



St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

The very best Catholic education now and for generations to come

Chief Operations Officer

Information Pack

November 2022





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1. Letter from our CEO, Mr Andrew Celano

Dear prospective applicant,

Thank you for your interest in this exciting role. The Trust aims to become an exceptional organisation, delivering school improvement and better outcomes for every individual in our community. It was created out of a voluntary decision from eight schools in our Deanery to come together in one go and forge ever-closer relationships to make us 'stronger together'. The Trust duly opened with eight schools on 1st September 2021; we are not yet four terms old! Whilst there is no doubt that the creation of an eight-school Trust 'overnight' is a big challenge owing to the significant levels of change we are carefully managing across the schools, we are growing very quickly into a cohesive and committed Trust.

Your role, as COO, will be to organise the complex and ambitious operations that we are beginning to put in place and form. Those operations revolve around our strategy which is to invest in and create an organisation in which everyone can see the power of fundamental and transformative school improvement through a model of school to school collaboration. If you believe in the potential of this way of working, and you feel that you have the ability to help us deliver for every child, member of staff and member of our community, then we would like to hear from you. We particularly want to hear from those with successful and demonstrable experience of delivering complex operations to a high standard, but this experience need not necessarily be within the education sector; we are open to employing those with and without sector experience.

We are a very caring and supportive employer and we can offer you commitment, training, support and a very collegiate atmosphere in which to work. You will be based at St. Mary's Bishops Stortford with myself and the CFO, along with other Trust staff currently being recruited (e.g. the Company Secretary, who will work closely with you and support you). The role will involve work at other school sites, but we are a close geographical Trust and so travel is really not an issue for us.

An example of what has been achieved in Year One (2021/22) can be seen on the page 9. Whilst our first year was very much about setting up systems, policies and procedures, I hope you can see that we have also managed to deliver the beginnings of some fairly fundamental and valuable benefits. This is largely due to the fact that we work with very talented, positive and committed Directors, Local Governing Bodies, Headteachers and staff colleagues. One other achievement in our first year was the creation of our Core Function and Core Purpose document (see page 4) which all Heads have agreed represents a valuable return for the membership fee that each school contributes. That Core Function has been formed into an Annual Calendar and one of the key roles for the COO is to ensure the smooth running of this Core Function delivery, according to the calendar, and subsequent versions of it, across the eight schools.

This is genuinely an exciting role and opportunity. It will also be hard work and rewarding. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the role or your suitability, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me by emailing me at a.celano@stfrancistrust.net

Andrew Celano

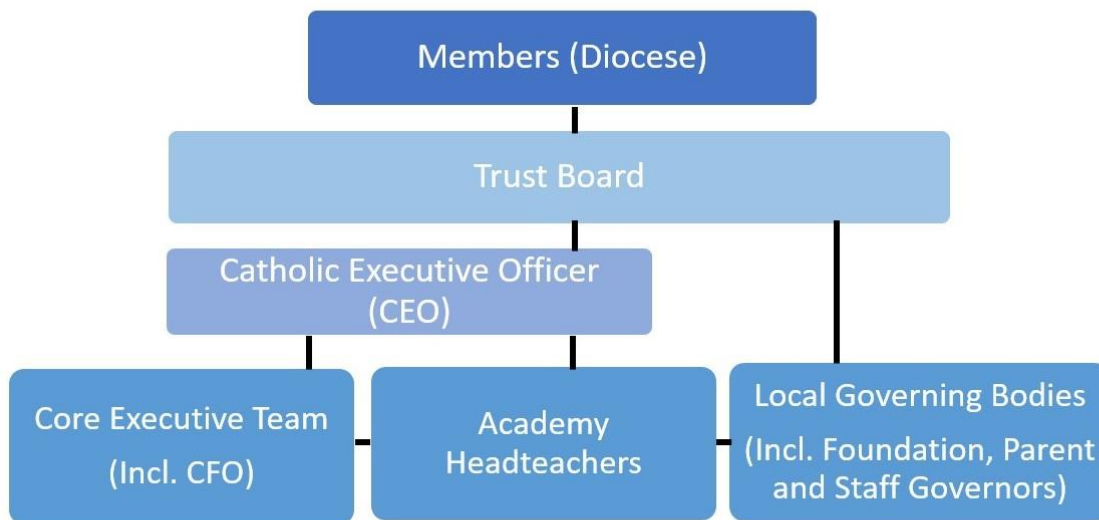
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Celano'.

