

Unity Schools Partnership

Annual Report and consolidated Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2023

Company Registration Number
07400386 (England and Wales)

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Reference and administrative information

Members	Christine Quinn Paul Marshall Lesley Birch Chelmsford Diocesan Education Trust (Represented by Mark Spencer)
Directors	Laura Barbrook (Chair of Audit & Risk Committee from 1st September 2022) Tim Coulson (Accounting Officer) Sarah Garner (appointed 25 July 2023, resigned 23 October 2023) Ian Jacobs (Safeguarding Lead, Chair of Safeguarding Committees) Gordon Jones Janet Morris Roger Quince (Vice Chair, Chair of Audit & Risk Committee to 31 August 2022) Christine Quinn (Chair and Chair of Standards Committee) Lloyd Spencer-Witcomb (Chair of Remuneration Committee) Dean Sykes Andrew Willett (Chair of Finance Committee)
Executive Leadership Team	
Chief Executive	Tim Coulson
Deputy Chief Executive	Sarah Garner
Executive Director of Secondary Education	Stephen Astley
Executive Director of Primary Education	Darren Woodward
Director of SEND	Georgina Ellis
Director of SEND	Lucie Calow
Director of Secondary Education	Rosemary Prince
Director of Secondary Education	Nick Froy (until 1st April 2023)
Director of Primary Education	Toni Kittle
Director of Primary Education	Matthew Fuller
Director of Operations	Debbie Willson
Director of HR	Angela Bull
Director of Teaching School Hub and Research School	Andy Samways
Company Secretary	Lisa Taylor

Reference and administrative information

Company Name	Unity Schools Partnership
Principal and Registered Office	Park Road Haverhill Suffolk, CB9 7YD
Company Registration Number	07400386 (England and Wales)
Independent Auditor	Buzzacott LLP 130 Wood Street, London, EC2V 6DL
Bankers	Lloyds Bank Plc 8 High Street Haverhill Suffolk, CB9 8BA
Solicitors	Stone King LLP Wellington House East Road Cambridge, CB1 1BH

Reference and administrative information

Academies Operated	Location	Head Teacher
Abbots Green	Bury St Edmunds	A Morrison
Breckland School	Brandon	J Winn (until 31st March 2023) / N Froy
Burton End Primary	Haverhill	G Almond
Castle Manor Academy	Haverhill	V Whitcombe
Churchill Special Free School	Haverhill	C Komodromos
Clements Primary School	Haverhill	V Hogg
County Upper School	Bury St Edmunds	S Kennedy
Coupals Primary Academy	Haverhill	D Maguire (until 31st December 2022) / J Sendall
Ditton Lodge Primary School	Newmarket	M Moore
Felixstowe School	Felixstowe	E Wilson-Downes
Glemsford Primary Academy	Glemsford	N George
Horringer Court Middle School	Bury St Edmunds	S Palmer (until 31st December 2022) / B Jeffery
Houldsworth Valley Primary	Newmarket	L Tweed
Kedington Primary Academy	Kedington	V Doherty
Langer Primary School	Felixstowe	M Hughes
Laureate Community Academy	Newmarket	D Perkins
Newmarket Academy	Newmarket	M Witter
Place Farm Academy	Haverhill	J Sendall
Samuel Ward Academy	Haverhill	A Hunter
Sir Bobby Robson Special School	Ipswich	A Dabin
Sir Peter Hall Special School	Bury St Edmunds	J Pettingale
St Edward's CofE Academy	Romford	J Hassan
Steeple Bumpstead	Steeple Bumpstead	M Nicholls
Sybil Andrews Academy	Bury St Edmunds	T King (until 31st March 2023) / K Blakey
The Bridge School	Ipswich	H Simmons
Thomas Gainsborough School	Great Cornard	H Yapp
Tollgate Primary School	Bury St Edmunds	H Brookman
Wells Hall Primary School	Great Cornard	R Towns
Westfield Primary Academy	Haverhill	A Hunter
Westley Middle School	Bury St Edmunds	B Jeffrey
Wickhambrook Primary Academy	Wickhambrook	H Tyzack
Woodhall Primary School	Sudbury	L Tweed

The Directors present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable group and company for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. The Directors' report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report, and a Directors' report and strategic report under company law.

Unity Schools Partnership is a family of secondary, primary, middle and special schools located mainly in Suffolk, and also on the Essex and Cambridgeshire borders as well as Romford in East London who share the same values and face similar issues, whilst providing a close network of support and challenge. Unity Schools Partnership recognises the unique characteristics of each of the communities in which it works and how they are reflected in distinctive school cultures.

The Trust operates 32 academies for pupils aged 2-19, it has a pupil capacity of 14,685 and had a roll of 14,171 pupils in the school census in October 2022.

Structure, governance and management

Constitution

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the Trust. The Directors of Unity Schools Partnership are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company operates as Unity Schools Partnership or UnitySP. Details of the Directors who served during the year, and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

Members' liability

Each member of the charitable company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the charitable company in the event of it being wound up while they are a member, or within one year after they cease to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10, for the debts and liabilities contracted before they ceased to be a member.

Directors' indemnities

Directors of the company are covered by the Educations, Skills and Funding Agency Risk Protection Arrangements (RPA) under their Directors' Indemnity policy.

Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Directors

The management of the Trust is the responsibility of the Directors who are elected and co-opted under the terms of the Articles of Association. The members can appoint up to 11 Directors through such a process as they may determine.

Directors are subject to retirement after a term of 4 years. After the term they are eligible for re-election at the meeting at which they retire.

The make-up of the Trust Board includes experienced professionals who have a good understanding of the operational and legal requirements of running an establishment such as Unity Schools Partnership.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Directors

Directors have developed a scheme of delegation and training has been provided for all Directors. Additional training has been provided by the Trust and is available from external providers including Suffolk County Council. The Trust has also engaged the support and expertise of a highly experienced educationalist to support and advise the Board adding valuable sector insight.

Organisational structure

Unity Schools Partnership has established a unified structure to enable its efficient running. The structure consists of three levels: The Trust Board along with its Audit & Risk Committee, Finance Committee, Remuneration Committee, Safeguarding Committee and Standards Committee; the Executive Leadership Team, and Local Governing Bodies at each individual school. The aim of the management structure is to devolve responsibility and encourage involvement in decision making at all levels.

The Trust Board is responsible for making major decisions about the strategic direction of the Trust, ensuring that its aims are met, and its ethos is maintained. Specifically, this includes setting general policy, adopting an annual plan and budget, monitoring the Trust's financial performance and educational outcomes and approving major investment programmes.

Each school has a Senior Leadership Team consisting of the senior management at each school. These teams are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the schools, organising and managing the teaching staff, curriculum, facilities and students.

The Local Governing Bodies are made up of a group of people representing staff, parents, the community and central Trust nominees. They act as a 'critical friend' to the Head Teacher and school, a 'sounding' board at a local level and to ensure that Unity Schools Partnership values remain at the heart of the school community. The Trust has an appointed governance adviser to support the work of the Local Governing Bodies and the Trust Board.

The Chair of the Trust Board and the Chief Executive Officer meet and share information with chairs of the Local Governing Bodies on a regular basis. Furthermore, members of the Executive Leadership Team regularly attend Local Governing Body meetings and sub committees.

Each layer of the organisation is structured according to a set of terms of reference with associated delegation of authority for all decision-making matters. The Trust Board meets regularly throughout the academic year through a series of structured and systematic meetings.

Unity Schools Partnership Education Ltd (Unity Education) is a wholly owned subsidiary of Unity Schools Partnership. The Directors are made up from one Unity Trustee, the CEO and Deputy CEO from Unity Schools Partnership and one independent non-Executive Director.

Unity Schools Partnership have oversight of the subsidiary company through direct links with the Directors who report to the Board of Unity Schools Partnership at each meeting and provide copies of the meeting minutes.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

Unity Schools Partnership has its own Remuneration Committee which meets on a regular basis to discuss matters relating to the setting of pay and remuneration of the Executive Leadership Team. Where appropriate this committee will also review any settlement agreements.

The Remuneration Committee also reviews all recommendations for pay increments for direct reports of the Chief Executive Officer.

Key Management Personnel salaries are set in accordance with the Trust's pay policy. The Trust's pay scales are set in accordance with the National Teaching and Support staff pay scales. These are reviewed annually in line with benchmarking from other similar Trusts.

Trade Union facility time

Unity Schools Partnership subscribes to the Trade Union Facility service provided by the JCNC (Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee). This is a service provided by lay officers from the Union who are teachers and can therefore provide relevant, appropriate and robust support to staff.

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	5
Full-time equivalent employee number	0.2

Percentage of working hours spent on facility time

0% of working hours	0
1 – 50% of working hours	5
51 – 99% of working hours	0
100% of working hours	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Total pay bill	£79,939,451
Total cost of facility time	£6,758
Percentage of pay spent on facility time	0.01%

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Related parties, connected charities and co-operation with other organisations

The Trust operates under the Seven Principles of Public Life, known as the Nolan Principles. These are:

- ◆ Selflessness
- ◆ Integrity
- ◆ Objectivity
- ◆ Accountability
- ◆ Openness
- ◆ Honesty
- ◆ Leadership.

These principles are reflected in the way the Trust declares and deals with related party transactions so that the Trust is operating fairly, transparently and the Trust is open to scrutiny. Potential for conflicts of interest arises when an individual could gain, or be perceived to gain, from an aspect of the Trust business. All potential conflicts of interest and pecuniary interests are declared at the start of each meeting. All purchasing decisions made by the Trust follow the same procurement and/or commissioning procedures. Any business links with Directors or other Trust Officers have been made in accordance with these procedures.

The Trust Board is confident that conflicts of interest are handled according to the Seven Principles of Public Life and in accordance with the Academies Trust Handbook.

Unity Research School

The Trust is responsible for the Unity Research School, which has a responsibility to promote evidence informed practice in a wide range of schools that includes all those within the Trust but much wider too. The objectives of the Research School are to support schools through research and development and initial teacher training (ITT) and provide continuous professional development (CPD).

Unity Teaching School Hub

Unity Teaching School Hub was approved by the Department for Education as one of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development, focused on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts in the country. This programme replaces the previous network of around 750 teaching schools which ended in August 2021. Teaching school hubs are expected to provide high-quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers. The hub has responsibility for a defined area encompassing 180 schools across the four districts of Forest Heath, Mid-Suffolk, St. Edmundsbury and Suffolk Coastal. The Trust's work as a teaching school hub requires the Trust to play a significant role in delivering:

- ◆ school-based initial teacher training (ITT)
- ◆ the early career framework for teachers in their first two years
- ◆ the national professional qualifications (NPQ)
- ◆ appropriate body services for early career teachers.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Unity Teaching School Hub (continued)

Unity Schools Partnership is funded for three years from September 2021 to operate as a teaching school hub, receiving an annual grant, subject to conditions, including demonstrating progress against key performance indicators. It is also a delivery partner for Ambition Institute for the Early Career Teacher Programme, and the Teacher Development Trust for NPQs. It is a partner that provides initial teacher training through the CTSN SCITT.

Unity Schools Partnership Education Ltd (Unity Education)

Unity Education was established in July 2020 under the name of Schools Partnership Tutors in response to the Government's Education Recovery Programme – the name was changed in October 2022 to allow for a broader outlook to the provision of educational support and services beyond the Trust schools.

In September 2021 the subsidiary (company number 12709238) came under the control of the Trust and is consolidated in these financial statements as a subsidiary.

In 2022/23 the Board of Unity Education have been proud to be able to use the trading company to provide a wider range of educational support services to schools inside and outside of the Trust, including the established CUSP (Curriculum with Unity Schools Partnership) an internally developed curriculum for primary students that has seen success outside of the Trust as well as within Unity schools. It is anticipated that the CUSP curriculum under the umbrella of Unity Education will continue to thrive and grow in 2023/24 through evolving new modules and a bold move into secondary education at key stage three.

Furthermore, the company continues to seek to explore other educational support service areas supporting the education system nationally.

Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

The Trust has established its own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee which is committed to addressing issues of inequality and discrimination and raising awareness of current issues across the Trust, the Committee are recognising three main areas of focus in 2023/24: special educational needs and disability (SEND); Gender, Race & Ethnicity and LGBTQ+ with the intention of raising awareness amongst staff, students and the local communities.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

SEND & Disabilities

In 2021/22 Unity Schools Partnership committed to being an Equal Opportunities Employer following its accreditation as a Disability Confident Employer and continues to work:

- ◆ with each Local Governing Body and Head Teacher, to ensure there are appropriate discussions with staff who have a disability to provide any aids and support that would help them to fulfil their role in the school.
- ◆ with disabled members of staff to ensure that they are offered the same conditions of service, employment rights, promotion and training opportunities as other staff in the same roles in each school.
- ◆ with disabled staff to encourage them to bring any complaints about their treatment as disabled staff to the notice of the Head Teacher in the first instance. All staff are regularly reminded to use the Trust's grievance procedure if they consider this to be the best route.

