

Head of Finance & Operations



Recruitment Pack
Spring 2024

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Welcome from the Chief Executive of Camden Learning

Thank you for your interest in the role of Head of Finance & Operations at Camden Learning. I am delighted that you have chosen to find out more about joining us. This role provides a unique opportunity to lead, grow and develop our business and communications functions as we reach a critical time in our journey so that we can have an even more positive impact on the educational experiences of thousands of young people in Camden.

Camden Learning is a pioneering school-led, place-based partnership. A joint enterprise, launched by Camden schools and Camden Council in 2017, we are a unique organisation founded on the principle that there is far more we can achieve together than by acting alone. In consultation with our schools and local communities, we articulated our ambitions for education in Camden by developing a new strategy for 2030 [Building Back Stronger](#). This is built on the twin pillars of excellence and equity so central to the Camden system of education.

The lifeblood of Camden Learning is its face-to-face work supporting improvement in and across schools. This is sometimes delivered by centrally based Camden Learning staff but more commonly brokered from a range of both external expertise and Camden schools themselves. Camden Learning is at a crossroads. On the one hand, it has a remarkable opportunity as the Council's and schools' key partner in delivering Building Back Stronger to 2030. Camden also has a respected 'brand' and a leading role in the sector. On the other hand, in developing a business development strategy, including a more entrepreneurial approach, Camden Learning faces a number of challenges in a financially challenging context for local government and schools. Camden Learning is over-dependent on commissioning by Camden Council, with 70% of its total budget coming from this source. The traded offer for Camden Schools generates 30% of the Camden Learning total budget. The national context is always uncertain so the organisation must be ready to adapt and be highly flexible.

Camden has a very loyal and stable headteacher workforce and long-standing governors who feel strong ownership of Camden Learning as do many other staff in our schools. However, given the autonomy of schools, the organisation still needs to be able to demonstrate its value strongly to new headteachers and staff coming in from other areas and new chairs of governors through effective communications.

Camden Learning needs to be ahead of the curve in understanding its market, schools needs and opportunities to develop and sell services which are a better use of schools' own funding than working as individual schools or buying from the private

sector. Customer and market intelligence is vital to understand what schools need, how the organisation is performing, how it can improve and grow its market penetration.

This entrepreneurial approach needs to be underpinned by a rigorous and business-like approach to costs and activity. The business support and development function is part of the 'glue' in the organisation. A new approach to business development will need to be built securely into the culture of our organisation, most particularly our ways of working.

The Head of Finance & Operations is an exciting opportunity to lead activity in a dynamic part of central London. To be successful, you'll need to demonstrate a proven track record in business planning and the development, efficient and effective compliant financial planning, with sound knowledge and experience of overseeing IT and personnel systems and the confidence to provide financial advice, insight, support, and challenge as appropriate to both the Senior Leadership team and the Board, to improve overall business performance. Whatever your background, you'll be able to evidence your credibility and personal impact on quickly building the respect and trust of others, alongside proven interpersonal and communication skills. You will have ambition for the programmes that you lead, others in your team and holding them to account and be comfortable working in a hands-on, agile manner to meet the needs of our schools and stakeholders.

Your track record of success will ensure you can develop relationships with key stakeholders at pace, working closely with the wider educational community in Camden and quickly developing an understanding of our schools' current and future needs. By doing so, you'll ensure Camden Learning continues to be closely engaged with our schools, able to broker creative and impactful solutions that are expertly configured to respond to future challenges.

If you're passionate about ensuring all young people enjoy excellent educational opportunities, developing strong and lasting partnerships with schools and educational stakeholders and are seeking to develop your leadership skills in a challenging and exciting role, then we want to hear from you. We welcome applications from a range of backgrounds and experiences, including those from colleagues in the not-for-profit sector, the private sector and from school or academy trust business managers.

If you would like an opportunity to talk through the possibilities of the role please contact Kathryn Moss at our partners at Robertson Bell in the first instance to arrange an informal conversation [0203 889 4129](tel:02038894129) or kathrynmoss@robertsonbell.co.uk

We look forward to hearing from you

Stephen Hall
Chief Executive Officer
Camden Learning

About Camden Learning

Launched in 2017, Camden Learning is a successful schools-led and area-based partnership. All schools in Camden have chosen to be involved and every school is a member of the company, as is Camden Council. As members, schools own the company and have delegated powers to the Camden Learning Board of Directors to run it on their behalf. We are very proud that our model has been genuinely co-constructed, founded on the principle that there is far more we can achieve together than by acting alone. There is collective responsibility across schools for all Camden children.

The support Camden Learning provides to schools is wide and varied. We are commissioned by Camden Council to deliver services such as school improvement and, in addition, we offer a variety of other targeted improvement, development and support services – both on a commission and point-of-need basis.

Our commission from Camden Council is stable and secure – and because we enjoy a relationship of trust and mutual respect, over time we have taken on responsibility for delivering more council services through the Camden Learning model.

Ultimately, the success of Camden Learning has been underpinned by the excellent relationships that we have been able to develop both with the Council and with our partner organisations.

