



DURHAM JOHNSTON
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
DARE TO BE WISE



Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15, SCP 42 to 46, £53,460 - £57,585

Permanent

Starting date: As soon as possible

Crossgate Moor, Durham, DH1 4SU

www.durhamjohnston.org.uk

Contents

Letter of Introduction 3

Core Values 4

Job Description 5

Person Specification 9

Context of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School 13

Letter of Introduction

Rosslyn McFadden
Headteacher



Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in being Director of Finance and Operations at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School.

Durham Johnston Comprehensive School is a happy, high performing, oversubscribed 11-18 school in Durham city. We have a national reputation for academic excellence and are well respected in our local community both for our excellent outcomes and our strong pastoral care. The success of our school is built on positive relationships at all levels, and our dedicated staff work together to prioritise the wellbeing and best possible outcomes for all our students. As a Local Authority school, we care for our own community; our focus is always on, 'how will this benefit our students?' and 'what impact will this have on our staff?'. Staff often stay at Durham Johnston for a significant period of time as wellbeing, professional autonomy and expertise are respected and protected.

We are seeking to appoint a Director of Finance and Operations who will have strategic leadership and oversight of all aspects of financial management and operational functions. They will be a senior member of the School Leadership Team and will lead and influence strategy, governance and growth. Working closely with the Headteacher and the Governing Body, they will ensure the organisation's resources, systems, and infrastructure effectively support the implementation of the school's core values, strategic vision, and long-term sustainability.

All leaders at Durham Johnston are committed to both ethical leadership and the school's core values. Our intake is fully comprehensive, and it is important that any staff member joining us has a genuine commitment to social justice. It is important to us that all of our students benefit from their time here, have access to strong subject specialists and a diverse range of opportunities. The Director of Finance and Operations will play an essential role in achieving this goal.

We encourage applications from any colleagues who meet the essential criteria to apply to work in our school and informal visits to the school are very welcome. If you would like meet with us, please contact Jane Bewley (j.bewley@durhamjohnston.org.uk) to book a time.

The closing date is **9.00am Thursday 26th March 2026**. If you are returning your application by email please use the following address: recruitment@durhamjohnston.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Rosslyn McFadden
Headteacher

Core Values

Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15 SCP 42 to 46



At Durham Johnston Comprehensive School all members of our school community are expected to exemplify the school's core values.

- 1. Academic Excellence;** a belief in progress for all.
- 2. Acquiring Knowledge;** the importance of being an educated person and knowing things.
- 3. Social Justice;** providing opportunities for all, regardless of background.
- 4. Public Service;** the importance of making a contribution to the school community and wider society.
- 5. Diverse Opportunities;** a rounded education that 'opens doors' regardless of location or specialism.

In their time with us we want all of our students to make excellent academic progress based upon their starting points, to acquire knowledge, to access opportunities regardless of previous experiences or circumstance, to support others within and beyond our community and to leave us for further success as adults. We are a big and busy comprehensive school, and all teaching and support staff are united in wanting the best for our students. We work hard, and look for ways to adapt, improve, and create new opportunities for our young people. We don't always get things right and sometimes encounter issues and circumstances for which there aren't easy solutions, but we are honest about that and seek to work collaboratively with parents and carers.

We believe firmly in social justice and equality of opportunity for all; when students cross our threshold each morning, they have access to the same opportunities. As a school we believe in education in its widest sense; students can learn a huge amount both in and beyond the classroom, and, of equal importance, by interacting and working with others. The personal development of each student is key to their future success, and we offer a diverse range of extracurricular opportunities, as well as encouraging participation in public service, particularly through our well established House System.

Job Description

Director of Finance and Operations

September 2026



The Director of Finance and Operations will have strategic leadership and oversight of all aspects of financial management and operational functions. They will be a senior member of the School Leadership Team and will lead and influence strategy, governance and growth. The Director of Finance and Operations will report directly to the Headteacher and will work closely with school leaders and the Governing Body to ensure the organisation's resources, systems, and infrastructure effectively support the implementation of the school's core values, strategic vision, and long-term sustainability.

Overview of Responsibilities

At Durham Johnston Comprehensive School everyone's first responsibility is to ensure our work remains aligned with our school's core values and ethos and contributes to our long-term strategic vision. Whilst job descriptions vary, our common commitment to the welfare and success of our young people does not.

The specific duties and responsibilities of the role of Director of Finance and Operations include:

Strategic Leadership - Act as the principal financial and operational advisor to the governors and headteacher. Develop financial and operational strategies and support long-term organisational sustainability.

Governance & Compliance - Ensure adherence to statutory, regulatory, and governance standards; oversee risk management and maintain relationships with auditors and regulators.

Financial Management - Lead budgeting, forecasting, reporting, cashflow, payroll, pensions, VAT, and statutory financial obligations.

Team Leadership - Manage and develop the school support staff including the finance team, buildings and premises team and personnel/HR team fostering accuracy, efficiency, and professional growth.

Financial Systems & Controls - Optimise finance systems, implement internal controls, and drive process automation.

Operational Oversight - Strategic oversight of operational delivery across estates, health & safety, procurement, contracts, insurance, and supplier management.

Project & Estates Management - Strategic oversight of capital projects, refurbishments, and site developments to support organisational growth.

Inspection & Audit Readiness - Ensure preparedness for Ofsted inspections, DfE registration, and external financial audits.

Culture & Leadership - Promote values-led leadership, collaboration, accountability, and team development across non-teaching and operational staff.

Strategic Contribution - Actively contribute to the Leadership Team and organisational strategy, supporting investment and innovation decisions.

.

Job Description

Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15 SCP 42 to 46



Key Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership

- Attend Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings as required, and appropriate Local Governing Committee and other meetings. Act as the principal financial and operational advisor to the governors and headteacher.
- Work collaboratively with the SLT and contribute towards strategic decision making.
- In the absence of the Headteacher, take delegated responsibility for financial and other related decisions, and working in close partnership with the Deputy Headteacher and Chair of Governors.
- Provide leadership and oversight to the line management and appraisal structure of specific support staff teams, ensuring a highly effective and highly motivated operational workforce.
- Work with the Headteacher and senior support staff to manage the HR systems and structures to ensure consistency. Seek and make use of external specialist expertise in relation to HR issues where necessary.
- Lead a culture of continuous improvement across the school support services to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Embody and promote the core values of the school and act as a role model for school staff.

Strategic Financial Planning and Management

- Oversee all aspects of financial management budgeting, forecasting, reporting, cashflow, payroll, pensions, VAT, and statutory financial obligations.
- Lead the development and implementation of the school's three-to-five-year financial strategy and annual budget planning process, aligning resources with the School Improvement Plan and educational priorities.
- Develop a financial strategy which supports sustainable long-term financial health and ensures the school achieves its strategic outcomes.
- Report strategic financial information to Headteacher and the Governing Body and keeping the Headteacher and the Governing Body informed of education funding and legislative changes.
- Provide expert financial advice and analysis to the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team, and the Governing Body to inform strategic decision-making.
- Oversee and manage the annual budget, including forecasting, benchmarking, budget monitoring, and variance analysis, ensuring effective control and value for money in all expenditure.
- Develop robust financial models to evaluate new initiatives, capital projects, and potential funding streams.

Job Description

Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15 SCP 42 to 46



- Exercise strategic leadership of the school's commercial businesses, including catering, and lettings, to ensure a profit margin in line with financial targets set by the Governing Body.
- Lead on the strategic financial planning, pricing, and performance review of all trading activities, actively seeking ways to maximise non-statutory income and efficiency.
- Strategic oversight of all daily financial operations, including payroll, purchasing, invoicing, banking, commercial financial transactions and ledger maintenance.
- Support and challenge colleagues across all aspects of financial management, governance and administration.

Financial Reporting and Compliance

- Ensure full compliance with the local authority's financial regulations, statutory requirements, and all relevant accounting standards for all school funds.
- Prepare and present accurate, timely, and comprehensive statutory financial reports and management accounts to the Headteacher, Governing Body and the Local Authority.
- Manage the school's financial control systems, ensuring effective internal controls and risk management.
- Be the principal officer responsible for the strategic oversight and management of the Private School Fund and ensure it is managed in strict adherence with the school's approved policy, charity law principles (where applicable), and best financial practice.
- Coordinate and manage the annual external audit and the separate audit / independent examination of the Private School Fund.
- Ensure provision and oversight of insurance arrangements, additional to DCC Insurance SLA provision, to cover school-specific risks related to commercial activities, the Private School Fund, and specialised assets.

Operations, Estates, and Compliance

- Strategic oversight of the whole school administrative function and work collaboratively with team leaders to line manage school support staff.
- Strategic leadership and oversight of operational delivery across estates, health and safety, procurement, and compliance functions.
- Strategic oversight of the internal catering service, including setting and monitoring budgets, analysing profitability, and ensuring competitive pricing and efficiency. Support the Catering Manager to identify opportunities for revenue generation and cost savings.
- Strategic oversight of the letting of school premises to external organisations to maximise the revenue potential of the school estate including analysing profitability, and ensuring competitive pricing and efficiency.

Job Description

Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15 SCP 42 to 46



- Strategic oversight of the planning and management of capital projects, refurbishments, and site developments.
- Ensure readiness for Ofsted inspections, DfE registration, and external financial audits.
- Develop and maintain scalable systems and processes to support organisational growth and operational excellence.
- Oversight of Health & Safety across site delegating to the Facilities Manager for site H&S, Compliance and Fire Risk Assessment and Fire Safety.
- Manage and monitor all school contracts, insurance, tenders, and procurement activities, ensuring competitive pricing, adherence to public sector guidelines and mitigate operational risks.
- Monitor SLA contracts and compliance services in collaboration with senior support staff and the Headteacher to review effectiveness and value for money.
- Oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring appropriate policies relevant to school support functions ensure compliance, transparency, and best practice across the organisation.
- Line manage of senior support staff and lead their performance management, appraisal and development.
- Work collaboratively with the school's GDPR Lead to ensure data protection compliance across administrative and digital systems.

The Director of Finance and Operations will also complete any other professional duties reasonably delegated by the Headteacher or as reviewed by the Governing Body commensurate with the grading of the post.

This job description is current and was reviewed on 2nd February 2026. The post will be reviewed annually, and it may be subject to modification or amendment at any time, after consultation with the post holder to reflect or anticipate changes in the job which are commensurate with the salary and job title.

Person Specification

Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15 SCP 42 to 46



| | Essential | Desirable |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Qualifications and Experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold a relevant professional accounting qualification (e.g., ACA, ACCA, CIMA, CIPFA) or equivalent experience in a senior financial management role.• Experienced senior leader in finance and operations, ideally in education, charity, or multi-site organisations.• Strong track record in financial management, budgeting, forecasting, and governance.• Skilled in leading and developing teams, promoting accountability and professional growth.• Able to advise governing body and senior leaders with clear, strategic insight.• Proficient in digital finance systems (e.g., Oracle) with strong analytical skills.• Knowledge of operational management, including estates, procurement, compliance, and risk.• High proficiency in complex financial modelling (e.g., on spreadsheets) and long-term forecasting.• Commercial acumen with the ability to assess value for money, return on investment, and negotiation outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience managing DfE registration, Ofsted readiness, or capital projects.• Proven senior experience in strategic financial planning, budget setting, and forecasting for a large, complex organisation.• Demonstrable knowledge of public sector finance, specifically within the education sector or local government, including an understanding of school funding formulas.• Substantial experience in successfully leading and managing a finance team.• Experience of working in education. |

Person Specification

Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15 SCP 42 to 46



Knowledge and Skills

- Exceptionally high level analytical and problem-solving skills, including the ability to interpret complex financial data and communicate it clearly to non-financial stakeholders (e.g. parents, governors, and staff).
- Strong business acumen and decision-making skills.
- Professional written and oral communication skills.
- Exceptional time management.
- Exceptional interpersonal communication and leadership skills, with the ability to communicate and manage staff at all levels.
- Confidence in presenting complex financial information to both specialist and non-specialist audiences (including Governors).
- Ability to assimilate knowledge and understanding of areas relevant to the role such as strategic finance, law, tax matters, school maintenance, and project management.

Personal Attributes

- Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- Demonstrably strong leadership, interpersonal, and communication skills, and the ability to influence and collaborate across all levels with internal and external stakeholders.
- Resilience and the ability to work under pressure and be able to meet deadlines.
- Collaborative mindset with the ability to work closely with senior leaders and governors to support the implementation of the school's core values, strategic vision, and long-term sustainability.
- Ability to show sensitivity and objectivity in dealing with confidential issues.
- A proactive, results-oriented approach with a strong commitment to probity, transparency, and ethical practice in managing public and private monies.
- Excellent communication, organisational, and leadership skills.
- Commitment to continuous improvement, efficiency, and innovation.

Person Specification

Director of Finance and Operations

Grade 15 SCP 42 to 46



Leadership

All staff at Durham Johnston Comprehensive School are expected to exemplify seven virtues of Ethical Leadership. **These qualities are essential in the role of Director of Finance and Operations.** We define these virtues as:

Trust: Leaders should be trustworthy and reliable. They hold trust on behalf of children and should be beyond reproach. They are honest about their motivations.

Wisdom: Leaders use experience, knowledge, insight, understanding and good sense to make sound judgements. They should demonstrate restraint and self-awareness, act calmly and rationally, exercising moderation and propriety as they serve their schools wisely.

Kindness: Leaders demonstrate respect, generosity of spirit, understanding and good temper. Where unavoidable conflict occurs, difficult messages should be given humanely.

Justice: Leaders should be fair, and work for the good of all children. Leaders should work fairly for the good of children from all backgrounds. They should seek to enable all young people to lead useful, happy and fulfilling lives

Service: Leaders should be conscientious and dutiful, demonstrating humility and self-control, supporting the structures and rules which safeguard quality. Their actions should protect high-quality education.

Courage: Leaders should work courageously in the best interests of children and young people. They protect their safety and their right to a broad, effective and creative education. They should hold one another to account courageously.

Optimism: Leaders should be positive and encouraging. Despite difficulties and pressures, we are developing excellent education provision to change the world for the better.

Context of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School



Comprehensive Nature

Durham Johnston Comprehensive School is a truly comprehensive school that genuinely serves a social cross-section. We strongly believe that all students regardless of background or ability should have access to a knowledge rich curriculum and are unique in our commitment to both academic rigour and social inclusivity. We have high ambitions for all our students, and we are determined to ensure that every child, no matter where they grow up, whatever their personal circumstances, whatever life has given or denied them, has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to be happy. For many colleagues, it is this unique opportunity to teach across the ability and social spectrum that is one of the main draws of the school.

Leadership

Durham Johnston is a local authority school. This allows the school to have its own unique identity and ensures that leadership decisions are made for the benefit of our students and our community. The school is led in a way that seeks to maximise the autonomy of individual classroom teachers and departments, as we recognise that highly dedicated, educated and trained professionals are the people best placed to determine how to teach their subject to the individuals in their classroom. The leadership of the school look to ensure that departments and classroom teachers are supported in a way that allows them to focus on this as much as possible; we keep good order and let our teachers teach.

At a leadership level we are committed to the values of ethical leadership. As a leadership team we listen and respond to staff concerns and our staff are able to raise problems and tough issues when necessary. In a recent staff survey, an overwhelming majority of our staff said they felt well supported by the school's Senior Leadership Team.

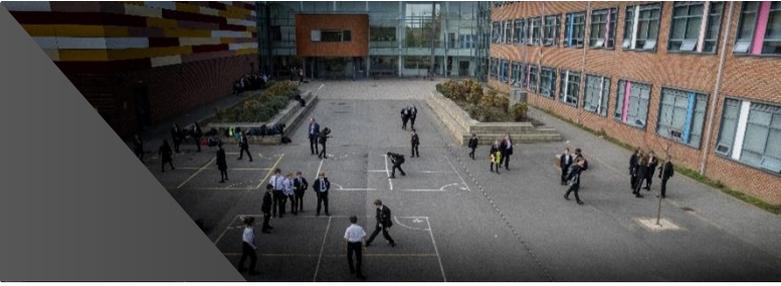
Staff Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our staff is central to the ethos of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School and this is evidenced in our exceptionally high staff retention. Leaders are very conscious that our staff are what makes Durham Johnston special; we value them and look after them. We have a strong sense of community within our school and our staff work very hard as a team to support one another. We welcome opportunities to come together as a staff and these can range from tea and scones in the staff room, to the highly competitive end of term departmental quizzes. Many staff socialise both inside and outside of school and in school run sessions such as sport and fitness clubs and wellbeing sessions. Our staff like each other and enjoy spending time together.

Pastoral Care

Students at Durham Johnston benefit from exceptional pastoral care. One of the greatest strengths of the school is the strong, caring relationships between staff and students and the warm, harmonious ethos is regularly commented on by external visitors. We are incredibly proud of our students and who display a positive attitude to their studies and demonstrate a consistently strong desire to learn - we have an unusual culture where it is "cool to be clever". Behaviour in lessons and around school is consistently calm and purposeful due to effective systems built on strong relationships. Our strong pastoral systems help to ensure that every child feels valued and cared for and we offer a bespoke range of support where needed. Our pupils and parents and carers report that bullying is rare but, when it happens, it is dealt with highly effectively. Attendance at our school is very high.

Context of Durham Johnston Comprehensive School



Sixth Form

Our sixth form has a national reputation for excellence and is a specialist A-Level centre. We have over 350 students who join us from a wide geographical area and a range of schools. We offer 25 traditional A-Level subjects and our results consistently place us as one of the highest performing state schools nationally. The vast majority of our students go on to study at Russell Group universities and around 15% of our students each year typically secure places at Oxford, Cambridge, or for Medicine/Veterinary courses. Pastoral support in the Sixth Form is highly specialised and our expert staff and our students receive excellent guidance on transition, UCAS applications, personal statements as well as support on mental wellbeing and building resilience and good habits.

In addition, we offer an exceptional super curricular programme to develop our students beyond the exam syllabus. Our Sixth Formers are remarkable young people and they engage in a wide range of enrichment and leadership opportunities. This includes student led societies ranging from the very academic (quantum computing) through to those that are more social (the Taylor Swift society). Our House leads organise and run house events and competitions, as well as charity fundraising events. Other activities they engage in include: Debate, MedSoc group, Oxbridge group, Year 11 mentoring, Year 7 paired reading, Library leads, Mental health ambassadors, Subject ambassadors, Sports and Music.

Extra-Curricular

We are proud of the range of sports our young people can take part in and the school has regularly been recognised in the top 1% of sport schools nationally by School Sport magazine. This reflects both the range of sports offered, as well as the high standards that many of our students achieve. Our music department lead a series of highly popular orchestras and choirs and we are excited about our upcoming musical. However, it is not just in these two areas that children can access a wide range of opportunities, our offer extends from coding to gardening; from film club to Ancient Greek. There are clubs for everyone and our young people always meet students with a shared interest. We actively seek to ensure that all children find something they can enjoy during their time at Durham Johnston. We were chosen as The Sunday Times National Comprehensive School of the Year for 2019/20 and we are very proud that the award was based upon a wide range of factors, including the opportunities that we provide for students regardless of their backgrounds or personal circumstances. We regularly receive regional awards for academic excellence.

Living in the North East

Living in the North East is an attractive proposition. Many of our staff live within our catchment area and house prices in the region mean that it is ideal both for those seeking to establish themselves on the property ladder, or for families in need of more space. As well as the historic city of Durham, the surrounding area offers much in the way of natural beauty for people to enjoy, whether walking in the Wear valley, visiting the Borders or North York Moors, or surfing in the North Sea on the Northumberland Coast. Equally close is the vibrant city of Newcastle upon Tyne. Well served by transport links, the school is close to both Durham train station, a key stop on the East Coast Mainline, and the A1 (M), allowing easy access to Newcastle, York and London.