Anti-Racism

Following on from the work the Trust carried out since the Black Lives Matter campaign in 2020, the Trust remains committed to help raise awareness of racism in the sector, creating a safe environment for staff and students to talk about race, understand the issues surrounding ethnic minorities in our communities and have the confidence to challenge and call out racist acts.

In October 2023 all schools across the Trust supported Black History Month with a particular focus on literature by black authors, learning about Windrush and sporting heroes.

Gender Equality

Through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee the group have run a number of initiatives to support women in the Trust to be more empowered. This began with an emotional event for International Women's Day in March 2023 with senior staff from across our schools sharing their own journeys and how with the support of other women they have turned those struggles into success stories. This event led to a further panel discussion at the Trust's professional development day in July where imposter syndrome, families, motherhood and the menopause were also discussed.

Wellbeing

In addition to this, the Trust puts the health and wellbeing of staff at the forefront of its ethos, a happy staff creates happy children who are ready and willing to learn. This is seen a key success factor for the Trust with investment into wellbeing being valued by all staff.

The Trust has appointed LifeWorks to provide an Employee Assistance Programme for all staff and their families, this includes health and wellbeing advice, guidance and information through a MyMindPal app; 24/7/365 telephone and on-line support service and where appropriate further counselling or therapy services.

Structure, governance and management (continued)

Wellbeing (continued)

Further to this, the Trust works closely with a small local company whose founders are former school nurses and provide invaluable support to staff, students and families tackling issues of behaviour, attendance and general supervision but on standby to support with more serious incidents if and when they arise. Staff have proactively fed back that this service sets the trust apart from other schools in which they have worked.

Surveys

In the summer term, the Trust carried out a Trust wide survey, collecting information from staff, students and parents about their wellbeing, their views and opinions on their school and the Trust. The results were positive and have provided a number of areas that the Trust will focus on in 2023/24.

Engagement with suppliers, customers and others in a business relationship with the Trust

The Trust's supplier and customer engagement, including all on-boarding policies and procedures are designed to ensure a fair and transparent approach to all business transactions.

The Trust actively encourages local community and customer engagement regarding the development and expansion of these facilities and services.

All customer contracts are, where applicable, charged in line with national approved rates and clear service level agreements established.

The Trust and Unity Education operate a transparent procurement process through a value-based approval structure, therefore ensuring all services and products are assessed under the same best value and risk mitigation criteria.

The Trust has reviewed its financial software again during the academic year which has enabled more robust control procedures for order management. This has resulted in stronger communication and engagement with suppliers and more efficient and timely order processes for all parties.

The Trust completes regular relationship management meetings with all strategic services suppliers to ensure effective contract management and engagement.

At Unity Schools Partnership, we are also committed to ensuring there is transparency in our own business and in our approach to tackling modern slavery throughout our supply chains, consistent with our disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We expect the same high standards from all our contractors, suppliers and other business partners, and as part of our contracting processes, we include specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children, and we expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objects and aims

The Trust's objective for the period to 2023-26 is to achieve "Excellence" in all schools. The vast majority of schools in the Trust are now successful, well-performing schools and judged 'good' by Ofsted. The ambition over the next three years is that schools across the Trust become excellent schools, characterised by top quartile performance and with the capacity to support more schools in the area that need support to benefit from being part of the Trust.

In order to achieve this ambition, the Trust will focus on:

- ◆ **Excellent education** – we have plans for work in primary, secondary and special education which aim by 2026 to achieve top quartile performance in primary and secondary results and that has very high approval ratings externally and from parents for children with special educational needs.
- ◆ **Excellent staff** – we are developing a People Strategy that includes the ambition of being the employer of choice for school staff in the region.
- ◆ **Excellent support for schools** – we have included in our plans for work in primary, secondary and special education how schools are supported to provide excellent education and we have an operational plan for wider support for schools in the Trust, those who wish to be associated with the Trust and those who potentially might wish to join the Trust.

Objectives, strategies and activities

The Trust aims to achieve these objectives through a range of strategies and activities bound by milestones and key performance indicators.

Primary & Secondary Education

- ◆ Great outcomes on a trajectory towards top quartile by 2026
- ◆ Highly effective implementation of &iLearn
- ◆ Improved leadership across all trust schools
- ◆ Maximising opportunities to learn and creating a supportive environment
- ◆ Using financial metrics to help shape effective and efficient curriculum models.

Special Educational Needs

- ◆ Great outcomes for SEND pupils
- ◆ Nationally recognised for support for vulnerable children

Recruitment & Retention

- ◆ Employer of choice
- ◆ Continue to explore innovative and creative ways to reach the best talent
- ◆ Ensuring all staff have a clear career pathway ahead of them
- ◆ Creating nice working environments where staff feel respected, valued and appreciated
- ◆ Guaranteeing equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of the organisation.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES (continued)

Objectives, strategies and activities (continued)

Buildings & Estates

- ◆ Develop a robust maintenance and improvement action plan
- ◆ Create a plan that helps the Trust to exploit its assets by maximising the space and income opportunities
- ◆ Develop an energy efficiency strategy to maximise funding, whilst also reducing carbon emissions and energy usage.

Public benefit

The Directors have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers and duties. The Directors consider that the Trust's aims, and the activities undertaken to achieve them are demonstrable to the public benefit.

Following a period of huge uncertainty and risk post Covid19 and with the on-going cost of living crisis, the Trust is acutely aware of how hard life can be for families and has taken decisive action to support them as much as possible whilst balancing the desire to provide an enriched curriculum. In 2022/23 the Trust continued to provide access to hardship funds for its most in-need families and ran many charitable events to help raise funds, adding to local foodbanks and providing access to technology.

In setting the objectives and planning our activities for 2023-26 the Directors have carefully considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievements and performance

One further new school joined the Trust this year, Sir Peter Hall special school opened on the 1 September 2022. Sir Peter Hall is a SEMH school for pupils aged 8-16 based in Bury St Edmunds, west Suffolk.

As a Trust we believe we have made strong progress in improving educational standards across our schools and following the second set of graded exams since 2019 have seen improved results in national tests and examinations in the summer of 2023 including being above national average for Year 6 combined Reading, Writing and Maths as well as the Y4 Times Tables (MTC). Phonics in Year 1 will be at or slightly above the national average.

The Trust is delighted to have been able to continue to improve learning environments of many of our schools over the last year as the result of investment by the Trust through our own capital monies as well as extensive new building investments by Suffolk County Council. The Trust is now in the position to play an increasingly strategic regional role. We have developed strong links with community leaders, trusts and councils across the Eastern region, which is informing educational strategy, improving communications, and building capacity. We are committed to supporting the DfE, the Office of the Regional Director and Suffolk County Council in their strategic focus of educational improvement in the East and have positive relationships with all of them.

In both primary and secondary schools, attendance for the Trust finished below the national average for the Autumn and Spring terms. National attendance for all three terms is due to be released in March 2024. Attendance in primary schools was 93.8% at end of July 2023 compared to 93.7% the previous year. The national average attendance in primary schools in the previous year was 93.7%. Attendance in secondary schools was 90.9% at the end of July 2023 compared to 90.5% the previous year. The national average attendance in secondary schools in the previous year was 91.0%.

Persistent absence in primary schools was at 18.1% at the end of July 2023. At the same point in the previous year, it was at 16.9%. Persistent absence in secondary schools was at 25.9% at the end of July 2023. At the same point in the previous year it was 29.4%.

For 2023/24, as well as maintaining our push towards 97% attendance for all, we will be focusing closely on persistent absence in all groups the attendance to ensure this percentage is decreased, especially in light of continuing challenges facing families.

During 2022/23 Ofsted continued with a full inspection calendar. The Trust had eight schools inspected, three primary, three secondary and two specials. All schools maintained or improved their grades, with one previously inadequate special improving to a good judgement and one previously requires improvement school improving to a good judgement. Amongst the eight inspection judgements there were also two outstanding grades.

The current school year has started well with four successful school inspections and a successful monitoring visit. Tollgate maintained its Good rating, Langer moved from Inadequate to Good with 3 outstanding grades, Sybil Andrews moved from requires improvement to a Good rating and Thomas Gainsborough received a Good rating that indicated that the school could be judged outstanding at a future inspection which should take place in the next 12 to 18 months. Finally, the only requires improvement school, Felixstowe School received a positive monitoring visit in October and will now wait for a full inspection around Easter when we expect it to be judged as a Good school.

STRATEGIC REPORT (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

The Trust has been requested to open a new primary free school in Silfield near Wymondham for September 2025. It has also recently seen two schools join the trust from September 2023 - West Row Primary Academy near to Mildenhall, rebrokered from another trust following two successive requires improvement judgements, and Robert Kett Primary School in Wymondham, Norfolk, transferred from the local authority after two successive requires improvement judgements.

As part of work to continue improving the standard of provision for pupils with special educational needs, a further specialist provision is planned to open at Sybil Andrews in Bury St Edmunds in September 2024 and the trust opened its newest special school - The Compass school - for pupils with social emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) in Romford, Havering this September.

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the Board of Directors has a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

Promoting the success of the company

In accordance with Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006, the Directors (who form our Trust Board) complied with their duty to promote the success of the Trust.

The Trust makes all key decisions through reference to its long-term strategic plan, vision and values and after projecting the timing and impact of such decisions. This strategy is primarily designed around the objective to achieve the highest standards of education in all its schools. Every decision and operational approach is regularly reviewed for its impact on all stakeholders and the need for any changes or modifications to decisions previously taken.

Our employees are vital to the Trust and we regard ongoing, regular engagement with them as a top priority. We measure employee engagement through regular feedback and open communication. We address any issues raised by our employees as quickly as possible and look for ways to continually improve the Trust. All staff are offered access to a number of well-being support services and the Trust seeks to ensure that staff welfare is actively considered and addressed. Through our health and safety policies as well as through the termly "Team-Around-The-School" meetings we also actively seek to ensure that the working environment meets due high standards of safety and security as well as comfort. Headteachers are offered external, confidential coaches.

Our relationships with partners and suppliers are key to our effectiveness. The Trust actively seeks to engage in service reviews with all key suppliers. These reviews are focused on a two-way relationship with the Trust based on an aim of helping one another to achieve an optimum service as efficiently as possible and according to the best value for money. Where the Trust procures outsourced services, we seek to ensure that staff and management from that contractor are supported as an equal member of the school community and stakeholders.

STRATEGIC REPORT (continued)

Promoting the success of the company (continued)

We recognise our responsibility to care for the environment and aim to minimise our environmental impact in all our activities. As well as covering environmental issues in our school curriculum, the Trust encourages all staff and students to participate in initiatives to reduce negative environmental impacts. These include the promotion of recycling of waste and actions to maximise efficiency in energy consumption.

Last year the Trust embarked on a Climate protection plan, officially declaring a "Climate Emergency" and actively working towards NetZero for 2030 with a number of initiatives in schools based around energy usage, building and asset management and education.

Fairness in our dealings is upheld through having a clear and well communicated strategy, and financial discipline backed by strong internal controls. There is transparent reporting at regular intervals through the year to the members, open and continual access to senior management and a track record of successful growth through new school joiners who have been appropriately integrated into the Trust.

We aim to be a fully inclusive organisation and we will not unfairly discriminate against our students, staff or any other member of our community and stakeholders.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Most of the Trust's income is obtained from the Education Skills & Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to educational purposes. These grants received from the ESFA during the year ended 31 August 2023 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the statement of financial activities.

During the year ended 31 August 2023, total consolidated group income was £107,700k (2022: £97,647k) (which excludes transfers of existing academies and donated school buildings) and total consolidated group expenditure was £114,460k (2022: £106,702k). The consolidated net expenditure for the year before transfers, pension fund movements, restricted fixed asset movements, and transfers from existing academies was £2,087k (2022: net income £6,447k).

At 31 August 2023 the net book value of fixed assets was £265,121k (2022: £259,655k). Movements in intangible fixed assets are shown in note 12 and tangible assets in note 13 to the financial statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the pupils of the Trust.

Tangible fixed assets of £14,708k (2022: £7,844k) were acquired during the year ended 31 August 2023 which were funded through a combination of General Annual Grant (GAG), capital grants, other restricted funds and unrestricted funds.

In accordance with FRS 102, the Trust received an actuarial assessment of its pension scheme deficit. The deficit balance of £539k (2022: £2,816k) is included within the Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2023 and supporting notes to the financial statements.

FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

Though the pension scheme represents a liability on the Balance Sheet, it does not present a significant issue for the Trust in respect of cash flow, as it will not crystallise all at once. Contributions for the coming year are the primary factor for the Trust when considering the impact that the liability has on cash flow, and these have been appropriately reflected within forecasts and will be settled on a timely basis.

The balance on restricted income funds as at 31 August 2023 was £1,439k (2022: £1,902k).

Reserves policy

The Directors have determined that a level of funds retained should be at least equivalent to 5% of its GAG to enable the Group to react to budget changes within a manageable period without the use of cash flow advances from the ESFA. In August 2023, 5% amounted to 3.7m. The total of restricted income and unrestricted funds (excluding the pension reserve) of the Group held on 31 August 2023 is a surplus of £4,971k (2022: £5,434k). This allows for two schools in a turnaround period to correct their financial position at a steady rate without impacting the quality of education.

