

For immediate release

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Trust Academy Business Manager completes Level 7 Certificate in School Financial and Operational Leadership

At the White Rose Academies Trust we like to recognise the hard work and achievements of our dedicated staff members. As well as through our 'Employee of the Month' Award, we also like to highlight and share stories of staff successes.

A recent achievement worth celebrating comes from Samuel Bradley, Academy Business Manager for both Leeds East Academy and Leeds West Academy, who has worked at the White Rose Academies Trust for almost five years.

Sam has demonstrated his dedication to continuing professional development by recently completing the Level 7 Certificate in School Financial and Operational Leadership.

Developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Institute of School Business Leaders (ISBL), this extensive blended-learning programme accounts for 200 CPD hours and covers topics such as education funding, accountability, and contract management.

This accredited qualification is recognised by the Department for Education in the Academies Financial Handbook and ensures school business leaders can meet the highest professional standards when overseeing school finances, governance, and risk management.

Commenting on his achievement, Samuel said:

"I'm incredibly pleased to have completed this programme and to be awarded with this prestigious qualification. I have thoroughly enjoyed working my way through the modules and look forward to applying my new knowledge in practice.

"While I have personally enjoyed the benefits of this training programme, it will also have a fundamental and positive impact for our students by ensuring I keep my knowledge and skills up to date and relevant. In addition, the operations of the academies, for which I am responsible, will continue to improve as we strive to create an exceptional environment for teaching and learning."

Chief Executive Officer: Andrew Whitaker

P: Bedford Field, Woodhouse Cliff, Leeds, LS6 2LG

T: 0113 284 4260

E: info@whiteroseacademies.org W: www.whiteroseacademies.org

To further celebrate this achievement, we asked Samuel to provide us with greater insight into the life of an Academy Business Manager:

What is it like to be an Academy Business Manager?

Today, the role of Academy Business Manager is more vital than ever as schools gain greater responsibility and autonomy over managing their finances and resources.

There is [evidence to suggest that](#) school business managers can help senior leaders save almost a third of their time, covering their own salary with savings. But an Academy Business Manager's contribution is about so much more than financial efficiency.

"While efficiency is obviously important," says Samuel, "my role is also about supporting the academies I work for to make strategic decisions across all operational areas, and therefore enabling my colleagues to focus on industry-leading teaching and learning.

"For example, one of my regular responsibilities involves working with our Academy Principals on strategically planning our finances and workforce through a process known as [Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning](#) (ICFP). This approach ensures that our schools can use their resources efficiently to create the best curriculum possible for our students."

Thanks to Samuel's commitment to continuing professional development, he can draw from his wide range of knowledge about developing and leading support services, which he can tailor to the needs of each academy and help establish a strong culture of accountability.

"I strongly believe in the power of accountability and helping managers to be autonomous when it comes to leading their departments. Since I joined the Trust, I have led on developing a robust financial planning framework, which empowers others to participate in the planning process of budget setting and ultimately gives academy leaders a greater sense of responsibility and accountability when it comes to academy finance".

As you learn more about his role as an Academy Business Manager, you will understand that Sam is passionate about the development and improvement of systems, processes, and procedures:

"I like clarity and I think others appreciate this too. I dislike complex procedures or processes, especially if they are unnecessary. If we can make an operating procedure clearer and more accessible, it will have a greater impact throughout the academy.

"For example, I recently supported our Estates Managers to refresh their approach to monitoring facilities requests and compliance work. The result is that these managers now have greater control over tracking and quality assuring jobs through their teams, which means the process is more user friendly and useful for all colleagues across the academies.

"Another example of an improved process is the launch of our professional standards and line management framework across the operational provision, which clearly sets out expectations and available support. The aim is to foster a culture of high expectations with high support, ensuring our support services are integrated and strong, led by teams of skilled and knowledgeable individuals that add real value. Everything we are doing is aligned with the vision for operational excellence."

What does the future hold for the ambitious Academy Business Manager?

"With my experience, training, and skillset I could confidently work within another sector or corporate environment, but I would not feel like I was making the same positive impact that I do in schools or feel the same level of reward and job satisfaction.

"However, despite my recent success in achieving the Level 7 Certificate in School Financial and Operational Leadership, I am still focused on improving and developing further, I am currently a full member of the Institute of School Business Leadership and I am keen to apply for the organisation's Fellowship Programme and build upon my skills and knowledge. I am confident that this will further improve the operational and financial provision of our academies."

If you're interested in developing your skills, furthering your career and joining a culture of excellence, then why not join the White Rose Academies Trust.

Our Trust is going through an exciting period of growth and transformation, having recently welcomed our first primary school and formed a World Class partnership with High Performance Learning.

Look out for current and upcoming opportunities on our careers page
<https://www.whiteroseacademies.org/careers>

