

Astrea Academy Trust

Annual Report and Financial Statements

31 August 2024

Company Limited by Guarantee
Registration Number
09791051 (England and Wales)

Reports

Reference and administrative information	3
Trustees' report	5
Governance statement	23
Statement of regularity, propriety and compliance	30
Statement of Trustees' responsibilities	31
Independent auditor's report on the financial statements	33
Independent reporting accountant's report on regularity	38

Financial statements

Statement of financial activities	40
Balance sheet	41
Statement of cash flows	42
Principal accounting policies	44
Notes to the financial statements	51

Reference and administrative information

Members	Jonathan Simons Valerie Wass John Doyle Anne Moller Robert Tombs Simon Gregory (retired 30 September 2023)
Trustees	Valerie Dunsford (retired 20 November 2023) Matthew Robb (retired 20 November 2023) Kim Duff (appointed 01 December 2023) Nicholas Cragg Chris Rossiter Dr Tesca Bennett Marina Muirhead (appointed 01 July 2024) Benjamin Brown Peter Burrows Louise Cooper Faye Craster William McHugh (appointed 01 October 2023) Meesha Warmington (appointed 01 October 2023)
Company secretary	Tomas Thurogood-Hyde
Senior Management Team	
CEO and Accounting Officer	Rowena Hackwood
Chief Finance Officer	James Wright
Chief Operating Officer	Jonathan Timmis
Director of Secondary Education	Richard Tutt
Director of Primary Education	Jo Leishman
Registered address	The Quadrant 99 Parkway Avenue Sheffield S9 4WG
Company registration number	09791051 (England and Wales)
Auditor	Forvis Mazars LLP Park View House 58 The Ropewalk Nottingham NG1 5DW
Bankers	Lloyds Banking Group 25 Gresham Street London EC2V 7HN

Reference and administrative information

Solicitors

Stone King
Boundary House,
91 Charterhouse Street
Clerkenwell
London
EC1M 6HR

Academies operated

Hexthorpe Primary Academy
Hartley Brook Primary Academy
Gooseacre Primary Academy
The Hill Primary Academy
Highgate Primary Academy
Carrfield Primary Academy
Castle Academy
Greengate Lane Academy
Lower Meadow Primary Academy
Edenthorpe Hall Academy
Byron Wood Primary Academy
Cottenham Village College
Denaby Main Primary Academy
Kingfisher Primary Academy
Netherwood Academy
The Centre School
Intake Primary Academy
Atlas Academy
Waverley Primary Academy
Hatfield Primary Academy
Longsands Academy
Ernulf Academy
Astrea Academy Woodfields
Astrea Academy Sheffield
Astrea Academy Dearne
St Ivo Academy

Location

Doncaster
Sheffield
Barnsley
Barnsley
Barnsley
Barnsley
Doncaster
Sheffield
Sheffield
Doncaster
Sheffield
Cambridge
Doncaster
Doncaster
Barnsley
Cambridge
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Cambridge
Cambridge
Doncaster
Sheffield
Barnsley
Cambridge

Principal

Mrs J Harrison
Mrs C Costello
Mr J Moore
Mrs M Cockayne
Mrs L Sunley
Ms K Adamski
Ms C Blagden
Mrs K Robinson
Mrs J Dawtry
Mr T Orr
Mrs B Wood
Mrs Z Andrews
Ms J White
Ms C Skinn
Mr J Mitchell
Mrs S Raven
Mrs H Broad
Mr A Crossley
Mrs L Stanton
Mrs K Richards
Dr C Cusick
Mr T Fisher
Mr D Scales
Mr D Boyd & Ms R Flemming
Mrs E Glover
Mr A Meneagh

Trustees' report Year to 31 August 2024

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable company for the year to 31 August 2024. The annual report serves the purpose of both a trustees' report and a directors' report under company law.

In the year, the Trust operated seventeen primary academies in the South Yorkshire area for pupils aged 2 to 11; one all-through school (3-18) in Sheffield; three secondary schools in South Yorkshire and four secondary schools in Cambridgeshire. The Trust also operates one school as specialist provision in Cambridgeshire. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 17,888 and had a roll of 14,374 in June 2024.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution

The Academy 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 Academy Trust. The trustees of Astrea Academy Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purpose of company law. The Charitable Company is known as Astrea Academy Trust.

Details of the Trustees who served during the year are included in the reference and administrative details on page 3.

The principal activities of the charitable company are to establish and maintain a number of academies in accordance with the requirements of its Master Funding Agreement in place with the Secretary of State, in Primary, Secondary, all through education and a Special School.

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 amounts as may be required, not exceeding £10, for the debts and liabilities contracted before they ceased to be a member.

Trustees' indemnities

Subject to the provisions of the Companies Act, every trustee or other officer of the academy shall be indemnified out of the assets of the academy against any liability incurred by them in that capacity in defending any proceedings, whether civil or criminal, in which judgment is given in favour or in which they are acquitted or in connection with any application in which relief is granted to them by the court from liability for negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the affairs of the Academy.

Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Trustees

At the start of the reporting year, two new Trustees joined the Board, having been recruited and recommended by the Nominations Committee. The Terms of Reference for the Nominations Committee were renewed and this Committee will determine the process by which new Trustees are recruited – or terms renewed – on an ongoing basis.

Two further Trustees were appointed and two retired during the reporting period. No terms of office came due for renewal.

No Parent Trustees were elected during the period because the Terms of Reference for local governing bodies provides for the election of at least two parent members to each.

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

Training and induction provided for new Trustees will depend on their prior experience. An induction meeting is undertaken to provide training on charity, education, legal and financial matters. This series of meetings also sets out the strategy and objectives of the Trust along with the values and vision. All new Trustees are given a tour of at least one of the academies in the group, and a chance to meet staff and students. All Trustees are provided with copies of the Trust policies, procedures, minutes, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to understand their role as Trustees and directors of the Trust. On-going governance reviews and training programmes are encouraged for all trustees to ensure they continue to make an effective contribution and are keeping up to date with changes in legislation.

Organisational structure

The Trust has established a management structure to enable efficient and effective running of the organisation. The structure consists of three levels: the board of Trustees (the Governors); the Executive team who are the senior leadership team of the trust; and the Local Governance Committee or Trust Management Board of the academies.

Trustees are responsible for setting policy, adopting an annual plan and budget approval, monitoring the impact of the Trust on educational outcomes (including EYFS, KS1, KS2, KS4 and KS5 outcomes, and Ofsted outcomes), making major decisions about the direction of the Trust, oversight of capital expenditure and appointment of the CEO.

The Principal of each academy is directly responsible for its day-to-day running and is assisted by their senior leadership team.

Local committees support the Board at a school level by:

- Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of Astrea is maintained within each school.
- Holding school leaders to account for the educational performance of the schools, the inclusion of all pupils and the offer of a knowledge-rich and broadly-based curriculum.
- Working with the school's leadership and central team to ensure that high standards of safeguarding are maintained.
- Promoting positive parent, community and stakeholder engagement and driving school-to-school partnerships for improvement within the Trust.
- Identifying, understanding and reporting to Trustees any strategic risks facing the school.

The Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive of the Trust is the Accounting Officer for the Trust.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

When considering and setting salary levels across the trust a clear set of principles were identified to ensure transparency. In order to ensure fairness and equity throughout the organisation, it was proposed that job roles should be banded relative to that of the salary of a newly qualified teacher. The highest paid role will not exceed eight times that of a newly qualified teacher.

The Board of Trustees take great care to ensure the public obtain value for money from the personnel appointed within the Trust.

Trade union facility time

Facility time publication legislation requires public sector employers with more than 49 FTE employees to publish information every year about their usage and spend on trade union facility time. Facility time is the provision of paid or unpaid time off from an employees' normal role to undertake trade union duties and activities as a TU representative. There is a statutory entitlement to reasonable paid time off for undertaking union duties (but not activities).

The Trust meets its statutory obligation to provide facility time to trade union representatives by pooling resources with other schools and academies within the various local authorities in which the Trust's academies are located, to cover the time spent by TU representatives across a number of different employers.

Trustees' report Year to 31 August 2024

The Trust currently pays into facility time arrangements in the following local authorities:

- Sheffield
- Cambridgeshire

The Trust also has academies in two other local authority areas which do not allow academies to pay into the facilities time arrangements. These are:

- Doncaster
- Barnsley

The Trust therefore publishes facility time information as the total cost of contributions to pooled facility time expressed as a percentage of the total pay bill for the relevant period.