Investment policy

Our investment strategy centres around the judicious selection of financial instruments that not only preserve capital but also generate competitive returns. Throughout the fiscal year, we have actively sought opportunities in higher interest accounts, capitalizing on favourable market conditions to secure attractive rates.

In the pursuit of optimal financial outcomes, we have diligently assessed and selected higher interest accounts as a primary avenue for deploying funds. This strategic move aligns with our overarching goal of delivering enhanced value to our communities while maintaining a robust and secure financial environment.

Principal risks and uncertainties

The Trust Board has reviewed the key risks to which the Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks.

The Trust's risk register is comprehensive and is actively reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team, the Audit & Risk Committee and the Trust Board on a regular basis. The Trust utilises an independent internal auditor to perform a suite of internal audits based around a rolling programme aligned around the risk register and topical risks.

FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

Principal risks and uncertainties (continued)

Local school level risks are monitored via termly meetings with key members of the Executive Leadership Team. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks each school faces. The Directors have assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed, and specific risks are identified relating to the teaching, safeguarding, estates safety and management, including compliance with relevant regulations and other operational areas of the Trust and its finances.

The Directors have implemented a number of systems to assess risks that the Trust faces, especially in the operational areas (e.g. in relation to teaching, health and safety, bullying and school trips) and in relation to the controls in order to minimise risk.

Financial Risk

The Directors and the Executive Leadership Team undertake their responsibilities towards safeguarding very seriously and ensure that all staff receive regular, appropriate and relevant safeguarding training. The Trust has a safeguarding Lead and ensures that safer recruitment trained individuals are involved in the appointment of all staff.

Furthermore, the Trust has continued to take positive action this year to ensure that all staff are aware of the whistleblowing policy and how to invoke it should they feel the need to.

Where significant financial risk still remains, the Trust has ensured it has adequate insurance cover. The Trust has an effective system of internal financial controls and this is explained in more detail in the following statement. Effective risk management provides the Trust Board with assurance that:

- ◆ their financial responsibilities are being properly discharged;
- ◆ resources are being managed in an efficient, economical and effective manner;
- ◆ sound systems of internal financial control are being maintained; and
- ◆ financial considerations are fully taken into account in reaching decisions.

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period. As a Trust, the level of financial risk mainly occurs around certainty of year-on-year funding, cash flow and the actuarial assessed pension fund deficit. The Trust monitors the impact of cash flow and projects cash flow based on cash inflows and outflows at the start of the year and reviews the bank balance throughout the year. Future budgets are monitored in line with staffing levels/costs and follow benchmarking guidelines as set out by the ESFA.

FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

Principal risks and uncertainties (continued)

Other key risk areas for focus are:

Governance & Legal

The key risks in this area relate to the relationship with the Directors and Local Governing Bodies, the capacity and performance of the Board and the maintenance of a strong internal control framework. The Internal auditor advises the Trust Board on issues regarding financial control.

Strategic

The key risks in this area relate to the delivery of Unity Schools Partnership strategic ambition for "Excellence" whilst ensuring suitable attention to core business and the performance of the executive team. Capacity with the central team is continually reviewed to ensure correct skill set and sufficient capacity.

Educational

The key risk in this area relates to under performance of schools and underachievement against student outcomes and progress with adverse Ofsted judgements. Significant Board and Executive Leadership Team time is spent focusing on the delivery of the key strategic objectives of the Trust of which student outcomes are paramount.

Human Resources

Key risks in this area relate to retention and recruitment of key employees, attendance management, consistency of HR practice and policy implementation. The centralised HR team undertake robust vetting procedures of new staff following whilst also ensuring that all appointments and recruitment processes are managed by personnel who have been "safer recruitment" trained.

Other Legal & Operational

The key risks in this area relate to non-compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and data quality. Comprehensive annual training on GDPR is provided to all staff, including what to do in the case of a data breach and training on Freedom of Information is provided to key personnel. The Trust's risk register is comprehensive and deals with a wide range of matters relating to the above. Where appropriate, adequate insurance cover is procured to mitigate any residual risks.

Financial Liquidity Risk

Unity Schools Partnership manages its cash resources, including appropriate working capital balances, so that all operating needs are met without the need of any borrowings. Surplus cash is invested in short term deposit accounts with the objective of maximising interest income without incurring undue risk. Trade debtors and trade creditors are managed within the credit terms agreed.

FINANCIAL REVIEW (continued)

Principal risks and uncertainties (continued)

Financial Sustainability Risk

The Trust must demonstrate rigorous medium term financial planning and an operating environment focused on value for money in line with the Academy Trust Handbook. The Trust has cash surpluses which have built up over the last four years.

Estates

Central to the Trust's estates strategy is the commitment to providing a conducive space for learning. The Trust has undertaken initiatives to upgrade and optimise educational spaces, ensuring that they are equipped facilities and resources. This reflects the Trust's dedication to academic excellence.

The wellbeing and satisfaction of staff are paramount. Recognising that a happy workforce is a productive one, the Trust continues to implement measures to create an inclusive and positive work environment. This includes enhancements to common areas, workspaces and facilities, fostering a culture where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute their best.

Ensuring the safety and security of the community is a top priority. The Trust have conducted rigorous assessments to address structural concerns, implementing necessary improvements to guarantee the long-term integrity of its facilities. Additionally, the commitment to compliance extends to regulatory standards, with on-going efforts to meet and exceed industry standards.

Other Risks

The Trust is exposed to risks similar to other MATs and academies related to the funding from central and local governments. Credit risk in this respect is negligible however appropriate funding levels specifically related to the needs of the children in its schools will rely on the future of fair funding for Education.

Fundraising

The trust does not use any external fundraisers. All fundraising undertaken during the year was monitored by the Trustees.

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting

	2023 kWh	2022 kWh
Energy Consumption breakdown		
Aggregate of energy consumption in the year		
. Gas combustion	10,143,970	11,782,072
. Fuel consumed for transport	7,356,532	6,179,956
. Electricity purchased	380,378	263,203
. Biomass	1,591,994	1,609,251
. Gas oil	84,752	62,528
. LPG propane	19,861	16,696
Total	19,577,487	19,913,706
	2023 metric tonnes	2022 metric tonnes
Emissions of CO2 equivalent		
Scope 1 – direct emissions		
. Gas combustion	1,856.00	2,151.00
. Fuel consumed for owned transport	40.00	26.00
. Gas oil Consumption	22.00	16.00
. Wood Chip & Pellet Consumption	15.00	23.00
. LPG propane Consumption	4.00	4.00
	1,937.00	2,220.00
Scope 2 – indirect emissions		
. Electricity purchased	1,523.00	1,195.00
Scope 3 – other indirect emissions		
. Fuel consumed for transport not owned by the Trust	57.00	40.00
Total gross emissions	3,517.00	3,455.00
<i>Intensity ratio</i>		
Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.25	0.25
Carbon Offsetting Programme		
Emissions before Carbon Offsetting taken into account	3,517.00	3,454.00
Natural Gas Carbon Offset (UNFCCC/CDM)	(1,856.00)	(2,151.00)
Electricity Carbon Offset (REGO Renewable Electricity)	(1,523.00)	(498.00)
Transport Carbon Offset (Zurich Certificate)	(14.00)	(66.00)
Effective TCO2e Carbon emissions after Offsetting	124	739
Intensity ratio 2. Tonnes CO2e per pupil, including Carbon Offset Programme	0.009	0.054

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting (continued)

Quantification and reporting methodology

We have followed the HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines: including streamlined energy and carbon reporting guidance, March 2019. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol Corporate Standard and the UK Government's 2023 Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity measurement

The chosen intensity measurement ratio is total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO₂e per pupil, the recommended ratio for the sector.

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

USP appointed Normative as their provider of Carbon Tracking Software in September 2022. This enables the Trust to have a means of reporting in order to inform investment, management decisions and formal target setting under Scope 1,2 and 3. With 1 year of carbon tracking data as a baseline, USP is now in a position to finalise its first Sustainability Strategy in 2023/24. This will identify and plan the mid to long-term strategic view along with the key focus areas for the next 3 years. This will be adjusted during this time and is only a minimum target and starting point to ensure focus and advancement is monitored and achieved.

Actions taken on renewable energy and carbon offsets

The Trust has provisioned new supply contracts to ensure that its Electricity consumption is 100% renewable. The Trust has put in place carbon offset provision to ensure that its Gas consumption is 100% offset.

With the support of its fleet insurance provider, Zurich, The Trust has offset 80.04 tonnes of its vehicles carbon emissions.

Actions taken on climate change

Unity Schools Partnership (USP) declared a climate emergency in 2021 and, in response to this, has tackled a broad mix of areas this year and has already completed the items detailed below:

- ◆ Procuring offset gas and renewable electricity contracts for the Trust estate
- ◆ Appointed an Energy Service Partner (Normative) to support in decarbonisation strategies for the Trust
- ◆ Carried out a programme of LED lighting installation across 7 schools (over 20% of our estate) using the significant additional funding provided by the ESFA under the schools capital funding grant (towards energy savings initiatives).
- ◆ Partnered with Eco-Schools to give schools a framework to tackle environmental issues whilst empowering young people to make a difference in their school, local community and beyond
- ◆ Partnered with Energy Sparks to provide schools with an energy analysis tool and energy education programme specifically designed to help reduce their electricity and gas usage through the analysis of smart meter data.
- ◆ Procurement continued to commit to increasing focus on ensuring USP's supply chain share our values and commitment to Net Zero.
- ◆ Continued research and initiatives on how we can support schools.
- ◆ Planted one tree in every school in the Trust to commemorate the Trust's 10th birthday.

Plans for future periods

The Trust will continue to focus on improving the education of the children it is responsible for by further improving achievement, teaching and learning and leadership. Its expectation is that all its schools will be at least good in Ofsted terms and it will be pushing for excellence in all aspects for every school. It will continue to focus on improving the quality of teaching, the development of the curriculum and improvements in the attainment achieved by pupils at all ages, with a particular focus on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils across all schools.

The Trust anticipates that by the end of 2023/24 academic year all schools in the Trust will be judged as Good or Outstanding under the Ofsted framework and that student outcomes for SATS, GCSEs and A'Levels will exceed results from 2022/23.

The Trust Board and the Executive Leadership Team are working effectively with school leadership teams and local governing bodies and over the next year the Trust will continue to develop its infrastructure and centralised services and policies.

We will continue to find ways to enhance our back-office functions to offer academies the benefits of economies of scale and improved, more efficient levels of service.

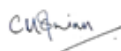
The Trust continues to work towards NetZero for 2030 and plans to run several initiatives both centrally and within schools to help achieve this ambition.

Auditor

In so far as the Directors are aware:

- ◆ there is no relevant audit information of which the Trust's auditor is unaware; and
- ◆ the Directors have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The Director's report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Directors, on 18 December 2023 and signed on the Board's behalf by:



Christine Quinn

Chair of the Trust Board

Scope of responsibility

As Directors, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Unity Schools Partnership has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However, such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

As Directors, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook, the Academies Trust Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The Trust Board has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Unity Schools Partnership and the Secretary of State for Education.

They are also responsible for reporting to the Trust Board any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Directors' Report and in the Statement of Directors' Responsibilities. The Trust Board has formally met 8 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Trust Board was as follows:

Director	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Christine Quinn (Chair)	7	8
Roger Quince (Vice Chair)	6	8
Ian Jacobs	8	8
Gordon Jones	8	8
Dean Sykes	4	8
Laura Barbrook	4	8
Janet Morris	6	8
Lloyd Spencer-Witcomb	5	8
Andrew Willett	4	8
Tim Coulson	8	8
Sarah Garner	2	2

There has been no change in the composition of the Trust Board in 2022/23. The Directors provide invaluable support to the Executive Leadership Team, offering advice, guidance and challenge which is both constructive and practical. Over the last four years the Executive Team have continually sought ways to provide effective data that is easily understandable and gives the Directors the ability to challenge data to provoke improvement.

The Trust Board reviews the management accounts at every meeting, in those months where there is not a Board meeting the management accounts are reviewed by the Finance Committee.

Managing conflicts of interest

Unity Schools Partnership has in place a number of mechanisms to help manage conflicts of interest. The potential for conflict of interest arises when an individual could gain, or be perceived to gain, from an aspect of the Trust business. All potential conflicts of interest and pecuniary interests are declared on a Pecuniary Interest form at the start of each academic year. Individuals are clear that should these change in the course of the year, they should update the forms and inform the Trust Secretary.

Further to this, all potential conflicts of interest or pecuniary interests are declared at the start of each meeting. All purchasing decisions made by the Trust follow the same procurement and commissioning procedures. The Trust has appointed a Head of Procurement who checks the submitted forms at the start of each procurement activity to ensure independence on decision making.

Where conflicts exist, the conflicted party will be asked to leave the meeting whilst matters are being discussed or in the event of a procurement exercise, the conflicted party will be removed from the decision making process.