Our ambitions for 2030

1. A Fair Start

- Thriving children who are ready to learn
- Schools rooted at the heart of their communities
- Parents as prime partners in their children's learning

2. An Excellent School Experience

- A good, local school place available for every Camden child
- Every child a reader by 7
- Knowledgeable and skilled leaders and teachers who love working and learning in Camden
- An inclusive, inspiring, creative and horizon-broadening curriculum in all our schools

- Harnessing technology to improve learning, schools and our local system
- Successful transition between settings and phases for every child — Children’s health and well-being are supported through the ethos, curriculum and practices of school life
- Ambitious inclusive schools
- Opportunity Centres to facilitate learning beyond the school day — A Camden accountability framework which captures the real story of the school

3. Flourishing Lives

- Building a generation of changemakers with impact in their communities
- A post 16 education system that benefits all students
- Greater access for young people to education, work and opportunity
- Better information, advice and guidance to support learning and job choices which lead to economic opportunity
- A Camden ‘Life Futures Plan’ for every young person at 16+

Our foundations

Underpinning our pillars of equity and excellence are four foundations to enable us to achieve the change set out in this strategy.



A strong place-based system

A system that understands and reflects local demographics, histories, and values.



An ambitious inclusive system

A system that breaks down the barriers to learning by calling out inequalities, acting to address them, making sure children and young people feel a strong sense of belonging to school and community so that no one is left behind.



A collaborative and federating system

A system where we use collaboration to motivate, learn and achieve better, taking collective responsibility for all our children, working together in formal and informal partnerships, including federations, so they are served well.



Think, test and learn

A system where we are constantly developing ideas and new practice and approaches, learning from research and staying at the leading edge of new and effective practice in education by trialling new ways of working.

About the role

This is a key role working closely with the Senior Leadership Team as a business partner, providing critical support as part of the decision-making processes including strategic and tactical planning, importantly providing an impartial conscience acting with integrity. The postholder will ensure good stewardship and planning of finance, strong governance, effective management of staffing resources and excellent IT systems.

Managing a small team, the Head of Finance and Operations is responsible to the CEO and the Camden Learning board, chaired by Dame Christine Gilbert. You will hold responsibility for the effective support and business function of the company, including business planning, IT and HR systems and development, efficient and effective compliant financial planning, and reporting, including medium term planning, annual budget-making, and monthly forecasts, providing financial advice, insight, support, and challenge as appropriate to both the Senior Leadership team and the Board, to improve overall business performance.

Building strong links with our school partners, you will work closely with the Head of Business Development and Communications and CEO to maintain and develop strategic partnerships with external organisations that have impact on the ground and play a key strategic influencing and delivery role as part of the Camden Learning Senior Leadership Team. Implementation is key. You will ensure you are able to evidence progress and impact against these strategic priorities.

This role is central to Camden Learning's drive for excellence and equity, set out in [Building Back Stronger](#), Camden's new education strategy for 2030.

The future success of Camden Learning will be defined by our ability to stay at the leading edge of school services. That means delivering a core school improvement offer alongside other council-commissioned services that are targeted and analysed for impact. But it also means exploring and seizing opportunities to do more with our partner schools.

You'll bring the creative thinking, entrepreneurial outlook and values-based decision making to earn the trust of our member schools and wider stakeholders to co-construct future and additional services to meet their needs. In doing so, you'll further strengthen our reputation for impact, agility, and ability to respond with services that deliver outstanding value for money.

This is an exciting opportunity to lead on organisational reporting providing insight alongside strategic and operational decision-making. You will contribute to the development of a vibrant culture across Camden Learning that is collaborative, proactive and promotes professional accountability, so we meet the needs of our schools, children, and young people.

This is a fantastic opportunity to build your professional expertise in a high-profile leadership role in central London. In return, you'll enjoy the support of your colleagues, peers and the Camden Learning Board and you'll positively influence the lives of thousands of learners and their families.

Most important to us is that you share our commitment to the children and young people of Camden. Everything we do is geared towards improving their life chances – and we'll look to you to represent those values throughout your work.

Job description

Head of Finance & Operations, Camden Learning

Salary: Permanent, Full time, £75,000

We are based at Pancras Square is ideally situated for Kings Cross, St Pancras and Euston stations with access to surrounding shopping, restaurants and cafes.

Job purpose

The Head of Finance and Operations is a broad and varied role, integral to Camden Learning's operations. The postholder will ensure good stewardship and planning of finance, strong governance, effective management of staffing resources and excellent IT systems.

Job Description

The Head of Finance & Operations will:

General:

- Contribute to the strategic direction of Camden Learning, supporting the Chief Executive and demonstrating the flexibility and versatility required in a small and developing organisation.
- Line manage staff as allocated ensuring they are set and meet clear objectives and receive the support and development to help enable them to meet these objectives.
- Work closely with Camden Council as primary commissioner and education service provider and with schools as the owners of the company and therefore the foremost stakeholder group.
- Carrying out any tasks and duties as may be required from time to time, including attending meetings outside normal working hours, deputising for the Chief Executive.