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period: 23 (18.61 FTE)

Percentage of time spent on facilities time: 1.61%

Total cost of facilities time: £13,233

Total pay bill: £82,318,199

% of total pay bill spent on facilities time: 0.02%

Time spent on paid trade union activities during the relevant period:

- 0%: 0 employees
- 1% - 50%: 23 employees
- 51% - 99%: 0 employees
- 100%: 0 employees

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

The trust looks to engage with suppliers to mutual medium to long-term benefit and recognises the need to engage with specialists as appropriate, but still focussing on balance of high-quality service, value for money and fair remuneration.

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Trust does not have any related party transactions.

Astrea is a member of the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) and this financial year paid £1,810 in fees. CST is the national organisation and sector body for school Trusts in England advocating for, connecting and supporting executive and governance leaders.

The Trust is also part of a group called The Queen Street Group, a collaboration between Trusts to focus on advocacy for the sector, best practice improvements and conduct, and this year paid £1,800 in fees. The Group is a vehicle through which leaders at senior levels can learn from each other and accelerate the sharing of best practice.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objects and aims

The principal objective and activity of the charitable company is to advance education in the UK for the public benefit by maintaining and developing the operation of academies to provide a broad and balanced education for pupils of all abilities, initially in the South Yorkshire and Cambridgeshire region.

In setting out the trust objectives, consideration has been given to the Charity Commission guidance in respect of public benefit when reviewing the aims and objectives of academies (see 'Public Benefit' section).

Objectives, strategies and activities

Trustees' vision is that:

All Astrea children will learn, thrive and lead successful lives. Working together, Astrea schools will tackle head on the barriers that stand in the way of children's success. We will do this through a relentless commitment to a brilliant education, a focus on inclusion for all, and by delivering on our promise of opportunities that inspire beyond measure.

The strategy commits to delivering on this vision through its theory of change, which focuses on:

- Securing knowledge, scholarship and outcomes
- Fostering resilience and ambition
- Cultivating broad opportunities

The Trust's Values have also been developed as a core set of behaviours needed of adults and children alike in order to deliver on the Vision. These are:

- **SCHOLARSHIP:** We will be informed by the best of academic and organisational thinking and research, using this where we can and expanding it where possible.
- **CURIOSITY:** We will ask searching questions, not take things on face value, seek out the best of what is known and engage in appreciative enquiry.
- **TENACITY:** We will deliver on our promises and see things through to completion. We will embody pace, urgency and determination in our focus on improving outcomes for children and on our own performance.

To achieve its key objectives, the Trust undertakes the following key activities:

- Review and on-going development of new and existing policies and procedures to strengthen the accountability of the Trust.
- Ensure a rich and varied educational experience for all pupils by developing best practice, fostering the development of a knowledge-rich curriculum and providing opportunities for enrichment across the Trust such as competitive sport, cultural literacy and community experience. The Trust will also ensure that best practice is secured through the development of communities of practice and strong leadership development programmes.
- Securing value for money and consistent quality of support services through a combination of centrally procured and provided services. Services that are centrally procured by the Academy Trust, but paid for directly by the academies are legal services, audit services and responsible officer services. Services that are directly provided or procured by the Academy Trust and paid for by the Trust, on behalf of its academies include: group leadership, training, business and administration.

Public Benefit

In setting the objectives, Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and in particular to its supplementary public benefit guidance on advancing education. The main public benefit delivered by the trust is the provision of high quality education to its students, which will be evidenced from feedback from external assessments. The Academy Trust has complied with its duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

Achievements, performance and Key Performance Indicators

Ofsted

Performance during Ofsted inspections has continued to be pleasing, with seven schools improving to 'Good'. This means that twenty-five of the Trust's twenty-six schools are deemed to be 'Good'.

Between September 2023 and October 2024, the following Ofsted outcomes were received:

Academy	Stage	Previous Grade	Current Grade
Netherwood	Secondary	Requires Improvement	Good
Astrea Academy Woodfields	Secondary	Inadequate	Good
Hexthorpe	Primary	Requires Improvement	Good
Cottenham Village College	Secondary	Requires Improvement	Good
Longsands Academy	Secondary	Requires Improvement	Good
St Ivo Academy	Secondary	Requires Improvement	Good
Greengate Lane Academy	Primary	Good	Good
The Centre School	Special (11-19)	Good	Good
Hartley Brook Academy	Primary	Good	Good
Castle Academy	Primary	Good	Good
Atlas Academy	Primary	Requires Improvement	Good

Attendance and Exclusions

Lower-than-average attendance and persistently high exclusion rates have remained legacy challenges for the Trust and both primary and secondary settings continued to miss ambitious targets, in part reflecting the national challenge. Promoting good attendance remained a high priority in 2023/24. This has created a strong platform for 2024/5 attendance.

Both fixed-term suspensions and permanent exclusion rates in the Trust remained high in the reporting year, showing that students were disrupting learning and too often missing out on their own education as a result. In primary schools, the numbers of children concerned were relatively small, but the numbers increased on 2022/23. In secondary schools, persistent challenges remained, particularly in the Trust's South Yorkshire schools, albeit that suspensions fell by 14% overall compared with 2022/23. Difficulties in accessing appropriate alternative provision remain a barrier to reducing suspensions. An absolute focus on building a culture of belonging, reducing suspensions and investing in internal alternative pathways for students whilst maintaining high standards has already resulted in a positive start to 2024/5.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

During the period, ESFA/LA grants (including capital grants) totalled £107,933,000 (2023: £100,644,000). Restricted fund expenditure totalled to £113,836,000 (2022: £106,708,000).

Income from other trading activities during the period amounted to £375,000 (2023: £487,000).

The unrestricted and restricted general revenue reserves increased by £100,000 (2023: reduced £250,000) for the year ended 31 August 2024, bringing the total restricted and unrestricted revenue reserves to £3,831,000 (2023: £3,731,000) (4.5% of GAG).

The table below shows the operational result for the year on these funds excluding LGPS adjustments.

	2023
	£'000
Overall net movement in funds	(964)
Less: Pension Movement	(2,596)
Add: Depreciation	4,640
Less: Capital grant income	(3,004)
Less: Transfers to fixed asset funds	(464)
Add: Restricted fixed Asset spend	2,468
Add: Expenditure on designated fund	20
Trading surplus for the year	100

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 particular purposes. The grants received from the ESFA during the period ended 31 August 2024 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Trustees' report Year to 31 August 2024

The Academy also received grants for fixed assets from the ESFA. In accordance with the Charities SORP FRS 102 and Academies Accounts Direction, such grants are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the fixed asset fund. The restricted fixed asset fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation charges over the expected useful life of the assets concerned.

The Trust has implemented a centralised approach to the management of its financial resources in stages over the last few years, starting with using GAG pooling in 2022/23 and has been used to set school budgets in 2023/24 and 2024/25. This has allowed the Trust to ensure that all schools are fairly and appropriately funded working to a common cost model, irrespective of variations in school or class size, and bearing in mind building efficiency, legacy costs, investment needs and so on. The Trust has also brought into the centre a number of cost headings that in the past were embedded within school costs (e.g. cost of ICT staff, invoice processing, energy procurement and HR) to achieve efficiencies and create professional development pathways for business support staff. The effect of this may be that central costs as a percentage of overall income look to have increased, as a result of the reallocation of costs from school based to central budget headings

Under the Charities SORP FRS 102 and Academies Accounts Direction, it is necessary to charge projected deficits on the Local Government Pension Scheme, which is provided to support staff, to a restricted fund. This results in reducing reserves shown in the total funds of the Trust. This does not present the Trust with any liquidity problem. The employer contributions since July 2017 have increased and it is expected that they will continue to increase further. The deficits in the Local Government Pensions Schemes (LGPS) are recognised on the balance sheet in accordance with the provision of FRS 102.

Overall the Trust has a healthy balance sheet and cash balance and will be using reserves to maintain the fixed assets and to invest back into the schools in the form of additional resources and facilities in conjunction with the school development plans and Astrea's strategic aims.

The Trustees, through the Finance and Budget (FAB) Committee, receive financial progress reports monthly throughout the year and compare actual financial results against budgets submitted to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This committee also reviews longer term financial models (up to 3 years) to plan and organise resources most effectively to fulfil the aims of the academies and the Trust and consider future financial risks and opportunities.

The assets were used for providing education and the associated support services to all the pupils of the academies as well as the provision of adult learning courses and the hire of halls and sporting facilities to the wider community.

Reserves policy

Trustees have published a Reserves and Investment Policy to describe and account for the use of reserves. Reserves brought over by schools joining the Trust are accounted for as income in the year of conversion or transfer. Schools can apply to access these funds for exceptional expenditure in year once it has met its commitments and covered its other planned expenditure. More specifically reserves are income which become available to the academy trust and is to be spent at the Trustees' discretion in furtherance of any of the academy's objects (sometimes referred to as 'general purpose' income) but which is not yet spent, committed or designated (i.e. is free).

