunities:

Northern Lights Learning Trust are an equal opportunity employer. We want to develop a more diverse workforce and we positively welcome applicants from all sections of the community. Applicants with disabilities will be granted an interview if the essential job criteria are met.

Artificial Intelligence and Recruitment at Northern Lights Learning Trust

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to embracing innovation while maintaining fairness and integrity in our recruitment processes. We recognise that candidates may choose to use AI tools to support the preparation of their applications. While this is acceptable, we expect all submissions to reflect the applicant's own experiences, values, and suitability for the role and it is essential that AI is used appropriately.

AI must not be used to:

- provide misleading or false information at any stage of the application journey

- inflate or invent qualifications, skills or experience
- complete assessments as part of the recruitment process
- create generic responses and copy them into your application

If you have any questions about the use of AI in your recruitment process with us, please contact hadmin@nlt.co.uk