Chief Executive Officer, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust



2. Organisational Structure

Organisational Structure



Enhancing, preserving and protecting the future of Catholic education in our Deanery

The COO role is a key additional role within our Core Executive Team, reporting directly to the CEO and providing information to the Directors on the Trust Board which enables them to fulfil their responsibility in ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.

3. Our Core Function and Purpose

Mission *(our united purpose)*

“Inspired by the teachings of Christ and the example of St Francis, we strive for excellence, cherishing every child in our care as a unique thumbprint of God, enabling all to realise their full potential.”

Strategy *(how we will deliver the mission)*

“The Strategic Plan for the Trust is to enable and invest in an organisation which is always improving the quality of what we do; delivering the highest quality Catholic Education for generations to come. Our Trust is blessed with effective and committed academy leadership, where focussed and challenging local governance is provided for each Academy by the Local



Governing Bodies on behalf of the Trust Board. Our Trust values the scrutiny of local governance and trust directors to support and challenge our leaders to deliver the best quality of educational provision and pupil outcomes. Through planned investment and central functions, Academy leaders and Local Governing Bodies will be increasingly liberated to focus on the true heartbeat of each school: the pupils, parents and staff.”

Vision (*what it will look like when we fulfil the mission*)

“The very best possible Catholic education, now and for generations to come.”

Core Function

1. Quality of Education

- (a) Managing School performance
- (b) Overseeing standards of education, leadership & management, personal development and behaviour & attitudes
- (c) Understanding, assessing and reporting on all pupil progress data and sub-groupings (e.g. Pupil Premium, SEND) across the schools
- (d) Establishing agreed benchmarks for school performance
- (e) Intervention & planning for issues in schools
- (f) Behaviour
 - a. Monitor exclusions
 - b. Arrange IRP as required
 - c. Monitor attendance across the schools
- (g) Curriculum – assisting Heads to review curriculum across the Trust, including RE Curriculum Directory, SRE, and acts of Worship

2. People

- (a) Staffing
- (b) Supporting and conducting investigations
- (c) Monitoring quality and diversity
 - a. Overseeing staffing structures in each school
 - b. Reviewing appointment rates across schools
 - c. INSET and development provision and overview
 - d. Implement & review policies on pay, appraisal, discipline, attendance, grievance and dismissal
 - e. Ensuring uniformity of contracts going forwards
 - f. Co-ordinate HT PM
- (d) Meetings
 - a. Headteacher Meeting preparation and meetings
 - b. County / Local / Diocesan / RSC / Building Consultants / other external parties
 - c. Networking
 - d. Central Team meetings
 - e. Line managing HTs



- f. Line managing Central Team
 - i. CFO
 - ii. Operations Officer
 - iii. Admin support
 - iv. Contractor 1
 - v. Contractor 2
- (e) CPD & coaching
- (f) Monitoring equality and diversity
- (g) Working with community
 - a. Working with schools on their stakeholder surveys, including staff wellbeing
 - b. Engaging RSC
 - c. Working with Heads on local community engagement projects
 - d. Termly Trust Newsletter for Staff and Parents

3. Strategic leadership

- (a) Trust Development Planning
 - a. Creating and managing key objectives from the Trust Development Plan
 - b. Working with schools on their School Development Plans
 - c. Harmonisation planning
 - d. Designing up Central Team function
- (b) Working with Trust Board
 - a. Individual meetings with Directors
 - b. Trust Board Meetings
 - c. Writing Executive Reports
 - d. Reporting to RSC, DfE, ESFA, LA
 - e. Produce the Annual Report on Company Performance
- (c) Vision & values
 - a. Reviewing schools' mission statements, policies and practice, ensuring Catholic character permeates all aspects of school life
 - b. Planning and reviewing opportunities for Common Good and option for the poor