The level of reserves held takes into account the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match them with commitments, including future capital projects, and the nature of reserves. The Trustees will keep this level of reserves under review and aim to build and maintain the reserves level whilst in keeping within the principal object of the Trust.

The Trust has a fiduciary responsibility to carry sufficient free reserves to manage potential future financial risks as a result of structural deficits by maintaining schools with historic and/or structural deficits whilst executing robust deficit recovery plans, and by providing working capital and short-term deficit funding for new schools joining the Trust. Typically, new primary and secondary schools joining the Trust need bridge funding for a period of 1-2 years of, on average, £50k for a primary and £500k for a secondary transition school.

Reserves will cover future capital requirements (e.g. building repairs, IT infrastructure) where it is anticipated that there may be a shortfall against future eligible capital funding, such that free reserves will need to be drawn upon to meet the strategic long-term capital plans of the Trust. Where a shortfall in capital funding is identified, the Trustees have the discretion to designate free reserves against this future funding requirement.

The Trust will provide a buffer of general reserves to be drawn down in times when income is disrupted or decreased, or costs are increased unexpectedly, such that any given buffer will allow the Trust to continue to operate without material impact to educational outcomes or the Trust's pupils or staff.

The Trust also has a responsibility to the beneficiary that reserves are not excessive and as such would represent an educational risk to maximising the educational outcomes of the Trust's pupils. The Trust therefore needs to balance financial risk and educational risk and believes that setting a range of between 3% and 8% of GAG is a reasonable target range to balance both of these risks.

Total reserves at the end of the period amounted to £156,158,000 (2023: £157,121,000). This is comprised of fixed asset funds of £158,336,000; Pension reserve of £(6,009,000); general restricted fund of £58,000; with unrestricted reserves of £3,773,000. The combined general and unrestricted reserves total £3,831,000 (2023: £3,731,000), or approximately 4.5% of GAG, which is considered appropriate and in line with the reserves policy for the academy trust. Restricted funds were £152,385,000 (2023: £153,439,000).

Due to accounting for Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), the Trust recognises a significant pension fund deficit totalling £6,009,000 (2023: £8,605,000). This deficit is included in restricted funds. This does not lead to an immediate liability for this amount.

It should be noted that a surplus or deficit position of the pension scheme would generally result in a cash flow effect on the Academy Trust in the form of an increase or decrease in employers' pension contributions over a period of years. The Trust thus takes this into account when reviewing current business plans and budgets and ascertaining how the pension costs might affect budgets in the future. On the basis that increased pension contributions should generally be met from the Trust's budgeted annual income, whilst the deficit may not be eliminated there should be no actual cash flow deficit on the fund or direct impact on the unrestricted reserves of the Academy Trust due to the recognition of the deficit.

Investment policy

This policy sets out the principles for how the Trust invests its cash reserves in order to get the best return while minimising risk and managing operating requirements.

Investment Management & Cash Holding

Cash is held for 5 main reasons:

- 1 - Day-to-day cash flow management to ensure employees and suppliers can be paid.
- 2 - Where the organisation is growing and needs to build capacity in advance of need.
- 3 - As a safety net against reduced funding to allow time for correction of any organisation structure, paying for any short term deficit and subsequent restructuring costs.
- 4 - To allow for investment in vital infrastructure and teaching/learning equipment on a needs basis.
- 5 - To meet any short term emergencies.

The level of cash held and use thereof is reviewed annually via a cashflow budget as part of the annual budget.

Oversight by Trustees

In accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook the board of trustees may invest to further the trust's charitable aims, but must ensure that investment risk is properly managed. When considering an investment, the board must:

- Set investment objectives
- Set the parameters that deposit counterparties need to meet
- Consider the level of liquid cash required to be held either overnight or within current accounts
- Approve the type of products that the Trust can invest in and seek external guidance if required
- Define processes to manage and make investment decisions
- Monitor and review investments on a regular basis

Trustees should follow the Charity Commission's guidance: CC14 Charities and investment matters: A guide for trustees. ESFA's approval must be obtained for novel, contentious and/or repercussive investments.

Investment of Cash

Where the Trust has cash reserves that it does not need in the short-medium term it will invest them in deposit accounts to earn a return that can be re-invested in the Trust's core objectives.

Trustees' report Year to 31 August 2024

The investments will be a mixture of long-term deposits of up to 12 months for cash that can be set aside for longer periods, and short-term deposits or instant access accounts where cash may be needed for operating requirements but can generate sufficient returns to justify the deposit.

The Trust will always maintain a minimum buffer of cash to cover short-term fluctuations. It is expected this amount would be around £500k but the figure may vary based on requirements.

The Trust will have regard to ethical, environmental, social and governance considerations when making investment decisions and will develop its policies in this respect over time. Where adequate rates of return are available via ethical organisations that support charities and social enterprises, the Trust will actively seek opportunities to invest in such accounts.

The investments will be managed by the Financial Controller. To provide additional checks and controls all accounts would require written authorisation by two members of the Executive team before they are opened. All accounts would also require two signatories; for long-term deposits, which typically are of higher values, one of the signatories would need to be an Executive Director.

Total investment at the end of the period was £6,282,012 (2023: £7,532,000 Restated). This was held in a number of 12 month term fixed deposit accounts.

Risk Management

The priority is to avoid medium or high levels of risk and the risk will be reduced by following the measures listed below.

The Trust will avoid volatile investment instruments, ensuring security takes precedence over revenue generation.

Investments will be spread across multiple organisations or investment types.

Bank or building societies must be FCA and PRA regulated.

Preference will be given to investment vehicles that have at least an adequate credit rating measured by Standard and Poor, Fitch, Moody's, or another reputable credit rating agency.

For any single institution that has a credit rating or implied credit rating deemed as speculative (at the time of deposit) i.e. BELOW:

- Baa3 / P-3 (Moody's) or
- BBB- / A-3 (S&P) or
- BBB- / F3 (Fitch)

The Trust will deposit no more than £85,000 (plus interest accrued)

For Institutions with a "good" or better credit rating (also known as Investment grade), the Trust will deposit a maximum of £5,000,000 (plus interest accrued) These ratings include:

- Baa3 / P-3 or better (Moody's) or

Trustees' report Year to 31 August 2024

- BBB- / A-3 or better (S&P) or
- BBB- / F3 or better (Fitch) or
- An implied rating of BBB- or better

A report summarising the current position will be submitted to the Finance and Budget Committee and the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee every 6 months.

The Trust's Finance and Budget Committee and the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee will review the Investment Policy on an annual basis and where appropriate make recommendations to the Trust Board.

Key Performance Indicators

Income and Expenditure KPIs

The Trust uses certain high level key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor the overall financial performance of the Trust. The key performance indicators for the year ended 31 August 2024 are shown below, separated out in to Primary and Secondary. These financial KPIs cover per pupil and efficiency assessment in terms of income and costs.

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>All Through</u>	<u>Special</u>	<u>Total Trust</u>
Pupils	5,198	7,916	986	130	14,231
Income Per Pupil (£s)	6,983	7,925	8,376	25,442	7,920
Govt. Income Per Pupil (£s)	6,785	7,567	8,210	25,442	7,601
Staff costs/Total income	77.44%	67.75%	73.36%	71.26%	78.64%
Staff costs/Govt inc	79.69%	70.95%	74.83%	71.26%	87.52%
Non Staff Cost/Total income	13.66%	19.72%	16.43%	27.94%	21.27%
Staff Cost/Pupil (£s)	5,407	5,369	6,144	18,129	5,554
Non Staff cost/Pupil (£s)	954	1,563	1,376	7,108	1,378
Ave Teaching Staff (£s)	58,300	66,016	60,281	49,330	65,720
Pupil Teacher Ratio	19.7	17.4	15.3	3.9	16.9
Pupil Adult Ratio	8.6	10.8	8.4	3.5	8.8

These have been compared to the ESFA School Resource Management self-assessment (SRM). The trust submits a detailed report to the ESFA each year comparing each school to the SRM tool data. This covers a number of financial KPI metrics, which helps the Trust focus on areas that require further investigation or need addressing from an efficiency standpoint.

Staffing costs are managed within recommended ESFA benchmark levels and the staffing to pupil ratios are also within recommended guidelines. Costs are continuously being benchmarked and the best deals sought after. Further efficiency opportunities will be exploited in the next year when energy contracts end with the opportunity to harmonise across the Trust. National deals are used where possible.