Finance:

- ensure excellent financial planning, including efficient and effective financial control, clear and timely financial reporting, and compliance with statutory and funders'/commissioners' requirements.
- ensure that all income streams are robustly managed and accounted for, with efficient systems for income collection and maximise income streams.
- ensure best value from Camden Learning spending and ensuring effective commissioning and use of contracted services across the organisation.
- work with the CEO and Board to ensure financial planning for future sustainability and with effective understanding and management of risk.
- liaise with auditors and relevant bodies.

Governance:

- ensure strong organisational governance so that the Board can meet all its statutory duties and responsibilities as well as meeting the requirements of funders and commissioners.
- Management of commission reporting.

Human resources:

- ensure that staffing arrangements are efficient and effective, as well as in line with good practice in employment.
- ensure that clear systems, policies, and processes are in place to ensure an effective workforce and good practice as an employer.
- ensure effective systems for accounting for staff time, leave arrangements and sickness absence.
- ensure that Camden Learning pursues best practice as an employer which values equality and diversity, as well as being compliant with all relevant legislation.
- ensure that Camden Learning is meeting child and adult safeguarding requirements.
- ensuring that there are training and development opportunities for staff to assist them in achieving their objectives, within a performance management framework.
- take the lead on liaising with Camden Council on use of office space and other premises to ensure optimum working conditions.
- ensure compliance with health and safety requirements for all staff and activities.

Systems:

- ensure efficient and effective IT systems including the development and use of Finance Systems and the CRM to support the operation of Camden Learning
- ensure compliance with GDPR and other information governance requirements.
- ensure that the Camden Learning traded offer is underpinned by effective systems for invoicing, payment and contracts.

Equalities:

Act as a leader of social justice who:

- Understands the material, economic and social differences between different groups
- Works to right the wrongs of marginalised groups
- Creates safe spaces and opportunities that promote equity between individuals and groups
- Changes systems, processes, and structures to respond better to the needs of students
- Works to create fairness and inclusion in schools for all who study and work in them
- Interprets their role as working towards excellence and equity for all

Personal specification

The holder of the post will be able to demonstrate evidence of the following qualities, experience, knowledge and skills:

Job requirements

Qualifications:

- Recognised Accounting Qualification or equivalent.
- University degree or equivalent relevant experience.

Essential experience and skills:

- Senior level experience of financial planning and accounting, preferably, but not essentially, in both public sector and not for profit settings
- Experience of both annual and medium-term financial planning and review
- Understanding of clear systems, policies and processes that underpin effective human resource management
- Knowledge and skills to be able to train staff in adopting and embedding efficient and effective financial and HR systems and procedures
- The confidence and skills to help build a more entrepreneurial culture across Camden Learning
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including experience of presenting at board level and strong written communication skills
- Experience of producing written plans and strategic documents
- Understanding of schools and education policy (which could be gained from paid work in the sector or for example as a school governor)
- Demonstrable commitment to the moral purpose of education
- Unwavering commitment to equality and diversity and experience of championing these in a work environment
- Sound knowledge and understanding of statutory compliance in relation to health and safety, safeguarding and information governance.

Terms & Conditions

- A generous NEST pension – with a minimum 10% employer contribution.
- We offer 30 days' annual leave entitlement as well as bank holidays.
- We support flexible working arrangements including a balance of home and office working, part-time, term-time – all dependent on your job role and needs of the service.
- Season ticket loans, childcare voucher scheme.
- Collection of staff discount and cashback deals available on shops and health clubs, travel and insurance and world-leading technology manufacturers.

Health and wellbeing

- Cycle to Work Scheme, with savings of between 32% and 42% on the standard retail price of a new bike can be made.
- Corporate rates for membership of GLL – Better Leisure, with a state-of-the art gym right in the building at 5 Pancras Square.
- An Employee Assistance Programme.
- Free Hearing tests, Eye tests.

How to apply

To discuss this role in more depth or to arrange an informal conversation with the Kathryn Moss at Roberston Bell **t. 0203 889 4129** w. robertsonbell.co.uk
kathrynmosse@robertsonbell.co.uk

Closing date for applications: **Monday 8th April 2024 at 12 noon**

Interviews: **Week Beginning 15th April 2024**

We look forward to hearing from you.

Camden Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Our commitment to inclusive recruitment

For education organisations to flourish, improve performance and genuinely represent the communities they serve – it's essential that we seize the opportunity to develop a diverse workforce. We know that to make a lasting difference in the lives of children and young people, the very best talent from our society needs to be identified, supported and retained. Our organisations perform better when they reflect the rich breadth and depth of our society – and we should be proud to bring together a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills and lived experience. In practice, an inclusive approach to recruitment takes care and attention. We are all stakeholders in the education system – so together we need to continue to challenge recruitment norms, processes, and behaviours.

We are committed to recruitment campaigns that are developed with inclusivity at their core, whilst keeping a resolute focus on the best choice of candidate for the post.