

Reflections on 2 Years as New MAT CFO

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Moving into education....

- Background and experience
- St. Hilda's Catholic Academy Trust
- Early days.....

KABOOOOM!!!



Good early decisions

- Banking
- Finance Manager
- Procurement Strategy linked to MTFP
- Savings held centrally

Moving forward in the first year

- Managing expectations
- Educating others
- Internal v External support
- Working together
- BUT.....still a sunny day model!

Fundamental review

- MAT and Diocesan reviews
- Initial plans
- Merging MATs
- Back to the future?

Key Lessons

- Plan early
- Practical understanding of governance and internal controls
- Get the mix of provision right
- Get tasks done at the right level
- Not a jack off all trades
- Get the culture right

How I came to work in the academy sector.....

- Chartered Accountant
- Worked for Buzzacott, London and at Tait Walker advising charities and academy schools
- 2015 – appointed as Finance Director for Pax Christi Catholic Partnership, Northumberland.
- 3 schools, 1,200 pupils and 200 staff

In at the deep end

- 1 month lead in before conversion date
- Deficit on conversion
- Staff structures not fit for purpose in a MAT
- Vacant Business Manager role for 4 months

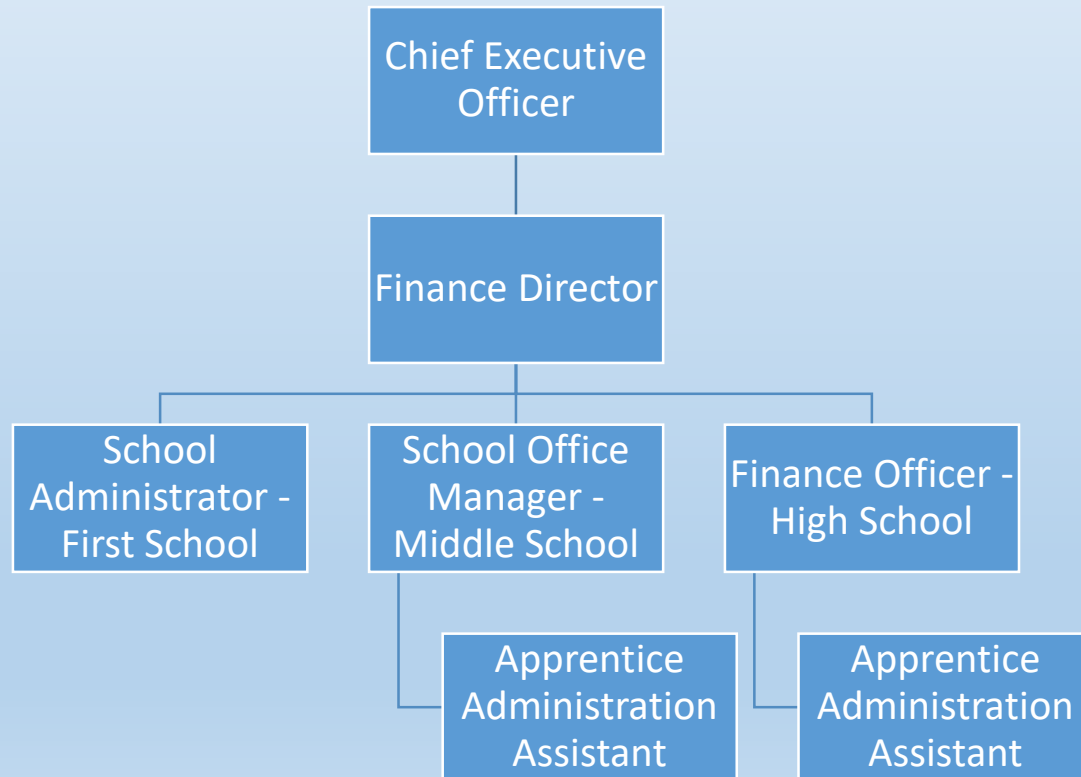
First things first

- Establish a recovery plan for the deficit
- Set up effective use of Accounting System PS Financials
- Audit compliant policy & procedures
- Bank accounts
- Removal of cheque payments
- Centralisation of orders

Structural Changes

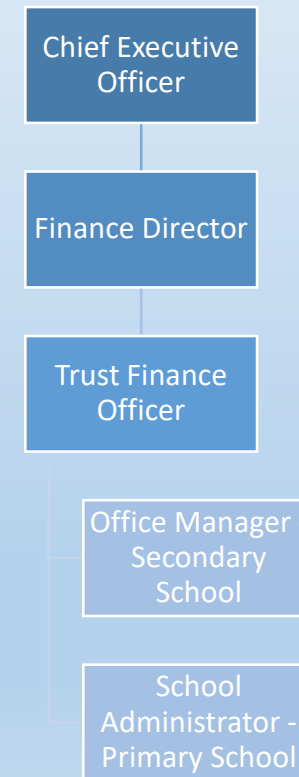
Structure on conversion

Roles with Finance responsibility



Structure from 1 September 2017

Roles with Finance responsibility



Changing the mindset....

- Thinking as a MAT, not individual schools
- Hard structures, soft behaviours – why bother?
- Doing things as we always have done
- Vacancies as an opportunity

Staying sane & getting the right support in place

- Internal/external provision
- The importance of professional networks
- Extra – curricular activities!