Balance Sheet KPIs

The Trustees view the reserves at 31 August 2024 as reasonable and not excessive. Unrestricted reserves at 31 August 2024, as a % of GAG were 4.4%. This is in line with the stated Trust reserves policy of between 3 and 8% of GAG.

The reserves were also underpinned by a strong financial position and cash at bank. Net current assets were £4,822,000. This included cash on short term deposit, at bank and in hand of £8,486,000.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising has been undertaken through schools' own initiatives

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The Trust's "*Astrea 2025*" strategy was deemed to remain appropriate in delivering Trustees' vision in 2023/24 and future years. 2024/25 is the final year of the current strategy and so the Board has begun overseeing the work of developing the next strategic plan.

The Trust remains focused on the delivery of ever higher educational standards and performance, together with securing a sustainable financial and operational model, with no specific plans for changes to its academy portfolio. Nevertheless, the strengthening of the Trust's performance has meant a greater interest from schools and trusts in Astrea's model, meaning that further academy acquisitions are likely in future years.

PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

A Trust risk register continues to be reviewed and updated regularly. Systems and procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the Trust faces. Internal risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed, in particular those relating to the specific teaching, provision of facilities and other operational areas of the Trust and its finances. Trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess risks that the schools face, especially in the operational areas (e.g. in relation to recruiting staff, teaching, health and safety, bullying and school trips) and in relation to the control of finances. They have introduced systems, including operational procedures (e.g. vetting of new staff and visitors ensuring they are able to work with pupils, supervision of school grounds) and internal financial controls (see below) in order to minimise risk. Where significant financial risk still remains, they have ensured they have adequate insurance cover. As part of its risk management strategy the Trust currently uses the 'Risk Protection Arrangements' (RPA) which is specifically designed for academies as an alternative to commercial insurance to transfer some risks.

The Academy Trust has an effective system of internal financial controls and this is explained in more detail in the Governance Statement.

Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff and pupils, including an annual health and safety audit of each school, with follow-up actions as appropriate. This includes assurances that the trust's estate is safe, well maintained and complies with relevant regulations.

There are four principal operational risks and uncertainties relating to the Trust.

Risk	Mitigation
<p>A failure to secure rapid improvement in attendance, including through reduced exclusions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued prioritisation of school improvement so that Astrea schools are places where students want to be and want to learn • Continued investment in key expertise to support schools in attendance and behaviour • Child-level exclusion reduction plans developed in primary schools; whole-school approaches taken under the Behaviour and Culture Framework in secondaries to improve behaviour
<p>Labour market pressures, with inflation, private sector vacancies and pay competitiveness, strike action and falling trainee teacher numbers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued funding of a 1% pay advantage over national rates for teaching staff • Development of the Astrea Talent Programme and wider value proposition • Prioritisation of disruption-free learning in secondary settings <p>Continued development of the Trust's brand identity and recruitment advertising</p>
<p>Operational non-compliance with statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding, data protection, health and safety and financial controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust-wide expertise in place to advise on, audit and manage compliance areas with direct reporting to senior executives in each area and onward reporting to relevant Trustee committees • Continued programme of internal scrutiny, directed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee • Proactive engagement with auditors and regulators, including voluntary training and briefing opportunities <p>Insurance taken out through the RPA</p>
<p>Multiple coinciding, unplanned and high-value estates costs occurring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up-to-date condition surveys to prioritise work • Reserves to meet significant additional costs • Strategic projects to invest in the professionalisation of estates teams, another to redefine the Trust's budget model to create more funding for capital investment in future years

STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024	2024	2023
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	7,173,485	7,808,705
<u>Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u> Gas consumption	218.35	347.32
Owned transport – mini-uses	27.75	8.71
<u>Total scope 1</u>	246.10	356.03
<u>Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u> Purchased electricity	1,120.66	1,137.67
<u>Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u> Business travel in employee owned vehicles	115.16	95.46
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	1,481.92	1,589.16
<u>Intensity ratio</u> Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.10	0.11

GOING CONCERN

After making appropriate enquiries, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Academy 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

Trustees of Astrea, as Directors of the Company, acknowledge and welcome their duties under Section 172 of the Companies Act 2006.

With reference to the individual provisions of this section of the Act:

The likely consequences of any decision in the long term remained foremost in the Board's considerations, for example with long-term investments being made to promote educational standards. The 2024/25 budget approved by trustees included commitments to substantially greater capital investment in the trust's estate.

The interests of the company's employees were considered throughout all of the meetings of the People and Remuneration Committee and of the main Board. Despite considerable financial pressures in the sector, the Trust maintained the above-national teaching staff pay at all pay scales. The Trust also awarded cost-of-living uplifts to non-teaching staff ahead of final national agreement, bringing forward this rise for the lowest-paid.

The need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others continued to inform Trustees' work and the Board supervised a number of high-value procurements as part of its remit.

The impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment remained a principal consideration given the Trust's public benefit objective. The Trust won two national awards for its environmental work.

The desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct means, to Trustees, that Astrea should be known as an ethical and high-performing trust. The Board has worked to establish an environment of candour in which the executive is expected to report in order to identify barriers to performance and to maintain the values, vision and ethos of the Trust. Operating in a highly-regulated environment, Trustees have sought and received numerous official evaluations of the standards across the Trust from inspectors, regulators, external reviews and other sources. The Board continues to commission and consider these in order to maintain and improve standards.

The need to act fairly as between members of the company did not arise as a particular challenge to the Board because Astrea's members do not have competing private interests. The Board ensures that all members are kept up-to-date with the work of the Trust by the company secretary and members are frequently invited to visit schools. The Members' Council was established and met during the year.

ENGAGEMENT WITH EMPLOYEES (INCLUDING DISABLED PERSONS)

In 2021/22, Trustees determined that the Trust should move ahead of a national pay freeze for teaching staff by awarding a 1% uplift to all teaching salary bands. This was maintained in 2023/24. As in previous years, the Trust made the pay award to support staff before national agreement in order to help address cost-of-living pressures.

The trust works with employee trade unions and professional associations across the academies and utilises other internally established communication forums to engage the workforce. The Trust also works to ensure that consultation is undertaken, as required, on aspects affecting its employees, including financial, operational and economic factors, and that these are communicated, discussed and consulted on with them.

The trust is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity to all who work here and gives full and fair consideration to applications for employment made by disabled persons, including accessibility and having regard to their particular aptitudes and abilities; continuing the employment of, and for arranging appropriate training and support for, employees who have become disabled persons during the period when they were employed by Astrea.

AUDITOR

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware
- the trustees 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 trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 17th December 2024 and signed on the board's behalf by:



Benjamin Brown

Chair of Trustees

Scope of responsibility

As trustees we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Astrea Academy Trust has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. 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 trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the CEO, 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 Astrea Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the trustees' report and in the statement of trustees' responsibilities. The board of trustees has formally met five times during the year and maintains effective oversight by reviewing the reports of its dedicated Finance & Budget and Audit & Risk Assurance Committees.

2023/24 saw change on the Board's membership, with two long-standing trustees retiring at the end of their terms and the appointments of four new trustees, as recommended through the board's nominations committee.

The Board continued its practice of meeting in person, with committees meeting remotely. During 2023/24, the Board met in St Ivo Academy, Hartley Brook Academy, Netherwood Academy and Astrea Academy Woodfields, as well as at the trust's registered office.

The Board of Trustees assesses the effectiveness of the Trust's governance model on an annual basis in determining the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference for its sub-committees. Trustees have expressed confidence in the balance of understanding and experience on the Board.

The Trust manages any conflicts of interest through maintaining a complete register of interest for all trustees and executive staff. Declarations of interest are a standing item on each meeting of the Board and its sub-committees, including local committees.

Information from the register is regularly reviewed and where a possible conflict is identified during a meeting the individual is required to recuse themselves for the discussion.

Trustees have closely considered the quality of information with which they are provided in order to fulfil their duties. A high level of granularity of financial information is provided to them at both Trust-wide and constituent academy level.

Governance (continued)

Attendance at each meeting of the Board and Committee is shown below.

