



**Lincoln Minster School**  
An education for life

# Director of Finance and Operations

**Candidate Information**



**United Learning**  
The best in everyone™

# Welcome

We are looking for an exceptional candidate to lead on all aspects of finance and operations at Lincoln Minster School, an all-through, co-educational independent day school.

At Lincoln Minster School, our priorities are simple: we want pupils to be happy and achieve, in that order. Our recent **ISI inspection** and Good Schools Guide review, and record-breaking exam results in 2025, are testament to the strength of the School and our community and our success in achieving those aims. As Director of Finance and Operations, you will contribute directly to our mission to bring out “the best in everyone” through outstanding leadership of those areas and the teams that deliver them.

The successful candidate will demonstrate exceptional financial and operational acumen, the ability to think creatively and drive innovation, and the ability to harness the support of the school communities as an inspiring, visionary leader.

As part of United Learning, Lincoln Minster School benefits from central support and expertise. You will be joining a network of dedicated, highly professional colleagues across both our independent schools and academies, who work collaboratively and share a vision of bringing out the best in everyone.

At a time of unprecedented change and challenge for the independent schools sector, this role provides the right leader with a fantastic opportunity to thrive and build their reputation alongside that of the School, with the full support and structure of a leading schools group behind them.

If you share our ambition for this role and for the children and young people we serve, we look forward to receiving your application.



## Aaron Smith

Director of Finance –  
Independent Schools,  
United Learning





# About Lincoln Minster School

Lincoln Minster School is an independent, co-educational school for around 400 pupils aged 4–18. Located in the heart of Lincoln, the School provides an outstanding education that empowers children to excel academically while also equipping them with the personal skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong success. The School is fortunate to be able to offer small class sizes, modern facilities in a historic setting, and a dynamic education from Reception through to Year 13 that brings out the very best of pupils both inside and outside of the classroom.

In addition to the academic provision, the School offers a rich programme of co-curricular activities. With over 100 clubs and activities, pupils have the opportunity to explore their passions and discover new talents. The School's thriving sports programme, ranked among the top 200 schools for sport by School Sports Magazine, offers exceptional opportunities for all pupils. With an inclusive ethos, extensive fixture list and excellent facilities, sport at Lincoln Minster School promotes both achievement and enjoyment.

The Arts have been central to life at Lincoln Minster School since the earliest days of the Cathedral School. Today, the School's vibrant music, art and drama programmes inspire creativity and confidence, with pupils participating in annual productions, concerts, recitals, and showcases.

The industry-standard recording and production studios offer professional-level opportunities, allowing students to develop their artistic talents and prepare for creative futures beyond school.

Pupils consistently perform well at GCSE and A-level. In 2024–25, 41% of GCSE grades awarded were between 9 and 7, and 10% received Grade 9, double the national average. At A-level, 35% achieved A\*–A. 85% of students secure a place at their first-choice university, in the UK and overseas. As they leave school, they become a member of the alumni community, which stretches worldwide and across all sectors.

## Location, Campus and Facilities

The city of Lincoln has a rich and distinctive history, home to the Magna Carta and the iconic Lincoln Castle. Its innovative city centre sits alongside historic charm, creating a unique blend of old and new – an inspiring environment in which to learn, work, and grow. Just two miles from the vibrant centre lies the beautiful Lincolnshire countryside, offering the best of both worlds.

With roots dating back to the 12th century, the School is based across two sites, each reflecting the School's forward-thinking approach to education. Situated beside Lincoln Cathedral,

both the Prep and Senior Schools are set in the midst of the historic cathedral quarter of the city. The School has a valued relationship with Lincoln Cathedral, and pupils regularly attend and perform during services and celebrations.

The Prep School is located a short walk from the Senior School and has been extensively redeveloped to provide exceptional learning spaces. The outdoor learning facilities are designed to build pupils' confidence and self-belief while helping them develop new skills and interests. From Year 4 onwards, each pupil is provided with their own iPad to develop their digital confidence and enhance their learning. Holiday clubs run for pupils and non-pupils, ensuring high-quality childcare outside school term time.

At the Senior School, the purpose-built Prior Building, opened in 2002 by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey, features fully equipped science laboratories, art studios, IT suites, and a dedicated Sixth Form Centre. The most recent addition, the Harper Building, is a specialist hub for music and performance, complete with an impressive Recital Hall, music practice rooms, and a fully equipped Drama Studio.