Governance reviews

Unity Schools Partnership commissioned the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) to undertake a review of governance, to provide an external objective insight into the effectiveness of the Trust's governance arrangements. CST is the national organisation and sector body for academy trusts in England advocating for, connecting, and supporting executive and governance leaders. Their report sets out conclusions that have emerged from the review, identifying strengths of governance at the Trust and recommended areas for consideration or action.

The review identified several strengths, including:

- ◆ a strong and highly effective Trust Board that operates at a strategic level and gives appropriate challenge and support to the Executive Team;
- ◆ a clear Trust vision and sense of purpose;
- ◆ strong and effective oversight of key aspects including finance, standards, risk and safeguarding;
- ◆ clear and effective decision making followed with action logging and an effective action tracking process;
- ◆ strong positive collaborative culture across the Board, with the Executive Team and across the Trust in general;
- ◆ meetings and communications are carried out in an open and transparent manner;
- ◆ strong support and advice to all tiers of governance;
- ◆ strong effective internal controls;
- ◆ extensive and detailed documentation;

Governance reviews (continued)

- ◆ high quality papers and information to the Trust Board and Committee meetings; and
- ◆ strong support for wider developments such as CUSP, Unity Education, the Research School and Teaching School Hub.

The review also identified a number of recommendations for development, some of which have already been identified by the Trust as areas for development prior to the review:

- ◆ consider replacing the Remuneration Committee with a People Committee to oversee the Trust's People Strategy;
- ◆ continue to clarify the role of Local Governing Bodies and develop them to bring all Local Governing Bodies up to a consistently highly effective working level;
- ◆ consider mapping out stakeholder engagement across the Trust to share with Chairs of Local Governing Bodies to further develop stakeholder engagement across all academies;
- ◆ consider ways in which the growth strategy for the Trust can be tighter or expressed in more specific terms;
- ◆ consider examining what is expected of Local Governing Bodies regarding risk and how this is linked with strategic risk at Board level; and
- ◆ continue to keep succession planning for both the Trust Board and the Executive Team as a regular issue for consideration.

Unity Schools Partnership values its governance, carefully considers it and makes every effort to enable it to be solidly good. This has allowed the Trust to remain in a strong position to encourage governors to be more robust in their challenge ensuring a greater positive impact on the school, its children and its outcomes.

The Finance Committee is a sub-committee of the main Trust Board. The terms of reference for the Finance Committee include:

- ◆ To monitor the income and expenditure throughout the year of all trust funds against the annual budget.
- ◆ Plan in monthly management accounts produced by Director of Finance (delegated to the Head of Finance).
- ◆ To monitor monthly accounts for all supported schools.
- ◆ To consider any changes to accounting policies.
- ◆ To consider and propose to the Board its recommendation for a reserves policy.
- ◆ To consider and propose to the Board its recommendation for a strategic capital investment plan.
- ◆ To monitor financial risk.

Governance reviews (continued)

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Andrew Willett (Chair)	7	7
Gordon Jones	7	7
Christine Quinn	7	7

The Audit & Risk Committee is a further sub-committee of the main Trust Board. The terms of reference for the Audit & Risk Committee are:

- ◆ To review the Trust's internal financial controls and the internal control and risk management systems.
- ◆ To monitor and review the effectiveness of the Trust's internal audit function.
- ◆ To make recommendations to the Trust Board and its Members in relation to the appointment of the external auditor and to approve the remuneration and terms of engagement of the external auditor.
- ◆ To review and monitor the external auditor's independence and objectivity and the effectiveness of the audit process, taking into consideration relevant UK professional and regulatory requirements.
- ◆ To report to the Trust Board on how it has discharged its responsibilities.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Laura Barbrook (Chair)	4	4
Roger Quince	3	4
Ian Jacobs	3	4

The Standards Committee is a further sub-committee of the main Trust Board. The terms of reference for the Standards Committee are:

- ◆ To keep under review standards across the Trust, using internal data and intelligence, publicly available data and inspection reports.
- ◆ To ensure a proper focus on the outcomes of disadvantaged and SEND learners.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Christine Quinn (Chair)	5	5
Ian Jacobs	4	5
Roger Quince	4	5
Janet Morris	2	3

Governance reviews (continued)

The Remuneration Committee - terms of reference include:

- ◆ Approval of pay policy.
- ◆ Approval of Executive Team pay awards.
- ◆ Benchmarking of pay against other similar organisations.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Lloyd Spencer-Witcomb (Chair)	3	3
Dean Sykes	2	3
Gordon Jones	2	3

The Safeguarding Committee - terms of reference include:

- ◆ Review and consideration of safeguarding instances across the Trust.
- ◆ Review of safeguarding audits carried out.
- ◆ Review of external safeguarding reports and investigations, including Ofsted inspections and agreement of any remediation required.
- ◆ Consideration of policies, processes and procedures to support effective safeguarding across the Trust.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Ian Jacobs (Chair)	4	4
Lloyd Spencer-Witcomb	3	4
Roger Quince	4	4

Review of value for money

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer, has responsibility for ensuring that the Trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The Accounting Officer understands that value for money refers to educational and wider societal outcomes, as well as estates safety and management, achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The Accounting Officer considers how the Trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Trust Board where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data or by using a framework where appropriate. The Accounting Officer for the Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- ◆ A full review of central services carried out by CST in the Summer term.

Review of value for money (continued)

- ◆ Ensuring procurement is managed compliantly with the use of frameworks where possible.
- ◆ A full tender of the gas contracts across all schools, resulting in significant savings against market rates.
- ◆ A full tender of the main management information system resulting in a change across all schools and longer-term savings financially and operationally.
- ◆ Regularly reviewing long term contracts and comparing against other providers, in order to achieve the best price without compromising quality.
- ◆ A full review of the estates strategy to ensure that the environment for students, staff and the communities in which the Trust operates are safe, conducive for learning and provide a nice place to work.

The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Unity Schools Partnership for the period 1 September to 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The Trust Board has reviewed the key risks to which the Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Trust Board is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Trust Board.

The risk and control framework

The Trust's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- ◆ A review of the most pressing risks at each and every Trust Board meeting;
- ◆ comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and monthly financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Trust Board;

The risk and control framework (continued)

- ◆ regular reviews by the Deputy CEO (nominated CFO), the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- ◆ setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- ◆ clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- ◆ delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- ◆ identification and management of risks; and
- ◆ termly operational reviews by the Trust's Executive Leadership team at each school.

Internal Audit services were commissioned in the year through SBM Services Limited, several audits were carried out identifying minor issues within some schools around controls and procedures, all of which have been reviewed and remedied.

During the course of the 2022/23 financial and academic year, SBM Services completed two very detailed and thorough audits:

- ◆ Spring term 2023 – Purchasing and Creditors
- ◆ Summer term 2023 – Funding Audit

The audits revealed minor issues which have since been remedied and will form part of on-going reviews to ensure best practice and compliance. Several of the points raised resulted in some amendments to the Finance Regulation policy and ensuring definitions were accurate and concise.

On an annual basis SBM prepare a summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. During the year in question the review has been informed by:


- ◆ the work of the internal auditor
- ◆ the financial management and governance self-assessment process
- ◆ the work of the Executive Leadership Team within the trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework
- ◆ the work of the external auditor

Review of effectiveness (continued)

- ◆ correspondence from ESFA e.g. financial notice to improve/notice to improve (FNtl/Ntl) and 'minded to' letters (not applicable to UnitySP in 2022/23).

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the audit and risk committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the Trust Board on 18 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Tim Coulson
Accounting Officer



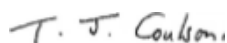
Christine Quinn
Chair of Trust Board

Statement of regularity, propriety and compliance 31 August 2023

As Accounting Officer of Unity Schools Partnership, I have considered my responsibility to notify the Trust Board and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding, including for estates safety and management, under the funding agreement in place between the Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration, I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Trust Handbook 2022, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the Trust's Board are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the Trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the Trust's Funding Agreement and the Academies Trust Handbook 2022.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the Trust Board and ESFA.



Tim Coulson
Accounting Officer

Date: 18.12.23

Independent auditor's report on the financial statements to the members of The Unity Schools Partnership

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Unity Schools Partnership for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the consolidated statement of financial activities, the consolidated and Trust balance sheets, the consolidated statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- ◆ give a true and fair view of the state of the group's and of the charitable parent company's affairs as at 31 August 2023, and of the group's income and expenditure for the period then ended;
- ◆ have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- ◆ have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- ◆ have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2019 and Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group or charitable parent company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Conclusions relating to going concern (continued)

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The Directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- ◆ the information given in the Trustees' report, which is also the Directors' report for the purposes of company law and includes the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- ◆ the Trustees' report, which is also the Directors' report for the purposes of company law and includes the strategic report, has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and the charitable parent company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' report including the strategic report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- ◆ adequate accounting records have not been kept by the charitable parent company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- ◆ the charitable parent company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

Matters on which we are required to report by exception (continued)

- ◆ certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- ◆ we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Directors' responsibilities statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Directors are responsible for assessing the group's and the charitable parent company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless Directors either intend to liquidate the group or the charitable parent company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- ◆ the engagement partner ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations;
- ◆ we identified the laws and regulations applicable to the group through discussions with management, and from our knowledge of the academy trust sector;
- ◆ the identified laws and regulations were communicated within the audit team regularly and the team remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit;

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

- ◆ we considered the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the group and determined that the most significant are the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019, the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, the Academy Trust Handbook 2022, and the funding agreement with the ESFA as well as legislation pertaining to safeguarding in the UK;
- ◆ we understood how the group is complying with those legal and regulatory frameworks by making inquiries to management and those responsible for legal, compliance and governance procedures. We corroborated our inquiries through our review of the minutes of trustees' meetings and the subsidiary company directors' meetings and papers provided to the trustees and directors.
- ◆ we planned and carried out a separate limited assurance engagement in respect of regularity, propriety and compliance in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts issued by the ESFA, as set out in our separate independent reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity.

We assessed the susceptibility of the group's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- ◆ making enquiries of management and those charged with governance as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- ◆ considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- ◆ performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- ◆ tested journal entries to identify unusual transactions;
- ◆ tested the authorisation of expenditure as part of our substantive testing thereon;
- ◆ assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates set out in the accounting policies were indicative of potential bias; and
- ◆ used data analytics to identify any significant or unusual transactions and identify the rationale for them.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- ◆ agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- ◆ reviewing the minutes of trustees' meetings and subsidiary company directors' meetings;

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

- ◆ enquiring of management and those charged with governance as to actual and potential litigation and claims;
- ◆ reviewing any available correspondence with Ofsted, ESFA and HMRC; and
- ◆ the work undertaken in relation to the limited assurance engagement in respect of regularity, propriety and compliance in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountants of Academy Trusts issued by the ESFA, as set out in our separate independent reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity.

There are inherent limitations in our audit procedures described above. The more removed that laws and regulations are from financial transactions, the less likely it is that we would become aware of non-compliance. International Standards on Auditing also limit the audit procedures required to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations to enquiry of the trustees and other management and the inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Hugh Swainson, Senior Statutory Auditor
for and on behalf of Buzzacott LLP, Statutory Auditor
130 Wood Street
London
EC2V 6DL

Independent reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity to Unity Schools Partnership and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Unity Schools Partnership Trust during the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

This report is made solely to Unity Schools Partnership and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Unity Schools Partnership and the ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than Unity Schools Partnership Trust and the ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Unity Schools Partnership Trust's Accounting Officer and the reporting accountant

The Accounting Officer is responsible, under the requirements of Unity School Partnership's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 27 June 2011 and the Academy Trust Handbook 2022, extant from 1 September 2022, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed, and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed, and income received during the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Framework and Guide for External Auditors and Reporting Accountant of Academy Trusts issued by ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in our engagement letter.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity.

A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

Approach (continued)

Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the Trust's income and expenditure.

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- ◆ An assessment of the risk of material irregularity and impropriety across all of the Trust's activities;
- ◆ Further testing and review of the areas identified through the risk assessment including enquiry, identification of control processes and examination of supporting evidence across all areas identified as well as additional verification work where considered necessary; and
- ◆ Consideration of evidence obtained through the work detailed above and the work completed as part of our financial statements audit in order to support the regularity conclusion.