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of possible
Trust Board		
Ben Brown (Chair)	5	5
Tesca Bennett	5	5
Peter Burrows	5	5
Louise Cooper	5	5
Nick Cragg	5	5
Faye Craster	5	5
Chris Rossiter	5	5
Bill McHugh	1	4
Meesha Warmington	3	4
Kim Duff	1	3
Marina Muirhead	1	1
Valerie Dunsford	0	2
Matt Robb	0	2
Finance and Budget Committee		
Nick Cragg (Committee Chair)	5	5
Tesca Bennett	5	5
Peter Burrows	5	5
Louise Cooper	4	5
<i>Chris Rossiter (visiting)</i>	1	1

Audit & Risk Assurance Committee		
Louise Cooper (Committee Chair)	5	5
Matt Robb	1	1
Val Dunsford	1	1
Peter Burrows	5	5
Bill McHugh	2	5
<i>Chris Rossiter (visiting)</i>	1	1
<i>Nick Cragg (visiting)</i>	1	1
<i>Meesha Warmington (visiting)</i>	1	1
People and Remuneration Committee		
Chris Rossiter (Committee Chair)	3	3
Faye Craster	3	3
Meesha Warmington	3	3
<i>Nick Cragg (visiting)</i>	1	1
Education and Safeguarding Committee		
Tesca Bennett (Committee Chair)	3	4
Nick Cragg	3	4
Chris Rossiter	3	4
Faye Craster	2	4
Meesha Warmington	2	3
Kim Duff	1	2

Nominations Committee		
Faye Craster	3	3
Chris Rossiter	3	3
John Doyle (Additional Member)	3	3
Joe Woffinden (Additional Member)	2	3

The Trust's Assistant CEO has worked with local governance committees to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities at academy-level, and an appreciation of where local committees fit into the Trust's overall governance structure. The Board of Trustees assesses the effectiveness of the Trust's governance model on an annual basis and, in 2024/25, have commissioned an external review of local governance.

The Finance and Budget Committee's main purposes were:

- To receive Academies' budgets for approval and consider and recommend acceptance/non-acceptance of the Academy Trust's budget to the Trustees.
- To monitor and review income and expenditure on a regular basis and ensure compliance with the overall financial plan for the Academy Trust, drawing any matters of concern to the attention of the Trust Board.
- To keep under review the Trust's financial management and reporting arrangements, providing constructive challenge (where necessary) to the actions and judgements of management in relation to the interim management and financial accounts, statements and reports and the annual accounts and financial statements, prior to submission to the Board.

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's main purposes were:

- To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's governance, risk management and internal control arrangements for financial and non-financial controls, through reports and assurances received from management, internal audit, the external auditor and any other relevant independent assurances or reports.
- To direct the programme of internal scrutiny within the Trust.

Review of Value for Money

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

The CEO considers how the academy trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the Board of Trustees where value for money can be improved, including the use of benchmarking data where available. The accounting officer for the Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Having a dedicated team, who are centrally employed. This will enable more focus on our academies and a more proactive approach being taken.
- Procurement of services that benefit our academies by achieving better quality, delivering economies of scale and consistent outcomes across our academies for example through catering tendering for the primary schools and Broadband and Photocopier tenders which serve the whole Trust.
- The embedding of curriculum-led financial planning to drive decision-making about resources at school-level.
- Monthly finance reporting at Trust, Directorate and school level of financial performance vs agreed budgets, along with clear reasons for variances (and the drivers of) and actions to mitigate any potential adverse variances going forward. These reports are communicated Trust wide.
- Termly whole Trust financial forecasts backed up by finance review meetings with Principals to monitor budgetary compliance and ensure delivery of value for money, year to date and for the whole financial year

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 risks to the achievement of academy 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 Astrea Academy Trust for the period to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to handle risk

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Trust's significant risks that have been in place for the period to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee, with any recommendations for changes being made to the Board of Trustees.

The risk and control framework

The Academy Trust's system of internal 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:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and financial forecast with periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees;
- regular reviews by the finance and budget committee 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;
- identification and management of risks.

The outputs from reviews are discussed at the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and reported to the Board of Trustees where necessary.

The Committee received reports in respect of the following areas of scrutiny:

- The presence of RAAC in the trust's estate (none)
- Pupil number projections
- Procurement
- Cyber security
- Safer recruitment

These were delivered by a number of specialist audit partners: Brown Jacobson LLP, TransforMATive, Place Group and Gillian Askew FCIPS.

In addition to these, the Trust underwent ten Ofsted inspections, providing Trustees with further assurances as to educational quality, governance and safeguarding effectiveness.

The Committee commissioned a further audit of food standards, received after the reporting period.

Review of effectiveness

As accounting officer, the CEO 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 external auditor and internal auditor;
- correspondence from ESFA;

Governance statement 31 August 2024

- the financial management and governance self-assessment process or the school resource management self-assessment tool; and
- the work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

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

Based on the advice of the audit and risk committee and the accounting officer, the board of trustees is of the opinion that the academy trust has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Benjamin Brown
(Chair of Trustees)

Date: 17th December 2024



Rowena Hackwood
(Accounting Officer)

Date: 17th December 2024

Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance 31 August 2024

As accounting officer of Astrea Academy Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees 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 between the academy trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the academy trust board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

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 Board of Trustees and ESFA.



Rowena Hackwood

Accounting Officer

Date: 17th December 2024

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities 31 August 2024

The trustees (who are also the directors of Astrea Academy Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report (including the strategic report) and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that in its conduct and operation the charitable company applies financial and other controls, which conform with the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. They are also responsible for ensuring that grants received from ESFA/DfE have been applied for the purposes intended.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 17th December 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities 31 August 2024

Benjamin Brown

Chair of Trustees

Independent auditor's report to the members of Astrea Academy Trust

We have audited the financial statements of Astrea Academy Trust ("the 'Academy Trust'") for the year ended 31 August 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), Accounting and Reporting by Charities; Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to Charities (Charities SORP 2019) and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education & Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Academy Trust's affairs at 31 August 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year 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 2023 to 2024.

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 company 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 academy trust'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.

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

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. 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.

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 course of 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 this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statement themselves. 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 including the incorporated Strategic Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report including the incorporated Strategic Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the Academy Trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report including the incorporated 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, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- 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 Trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 31, the trustees (who are also the directors 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 trustees 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 trustees are responsible for assessing the Academy Trust'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 the trustees either intend to liquidate the Academy Trust 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 the financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

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.

Based on our understanding of the Academy Trust and its activities, we considered that non-compliance with the following laws and regulations might have a material effect on the financial statements: employment regulation, health and safety regulation and anti-money laundering regulation.

To help us identify instances of non-compliance with these laws and regulations, and in identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect to non-compliance, our procedures included, but were not limited to:

- Inquiring of management and, where appropriate, those charged with governance, as to whether the Academy Trust is in compliance with laws and regulations, and discussing their policies and procedures regarding compliance with laws and regulations;
- Inspecting correspondence, if any, with relevant licensing or regulatory authorities;
- Communicating identified laws and regulations to the engagement team and remaining alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout our audit; and

- Considering the risk of acts by the Academy Trust which were contrary to applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.

We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the preparation of the financial statements, such as the funding agreement with the Department of Education, tax legislation, pension legislation, the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024.

In addition, we evaluated the trustees' and management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements, including the risk of management override of controls, and determined that the principal risks related to posting manual journal entries to manipulate financial performance, management bias through judgements and assumptions in significant accounting estimates, in particular in relation to revenue recognition (which we pinpointed to the cut off assertion subject to your revenue recognition significant fraud risk) and significant one-off or unusual transactions.

Our audit procedures in relation to fraud included but were not limited to:

- Making enquiries of the trustees and management on whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- Gaining an understanding of the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud;
- Discussing amongst the engagement team the risks of fraud; and
- Addressing the risks of fraud through management override of controls by performing journal entry testing.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of irregularities including fraud rests with management. As with any audit, there remained a risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations or the override of internal controls.

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 the audit report

This report is made solely to the Academy Trust'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 Academy Trust'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 Academy Trust and the Academy Trust's members as a body for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



[David Hoose \(Dec 20, 2024 09:25 GMT\)](#)

David Hoose (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of

Forvis Mazars LLP

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor

Park View House

58 The Ropewalk

Nottingham

NG1 5DW

Date: Dec 20, 2024

Independent reporting accountant's assurance report on regularity to Astrea Academy Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 1 July 2024 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Astrea Academy Trust during the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 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 Astrea Academy Trust and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Astrea Academy Trust 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 Astrea Academy Trust and the ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Astrea Academy Trust's Accounting Officer and the reporting accountant

The Accounting Officer is responsible, under the requirements of Astrea Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 30 March 2017 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2023, 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 requirements of the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024. 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 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 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 the 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.


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

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- Planning our assurance procedures including identifying key risks;
- Carrying out sample testing on controls;
- Carrying out substantive testing including analytical review; and
- Concluding on procedures carried out.

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 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.