There is a Sports Hall on the Senior School site, and nearby sports facilities are used for tennis, football, hockey, and sailing, to name but a few.

# Working with United Learning

United Learning is a group of schools which aims to provide excellent education to children and young people across the country. We seek to improve the life chances of all the children and young people we serve and make it our mission to bring out 'the best in everyone' – pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. We uniquely comprise schools in both the state and the independent sectors. We currently educate over 75,000 children and employ almost 12,000 adults.

Over the past five years, United Learning has seen significant impact: improving educational outcomes faster than the national average, strengthening school leadership, and deepening our work through our community hubs and teacher training partnerships. As we look ahead, we are preparing to launch our next five-year strategy (2026–2031), which will build on this foundation: continuing to drive excellence in teaching and learning, expanding our social purpose, and ensuring our schools are places where both staff and pupils thrive.

As a national group of schools, we believe that Heads and their Executive Teams, of which the

Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) is a key part, should run schools, and we centralise functions only when that will give a significant gain in efficiency and effectiveness. We have been able to generate substantial economies of scale in the 'back-office' functions of finance, HR and management information, central procurement and specialist estate management, as well as building excellent 'create once, use many times' educational and other resources.

The Group provides you with a professional network of other DFOs, and the 'team around the School' can transfer collective knowledge and skills from the wider Group, meaning that, as DFO, you have access to a wide range of expertise and resources. This support has become even more important in the current economic environment. We believe that successful organisations prioritise staff development. We make support and professional development for DFOs a particular priority, given their demonstrable and positive impact on staff and pupils' experiences within the School. We work on the basis that each of us, however effective, can always improve.





# Leadership, Management and Governance

United Learning consists of two charities which are responsible for the operation of the Group's schools. United Church Schools Trust (UCST) governs the independent schools, and United Learning Trust (ULT) governs the Group's academies. United Learning Ltd is the parent charity and owns the independent schools' land and buildings. The Trustees of UCST hold the ultimate responsibility for the governance of Lincoln Minster School, but they delegate certain key roles and responsibilities to the School's Local Governing Body. The LGB is responsible for ensuring that Lincoln Minster School operates effectively in line with the vision set out by the UCST Trustees.

As a senior leader at Lincoln Minster School, the DFO will work with the Head, the LGB and other members of the Senior Leadership Team, including the Prep School Head, to establish and implement the vision and direction for all pupils from Reception to Sixth Form. The DFO will play a key part in ensuring that United Learning's ethos and values are deeply embedded and visible, securing 'the best in everyone' for both staff and pupils.

The DFO of Lincoln Minster School reports to the Head with a dotted line to the Group's Director of Finance – Independent Schools, both of whom report to the Director of Independent Schools at United Learning, who is responsible to the overarching Charity Board through the Chief Executive. The Local Governing Body, and its Chair in particular, acts as a 'critical friend' to the School.



# United Learning's Ethos

Our approach to education is underpinned by a sense of moral purpose and commitment to doing what is right for children and young people. We believe in supporting our colleagues to achieve excellence and in acting with integrity in all our dealings within and beyond the Group.

We believe the safety and welfare of all children and young people is paramount. We summarise this ethos as 'the best in everyone'. This ethos underpins our core values:

- **Ambition** – to achieve the best for ourselves and others.
- **Confidence** – to have the courage of our convictions and to take risks for the right cause.
- **Creativity** – to imagine possibilities and make them real.
- **Respect** – of ourselves and others in all that we do.
- **Enthusiasm** – to seek opportunity, find what is good and pursue talents and interests.
- **Determination** – to overcome obstacles and achieve success.

Our values were selected in consultation with United Learning students and staff across the country. As a single organisation, we seek to bring together the best of independent and state sectors, respecting both traditions and learning from each. We believe that each of our schools is and should be distinctive – each is committed to developing its own strengths and identity while sharing our core values as institutions, which promote service, compassion and generosity.

As part of United Learning, Lincoln Minster School shares the objective of bringing out the best in everyone, enabling each pupil to become a balanced, happy and articulate person with intellectual freedom, confidence, compassion, integrity and a lifelong love of learning.

Further information on United Learning may be found [here](#).





