

School Business Manager (PO9)

The Garden School, Hackney

Closing date: Friday 1st May 2026 (midday)

Applications to: hr@thegarden.hackney.sch.uk

Start date: September 2026 (or earlier if available)

Join Us at a Pivotal Moment of Growth and Transformation

The Garden School is a thriving, ambitious special school for autistic pupils aged 4–18, based across two sites in Hackney. We currently serve 204 exceptional young people with a primary diagnosis of autism, supported by a dedicated, specialist staff team.

Our curriculum intent—**ACORN** (Ambition, Communication, Opportunity, Resilience, Needs)—underpins everything we do, and our most recent Ofsted inspection (December 2024) recognised the strength of our relationships, our ambition for pupils, and the quality of our provision.

We are now entering a crucial phase of organisational development. Our School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP) 2025–28 sets out a bold programme of educational excellence supported by financial recovery, systems modernisation, and robust governance. To support us in delivering this, we are seeking an exceptional School Business Manager who can lead transformative change with clarity, confidence and integrity.

This is not a maintenance role. It is a strategic, futureshaping position for a leader who thrives on improving systems, solving legacy challenges, and building highperforming teams.

The Role

As our School Business Manager, you will be a key member of the Senior Leadership Team, working closely with the Headteacher and Governors to secure the school's longterm sustainability and operational excellence.

You will lead the modernisation of our business operations across:

- **Finance** – delivering accurate forecasting, robust internal controls, transparent reporting and a 3year financial recovery plan.
- **HR** – ensuring compliance, accuracy, safer recruitment, and the resolution of historic HR issues.
- **Administration** – redesigning systems so they are efficient, reliable and futureproof.
- **Governance & Compliance** – providing highquality reports, risk management, efficient administration and clerking support.
- **Site, Health & Safety** – ensuring both school sites operate safely, efficiently and in line with statutory expectations.

Your work will directly support our ability to deliver highquality education for autistic pupils and will play a central role in strengthening the school's financial resilience.

Why This Role Matters

Our SIDP identifies financial sustainability, systems reform and strengthened accountability as urgent priorities. You will be instrumental in:

- Overhauling outdated processes and embedding best practice
- Establishing a culture of accuracy, accountability and value for money
- Ensuring governors and leaders receive the highquality information they need
- Helping secure a fairer funding model that reflects pupil complexity
- Building strong, confident business operations that enable excellent teaching and learning

This is a rare opportunity to make a profound and lasting impact on a school community.

About You

We are looking for a strategic, solutionsfocused professional who brings:

- **Significant experience** in financial management, HR, compliance or organisational improvement
- **A track record of leading change**, modernising systems and improving accuracy
- **Strong analytical skills**, including forecasting, scenario planning and benchmarking
- **Confidence in working with senior leaders and governors**
- **The ability to build capacity**, coach staff and lead cultural change
- **Resilience, integrity and a commitment to high standards**

Experience in a special school or SEND context is desirable but not essential. What matters most is your ability to bring rigour, clarity and ambition to our business operations.

How to Apply

Please complete the school's application form and submit it, along with a **letter of application (maximum 1,000 words)** explaining how your

experience and skills meet the person specification for this role,
to:hr@thegarden.hackney.sch.uk

Closing date: *Friday 1st May 2026 (midday)*

Interviews: *Week commencing 4th May 2026*

We warmly encourage visits to the school. To arrange this, please contact
Mary Francis (mfrancis@thegarden.hackney.sch.uk)

The Garden School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to enhanced DBS checks and rigorous safer recruitment procedures.