Forvis Mazars LLP (Dec 20, 2024 09:26 GMT)

Reporting Accountant

Forvis Mazars LLP

Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor

Park View House
58 The Ropewalk
Nottingham
NG1 5DW

Date: Dec 20, 2024

Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure account) 31 August 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted general funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed assets fund £'000	2024 Total funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	1	194	—	3,004	3,198	4,615
Charitable activities:						
. Funding for educational operations	2	3,502	107,933	—	111,435	103,755
Other trading activities	3	375	—	—	375	487
Investments	4	467	—	—	467	252
Total		4,538	107,933	3,004	115,475	109,109
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	5	507	—	—	507	463
Charitable activities:						
. Educational operations	6	3,476	106,708	7,128	117,312	111,790
Total		3,983	106,708	7,128	117,819	112,253
Net income (expenditure) before transfers between funds						
Transfers between funds	16	555 (464)	1,225 —	(4,124) 464	(2,344) —	(3,144) —
Other recognised gains						
Actuarial gains (losses) on defined benefit pension scheme	21	—	1,381	—	1,381	4,366
Net movement in funds		91	2,606	(3,660)	(963)	1,222
Reconciliation of funds						
Total fund balances brought forward at 1 September 2023		3,682	(8,557)	161,996	157,121	155,899
Total fund balances carried forward at 31 August 2024		3,773	(5,951)	158,336	156,158	157,121

Balance sheet 31 August 2024

	Notes	2024 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 (restated) £'000	2023 (restated) £'000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		157,345		159,738
Current assets					
Stock		30		-	
Debtors	13	4,463		4,071	
Short term deposits		6,282		7,532	
Cash at bank and in hand		2,204		3,435	
		12,979		15,038	
Current liabilities					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(8,157)		(9,050)	
Net current assets			4,822		5,988
Net assets excluding pension scheme asset/liability					
Defined benefit pension scheme asset/liability	21		(6,009)		(8,605)
Total net assets			156,158		157,121
Funds of the Academy Trust					
Restricted funds					
. Restricted fixed assets fund	16		158,336		161,996
. Restricted income funds	16		58		49
. Pension reserve	16		(6,009)		(8,605)
Total restricted funds			152,385		153,439
Unrestricted income funds					
General unrestricted funds	16		3,530		3,419
Designated funds	16		243		263
Total funds			156,158		157,121

The financial statements on page 40 to 66 were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 17th December 2024 and are signed on their behalf by:



Benjamin Brown
Chair of Trustees
Astrea Academy Trust
Company Limited by Guarantee
Registration Number: 09791051 (England and Wales)

Statement of cash flows 31 August 2024

		2024 £'000	2023 (Restated) £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (used in) provided by operating activities	A	(3,643)	(3,385)
Cash flows from investing activities			
	B	2,412	(5,013)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(1,231)	(8,398)
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds:			
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 September 2023		3,435	11,833
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 August 2024	C	2,204	3,435
A Reconciliation of net (expenditure) income to net cash (used in) provided by operating activities			
		2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Net (expenditure) income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)		(2,344)	(3,144)
Adjusted for:			
Depreciation charges		4,640	4,437
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income		(3,004)	(4,470)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets		63	-
Interest receivable		(467)	(252)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable		(1,311)	(90)
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost		95	407
(Increase)/Decrease in stock		(30)	-
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors		(392)	(1,195)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors		(893)	922
Net cash (used in) provided by operating activities		(3,643)	(3,385)
B Cash flows from investing activities			
		2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		467	252
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(2,309)	(2,203)
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA		3,004	4,470
Decrease/(Increase) in short term deposits		1,250	(7,532)
Net cash provided by investing activities		2,412	(5,013)
C Analysis of cash and cash equivalents			
		2024 £'000	2023 (Restated) £'000
Cash in hand and at bank		2,204	3,435
Total cash and cash equivalents		2,204	3,435

Statement of cash flows 31 August 2024

D Analysis of changes in net cash (debt)

	At 1 September 2023 (Restated) £'000	Cashflows £'000	At 31 August 2024 £'000
Cash in hand and at bank	3,435	(1,231)	2,204
Total	3,435	(1,231)	2,204

General information

Astrea Academy Trust is a charitable company (the 'Academy Trust'), incorporated in England and Wales. The address of its principal place of business is the same as that of its registered office given on page 1 and the nature of its operations are set out in the Trustees' report.

A summary of the principal accounting policies adopted (which have been applied consistently, except where noted), is set out below.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements of the Academy 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 2023 to 2024 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Astrea Academy Trust meets the definition of 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 Academy Trust.

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

Going concern

The Trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate, i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the charitable company to continue as a going concern. The Trustees 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 Academy Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the Academy 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.

In making their assessment, the trustees have considered the current and potential future impact of the wider macroeconomic uncertainties on the operations, activities and finances of the Academy Trust. As outlined in the Trustees' report, the Academy Trust faces increasing financial pressures as a result of unfunded national pay awards and increased energy costs, amongst other factors. The Academy Trust is mitigating the impact of these significant additional costs through a number of budgetary measures and active budget monitoring.

Income

All income is recognised when the Academy Trust 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 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.

Other income

Other income, including the hire of facilities, is recognised at fair value of the consideration received or receivable in the period it is receivable and to the extent the Academy Trust 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. Depreciation charges are allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on raising funds

This includes all expenditure incurred by the Academy 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 Academy Trust'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 Academy Trust apportioned to charitable activities.

Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Assets costing £2,000 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 or 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. Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with unrestricted funds, depreciation on such assets is charged to the unrestricted fund.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets, so as to write off the cost of assets less their residual values over their useful lives on the following bases:

- ◆ Long leasehold buildings 50 years straight line
- ◆ Freehold buildings 50 years straight line
- ◆ Leasehold improvements 10 years straight line
- ◆ Fixtures, fittings and equipment 4 years straight line
- ◆ Computer equipment 3 years straight line
- ◆ Motor Vehicles 5 years straight line
- ◆ Assets under construction Not depreciated

Residual value is calculated on prices prevailing at the reporting date, after estimated costs of disposal, for the asset as if it were at the age and in the condition expected at the end of its useful life.

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 Academy Trust 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 against income on a straight-line basis over the period of the lease.

Short term deposits

Fixed term deposits that are due to mature more than 90 days after the date of investment are classified as Short term deposits, those due to mature within 90 days remain within Cash at bank. Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

Financial instruments

The Academy Trust only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and financial liabilities of The Academy Trust and their measurement basis are as follows:

Financial assets – trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

Cash at bank – is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

Short term deposits – are classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value

Financial liabilities – trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

Taxation

The Academy 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 Academy 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 Academy 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 Academy 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 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.

The LGPS is a funded scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the Academy 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.

Fund accounting

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

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 Education and Skills Funding Agency or Department for Education.

Designated funds comprise of resources which are contractually required to update and maintain parts of the Trust Estate.

Employment benefits

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 services to the Academy Trust. The cost of any unused holiday entitlement the Academy Trust 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 Academy Trust 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

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 (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 21, 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 2024. 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.

For certain schools in the Trust, the present value of the defined benefit obligation at the reporting date is less than the fair value of plan assets at that date. Therefore for these schools the plan has a notional surplus. As management do not consider that the Trust will be able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan, the surplus has not been recognised in these financial statements in line with paragraph 28.22 of FRS102. The net pension asset at 31 August 2024 was £8.1m.

In June 2023 the High Court ruled in the case of Virgin Media Limited v NTL Pension Trustees. The ruling was that certain pension scheme rule amendments were invalid if they were not accompanied by the correct actuarial confirmation. This High Court ruling was appealed. In a judgment delivered on 25 July 2024, the Court of Appeal unanimously upheld the decision of the High Court. At the date of approval of these financial statements, while it is known there is potential for additional pension liabilities to be recognised as a result of this ruling, the impact in monetary terms is not known and it is reasonable to form the view that it cannot be reasonably estimated. Accordingly, no adjustments to reflect the impact of the ruling have been made in these financial statements. The Trustees will continue to monitor the developments and consider the impact on the LGPS liabilities recognised by the Academy Trust.

The company has an obligation to pay pension benefits to certain employees. The cost of these benefits and the present value of the obligation depend on a number of factors, including; life expectancy, salary increases, asset valuations and the discount rate on corporate bonds. Management estimates these factors in determining the net pension obligation in the Balance Sheet. The assumptions reflect historical experience and current trends. See note 21 for the disclosures relating to the defined benefit pension scheme.