## Finance

The School is financially stable. The majority of income is generated from school fees and related income. In the current climate, Lincoln Minster School, along with many others in the independent sector, is looking at additional income streams.

Consideration is currently being given to the optimum use of the school estate to ensure that facilities are harnessed to their full potential for commercial income generation when not required by the School.

# The Opportunity

This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced, commercial and entrepreneurial Director of Finance and Operations (DFO) to work with the Head, Senior Leadership Team, LGB and colleagues in the wider Group to guide Lincoln Minster School through its next phase. The DFO will play a crucial role in shaping and implementing the School's financial and operational strategy and will work closely with the Head and the LGB to develop and deliver the School's wider strategic vision.

The DFO will provide strong strategic, financial and commercial leadership and will bring demonstrable experience of managing people and resources effectively, delivering results, thinking strategically, and inspiring and motivating multi-disciplinary teams. They will need to demonstrate high energy and the ability to think and communicate with clarity, with the facility to execute key initiatives that will drive the School's success.

This is a collaborative and multi-faceted role requiring excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to build trusted relationships across the School and local community.

Although prior experience in the education sector is not a prerequisite, candidates must be able to demonstrate empathy with independent education,

a commitment to the School and United Learning's ethos and aims, and a willingness to play a full part in the life of the school community.

## Core Purpose

The DFO is responsible for the financial and operational management of the School, including facilities, grounds, IT, H&S, compliance, HR, catering, cleaning, and commercial enterprises. The aim is to ensure the smooth running of the School to support the Head and LGB in realising their vision for the School's future.

The DFO is responsible for delivering the financial strategy to meet the School's long-term objectives and, as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, shares in the strategic development of the School, working with senior colleagues, the LGB, and colleagues within the Group.

The DFO's direct reports include the Operations Manager, Finance, HR and Payroll Manager, IT Manager, Receptionist, Office Manager and Catering Manager.

This is a significant and wide-ranging role. The responsibilities listed are not exhaustive but indicative of what is required within each of these key areas.





# Key Responsibilities

## Strategy and Planning

- Advise the Head, LGB, and the Group on all matters relating to the School's financial strategy and operations.
- Contribute to the development of the School's Strategic and Operational Plan with specific responsibility for developing financial and commercial strategies in support of it.
- Oversee the implementation of the financial and operational elements of the Strategic and Operational Plan in conjunction with the Head.
- Support coordinated strategic development through working with senior leaders across the School.

## Leadership and Management

- Lead by example; be an inspiring leader of staff, coach and support them, facilitate and encourage strong working relationships between the teaching and operational staff.
- Ensure that the School's support teams are effectively staffed and resourced and have the appropriate skills to ensure the optimal functioning of the School, working with the Head to implement structural changes as necessary.
- Manage the performance of direct reports, ensuring that staff receive appropriate support to achieve the expected standards.

- Ensure Group policies and strategies are implemented in relation to the DFO's remit and more widely as a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Be a strong ambassador for the School, embracing its ethos and values.
- Contribute to and support the development of the Group's independent schools, promoting and sharing best practice, lessons learnt, and the review and development of policies, procedures and working practices, to include working collaboratively with peers across United Learning.

## Finance

- Manage the financial performance of the School to achieve agreed financial targets, KPIs and operational surpluses.
- Advise the Head and LGB on all matters relating to financial strategy to ensure the long-term sustainability of the School and the impact of their decisions on the School's financial position and commercial matters, including preparing feasibility studies and scenario modelling.
- Ensure that financial resources are deployed effectively and efficiently to support the School's educational aims, vision and ethos.
- Continuously review workforce plans to ensure the efficiency of staffing, using curriculum-based financial planning to support decision-making.

- Ownership of all finance functions of the School, including those functions provided on site or centrally by the Group through the Chief Financial Officer's team.
- Provide the Head, LGB and the Group's Director of Finance – Independent Schools with appropriate, regular and timely information about the School's finances, including the status of the management accounts, commentary on variance reports, and updates to risks and opportunities, including outside usual reporting timescales as circumstances require.
- Prepare an annual budget and five-year forecast each year for the School, to include pupil forecasts, all income streams, resourcing, non-employment expenditure and capital investment.
- Prepare business cases to support investment proposals, working with the Group to secure approval.
- Ensure that a robust system of financial policies, procedures and internal controls is in place, both specific to Lincoln Minster School and in accordance with the Group's requirements, including fraud prevention.
- Review, check and authorise expenditure and carry out reconciliations in accordance with the internal controls.
- Analyse school fees and costs, including benchmarking, and work with the Head and LGB to recommend fee levels and pricing strategies.
- Advise the Head and LGB on the School's use of fee concessions.