4. Finance, Sustainability & Compliance

- (a) Compliance audit and planning
- (b) Trust
- (c) ESFA / DfE / RSC
- (d) RCDO
- (e) Auditors
- (f) Accounting Officer role
- (g) Admissions
- (h) Receive school's admissions policies, or help co-ordinate a Trust policy
- (i) Review policies and take advice for Directors
 - a. Creation of central policies where desirable
 - b. Review of policies
- (j) Help schools organise their consultations as required
- (k) Administration
- (l) Scheme of Delegation
 - a. Revised versions
 - b. Reviewing regularly



- (m) Overseeing administration of LGB make up and acting accordingly
- (n) Register of Business interests
- (o) Term dates – help Heads to review and set
- (p) Trust website
- (q) Complaints
 - a. Process complaints
 - b. Overview complaints across the Trust and schools
 - c. Safeguarding
- (r) Monitoring the work of schools (legislation compliance, identifying any training needs, DSP in place)
- (s) Reporting to Directors re procedures in place across schools, incl. helping their governance professional to audit Director Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment training as required
- (t) Health and Safety
 - a. Support and advise Heads as required
 - b. Make proposals to Directors as required
 - c. Co-ordinate and support schools with CIF bids and strategy
 - d. Assist with monitoring of school build works
 - e. Risk Management – reviewing the Risk Register and ensuring appropriate action
- (u) Support Academies to complete their risk registers
- (v) Develop the Trust risk control strategy and monitoring of it
 - a. Finance
 - b. Making payments and entering into contracts
 - c. Report to Directors at least 3 times per year
 - d. Ensuring value for money
- (w) Reviewing monthly monitoring with each Headteacher (or CFO as necessary)
- (x) 3yr budget forecasting reviews and associated strategic planning
- (y) Working with CFO to ensure adherence to Academies Handbook
- (z) Review CFO's procurement programme
- (aa) Marketing and pupil roll analysis and intervention

Overall, our two-year Trust Development Plan aims to:

1. Develop the highest quality Catholic Life in our Schools;
2. Deliver the highest quality of education;
3. Secure robust safeguarding, with excellent behaviour, attitudes, and personal development;
4. Deliver increasingly effective Trust and local leadership and management;
5. Secure sustainable finance across the Trust;
6. Run an efficient MAT administration to effectively serve all schools;
7. Deliver our MAT mission, establishing and creating the foundations for future growth.



4. Our Schools



We have seven primary schools and one secondary school in Hertfordshire:

- St. Mary's Catholic Secondary Bishop's Stortford
- St. Joseph's Primary Bishop's Stortford
- St. Thomas of Canterbury Primary Puckeridge
- St. Joseph's Primary Hertford
- Sacred Heart Primary School Ware
- St. Cross Primary Hoddesdon
- St. Augustine's Primary Hoddesdon
- St. Joseph's Primary Waltham Cross





5. 25 Example Trust Benefits in Year 1 (2021/22)

1. Benefits for the children through our paired Trust projects:
 - a. Chaplaincy, including greater cohesion between school chaplaincy teams, connecting pupils across the schools to encourage their faith journey and service, creating a Trust prayer, holding Trust-wide chaplaincy liturgy, and the pupil design (competition) of St. Francis chaplaincy badge.
 - b. Subject Leadership, including developing the effectiveness of curriculum and subject leadership in our schools through creating networks, collaboration and sharing of schemes and best practice, as well as monitoring, mapping and assessment.
 - c. EYFS, including evaluation of the Early Years Curriculum and approach, spring term focus on early reading and phonics resourcing and approach, shared phonics purchasing, moderation & sharing good practice.
 - d. Catholic Life, including the creation of a pupil designed Stations of the Cross booklet – one given to each child & family, designing & readying of the Franciscan Values Award for Early Years to Year 13 to launch in Sept 22.
2. Full time availability and support of CFO on financial monitoring, budget setting and financial procedures.
3. Weekly Trust workshops and bulletins, peer to peer support, and free weekly training for finance colleagues.
4. Dedicated help for Heads on a range of financial matters.
5. Two in-school support and compliance visits from Health and Safety experts at HCC, along with free support and advice from building consultants on matters arising and Headteacher support for interim risk control.
6. Emergency support for a school with a serious critical incident.
7. In-school visits from the Health and Safety Director.
8. Health and Safety governor training.
9. Support with GIAS and governance registration.
10. In-school support, OFSTED prep and monitoring of Safeguarding governance from the Safeguarding Director.
11. Monitoring of Safeguarding operation peer review.
12. All internal and external audit fees covered, and all audit arrangements made with training given.
13. Creation of a Trust-wide Headteacher-designed Headteacher Report, streamlining reporting across the Trust and enabling Trust Reports and school to school support to be brokered.
14. School to school support and sharing of best practice in EYFS, ECT visits and shared support, writing moderation, expectations on environment, schemes of work.
15. Supporting 'advert to appointment' for two local boards appointing Headteachers.
16. Headteacher support on a range of matters, including exclusions, abusive parents, behaviour, complaints & absence management.
17. Headteacher wellbeing: conference, mini-retreat, a headteacher lunch, & regular team time off site to plan & share.