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

For and behalf of Buzzacott LLP
130 Wood Street
London
EC2V 6DL

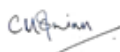
Consolidated statement of financial activities Year to 31 August 2023
(including income and expenditure account and statement of total recognised gains and losses)

	Notes	Un-restricted funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	1	507	—	14,200	14,707	5,130
Donations – transfer of existing academy into the trust	29	—	—	—	—	8,742
Charitable activities						
. Funding for the educational operations	2	2,307	96,102	—	98,409	89,223
. Teaching School	2	—	400	—	400	263
. Other trading activities	3	3,824	—	—	3,824	3,029
Other income		—	—	324	324	—
Investments	4	30	—	—	30	4
Total income		6,668	96,502	14,524	117,694	106,391
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	5	590	—	—	590	790
Charitable activities						
. Educational operations	6	3,086	101,265	9,203	113,554	105,724
. Teaching School	6	—	316	—	316	188
Total expenditure	5	3,676	101,581	9,203	114,460	106,702
Net income (expenditure) before transfers		2,992	(5,079)	5,321	3,234	(311)
Transfers between funds	20	(2,992)	3,269	(277)	—	—
Other recognised gains and losses						
Actuarial gain on defined benefit pension schemes	26	—	3,624	—	3,624	48,200
Net movement in funds		—	1,814	5,044	6,858	47,889
Reconciliation of funds						
Funds brought forward at 1 September 2022		3,532	(914)	259,657	262,275	214,386
Funds carried forward at 31 August 2023		3,532	900	264,701	269,133	262,275

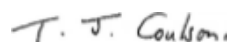
Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 August 2023

	Notes	2023 £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £000	2022 £000
Fixed assets					
Intangible assets	12		50		85
Tangible assets	13		<u>265,071</u>		<u>259,570</u>
			265,121		259,655
Current assets					
Stocks	15	97		107	
Debtors	16	4,282		4,866	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>9,001</u>		<u>10,897</u>	
		13,380		15,870	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	<u>(8,658)</u>		<u>(10,211)</u>	
Net current assets			4,722		5,659
Total assets less current liabilities			269,843		265,314
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18		<u>(171)</u>		<u>(223)</u>
Net assets before defined benefit pension scheme liability			269,672		265,091
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	26		<u>(539)</u>		<u>(2,816)</u>
Total net assets			269,133		262,275
Funds of the Trust:					
Restricted funds					
- Restricted fixed asset funds	20		264,701		259,657
- Restricted income funds			1,439		1,902
- Pension reserve			<u>(539)</u>		<u>(2,816)</u>
Total restricted funds			265,601		258,743
Unrestricted income funds	20		3,532		3,532
Total funds			269,133		262,275

The financial statements on pages 40 to 78 were approved by the Trust Board and authorised for issue on 18 December 2023 and are signed on their behalf by:



Christine Quinn
Chair of Trust Board



Tim Coulson
Accounting officer

Consolidated statement of cash flows Year to 31 August 2023

	Notes	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (used in) provided by operating activities	A	(1,763)	2,710
Cash flows from investing activities			
	B	(69)	(1,350)
Cash flows from financing activities			
	C	(64)	(65)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(1,896)	1,295
Reconciliation of net cash flows to movement in net funds:			
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 September 2022		10,897	9,602
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 August 2023		9,001	10,897

A. Reconciliation of net income (expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Net income (expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the SOFA)	3,234	(311)
Adjusted for:		
Net (surplus) deficit on transfer of academy in the trust	—	(8,742)
Depreciation charges (note 12)	9,169	7,579
Amortisation charge	34	48
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(4,206)	(5,033)
Donated fixed assets	(9,994)	—
(Gain) loss on disposal of fixed assets	18	12
(Gain) on disposal of land	(324)	—
Interest receivable (note 3)	(30)	(4)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable (note 28)	1,203	6,695
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost (note 28)	144	777
Decrease (increase) in stocks	10	(73)
(Increase) decrease in debtors	584	(23)
Increase (decrease) in creditors	(1,605)	1,906
Stocks, debtors and creditors transferred on conversion	—	(121)
Net cash provided by operating activities	(1,763)	2,710

B. Cash flows from investing activities

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	30	4
Cash funds transferred on conversion	—	922
Proceeds from sale of tangible fixed assets	20	19
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(4,714)	(5,831)
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA	4,206	2,979
Proceeds from sale of land	324	—
Capital funding received from sponsors and others	65	557
Net cash used in investing activities	(69)	(1,350)

Consolidated statement of cash flows Year to 31 August 2023

C. Cash flows from financing activities

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Repayments of borrowing	(64)	(65)
Net cash used in financing activities	(64)	(65)

D. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
Cash in hand and at bank	9,001	10,897
Total cash and cash equivalents	9,001	10,897

Accounting policies General information

Unity Schools Partnership is a charitable company (the Trust). The address of its principal place of business is given on page 1 and the nature of its operations are set out in the Directors' Report.

A summary of the principal accounting policies adopted (which have been applied consistently), judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty, is set out below.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the Group and Trust have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006. The Trust is a public benefit entity under FRS 102 and has therefore applied the relevant public benefit requirements of FRS 102.

The financial statements are presented in sterling which is also the functional currency of the Group and the Trust.

Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest whole £1,000, except where otherwise indicated.

Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the Directors have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus, the Directors continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

The Directors make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the financial statements and have concluded that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern. Thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Basis of consolidation

The Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities and Consolidated Balance Sheet consolidate the financial statements of the Trust and its subsidiary undertaking. The results of the Trust and its subsidiary are consolidated on a line by line basis.

All the financial statements are made up to 31 August 2023.

All intra-group transactions, balances and unrealised gains on transactions with the subsidiary are eliminated on consolidation. Unrealised losses are also eliminated unless the transaction provides evidence of an impairment of the asset transferred.

Reduced disclosure

The Company has taken advantage of the exemption from disclosing the following information, as permitted by the reduced disclosure regime within FRS 102:

Section 7 'Statement of Cash Flows' - Presentation of a Statement of Cash Flow and related notes and disclosures.

Income

All income is recognised when the Group has entitlement to the funds, the receipt is probable and the amount can be measured reliably.

Grants

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet. Where income is received in advance of meeting any performance-related conditions there is not unconditional entitlement to the income and its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income until the performance-related conditions are met. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period for which it is receivable, and any abatement in respect of the period is deducted from income and recognised as a liability.

Capital grants are recognised in full when there is an unconditional entitlement to the grant. Unspent amounts of capital grants are reflected in the balance sheet in the restricted fixed asset fund. Capital grants are recognised when there is entitlement, when performance-related conditions have been met, and are not deferred over the life of the asset on which they are expended.

Donations

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis (where there are no performance-related conditions) where the receipt is probable and the amount can be reliably measured.

Donated assets are recognised within income when title passes to the Trust, and the value can be reliably measured.

Other income

Other income, including the hire of facilities and tutoring income, is recognised at fair value of the consideration received or receivable in the period it is receivable and to the extent the Group has provided the goods or services.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on raising funds

This includes all expenditure incurred by the Trust to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

Charitable activities

These are costs incurred on the Group's educational operations to further its charitable aims for the benefit of the beneficiaries, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Group apportioned to charitable activities.

Intangible fixed assets and amortisation

Intangible assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment. Amortisation is provided on intangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

Purchased computer software	20%
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Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment. Subsequent costs are capitalised only when it is probable that such costs will generate future economic benefits. All other costs of repairs and maintenance are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities as incurred.

Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the Balance Sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. Where there are specific conditions attached to the funding that require the continued use of the asset, the related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities and carried forward in the Balance Sheet. Depreciation on the relevant assets is charged directly to the restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation (continued)

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets other than freehold land, so as to write off the cost of assets less their residual values on a straight-line basis over their useful lives on the following bases:

◆ Freehold property	2% - 4%
◆ Leasehold property	2% - 4%
◆ Building improvements	10%
◆ Computer equipment	20%
◆ Fixtures, fittings, plant and machinery	10-20%

Assets in the course of construction are included at cost less any identified impairment loss. Cost includes professional fees and other directly attributable costs that are necessary to bring the property to its operating condition. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use and reclassified to freehold or leasehold land and buildings.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Shortfalls between the carrying value of fixed assets and their recoverable amounts are recognised as impairments. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Liabilities

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the Group anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Leased assets

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight line basis over the period of the lease.

Stock

Unsold uniforms, textbooks and catering stocks are valued at the lower of cost and estimated selling price less costs to complete and sell.

Financial instruments

The Group has adopted Sections 11 and 12 of FRS 102 in full in respect of financial instruments.

Financial instruments (continued)

Financial assets and liabilities

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Group becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial liabilities are classified according to the substance of the financial instrument's contractual obligations, rather than the financial instrument's legal form.

All financial assets and liabilities are initially measured at transaction price (including transaction costs). A financial asset or financial liability that is payable or receivable in one year is measured at the undiscounted amount expected to be received or paid net of impairment.

Financial assets are derecognised only when the contractual rights to the cash flows from the asset expire or are settled, or when the company transfers the financial asset and substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to another entity, or if some significant risks and rewards of ownership are retained but control of the asset has transferred to another party that is able to sell the asset in its entirety to an unrelated third party.

Taxation

The Trust is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes. Accordingly, the Trust is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by chapter 3 part 11 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

Pensions benefits

Retirement benefits to employees of the Trust are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ('TPS') and the Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS'), which are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the Trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary on the basis of quadrennial valuations using a projected unit credit method. The TPS is a multi-employer scheme but there is insufficient information available to use defined benefit accounting. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions are recognised in the period to which they relate. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments.

Pensions benefits (continued)

The LGPS is a funded multi-employer scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the Trust in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each reporting date. The amounts charged to net income are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other recognised gains and losses.

Defined contribution plans

For defined contribution schemes the amount charged to profit or loss is the contributions payable in the year. Differences between contributions payable in the year and contributions actually paid are shown as either accruals or prepayments.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted income funds represent those resources which may be used towards meeting any of the charitable objects of the Group at the discretion of the Directors.

Restricted fixed asset funds are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by funders where the asset acquired or created is held for a specific purpose.

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received with restrictions imposed by the funder/ donor and include grants from the DfE Group, as well as other third parties.

Agency arrangements

The Trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary funds from the ESFA. Payments received from the ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the Statement of Financial Activities as the Trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The Trust can use up to 5% of the allocation towards its own administration costs and this is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The funds received and paid and any balances held are disclosed in note 28.

Employee benefits

The best estimate of the expenditure required to settle an obligation for termination benefits is recognised immediately as an expense when the Trust is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

Employee benefits (continued)

Short term employment benefits such as salaries and compensated absences (holiday pay) are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employees render service to the Academy Trust. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement the Group expects to pay in future periods is recognised in the period the employees' services are rendered.

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Accounting estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

The Group makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 26, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2023. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

Donated and transferred land and buildings

On transfer of academies into the Trust or donation of land and buildings, a value is required to be attributed to the land and buildings occupied by the School. Where no previous valuations had been performed on a site, a Directors' valuation is used, based upon an existing School within the Trust with a comparable PAN, and reflecting the location of the transferring site. Though assumptions have been applied, it is not considered that the resulting values reflected within these financial statements would result in a material difference from the transferring value of the sites.

Depreciation and amortisation

The net book value of intangible and tangible fixed assets is based on the original cost of the asset net of provision for amortisation and depreciation. The amortisation or depreciation provision to date is based on the Directors' assessment of the estimated useful lives of such assets.

Going concern

The Trust's income and expenditure flows for the purpose of preparing cash flow forecasts and budgets to assist in the assessment of going concern.

1 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
Capital grants	—	4,206	4,206	2,979
Donated fixed assets	—	9,994	9,994	1,497
Other donations	507	—	507	654
	507	14,200	14,707	5,130

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
Capital grants	—	—	2,979
Donated fixed assets	—	—	1,497
Other donations	77	77	654
	77	77	5,053

2 Funding for the Group's charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2023 Total funds £	2022 Total funds £
Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG) (note 1)	—	74,874	74,874	70,585
Other DfE/ ESFA grants				
. Universal infant free school	—	700	700	674
. Pupil premium	—	3,789	3,789	3,473
. Start up grants	—	260	260	255
. Teachers' pay and teachers pension grants	—	413	413	255
. Other grants	—	5,133	5,133	1,989
	—	85,169	85,169	77,231
Other government grants				
Local authority grants	—	10,104	10,104	8,148
Other income for the Trust's educational operations	2,307	—	2,307	3,213
COVID-19 additional funding (DfE/ESFA)				
Catch-up and recovery premium	—	829	829	442
COVID-19 additional funding (non-DfE / ESFA)				
Other non-DfE / ESFA COVID-19 funding	—	—	—	189
Teaching School				
DfE/ESFA grants	—	170	170	—
Other income	—	230	230	263
		400	400	263
2023 total funds	2,307	96,502	98,809	89,486

2 Funding for the Group's charitable activities (continued)

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2022 Total funds £
<i>Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) grants</i>			
General Annual Grant (GAG) (note 1)	—	70,585	70,585
<i>Other DfE/ ESFA grants</i>			
. Universal infant free school	—	674	674
. Pupil premium	—	3,473	3,473
. Start up grants	—	255	255
. Teachers' pay and teachers pension grants	—	255	255
. Other grants	—	1,989	1,989
	<u>—</u>	<u>77,231</u>	<u>77,231</u>
<i>Other government grants</i>			
Local authority grants	—	8,148	8,148
<i>COVID-19 additional funding (DfE/ESFA)</i>			
Catch-up and recovery premium	—	442	442
<i>COVID-19 additional funding (non-DfE / ESFA)</i>			
Other non-DFE / ESFA COVID-19 funding	—	189	189
Other educational income	2,968	245	3,213
Teaching School	—	263	263
2022 total funds	<u>2,968</u>	<u>86,518</u>	<u>89,486</u>