- Oversee the School's bursary application and assessment process and advise the Head and LGB on decisions.

## Facilities

- Manage the submission of business cases and capital expenditure requests to the Group's Director of Finance – Independent Schools.
- Manage all capital building projects across the site, ensuring that such projects are delivered on time, on budget and to the agreed quality, including the tendering process and management of contractors on site, working collaboratively with the Group's Estates Manager – Independent Schools.
- Develop and maintain an effective, forward-looking master plan that supports the strategic vision in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team, LGB and the Group's Estates team.
- Ensure that the rolling programme for building maintenance and school facilities is costed and implemented on time, on budget and to the agreed quality, including the tendering process and management of contractors on site.
- Ensure that the facilities are well presented, serviceable, safe and compliant with regulations, including health and safety, fire and the Independent School Standards, liaising with expert external consultants as appropriate.
- Ensure positive relationships are fostered with local residents.

- Manage the catering contract, liaising closely with the Catering Manager to ensure that appropriate standards of catering are provided for students, staff, and hospitality for agreed school events.
- Ensure effective management of school transport and arrangements for vehicular traffic to, from and within the site, including tendering for transport contracts.

## HR

- Ensure United Learning policy and procedures are followed, liaising with the Group's HR function as appropriate.
- Ensure compliance with employment law and the relevant sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Independent School Standards Regulations.
- Oversee the Single Central Register and ensure all required compliance with the regulations is fully implemented.
- Facilitate and encourage positive employee relations across all staff.

## IT

- Oversee the development, procurement, delivery and management of the IT infrastructure, data and services to support high-quality teaching and learning and administration.
- Work closely with the central IT teams to manage the safety, security and integrity of the School's IT network, ensuring that it remains secure from attacks and viruses.





## Health and Safety

- Ensure there are appropriate arrangements in place, including policies, procedures, equipment, training and funding, to ensure compliance with all health and safety regulations, including those determined by the Group.
- Promote a positive health and safety culture throughout the School.

## Administration

- Ensure effective administrative support for the smooth day-to-day operation of the school reception.

## Commercial

- Develop and grow commercial activities and business opportunities across the sites to maximise income generation and optimise returns for the benefit of the School, the Group and the community.

## Governance, Compliance and Risk Management

- Implement key Group-wide policies and strategies in relation to GDPR, compliance, finance, HR and IT security.

- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, ensuring policies and procedures are in place and championing their application throughout the School.
- Identify, assess and manage risk, including management of the risk assessment process and Risk Register.
- Ensure that the School has appropriate insurance cover for all key insurable risks.
- Lead on critical incident planning and lead on business continuity and financial planning to ensure that the School is well prepared for any crisis.
- Liaise with the Clerk to the Governors to ensure the LGB has the information it requires to fulfil its role and responsibilities.
- Attend termly LGB meetings, advising the Board as required.

## Safeguarding and the Welfare of Children

Lincoln Minster School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. You will undertake your role and responsibilities in accordance with the Lincoln Minster School Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. The successful candidate will be required to have an enhanced DBS disclosure. The School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy can be found [here](#).

# Person Specification

The successful candidate will bring the following qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge, leadership style and personal attributes.

## Qualifications and Experience

- Educated to degree level or equivalent.
- A professional qualification in a business-related discipline (desirable but not essential).
- Demonstrable success in a leadership role in a comparable organisation and through significant periods of development.
- Direct experience at a senior level of both finance strategy and operations.
- Experience of working within a complex budgetary structure, leading efficiency savings and business improvement initiatives.
- Experience of shaping and delivering change.
- An awareness and understanding of estate planning and health and safety.
- Experience in leading and developing colleagues and effective teams.

## Skills and Knowledge

- Strong strategic abilities and organisational skills with the capacity to guide whole-organisational development.