18. Retention and development of Headteachers through opportunities: two Heads of School posts, and one Executive Headteacher appointment made.
19. Supporting local Chairs with various procedures from allegations against staff to formal complaints.
20. Sharing of wellbeing strategies between schools.
21. Termly newsletter communicating Trust work and developments in schools.
22. Creation of centralised Trust policies saving Heads and Boards creation and meeting time, incl. Admissions, Child Protection, H&S, Fire Aid, Discipline, Grievance, Complaints, Whistleblowing, Trips, Code of Conduct, Risk Management, Assets, Lettings, Visitors, Critical Incident, Financial Procedures, Recruitment, Flexible Working etc. (will include SEN & Pay by the end of the term).
23. Helping each school produce or update Risk Registers.
24. Post CIF bid support on appeals and interim measures.
25. Website audit and compliance checks.



6. Recruitment Process

The St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicant will require an enhanced disclosure from the DBS.

For more information, please find attached:

- Child Protection Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education.

7. Equality and Diversity

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust values all of its community, irrespective of gender, race or disability. It aims to live according to the values of Jesus Christ – to love thy neighbour as thyself. We see all staff, learners, and their parents and carers, as of equal value. Our policies, procedures and activities must not discriminate and will take account of differences of life-experience, outlook and background.



8. Application

Please see the COO job description and person specification overleaf.

Please complete the Application Form (Support Staff) and ancillary documents, (Rehabilitation of Offenders, Recruitment Monitoring and Consent to References forms), which can be found at:



<https://www.stmarys.net/page/?title=Instructions+for+Applicants&pid=149> , CVs will not be accepted, and also enclose a letter of application (no more than 2 sides of A4) outlining how your skills and experience meet the requirements of the person specification.

Applications should be sent to:

Andrew Celano, CEO

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust

c/o St Mary's Catholic School

Bishop's Stortford

Herts

CM23 2NQ

Or by email to: c.boylan@stmarys.net

Application closing date: Friday 9th December 2022 at 12 noon

Shortlisting: Monday 12th December

Interview Dates: Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th December.



9. COO Job Description

Core Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To lead operations across the Trust with a strong focus on compliance, communication, standards, safeguarding, estates management, including capital projects, and health and safety• Work alongside the CEO and CFO to ensure that the Trust meets its statutory and ethical obligations and continues to deliver the strategic aims and objectives set out by the Trust Board• To uphold the trust's Catholic and Franciscan values in all aspects of your work• Provide visible leadership across the organisation• To work collaboratively with the Trust Board, Trust Executive, trust leaders and Headteachers to develop and deliver both the education offer and strategic objectives• To perform the duties of the COO in accordance with the conditions of employment• To promote the Trust in the wider community
Key Responsibilities and Accountabilities
<p>Strategic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribute to the work of the Executive Team and Directors to develop the vision and deliver a long-term corporate strategy for success and continuous improvement• Support the CEO and CFO in the development and growth of the Trust• Develop systems and processes to ensure all operational matters are compliant, effective and efficient• To maintain an oversight of standards in schools across the Trust to enable the sharing of best practice and support for areas of development, as well as supporting our Headteachers to continue to deliver excellence through our nursery, primary and secondary provision.• Develop and maintain effective relationships with key partners/stakeholders within and outside of the Trust• Keep abreast of national, regional and local initiatives that impact directly on Trust operations• Lead on all at least two Trust-wide themes, e.g. Safeguarding and Health and Safety matters adopting a strategic approach to ensure practice is always excellent in these areas <p>Leadership and Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting all Local Governing Bodies through their Headteachers to understand the scheme and schedule of delegation• Assume responsibility for liaison and operational direction with 2 schools – managing Headteachers for the CEO as required• Alongside the CEO, ensure that leadership at all levels is robust and resilient and hold leaders to account if there are concerns• To report as and when required to Trust Board and its sub-committees on all operations in line with the Trust Calendar• Lead on the production of all reports for the Trust Education Committee