3 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
Hire of facilities	290	—	290	365
Tutoring income	—	—	—	842
CUSP income	1,122	—	1,122	652
Sale of goods	49	—	49	63
Trip income	938	—	938	549
Other income	1,425	—	1,425	558
	<u>3,824</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>3,824</u>	<u>3,029</u>

3 Other trading activities (continued)

	<i>Unrestricted funds £'000</i>	<i>Restricted funds £'000</i>	<i>2022 Total funds £'000</i>
<i>Hire of facilities</i>	365	—	365
<i>Tutoring income</i>	842	—	842
<i>CUSP income</i>	652	—	652
<i>Sale of goods</i>	63	—	63
<i>Other income</i>	1,093	14	1,107
	3,015	14	3,029

4 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
Interest from short term deposits	30	—	30	4
	30	—	30	4

	<i>Unrestricted funds £'000</i>	<i>Restricted funds £'000</i>	<i>2022 Total funds £'000</i>
<i>Interest from short term deposits</i>	4	—	4
	4	—	4

5 Expenditure

	Staff costs (note 7) £'000	Non pay expenditure		2023 Total funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
		Premises £'000	Other costs £'000		
Expenditure on raising funds					
- Direct costs	372	2	69	443	790
- Allocated support costs	70	34	43	147	—
Academy's educational operations					
- Direct costs	67,664	9,166	8,352	85,182	74,959
- Allocated support costs	13,818	6,587	7,967	28,372	30,765
Teaching School					
- Direct costs	126	—	47	173	115
- Allocated support costs	143	—	—	143	73
	82,193	15,789	16,478	114,460	106,702

5 Expenditure (continued)

	Staff costs (note 9) £	Non pay expenditure		2022 Total funds £
		Premises £	Other costs £	
<i>Expenditure on raising funds</i>				
- Direct costs	592	—	198	790
<i>Academy's educational operations</i>				
- Direct costs	60,840	7,639	6,480	74,959
- Allocated support costs	17,721	7,160	5,884	30,765
<i>Teaching School</i>				
- Direct costs	101	—	14	115
- Allocated support costs	60	—	13	73
	79,314	14,799	12,589	106,702

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Operating leases rentals	656	634
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	9,169	7,579
Amortisation of intangible fixed assets	34	48
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	18	12
Net interest on defined benefit pension liability	144	777
Fees payable to auditor		
. Audit of financial statements of parent and consolidated financial statements	56	84
. Audit of subsidiary of the Trust	2	4
. Other services	19	29
. Audit related assurance	6	12
. All other taxation advisory	—	4

6 Charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
Direct costs				
Educational operations	3,086	82,096	85,182	74,959
Teaching Schools	—	173	173	115
Support costs				
Educational operations	—	28,229	28,229	30,765
Teaching School	—	143	143	73
	3,086	110,641	113,727	105,912

6 Charitable activities (continued)

	<i>Unrestricted funds £'000</i>	<i>Restricted funds £'000</i>	<i>2022 Total funds £'000</i>
<i>Direct costs</i>			
<i>Educational operations</i>	2,088	72,871	74,959
<i>Teaching Schools</i>	—	115	115
<i>Support costs</i>			
<i>Educational operations</i>	2,550	28,215	30,765
<i>Teaching School</i>	—	73	73
	4,638	101,274	105,912

	<i>Teaching School £'000</i>	<i>Educational operations £'000</i>	Total 2023 £'000	<i>Total 2022 £'000</i>
Analysis of support costs				
Support staff costs	143	13,675	13,818	18,113
Technology costs	—	1,625	1,625	1,255
Premises costs	—	6,587	6,587	7,160
Legal costs	—	783	783	785
Other support costs	—	5,478	5,478	3,424
Governance costs	—	81	81	101
	143	28,229	28,372	30,838

	<i>Teaching School £'000</i>	<i>Educational operations £'000</i>	<i>Total 2022 £'000</i>
Analysis of support costs			
<i>Support staff costs</i>	60	18,053	18,113
<i>Technology costs</i>	—	1,255	1,255
<i>Premises costs</i>	—	7,160	7,160
<i>Legal costs</i>	9	776	785
<i>Other support costs</i>	4	3,420	3,424
<i>Governance costs</i>	—	101	101
	73	30,765	30,838

7 Staff

Staff costs

Staff costs during the year for the Group and Trust were:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Wages and salaries	59,463	53,529
Social security costs	5,643	5,367
Pension costs	14,226	18,527
Staff costs - employees	79,332	77,423
Agency staff costs	1,676	1,745
Staff restructuring costs	1,135	146
	82,143	79,314
Staff development and other staff costs	50	747
Total staff expenditure	82,193	80,061
Staff restructuring costs comprise:		
Redundancy payments	536	3
Severance payments (including special severance payments)	93	130
Other restructuring costs	506	13
	1,135	146

No specific funding was received or receivable to support the payments disclosed above in respect of the current or prior year.

Exit payments

The Trust paid six exit payment in the year, as follows:

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
£0 - £25,000	5	11
£25,001 - £50,000	1	1

Special staff severance payments

Included in staff restructuring costs is one non-statutory/non-contractual severance payment totalling £3,900 (2022: two payments totalling £47,454).

Staff numbers

The average number of persons employed by the Group and Trust during the year was as follows:

	2023 No.	2022 No.
Teachers	923	894
Administration and support Management	1,258	1,193
Teachers	41	42
	2,222	2,129

7 Staff (continued)

Higher paid staff

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding national insurance contributions) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2023	2022
	No.	No.
£60,001 - £70,000	52	41
£70,001 - £80,000	20	13
£80,001 - £90,000	6	9
£90,001 - £100,000	12	10
£100,001 - £110,000	5	3
£110,001 - £120,000	2	1
£120,001 - £130,000	1	—
£170,001 - £180,000	—	1
£180,001 - £190,000	1	—

Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Group and the Trust comprise the Directors and the Executive Leadership Team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Trust was £1,743,379 (2022: £1,639,953).

8 Comparative information

Analysis of income and expenditure in the year ended 31 August 2022 between restricted and unrestricted funds:

	Notes	Un-restricted funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	2022 Total funds £'000
<i>Income from:</i>					
Donations and capital grants	1	77	20	5,033	5,130
Donations – transfer of existing academy into the trust	30	522	336	7,884	8,742
<i>Charitable activities</i>					
. Funding for the educational operations	2	2,968	86,255	—	89,223
. Teaching School	2	—	263	—	263
. Other trading activities	3	3,015	14	—	3,029
Investments	4	4	—	—	4
Total income		6,586	86,888	12,917	106,391
<i>Expenditure on:</i>					
Raising funds	5	789	1	—	790
<i>Charitable activities</i>					
. Educational operations	6	4,638	93,447	7,639	105,724
. Teaching School	6	—	188	—	188
Charitable expenditure – transfer of existing academy into the trust		—	—	—	—
Total expenditure	5	5,427	93,636	7,639	106,702
Net income (expenditure) before transfers		1,159	(6,748)	5,278	(311)
Transfers between funds	20	(440)	(728)	1,168	—
<i>Other recognised gains and losses</i>					
Actuarial gain/(loss) on defined benefit pension schemes	26	—	48,200	—	48,200
Net movement in funds		719	40,724	6,446	47,889
<i>Reconciliation of funds</i>					
Funds brought forward at 1 September 2021		2,813	(41,638)	253,211	214,386
Funds carried forward at 31 August 2022		3,532	(914)	259,657	262,275

9 Central services

The Trust has provided the following central services to the academies within the Group during the year:

- ◆ Executive Team Leadership & Specialist Support
- ◆ Directors of Education - Secondary, Primary and Special
- ◆ Targeted school improvement support - Science, English, Maths & MFL
- ◆ Financial administration services - finance support, finance helpline & transaction processing

9 Central services (continued)

- ◆ HR & payroll Services - HR transactional support, contract management, wellbeing, HR Helpdesk, recruitment, employee relations & payroll
- ◆ Legal & professional Services
- ◆ Teaching & learning support - including school reviews, access to learning advisors and a wide range of educational resources
- ◆ Centralised ICT
- ◆ Property management and building condition improvement services.
- ◆ Executive PA support.

The Trust charges all academies for these services at the same flat rate of 9.5% (2022: 7.25%) on the following basis:

- ◆ General Annual Grant
- ◆ 16-19 Funding
- ◆ Special School Place Funding & Top Up Funding
- ◆ Local Authority Nursery Income
- ◆ Teacher Pay & Pensions Grants outside GAG
- ◆ School Supplementary Grant

Each academy also makes a 1.0% contribution of income listed above as a contribution from revenue to IT hardware and infrastructure costs.

9 Central services (continued)

The amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2023 £'000	2022 £000
Abbots Green Primary School	188	163
Breckland School	311	41
Burton End Primary Academy	178	142
Castle Manor Academy	430	350
Churchill Special Free School	151	125
Clements Primary Academy	124	105
County Upper School	446	433
Coupals Primary Academy	141	117
Ditton Lodge Primary School	78	69
Felixstowe Academy	699	550
Glemsford Primary Academy	99	82
Horringer Court Middle School	145	129
Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy	150	127
Kedington Primary Academy	85	70
Langer Primary School	71	58
Laureate Community Academy	102	89
Newmarket Academy	454	360
Place Farm Primary Academy	163	134
Samuel Ward Academy	654	555
Sir Bobby Robson School	151	99
Sir Peter Hall	96	—
St Edward's Church of England Academy	341	341
Steeple Bumpstead Primary School	72	61
Sybil Andrews Academy	368	305
The Bridge School	363	299
Thomas Gainsborough School	853	701
Tollgate Primary School	157	108
Wells Hall Primary School	184	154
Westfield Primary Academy	164	135
Westley Middle School	208	184
Wickhambrook Primary Academy	79	63
Woodhall Primary School	181	155
	7,886	6,304

10 Directors' remuneration and expenses

One of the Directors has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the Trust, this was for a short period during 2022/23 to provide cover to the Accounting Officer. The Accounting Officer only receives remuneration in respect of services provided in undertaking the role of Accounting Officer under his contract of employment, and not in respect of services as Director.

The value of Directors' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		2023 £	2022 £
Dr Tim Coulson	Remuneration	182,000	170,001
	Pension contributions	43,098	40,256
Sarah Garner	Remuneration	12,683	—
	Pension contributions	2,600	—

During the year ended 31 August 2023, travel and subsistence expenses totalling £4,278 (2022: £3,327) were reimbursed or paid directly to four Directors (2022: three Directors).

11 Directors and officers' insurance

The Trust has opted into the Department for Education's Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA), an alternative to insurance where UK government funds cover losses that arise. This scheme protects Directors and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Trust business, and provides cover up to £10,000,000. It is not possible to quantify the Directors and officers indemnity element from the overall cost of the RPA scheme.

12 Intangible fixed assets

Group and Trust	Computer software £'000
Cost	
At 1 September 2022	386
Disposals	(3)
At 31 August 2023	383
Amortisation	
At 1 September 2022	302
Charge for year	34
Disposals	(3)
At 31 August 2023	333
Carrying amount	
At 31 August 2023	50
At 31 August 2022	85

13 Tangible fixed assets

Group	Freehold property £'000	Leasehold property £'000	Fixtures, fittings, plant and machinery £'000	Assets under construction £'000	Computer equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost						
At 1 September 2022	82,830	190,857	5,241	4,142	4,978	288,048
Transfer between classes	—	5,553	357	(5,910)	—	—
Additions	1,498	9,097	111	3,434	568	14,708
Disposals	—	(537)	(155)	—	(485)	(1,177)
At 31 August 2023	84,328	204,970	5,554	1,666	5,061	301,579
Depreciation						
At 1 September 2022	8,571	13,981	3,071	—	2,855	28,478
Charge for the year	1,292	6,327	754	—	796	9,169
Disposals	—	(537)	(155)	—	(447)	(1,139)
At 31 August 2023	9,863	19,771	3,670	—	3,204	36,508
Net book value						
At 31 August 2023	74,465	185,199	1,884	1,666	1,857	265,071
At 31 August 2022	74,259	176,876	2,170	4,142	2,123	259,570

Transfer between classes relate to the transfer of assets under construction to their completed categories.

13 Tangible fixed assets (continued)

Included in additions is a teaching block at Breckland School of £3,179k which has been donated at fair value and £6,815k of land and leasehold building at Sir Peter Hall School donated at fair value.