- Financial literacy (budgeting, cost management, financial planning, and reporting) with strong analytical skills and the ability to present financial information clearly and concisely.
- Strategic financial management and commercial acumen.
- First-class communication skills – able to balance robustness with constructive, positive discussion and diplomacy with the confidence and personal authority to represent the School with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Strong interpersonal skills and high levels of emotional intelligence, with a proven ability to operate effectively and efficiently in a complex environment while maintaining a sense of humour.
- An understanding of the economic, financial, legal and commercial challenges in the leadership and management of independent charitable schools.
- A clear and analytical thinker – willing to be flexible, solution-focused, and listen to others as well as take and implement difficult decisions.
- Versatility and ability to manage conflicting deadlines and priorities.
- High levels of accuracy and attention to detail.
- Excellent IT skills, proficiency in MS Office Suite with advanced working knowledge of MS Excel, finance MIS systems and software packages.



## Leadership Style and Personal Attributes

- A highly visible leader who can work both independently and as a key team member, with the ability to delegate and build rapport, empower colleagues and gain the confidence of wider stakeholders.
- A clear understanding of and commitment to the development of the United Learning values and ethos.
- Clarity of vision with the ability to communicate it in a compelling and engaging way.
- An adaptable leadership style which encourages leadership from others and celebrates success.
- A team player and a commitment to collaborative working, both within the School and across the Group.
- An entrepreneurial spirit balanced by a strong appreciation, evaluation and judgment of risk.
- Openness, humility, energy and enthusiasm.
- Sensitivity and wisdom in managing relationships within a school.
- Willing to participate in all areas of school life and promote the School externally.
- Highly ethical.
- A commitment to the safeguarding of children.
- Determined and resilient, able to remain calm in a crisis.
- Values and promotes equality, diversity, and inclusion.



# Appointment Terms

A highly attractive remuneration package is offered, reflecting the seniority and significance of the position. The salary offered will depend on skills and experience.

This is a full-time, 52-week post, and some flexibility of working hours will be required in light of the role and responsibilities it entails.

The main benefits are likely to include:

- Annual holiday entitlement of 30 days plus statutory bank holidays.
- A generous staff discount on fees for children at the School.
- Contributory employer's pension scheme.
- Group life assurance.
- Health cash plan after six months.
- Complimentary school lunches in term time.

*United Learning values diversity and inclusion and is committed to creating and sustaining a more diverse workforce. We welcome applications from professionals of minority ethnic origin and from majority ethnic professionals who share our commitment to inclusion and diversity. Whether you are an aspiring or experienced Bursar/DFO looking to develop your career within the support and framework of a wider group, we would welcome an application from you.*

*United Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers, the Disclosure and Barring Service and online searches.*

*This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.*





# Application Process

Interested candidates are invited to contact RSAcademics in the first instance to arrange a confidential discussion with Susannah Thompson: [susannahthompson@rsacademics.com](mailto:susannahthompson@rsacademics.com)

**Closing date: 10.00am on Thursday 12 March 2026.**

Applications should be made electronically to RSAcademics. To submit your application, please click on "Apply Now" on the **RS Academics website** and follow the instructions provided.

As part of your online application, you will be asked to upload a PDF version of your covering letter addressed to Mr Aaron Smith, Director of Finance – Independent Schools, United Learning. The letter should be a maximum of two pages and should explain your reasons for applying and outline your suitability for the role.

If you have any questions about uploading your application documents, please contact:

- Laura Cave, Project Coordinator (Appointments): [applications@rsacademics.com](mailto:applications@rsacademics.com) / +44 (0) 204 6269 791.

The process is as follows:

- All applications will be acknowledged by email. If you have not received acknowledgement that your application has been received within two working days of sending it, please contact our Head Office by telephone.
- Preliminary interviews will take place with RSAcademics via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 March 2026.
- Longlist interviews will take place at the School w/c 23 March 2026.
- Shortlist interviews will take place at the School w/c 30 March 2026.

RS Academics is a global executive search and consultancy firm working exclusively with schools. For more than 20 years, we've supported governors and leaders at pivotal moments – whether they are appointing senior staff or making complex strategic decisions.

What makes us distinctive is the depth of first-hand experience in schools across our team – as heads, governors, bursars and senior professionals – combined with specialist expertise in areas such as strategy, research, marketing and finance. This blend is continually enriched by our ongoing consultancy and appointments work with schools worldwide, so our advice is always current, practical and evidence led. Please visit [www.rsacademics.com](http://www.rsacademics.com) for more information.



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