Critical areas of judgement

Buildings held under PFI contract

Buildings at Dearne and Netherwood Academy are subject to contracts under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Under these contracts, the Academy premises are maintained and managed for a period of 25 years by the PFI-Contractor subject to contractual annual fees paid by the Academy Trust. Upon expiry of the PFI contract, the residual benefit of the premises passes to the Academy as a result of a 125 year lease granted to the Academy Trust

These transactions have been accounted for as a leasing transaction. As the Academy Trust only enjoys the benefit of the Premises subject to the restrictions under the PFI agreement, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, the Academy Trust does not hold substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of the premises and the property is therefore accounted for as a financial commitment. The premises are not therefore recognised as an asset in the Academy Trust's financial statements.

The annual charges under the PFI agreement are subject to fixed formula but will vary over time

Useful economic lives of tangible assets

The annual depreciation charge for tangible assets is sensitive to changes in the estimated useful economic lives and residual values of the assets. The useful economic lives and residual values are reassessed annually. They are amended when necessary to reflect current estimates, based on technological advancement, future investments, economic utilisation and the physical condition of the assets. See note 12 for the carrying amount of property plant and equipment.

Agency Arrangement Accounting Policy

The academy trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary funds from ESFA. Payments received from ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the statement of financial activities as the academy trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The funds received and paid, and any balances held are disclosed in note 24.

1 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	2024 Total £'000	2023 Total £'000
Capital grants	—	3,004	3,004	4,470
Donated fixed assets	—	—	—	—
Other donations	194	—	194	145
	<u>194</u>	<u>3,004</u>	<u>3,198</u>	<u>4,615</u>

2 Funding for the Academy Trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2024 Total £'000	2023 Total £'000
DfE/ESFA grants				
General annual grant (GAG)	—	85,837	85,837	81,130
Other DfE/ESFA grants				
. UIFSM	—	503	503	460
. Pupil Premium	—	6,699	6,699	6,386
. Rates	—	478	478	362
. Catch-up Premium	—	1,177	1,177	1,132
. Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	—	2,863	2,863	1,192
. National Tutoring Programme	—	353	353	478
. Teachers Pay Grant	—	1,568	1,568	
. Teachers Pension Grant	—	1,006	1,006	
. Schools Supplementary Grant	—			2,357
. Other DfE Group grants	—	312	312	769
	—	100,796	100,796	94,266
Other government grants				
Local authority grants	—	7,137	7,137	6,378
	—	7,137	7,137	6,378
Other income	3,502	—	3,502	3,111
2024 Total funds	<u>3,502</u>	<u>107,933</u>	<u>111,435</u>	<u>103,755</u>

3 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2024 Total £'000	2023 Total £'000
Hire of facilities	212	—	212	341
Adult learning courses	125	—	125	125
Income from ancillary charitable activities	38	—	38	21
2024 Total funds	<u>375</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>375</u>	<u>487</u>

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

4 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted funds £'000	2024 Total £'000	2023 Total £'000
Interest from short term deposits	467	—	467	252

5 Expenditure

	Staff costs £'000	Non pay expenditure		2024 Total funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000
		Premises £'000	Other costs £'000		
Expenditure on raising funds					
. Direct costs	—	—	507	507	463
Academy's educational operations:					
. Direct costs	69,120	4,639	7,955	81,714	76,236
. Allocated support costs	18,021	12,138	5,439	35,598	35,554
Total support costs	87,141	16,777	13,901	117,819	112,253

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
--	-----------------------	---------------

Net income (expenditure) for the year includes:

Operating lease rentals – equipment	233	198
Operating lease rentals – PFI	2,399	2,469
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	4,640	4,437
Fees payable to the Academy Trust's auditors in respect of both audit and non-audit services are as follows:		
. Audit	50	54
. Other assurance services	6	7
. All other non-audit services	—	—

6 Charitable activities

	2024 Total £'000	2023 Total £'000
Direct costs – educational operations	81,714	76,236
Support costs – educational operations	35,598	35,554
	117,312	111,790

	2024 Total funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000
Analysis of support costs		
Support staff costs	18,021	17,340
Technology costs	1,247	1,174
Legal costs	100	89
Premises costs	12,138	11,922
Other support costs	4,030	4,978
Governance costs	62	51
	35,598	35,554

7 Comparative information

Analysis of income and expenditure in the year ended 31 August 2023 between restricted and unrestricted funds:

	Notes	Unrestricted general funds £'000	Restricted general funds £'000	Restricted fixed assets fund £'000	2023 Total funds £'000
Income from:					
Donations and capital grants	1	145	—	4,470	4,615
Charitable activities:					
. Funding for educational operations	2	3,111	100,644	—	103,755
Other trading activities	3	487	—	—	487
Investments	4	252	—	—	252
Total		3,995	100,644	4,470	109,109
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	5	463	—	—	463
Charitable activities:					
. Educational operations	6	3,082	104,271	4,437	111,790
Total		3,545	104,271	4,437	112,253
Net income (expenditure) before transfers between funds					
		450	(3,627)	33	(3,144)
Transfers between funds	16	(557)	3,167	(2,610)	—
Other recognised gains					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension scheme	21	—	4,366	—	4,366
Net movement in funds		(107)	3,906	(2,577)	1,222
Reconciliation of funds					
Total fund balances brought forward at 1 September 2022		3,789	(12,463)	164,573	155,899
Total fund balances carried forward at 31 August 2023		3,682	(8,557)	161,996	157,121

8 Staff

(a) Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were:

	2024 Total funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000
Wages and salaries	63,497	58,969
Social security costs	6,661	6,162
Pension costs	13,944	13,148
	84,102	78,279
Agency staff costs	2,874	2,720
Staff restructuring costs	165	268
Total staff expenditure	87,141	81,267

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

	2024 Total funds £'000	2023 Total funds £'000
Severance payments	77	131
Redundancy payments	88	137
	165	268

(b) Severance payments

The academy trust paid 9 severance payments in the year, disclosed in the following bands:

	2024 No.
£0 - £25,000	9
£25,001 - £50,000	—
£50,001 - £100,000	—
£100,001 - £150,000	—
£150,000+	—

(c) Non statutory/non-contractual staff severance payments

Included in staff restructuring costs are non-statutory/non-contractual severance payments totalling £77,928 (2023: £136,679). Individually the payments were: £25,000, £17,829, £12,228, £6,864, £5,510, £5,000, £3,750, £1,497 and £250.

(d) Staff numbers

The average number of persons employed by the Academy Trust throughout the year was as follows:

Charitable activities	2024 No.	2023 No.
Teachers	891	874
Administration and support	1,303	1,290
Management	40	30
	2,234	2,194

(e) Higher paid staff

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
£60,001 - £70,000	46	40
£70,001 - £80,000	37	26
£80,001 - £90,000	17	17
£90,001 - £100,000	10	7
£100,001 - £110,000	6	1
£110,001 - £120,000	3	1
£120,001 - £130,000	2	4
£130,001 - £140,000	3	-
£180,001 - £190,000	-	1
£190,001 - £200,000	1	-

(f) Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team roles as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £989,000 (2023: £886,000), the increase on prior period is due to vacancies in the prior year being filled for the entire period.

9 Central services

As the Trust implements a trust wide GAG and reserves pooling policy, central service charges are not levied.

10 Trustees' remuneration and expenses

The CEO is not a Trustee and only received remuneration in capacity as an employee of the Trust.

Trustees did not receive any remuneration from the Academy Trust during the year (2023: none).

During the year ended 31 August 2024 No trustee claimed expenses from the Academy Trust (2023: One trustee for £395).

11 Trustees and officers insurance

The academy 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 trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business, and provides cover up to £10,000,000. It is not possible to quantify the trustees and officers indemnity element from the overall cost of the RPA scheme.

12 Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold land and buildings £'000	Long leasehold land and buildings £'000	Leasehold improve- ments £'000	Fixtures, fittings and equipment £'000	Computer equipment £'000	Motor Vehicles £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Total funds £'000
Cost								
At 1 September 2023	51,549	116,252	5,240	2,993	4,386	107	65	180,592
Additions	—	—	1,024	228	968	78	11	2,309
Disposals	—	—	—	(2)	—	(4)	(57)	(63)
Transfers	—	—	7	—	—	8	(15)	—
At 31 August 2024	51,549	116,252	6,271	3,219	5,354	189	—	182,838
Depreciation								
At 1 September 2023	3,408	10,641	1,568	2,343	2,866	29	—	20,855
Charge for the year	641	1,969	597	453	950	30	—	4,640
Disposals	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transfers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
At 31 August 2024	4,049	12,610	2,165	2,796	3,816	59	—	25,493
Net book value								
At 31 August 2024	47,500	103,642	4,106	423	1,538	132	—	157,345
At 31 August 2023	48,142	105,611	3,672	650	1,520	78	65	159,738

Included within freehold land and buildings is land with a value of £19,477,700 (2023: £19,477,700) which is not depreciated. Included within long leasehold land and buildings is land with a value of £17,820,000 (2023: £17,820,000) which is not depreciated.