Trust	Freehold property £'000	Leasehold property £'000	Fixtures, fittings, plant and machinery £'000	Assets under construction £'000	Computer equipment £'000	Total £'000
Cost						
At 1 September 2022	82,830	190,857	5,241	4,142	4,977	288,047
Transfer between classes	—	5,553	357	(5,910)	—	—
Additions	1,498	9,097	111	3,434	568	14,708
Disposals	—	(537)	(155)	—	(485)	(1,177)
At 31 August 2023	<u>84,328</u>	<u>204,970</u>	<u>5,554</u>	<u>1,666</u>	<u>5,060</u>	301,578
Depreciation						
At 1 September 2022	8,571	13,981	3,071	—	2,855	28,478
Charge for the year	1,292	6,327	754	—	796	9,169
Disposals	—	(537)	(155)	—	(447)	(1,139)
At 31 August 2023	<u>9,863</u>	<u>19,771</u>	<u>3,670</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>3,204</u>	36,508
Net book value						
At 31 August 2023	<u>74,465</u>	<u>185,199</u>	<u>1,884</u>	<u>1,666</u>	<u>1,856</u>	265,070
At 31 August 2022	<u>74,259</u>	<u>176,876</u>	<u>2,170</u>	<u>4,142</u>	<u>2,121</u>	259,568

14 Fixed asset investments

Unity Schools Partnership Education Ltd (Unity Education) (company number 12709238) is a company limited by guarantee which came under the control of the Trust on 1 September 2021. This is by virtue of the Trust being the sole member of the Company as dictated in the Articles. Unity Education is a company incorporated in England and Wales with a registered office address of C/O Unity Schools Partnership, Park Road, Haverhill, Suffolk, United Kingdom, CB9 7YD. The principal activity of Unity Education is the supply of the CUSP curriculum to schools outside of the Trust. In the prior year the company was known as SP Tutors and provided tutoring services. A summary of their results are shown below.

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Turnover	813	835
Cost of sales	(236)	(610)
Gross surplus	577	225
Administrative expenses	(207)	(185)
Net surplus	370	40
Distribution to parent company	(370)	(40)
	—	—
Fixed assets	—	2
Current assets	731	30
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(731)	(32)
Net current (liabilities)/ assets	—	(2)
Total assets less current liabilities	—	—
Reserves	—	—

15 Stocks

	Group		Trust	
	2023 £'000	2022 £000	2023 £'000	2022 £000
Goods for resale	97	107	97	107

16 Debtors

	Group		Trust	
	2023 £'000	2022 £000	2023 £'000	2022 £000
Trade debtors	353	356	186	353
VAT recoverable	731	1,651	741	1,646
Other debtors	24	13	25	13
Prepayments and accrued income	3,174	2,846	3,169	2,855
	4,282	4,866	4,121	4,867

17 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Group		Trust	
	2023 £'000	2022 £000	2023 £'000	2022 £000
Trade creditors	1,599	2,354	1,599	2,352
Other taxation and social security	1,405	1,562	1,405	1,562
Loans	51	63	51	63
Other creditors	2,011	1,966	2,011	1,966
Accruals and deferred income (see note 22)	3,592	4,266	2,871	4,258
	8,658	10,211	7,937	10,201

Loans totalling £51k (2022: £63k) are from ESFA in relation to Salix and CIF loans. No interest is charged on these loans and they are unsecured.

18 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	Group		Trust	
	2023 £'000	2022 £'000	2023 £'000	2022 £000
Loans	171	223	171	223

18 Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year (continued)

Group and Trust	2023	2022
	£'000	£000
Analysis of loans		
Wholly repayable within five years	222	286
Less: included in current liabilities	(51)	(63)
Amounts included above	171	223
Loan maturity		
Debt due in one year or less	51	63
Due in more than one year but not more than two years	51	51
Due in more than two years but not more than five years	91	108
Due in more than five years	29	64
Analysis of loans	222	286

Loans totalling £171k (2022: £223k) are from ESFA in relation to Salix and CIF loans. No interest is charged on these loans and they are unsecured.

19 Deferred income

	Group		Trust	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	£'000	£000	£'000	£000
Deferred income is included within:				
Creditors due within one year	1,882	1,519	1,169	1,519
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	1,519	1,126	1,519	1,126
Released from previous years	(1,519)	(1,126)	(1,519)	(1,126)
Resources deferred in the year	1,882	1,519	1,169	1,519
Deferred income at 31 August 2023	1,882	1,519	1,169	1,519

At the reporting date the Trust was holding funds received in advance for future school trips, rates relief, early years funding, universal infant free school meals funding and CUSP subscriptions.

20 Funds

Group and Trust	Balance at 1 September 2022 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2023 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,745	74,874	(78,757)	3,341	1,203
Other DfE / ESFA grants:					
- Universal infant free school meals	—	700	(700)	—	—
- Pupil premium	—	3,789	(3,789)	—	—
- Start up grants	17	260	(192)	—	85
- Teachers' pay and teachers pension grants	—	413	(413)	—	—
Catch-up and recovery premium	—	829	(829)	—	—
Other DfE / ESFA funding	31	5,133	(5,140)	40	64
Other government grants	19	10,104	(10,098)	7	32
Teaching School hub	—	400	(316)	(84)	—
Other restricted funds	90	—	—	(35)	55
Pension reserve	(2,816)	—	(1,347)	3,624	(539)
	(914)	96,502	(101,581)	6,893	900
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Inherited on conversion	204,202	—	(5,879)	—	198,323
DfE group capital grants	13,817	4,206	(1,263)	(224)	16,536
Capital expenditure from GAG	2,432	—	(476)	371	2,327
Unspent capital grants	597	—	—	98	695
Overspent capital grants	(307)	—	—	(586)	(893)
Salix and other capital loans	(286)	—	—	64	(222)
Other capital income	39,202	10,318	(1,585)	—	47,935
	259,657	14,524	(9,203)	(277)	264,701
Total restricted funds	258,743	111,026	(110,784)	6,616	265,601
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	3,532	6,668	(3,676)	(2,992)	3,532
Total funds	262,275	117,694	(114,460)	3,624	269,133

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

General Annual Grant (GAG)

The General Annual Grant (GAG) must be used for the normal running costs of the Trust. Under the Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State, the Trust was not subject to a limit on the GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2023.

Other DfE/ESFA grants

Other DfE/ESFA grants include:

- ◆ Pupil Premium must be used to support the cost of raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

20 Funds (continued)

Other DfE/ESFA grants (continued)

- ◆ Universal infant free school meals funding must be used to provide free school meals to infant school pupils.
- ◆ Start up grants relates to income received to cover the start up costs of schools on converting to an Academy.
- ◆ Teachers' pay and pension grants are received from the ESFA to fund teacher's pay rises and increases to pension contribution rates.
- ◆ PE & sport premium represents funding received from the ESFA for the provision of PE and sport, for the benefit of primary aged pupils, to that they develop healthy lifestyles.
- ◆ Free school meal supplementary grant represents funding received from the ESFA to help meet the costs of providing more pupils with free school meals linked to the roll out of Universal Credit.
- ◆ 16-19 tuition funding received from the ESFA supports small group tuition for 16-19 students in English, maths and other courses to mitigate the disruption to learning arising from COVID-19.
- ◆ Academic mentors grant is funding received from the DfE towards the salary costs for mentors on the Academic Mentors programme.

Catch-up and recovery premium

The academy received £829k of funding for catch-up premium and costs incurred in respect of this funding totalled £829k, clearing the fund.

Other government grants

Other government grants include:

- ◆ SEN funding which represents grants received in order to provide additional teaching resources for children with special learning needs. The cost of these teaching resources has been set against the income.
- ◆ Early years funding received for 3 and 4 year olds.
- ◆ Other lower level grants and donations received for a particular purpose. Any relevant costs have been offset against this income.

Other DfE/ESFA COVID-19

Catch-up and recovery premium and other non-DfE/ESFA COVID-19 funding funds have arisen from funding received to aid the trust in dealing with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both the students and the schools' ability to provide teaching.

20 Funds (continued)

Teaching School

During 2020/21, Unity Schools Partnership was awarded a Teaching School Hub contract for three years by the Department for Education. The Teaching School Hub receives an annual grant, which is dependent on meeting key performance indicators. Funding of £400k (2021/22: £170k) was received and spent during 2022/23 and from 2023/24, grant funding available is £170k per annum.

Other restricted funds

Other restricted funds represent lower level grants and donations received for a particular purpose. Any relevant costs have been offset against this income.

Pension reserve

The Pension reserve represents the Trust's net liability in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Restricted fixed asset funds

Restricted fixed asset funds include:

- ◆ Inherited on conversion relates to the assets transferred from predecessor schools upon joining the Trust. Income relates to the value of assets transferred on schools joining the Trust where the net transfer was recognised as a net gain in the Statement of Financial Activities. Expenditure relates to depreciation in respect of these assets.
- ◆ DfE group capital grants relates to capital grants received during the year including devolved formula capital grants, schools condition allowance and healthy pupils capital fund.
- ◆ Capital expenditure from revenue funds includes fixed assets purchased by schools within the Trust following conversion. Expenditure relates to depreciation charged on these assets.
- ◆ The overspent capital grants deficit will be cleared by funding instalments and transfers from unrestricted funds in future periods.
- ◆ Unspent capital grants relates to capital grants received which have not been spent at the year end.
- ◆ Salix loans represent the amounts owed in respect of loans taken out to fund the purchase of assets.
- ◆ Other capital income relates to capital donations and income from other sources.

Unrestricted funds

These funds relate to unrestricted income to be used to support the Trust's objectives and educational activities.

20 Funds (continued)**Transfers**

Transfers between funds during the year relate to fixed asset purchases from unrestricted and GAG income, allocation of capital grants and additions between restricted fixed asset funds, and allocation of underspends to other funds in line with the terms of the funding.

Funds prior year

<i>Group and Trust</i>	<i>Balance at 1 September 2021 £'000</i>	<i>Income £'000</i>	<i>Expenditure £'000</i>	<i>Gains, losses and transfers £'000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2022 £'000</i>
<i>Restricted general funds</i>					
<i>General Annual Grant (GAG)</i>	1,138	70,930	(69,958)	(365)	1,745
<i>Other DfE / ESFA grants:</i>					
<i>- Universal infant free school meals</i>	—	674	(611)	(63)	—
<i>- Pupil premium</i>	8	3,473	(3,481)	—	—
<i>- Start up grants</i>	(3)	255	(207)	(28)	17
<i>- Teachers' pay and teachers pension grants</i>	—	255	(255)	—	—
<i>- Others</i>	150	1,994	(1,700)	(413)	31
<i>Catch-up and recovery premium</i>	402	442	(844)	—	—
<i>Other DFE / ESFA COVID-19 funding</i>	(1)	—	1	—	—
<i>Other non-DFE / ESFA COVID-19 funding</i>	—	189	(189)	—	—
<i>Other government grants</i>	44	8,148	(8,112)	(61)	19
<i>Teaching School</i>	—	263	(188)	(75)	—
<i>Other restricted funds</i>	149	284	(620)	277	90
<i>Pension reserve</i>	(43,525)	(19)	(7,472)	48,200	(2,816)
	<u>(41,638)</u>	<u>86,888</u>	<u>(93,636)</u>	<u>47,472</u>	<u>(914)</u>
<i>Restricted fixed asset funds</i>					
<i>Inherited on conversion</i>	199,640	7,884	(4,905)	1,583	204,202
<i>DfE group capital grants</i>	10,268	2,979	(1,207)	1,777	13,817
<i>Capital expenditure from GAG</i>	1,545	—	(402)	1,289	2,432
<i>Unspent capital grants</i>	1,929	—	—	(1,332)	597
<i>Overspent capital grants</i>	—	—	—	(307)	(307)
<i>Salix and other capital loans</i>	(227)	—	—	(59)	(286)
<i>Other capital income</i>	40,056	2,054	(1,125)	(1,783)	39,202
	<u>253,211</u>	<u>12,917</u>	<u>(7,639)</u>	<u>1,168</u>	<u>259,657</u>
<i>Total restricted funds</i>	<u>211,573</u>	<u>99,805</u>	<u>(101,275)</u>	<u>48,640</u>	<u>258,743</u>
<i>Unrestricted funds</i>					
<i>General funds</i>	<u>2,813</u>	<u>6,586</u>	<u>(5,427)</u>	<u>(440)</u>	<u>3,532</u>
<i>Total funds</i>	<u>214,386</u>	<u>106,391</u>	<u>(106,702)</u>	<u>48,200</u>	<u>262,275</u>

Analysis of academies by fund balance

In line with the freedoms within the Trust's Master Funding Agreement and with encouragement of the Department of Education, the Trust Board decided to pool all reserves with effect from 12 December 2019. Accordingly, no surpluses or deficits are attributed to particular schools but all are held centrally.

20 Funds (continued)**Analysis of academies by fund balance (continued)**

	2023 £'000	<i>2022</i> <i>£000</i>
Central Trust	4,971	5,434
Restricted fixed asset fund	264,701	259,657
Pension liability	(539)	(2,816)
	269,133	262,275

Total cost analysis by school

Expenditure incurred by each school during the year was as follows:

	Teaching and educational support staff £'000	Other support staff costs £'000	Educational supplies £'000	Other costs excluding depreciation £'000	Total 2023 £'000	Total 2022 £'000
Abbots Green Primary School	1,794	183	161	406	2,544	2,418
Breckland School	2,367	494	419	543	3,823	570
Burton End Primary Academy	1,602	196	131	303	2,232	2,059
Castle Manor Academy	3,438	634	345	615	5,032	4,484
Churchill Special Free School	1,131	124	80	110	1,445	1,364
Clements Primary Academy	1,287	180	120	209	1,796	1,737
County Upper School	3,312	608	496	653	5,069	5,211
Coupsals Primary Academy	1,227	207	93	311	1,838	1,590
Ditton Lodge Primary	793	80	37	193	1,103	1,035
Felixstowe Academy	5,000	1,094	631	1,098	7,823	7,041
Glemsford Primary Academy	935	99	58	158	1,250	1,262
Horringer Court Middle School	1,280	177	171	249	1,877	1,678
Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy	1,353	193	102	172	1,820	1,767
Kedington Primary Academy	724	77	98	180	1,079	993
Langer Primary School	621	244	235	200	1,300	1,061
Laureate Community	980	122	53	193	1,348	1,303
Newmarket Academy	3,296	574	329	608	4,807	4,599
Place Farm Primary	1,441	152	127	277	1,997	1,927
Samuel Ward Academy	4,783	926	435	800	6,944	6,632
Sir Bobby Robson School	1,240	195	352	244	2,031	1,550
Sir Peter Hall	865	133	293	295	1,586	—
St Edward's Church of England Academy	2,792	734	222	997	4,745	4,273
Steeple Bumpstead Primary School	597	85	48	147	877	872
Sybil Andrews Academy	2,589	729	387	719	4,424	3,824
The Bridge School	3,084	309	150	535	4,078	3,607
Thomas Gainsborough School	6,652	1,112	603	927	9,294	8,757
Tollgate Primary School	1,343	137	90	280	1,850	1,501
Wells Hall Primary School	1,662	226	137	216	2,241	2,138
Westfield Primary Academy	1,465	280	121	330	2,196	2,106
Westley Middle School	2,067	136	185	266	2,654	2,370
Wickhambrook Primary Academy	725	92	77	174	1,068	909
Woodhall Primary School	1,556	176	162	285	2,179	2,129
USEP Ltd (formally Schools Partnership Tutors Limited)	—	—	—	36	36	650
Central services	2,308	3,922	1,297	1,997	9,524	15,646
	66,309	14,630	8,245	14,726	103,910	99,063

21 Analysis of net assets between funds

Group	Un-restricted funds £'000	Restricted General funds £'000	Restricted Fixed asset funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2023 are represented by:				
Intangible fixed assets	—	—	50	50
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	265,071	265,071
Current assets	4,476	8,904	—	13,380
Creditors falling due within one year	(944)	(7,294)	(420)	(8,658)
Creditors falling due after one year	—	(171)	—	(171)
Defined benefit pension liability	—	(539)	—	(539)
Total net assets	3,532	900	264,701	269,133

Group – prior year	Un-restricted funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	Total funds £'000
<i>Fund balances at 31 August 2022 are represented by:</i>				
Intangible fixed assets	—	—	85	85
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	259,570	259,570
Current assets	3,681	11,901	288	15,870
Creditors falling due within one year	(149)	(9,999)	(63)	(10,211)
Creditors falling due after one year	—	—	(223)	(223)
Defined benefit pension liability	—	(2,816)	—	(2,816)
Total net assets	3,532	(914)	259,657	262,275

Trust	Un-restricted funds £'000	Restricted General funds £'000	Restricted Fixed asset funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Fund balances at 31 August 2023 are represented by:				
Intangible fixed assets	—	—	50	50
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	265,070	265,070
Current assets	3,763	8,897	—	12,660
Creditors falling due within one year	(231)	(7,287)	(419)	(7,937)
Creditors falling due after one year	—	(171)	—	(171)
Defined benefit pension liability	—	(539)	—	(539)
Total net assets	3,532	900	264,701	269,133

Trust – prior year	Un-restricted funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	Total funds £'000
<i>Fund balances at 31 August 2022 are represented by:</i>				
Intangible fixed assets	—	—	85	85
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	259,568	259,568
Current assets	3,680	11,892	290	15,862
Creditors falling due within one year	(148)	(9,990)	(63)	(10,201)
Creditors falling due after one year	—	—	(223)	(223)
Defined benefit pension liability	—	(2,816)	—	(2,816)
Total net assets	3,532	(914)	259,657	262,275

22 Capital commitments

Group and Trust	2023 £'000	2022 £000
Expenditure contracted for but not provided in the financial statements	1,078	1,105

23 Long-term commitments

Operating leases

Group and Trust

At 31 August 2023 the total of the Trust's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable leases was:

	2023 £'000	2022 £000
Amounts due within one year	449	490
Amounts due between one and five years	581	421
Amounts due after five years	2	—
	1,032	911

24 Analysis of changes in net funds

	1 September 2022 £'000	Cash flows £'000	Other non- cash changes £'000	31 August 2023 £'000
Cash	10,897	(1,896)	—	9,001
Loans falling due within one year	(63)	12	—	(51)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(223)	52	—	(171)
	10,611	(1,832)	—	8,779

	1 September 2021 £'000	Cash flows £'000	Other non- cash changes £'000	31 August 2022 £'000
Cash	9,602	1,295	—	10,897
Loans falling due within one year	(64)	—	1	(63)
Loans falling due after more than one year	(163)	65	(125)	(223)
	9,375	1,360	(124)	10,611

25 Members' liability

Each member of the charitable company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of it being wound up while he or she is a member, or within one year after he or she ceases to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10 for the debts and liabilities contracted before he or she ceases to be a member.

26 Pension and similar obligations

The Trust's employees belong to two principal pension schemes: the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff; and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016, and that of the LGPS related to the period ended 31 March 2022.

Contributions amounting to £1,007,461 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022: £1,520,962) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme Introduction

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers in academies. All teachers have the option to opt out of the TPS following enrolment.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis - these contributions along with those made by employers are credited to the Exchequer. The academy trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The academy trust has set out below the information available on the scheme.

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The actuarial valuation of the TPS which applied during the year ended 31 August 2023 was carried out as at 31 March 2016.

The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

- ◆ Employer contribution rates set at 23.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy;
- ◆ total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £218,100 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £196,100 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £22,000 million; and
- ◆ the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, is used to determine the notional investment return. The current SCAPE rate is 2.4% above the rate of CPI. The assumed real rate of return is 2.4% in excess of prices and 2% in excess of earnings. The rate of real earnings growth is assumed to be 2.2%. The assumed nominal rate of return including earnings growth is 4.45%.

The latest actuarial valuation results, as at 31 March 2020, were released in October 2023. The valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2024, from this date employer contribution rates will increase to 28.6% (including a 0.08% administration levy).

26 Pension and similar obligations (continued)**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme** (continued)

The employer's pension costs paid to the TPS in the period amounted to £8,354,234 (2022: £7,935,645).

The TPS is a multi-employer pension plan and there is insufficient information to account for the scheme as a defined benefit plan so it is accounted for as a defined contribution plan.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions are as noted below. The agreed contribution rates for future years are listed below for employers and 5.5% - 12.5% for employees.

As described in note the LGPS obligation relates to the employees of the Trust, being the employees transferred as part of the conversion from the maintained school and new employees who joined the scheme in the period. The obligation in respect of employees who transferred on conversion represents their cumulative service at both the predecessor school and the Trust at the balance sheet date. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013 and on 21 July 2022, the Department for Education reaffirmed its commitment to the guarantee, with a parliamentary minute published on the GOV.UK website.

Principal actuarial assumptions:

The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the funds at 31 March 2022 updated to 31 August 2023 by the qualified independent actuaries.

	Discount rate for scheme liabilities		Rate of increase in salaries		Rate of increase for pensions in payment / inflation	
	2023 %	2022 %	2023 %	2022 %	2023 %	2022 %
Suffolk Local Government Pension Scheme	5.20	4.25	3.95	3.75	2.95	3.05
Cambridgeshire Local Government Pension Scheme	5.20	4.25	3.50	3.55	3.00	3.05
London Borough of Havering Local Government Pension Scheme	5.20	4.25	3.70	3.9	3.00	3.2
Essex Local Government Pension Scheme	5.35	4.25	3.90	3.95	2.90	2.95

26 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

Mortality

The assumed life expectations are:

	Males		Females	
	Retiring today 2023	Retiring in 20 years 2023	Retiring today 2023	Retiring in 20 years 2023
Suffolk Local Government Pension Scheme	19.3	21.8	23.9	25.7
Cambridgeshire Local Government Pension Scheme	21.6	21.4	25.0	26.1
London Borough of Havering Local Government Pension Scheme	20.5	24.0	20.9	25.3
Essex Local Government Pension Scheme	20.7	22.0	23.2	24.6

	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Total contributions made		
Employer's contributions	4,400	4,085
Employees' contributions	1,225	1,054
Total contributions	5,625	5,139

The Group and Trust's share of the assets in the scheme:

	2023 Fair value £'000	2022 Fair value £000
Equities	40,306	38,494
Bonds	15,781	12,987
Gilts	10	13
Cash	955	—
Property	5,710	6,763
Other assets	226	392
Total fair value of assets	62,988	58,649
Present value of scheme liabilities		
Funded	(56,545)	(61,465)
Surplus/(deficit) in the scheme	6,443	(2,816)
Recognised in the financial statements	(539)	(2,816)

As the LGPS surplus is irrecoverable, recognition of the surpluses seen in some actuarial valuations of the pension schemes of which the Trust is part of has been restricted to £nil. The adjustment of £6,982,000 has been offset against the overall actuarial gain for the year.

26 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

The actual return on scheme assets was £713,000 (2022: £789,000).

Amount recognised in the statement of financial activities

	2023	2022
	£'000	£000
Current service cost	5,491	10,757
Net interest cost	144	777
Plan introductions, changes, gain/(loss) on curtailment and gain/(loss) on settlement	—	23
Total operating charge	5,635	11,557

Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
At 1 September 2022	61,465	97,155
Transferred in on schools joining the Trust	—	1,225
Current service cost	5,491	10,757
Interest cost	2,736	1,702
Employee contributions	1,225	1,054
Actuarial (gain)/loss	(13,709)	(49,914)
Benefits paid	(775)	(537)
Past service cost	112	23
At 31 August 2023	56,545	61,465

Changes in the fair value of the Trust's share of scheme assets

	2023	2022
	£'000	£'000
At 1 September 2022	58,649	53,630
Transferred in on schools joining the Trust	—	1,206
Interest income	2,592	925
Actuarial (gain)/loss	(3,103)	(1,714)
Employer contributions	4,400	4,085
Employee contributions	1,225	1,054
Benefits paid	(775)	(537)
At 31 August 2023	62,988	58,649

27 Related party transactions

During the year the Trust entered into the following related party transactions:

The Trust made sales of £17,727 (2022: £85,334) in respect of education services to Sabres Educational Trust, a company in which Tim Coulson is the Chair of the Board. At 31 August 2023, the Trust was owed £nil (2022: £nil) which is included within trade debtors.

The Trust made sales of £403,790 (2022: £144,690), purchases of £nil (2022: £199,211), recharged £nil (2022: £495,275) and received a donation of £370,000 (2022: £40,000) from Unity Schools Partnership Education Ltd (formerly Schools Partnership Tutors Limited), a company which was related in the prior year due to common Key Management Personnel, but which came under the control of Unity Schools Partnership from 1 September 2021. At 31 August 2023 the Trust was owed £nil which is included within accrued income (2022: £18,000).

Certain Directors' remuneration and expenses have already been disclosed in note 10.

All transactions involving such organisations are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook, including notifying ESFA of all transactions made on or after 1 April 2019 and obtaining their approval where required, and with the Trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures relating to connected and related party transactions.

28 Agency arrangements

The Trust distributes 16-19 bursary funds to students as an agent for ESFA. In the accounting period ending 31 August 2023, the Trust received £55,280 (2022: £69,265), disbursed £19,600 (2022: £58,010) and repaid £5,982 (2022: £3,791) to the ESFA from the fund. An amount of £84,114 (2022: £54,416) is included in other creditors relating to undistributed funds that is repayable to ESFA.

29 Transfer of existing academies into the Trust

In the prior year, on 1 July 2022 the Breckland School transferred from Sabres Educational Trust and all the operations and assets and liabilities were transferred to Unity Schools Partnership for £nil consideration.

The substance of the transfer is that of a gift and it has been accounted for on that basis. The assets and liabilities transferred were valued at their fair value and recognised in the Balance Sheet under the appropriate headings with a corresponding net amount recognised as net gain/loss in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The following table sets out the fair values of the identifiable assets and liabilities transferred and an analysis of their recognition in the SOFA.

	Transfer in recognised £'000
Freehold land and buildings	7,621
Other tangible fixed assets	339
Stocks	27
Debtors	287
Pension Creditors	(19)
Creditors	(445)
Cash and cash equivalents	922
Total net assets	8,732

30 Post balance sheet events

Following the year end, the former Horringer Middle School site was handed over to the Local Authority as a consequence of the closure of the school at the end of the 2022/23 academic year.

On the 1 September 2023 Robert Kett Primary school in Wymondham, Norfolk and West Row Primary in Suffolk joined the Trust. Furthermore, the Compass Special school opened on 1 September 2023 in Romford adjacent to the existing St Edwards CofE academy.