- Lead, support and inspire all stakeholders to create a shared culture of ambition and excellence
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with all Trust stakeholders and partners
- Lead on CPD planning for Trust Board Directors
- Lead on Risk Management, monitoring risk registers and ensuring all internal and external controls are in place

School Improvement and Monitoring Standards

- Alongside the Trust Leaders and CEO, develop a school improvement culture which promotes high professional standards that deliver improvements in provision and outcomes
- Lead on academic standards and schools' development processes, strategies and evaluation to ensure Trust-wide educational excellence
- Analyse, evaluate and report on attainment, achievement and target setting across the Trust identifying strengths and areas for development
- Encourage networking opportunities and ways to share best practice across the Trust
- Monitor admissions and maintain oversight of pupil numbers, current and forecast
- Encourage the further development of Headteachers as Trust Leaders
- Provide support and challenge to schools across the Trust as required

Operational Responsibilities

- Working closely with the CFO to ensure all Financial Management systems are working effectively, that the CEO has all necessary information to ensure the CFO and COO are managing the financial stability of the Trust
- Work closely with the CFO on budget matters supporting reporting to the CEO in line with the Trust calendar
- Have clear oversight of the Trust calendar, ensuring that all activities are carried out at school. Executive and trust Board levels
- Maximise resources and ensure financial efficiency in all aspects of the Trust's work
- Monitor Health and Safety inspections and ensure recommendations are acted upon where necessary
- Keep abreast of changes to policies and communicate changes swiftly to Trust Board, schools and any operational committee members
- Promote the safety of pupils through regular Safeguarding and Health and Safety Operational Committee meetings
- Keep abreast of changes to the Academies Handbook ensuring all 'musts' are reflected in the Trust calendar; keep the organisation fully compliant
- Seek HR advice on behalf of schools where necessary
- To process statutory returns to the DfE
- Work with the CFO on service procurement to schools, e.g. catering contract, estates compliance
- To undertake any other responsibilities as deemed reasonably necessary by the CEO or Trust Directors



10. COO Person Specification

Title	Chief Operations Officer		
Accountable to	CEO		
AF: Application Form and Letter CQ: Certificates/Qualifications	I: interview R: Reference P: Presentation		
Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	How identified
Graduate Status	Y		AF/CQ
Relevant post-graduate qualification		Y	AF/CQ
Relevant leadership CPD	Y		AF/CQ/R
Experience			
Extensive leadership experience in a complex organisation, either in education or business	Y		AF/R
Representing and promoting the mission of Catholic education		Y	AF/R
Experience in leading work outside of current setting, e.g. school reviewer, business support		Y	AF/R/I
Strong advocate for and proven track record in pupil achievement/school improvement/business development		Y	AF/R/I
Strategy development and implementation	Y		AF/I/R
Significant line-management experience of senior staff	Y		AF/R
Skills and Attributes			
Effective communication skills	Y		AF/I/P/R
Effective interpersonal skills	Y		I/R
Stamina	Y		R
Personal and professional resilience in the face of challenging situations	Y		R/I
Integrity	Y		R
Professionalism	Y		R
Ability to analyse data and make recommendations for action	Y		I/AF/R
Accountability	Y		R/I
A strong team ethos and natural networker. Able to engage effectively and communicate with the wider community	Y		AF/I/R/
A commitment to the vision, guiding principles and strategic goals of the Trust	Y		AF/I/P



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST