

The Organisation

Organisational Context and Priorities

SGS College is entering an important period of delivery. Its five-year Strategy to 2031 is built around four outcomes: Community, Achievement, Readiness and Enjoyment. These outcomes express what the College wants to achieve for its students, people, partners and the communities it serves. They are supported by five critical enablers: engaged and capable people; robust data and insight; high-quality and sustainable infrastructure; strong partnerships; and strong financial health.

The College's ambition is to be recognised as a place where lives are changed. It aims to equip students with the qualifications, skills, confidence and resilience to thrive in work, further study and life; help employers and communities respond to changing skills needs; and create an inspiring, inclusive and enjoyable place to learn and work.

The strategy responds to rapid technological change, evolving labour-market needs, persistent skills shortages, pressures on participation and progression, and the need for Further Education to support both economic prosperity and social cohesion. SGS is well positioned, with a strong local reputation, committed people, high-quality specialist facilities, strong industry relationships and strong financial foundations. The next phase requires disciplined delivery, joined-up leadership and investment choices that turn ambition into measurable impact.

The Director of Finance will connect financial strategy directly to this educational purpose, translating ambition into deliverable plans and maintaining resilience while creating capacity to invest in curriculum, people, technology, infrastructure and the student experience.

People-Centred Priorities

The College's strategy was developed through extensive engagement with students, parents and carers, colleagues, employers and community partners. This reflects a leadership culture that values participation, shared ownership, clear communication and practical collaboration. The Director of Finance will need to engage confidently across this broad community, making financial information accessible and helping colleagues understand both the opportunities and the choices involved in delivering the strategy.

SGS is also moving through a period of organisational and systems change. The successful candidate will need to bring clarity, stability and momentum: listening carefully, building trust and ensuring that improvement is sustained. Visible leadership, consistent communication and a genuine commitment to developing others will therefore be as important as technical authority.

The College's behaviours, #TheSGSWay, are Consistent, Ambitious, Respectful and Empowered. The successful candidate will model these through clear communication, high standards, evidence-informed judgement, inclusion, curiosity, ownership and accountability, particularly when leading change and balancing ambition with affordability and risk.

Key priorities for the role and the college

The Director of Finance is a key member of the College Leadership Team, reporting to the Deputy CEO and Chief Operations Officer and contributing fully to the implementation of SGS 2031. The postholder will bring a whole-college perspective to collective leadership, with responsibility not only for the finance function but also for wider organisational performance, developments and cross-college projects.

The postholder will lead the College's Finance Strategy and develop a sustainable medium-term financial model that supports delivery of the College's outcomes and enablers. This will include aligning resource allocation, scenario planning and investment appraisal with curriculum priorities, workforce planning, infrastructure, systems and the student experience, while maintaining resilience in a constrained and changing funding environment.

The role will lead the preparation of budgets, management accounts, statutory financial statements, medium-term financial plans and in-year forecasts, together with effective cash, liquidity and balance-sheet management. A particular priority will be to connect financial insight more clearly with learner recruitment and delivery, curriculum plans, workforce decisions, funding performance and operational activity, so that emerging issues are identified early and leaders have practical options for action.

A major focus will be successful implementation and adoption of the new finance system as part of the College's wider programme of systems improvement. The Director of Finance will be expected to simplify processes, reduce manual effort and duplication, strengthen data quality and controls and develop timely, transparent reporting and dashboards that support confident decision making.

The postholder will maintain robust financial control and regulatory compliance and provide clear, proportionate assurance to the College Leadership Team, Corporation and its committees. The role also has responsibility for audit, internal control, risk management, data protection, information governance and freedom of information. These arrangements should protect public funds and organisational resilience while enabling responsible ambition.

The Director of Finance will lead and develop the finance team, establishing clear standards, accountabilities and service expectations. The role will also strengthen financial confidence across the College so that budget holders understand their responsibilities, use information effectively and take ownership of delivery. Success will depend on a finance function that is technically strong, responsive and constructive in its work with curriculum and professional services colleagues.

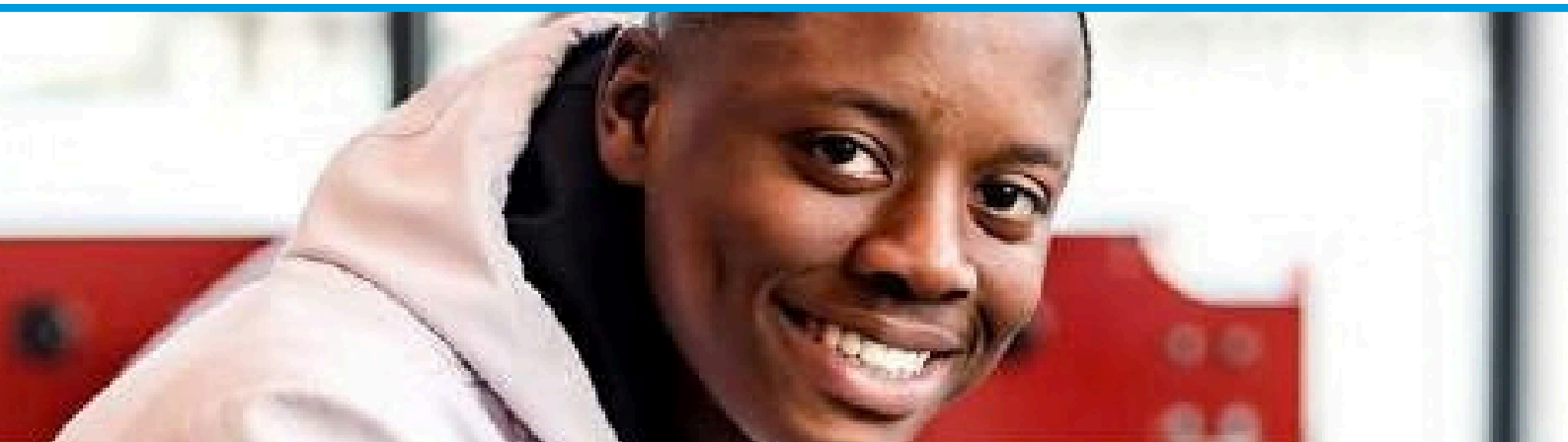
The postholder will line manage three direct reports and lead the wider finance function through agreed reporting structures. Key relationships include the Chief Executive Officer and Principal; Deputy CEO and Chief Operations Officer; College Leadership Team and Extended Leadership Group; Corporation and its committees; curriculum and support departments; auditors; funding agencies; local authorities; the Department for Education; and the Office for Students.



Success indicators for the postholder

Success will be demonstrated through sustainable results, stronger organisational capability and trusted leadership:

- A strong and sustainable financial position, supported by reliable cash generation and liquidity, credible medium-term planning, robust reporting and effective control of financial risk.
- Budgets, forecasts and investment decisions aligned with strategic priorities, with transparent choices and appropriate consideration of benefits, affordability and risk.
- Integrated, timely forecasting that identifies emerging issues and supports practical intervention across learner numbers, funding, curriculum, workforce, capital and operations.
- Successful adoption of the new finance system, improving data, controls, efficiency, ownership and access to management information.
- High-quality advice and proportionate assurance for leaders and governors, supported by effective audit, risk and compliance arrangements.
- A visible and collaborative leadership presence, combining constructive challenge with strong relationships across curriculum, professional services and governance.
- A capable, resilient and service-focused finance function with clear standards, effective development and increasing capacity.
- A strong contribution to collective leadership and cross-college improvement, focused on outcomes and experiences for students and staff.
- During the first 12 to 24 months, the postholder will establish credibility across leadership and governance; confirm the medium-term outlook and key sensitivities; lead finance-system implementation; strengthen forecasting, integrated planning and management information; review priority areas of control and assurance; and develop the finance team and budget-holder capability.



The Person

Cultural Priorities and Values

The College is looking for a leader who sees finance as an enabling function: protecting public funds and organisational resilience while helping colleagues deliver better outcomes. The successful candidate will combine professional authority with curiosity, accessibility and sound judgement. They will be comfortable moving between strategic questions and operational detail and between supportive partnership and clear challenge.

Financial leadership at SGS is inseparable from educational purpose. Decisions must reflect their impact on students, staff, communities and long-term capability as well as the immediate financial result. The successful candidate will bring commercial and analytical thinking grounded in the values and public-service purpose of Further Education.

The required leadership style is authentic, visible and collegiate. The successful candidate will communicate complex matters clearly, listen to different perspectives, remain calm under pressure and build ownership. They will set high expectations, follow through and enable people to contribute, develop and be held accountable with respect.

Values and Behaviours

Consistent leadership will be evident through clear and transparent communication, dependable planning and reporting, fair application of standards and a strong commitment to following through. The successful candidate will use evidence and insight to support well-informed and sustainable decisions.

Ambitious leadership will be demonstrated through high expectations, a focus on improved outcomes and a willingness to challenge established ways of working. The successful candidate will seek better use of systems, information and resources, embrace appropriate innovation and create capacity for strategic investment and improvement.

Respectful leadership will be reflected in trusted relationships, careful listening and the ability to explain financial choices in accessible language. The successful candidate will value different perspectives, champion inclusion and belonging, and challenge issues constructively without diminishing people.

Empowered leadership will create ownership and accountability. The successful candidate will develop others, encourage ideas and responsible innovation, act when something is not working and enable colleagues to make confident, well-informed decisions within clear parameters.

Strengthening Capability

This appointment should strengthen capability in strategic financial leadership, integrated planning and reporting, systems improvement, risk and assurance and the alignment of resources with College priorities. The postholder will bring coherence and pace to complex cross-college change while ensuring that controls remain robust and proportionate.

The role requires a recognised professional accountancy qualification and current technical credibility, together with significant senior-level responsibility for financial leadership in a complex organisation. Candidates should be able to demonstrate strong experience of budgeting, forecasting, statutory accounts, cash flow, balance-sheet management, financial control and the leadership and development of a professional finance function.

Candidates should also provide evidence of shaping financial strategy in support of wider organisational goals; integrating finance with operational, workforce and capital planning; leading through organisational change; and working effectively with executive leaders and a governing or board-level audience. Experience of operating in a regulated environment and managing relationships with auditors and external stakeholders will be important.

The College will particularly value experience of implementing or materially improving finance systems, budget-management tools, reporting processes or integrated management information. Strong analytical capability, effective use of scenarios and forecasting and the ability to strengthen controls while simplifying processes and improving the user experience will all be relevant. An understanding of how automation, digital tools and the responsible use of AI can improve productivity and insight will support the College's future direction.

Knowledge of education funding, financial regulations and accountability requirements would be valuable, although candidates from comparably complex public-service environments should be able to demonstrate how their experience will transfer quickly. In all cases, candidates will need to understand the connection between learner recruitment, delivery, retention, achievement, funding and financial sustainability and show clear alignment with the College's purpose, CARE outcomes and #TheSGSWay behaviours.