Buildings at Dearne and Netherwood Academy are subject to contracts under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Under these contracts, the Academy premises are maintained and managed for a period of 25 years by the PFI-Contractor subject to contractual annual fees paid by the Academy Trust. Upon expiry of the PFI contract, the residual benefit of the premises passes to the Academy as a result of a 125 year lease granted to the Academy Trust.

These transactions have been accounted for as a leasing transaction. As the Academy Trust only enjoys the benefit of the Premises subject to the restrictions under the PFI agreement, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, the Academy Trust does not hold substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of the premises and the property is therefore accounted for as a financial commitment. The premises are not therefore recognised as an asset in the Academy Trust’s financial statements. The annual charges under the PFI agreement are subject to fixed formula but will vary over time.

13 Debtors

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Trade debtors	231	216
VAT recoverable	884	985
Other debtors	34	15
Prepayments and accrued income	3,314	2,855
	4,463	4,071

14 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Trade creditors	2,006	2,317
Other taxation and social security	1,434	1,414
Other creditors	1,766	1,522
Accruals and deferred income (see note 15)	2,951	3,797
	8,157	9,050

15 Deferred income

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
Deferred income at 1 September 2023	1,340	1,147
Released from previous years	(1,340)	(1,147)
Resources deferred in the year	1,538	1,340
Deferred income at 31 August 2024	1,538	1,340

The deferred income balance carried forward relates to the Bursaries and other income £695,000 (2023 £431,000), Universal Infants Free School Meals £293,000 (2023 £283,000), Rates £239,000 (2023 £17,000) , School Trips £217,000 (2023 £139,000) occurring post 31 August 2024 and other smaller balances

16 Funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfers £'000	Balance at 31 August 2024 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	49	85,837	(85,828)	—	58
Pupil Premium	—	6,699	(6,699)	—	—
UIFSM	—	503	(503)	—	—
Catch-up premium	—	1,177	(1,177)	—	—
Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	—	2,863	(2,863)	—	—
Teachers Pay Grant	—	1,568	(1,568)	—	—
Teachers Pension Grant	—	1,006	(1,006)	—	—
Other grants & restricted income	—	1,143	(1,143)	—	—
Local Authority Grants	—	7,137	(7,137)	—	—
Pension reserve	(8,606)	—	1,216	1,381	(6,009)
	(8,557)	107,933	(106,708)	1,381	(5,951)
Restricted fixed assets fund					
Transfer on conversion	115,011	—	(2,040)	—	112,971
Donated fixed assets	31,506	—	(681)	—	30,825
DfE/ESFA capital grants	13,833	3,004	(3,726)	—	13,111
Local Authority capital grants	314	—	(128)	—	186
Capital expenditure from GAG & revenue reserves	1,332	—	(553)	464	1,243
	161,996	3,004	(7,128)	464	158,336
Total restricted funds	153,439	110,937	(113,836)	1,845	152,385
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	3,419	4,538	(3,963)	(464)	3,530
Designated funds	263	—	(20)	—	243
	3,682	4,538	(3,983)	(464)	3,773
Total funds	157,121	115,475	(117,819)	1,381	156,158

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the Trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2024.

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

Restricted general funds

These grants relate to the Trust's development and operational activities.

The General Annual Grant (GAG) represents the core funding for the educational activities of the school that has been provided to each Academy within the Trust via the Education and Skills Funding Agency by the Department for Education. The General Annual Grant Fund has been set up because the GAG must be used for the normal running costs of the academies within the Trust.

The Pension Reserve deficit fund has been created to separately identify the pension deficit inherited from the local authority upon conversion of each Academy, and through which all the pension scheme movements are recognised. The Trustees will continue to monitor this situation closely.

Other restricted funds relate to specific income streams received by the Academy Trust.

Restricted fixed assets funds

The 'transferred on conversion' fund has been set up to recognise the tangible assets gifted to the academies upon conversion and transfer into the Academy Trust which represents the school sites including the long leasehold land and buildings and all material items of plant and machinery included therein. Depreciation charged on those inherited assets is allocated to the fund.

The capital grants fixed assets fund recognises the tangible assets purchased by the Trust that have been funded by capital grants. Depreciation charged on those tangible assets is allocated to the fund. Transfers out of restricted fixed assets funds represent the utilisation of these grants on qualifying purchases which do not meet the capitalisation policy of the Trust, such as significant maintenance which does not enhance the value of the Academy Trust's properties.

Designated funds

These funds relate to sinking funds for the future maintenance of specific assets. Significant work is required on the assets over the next 12 months which will see the designated fund used accordingly.

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

Comparative information

Comparative information in respect of the preceding period is as follows:

	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)	192	81,492	(84,802)	3,167	49
Pupil Premium	—	6,386	(6,386)	—	—
UIFSM	—	460	(460)	—	—
Catch-up premium	—	1,132	(1,132)	—	—
Other Grants	—	4,796	(4,796)	—	—
Local Authority Grants	—	6,378	(6,378)	—	—
Pension reserve	(12,655)	—	(317)	4,366	(8,606)
	(12,463)	100,644	(104,271)	7,533	(8,557)
Restricted fixed assets fund					
Transfer on conversion	117,058	—	(2,047)	—	115,011
Donated fixed assets	32,238	—	(732)	—	31,506
DfE/ESFA capital grants	13,524	4,356	(880)	(3,167)	13,833
Local Authority capital grants	343	114	(143)	—	314
Capital expenditure from GAG	1,410	—	(635)	557	1,332
	164,573	4,470	(4,437)	(2,610)	161,996
Total restricted funds	152,110	105,114	(108,708)	4,923	153,439
Unrestricted funds					
General funds	3,526	3,995	(3,545)	(557)	3,419
Designated funds	263	—	—	—	263
	3,789	3,995	(3,545)	(557)	3,682
Total funds	155,899	109,109	(112,253)	4,366	157,121

Funds by school

Fund balances for each academy 31 August 2024 and 31 August 2023 were zero, hence a breakdown by academy is not included in these accounts.

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Trust revenue reserves	3,831	3,731
Total before fixed assets fund and pension reserve	3,831	3,731
Restricted fixed asset fund	158,336	161,996
Pension reserve	(6,009)	(8,606)
Total funds	156,158	157,121

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

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

	Teaching and educational support staff £'000	Other support staff costs £'000	Educational supplies £'000	Other costs excluding depreciation and losses on disposal £'000	2024 Total £'000
Carrfield Primary Academy	1,203	267	83	217	1,770
Castle Academy	756	169	63	210	1,198
Edenthorpe Hall Academy	851	204	57	299	1,411
Gooseacre Primary Academy	1,400	291	61	221	1,973
Hartley Brook Primary Academy	2,643	603	167	392	3,805
Hatfield Primary Academy	1,562	398	83	248	2,291
Highgate Primary Academy	1,345	282	89	243	1,959
Lower Meadow Primary Academy	1,484	242	108	225	2,059
The Hill Primary Academy	1,683	451	74	528	2,736
Byron Wood Primary Academy	1,795	347	93	197	2,432
Greengate Lane Academy	954	164	69	199	1,386
Hexthorpe Primary Academy	1,706	454	108	309	2,577
Denaby Main Primary Academy	793	242	74	184	1,293
Kingfisher Primary Academy	1,499	376	90	406	2,371
Netherwood Academy	5,649	986	740	2,071	9,446
Cottenham Centre	1,962	403	738	214	3,317
Cottenham Village College	3,822	753	519	1,144	6,238
Intake Primary Academy	1,085	256	60	284	1,685
Atlas Academy	1,541	612	106	508	2,767
Astrea Academy Sheffield	5,008	1,144	483	925	7,560
Waverley Academy	851	282	57	248	1,438
Ernulf Academy	3,169	646	455	906	5,176
Longsands Academy	6,656	1,025	1,098	1,596	10,375
Astrea Academy Woodfields	3,862	1,101	459	854	6,276
Astrea Academy Dearne	6,165	832	484	1,741	9,222
St Ivo Academy	6,821	1,505	889	732	9,947
Central services	3,876	2,967	646	2,959	10,448
Total expenditure	70,141	17,002	7,953	18,060	113,156

Comparative information in respect of the preceding period is as follows

	Teaching and educational support staff £'000	Other support staff costs £'000	Educational supplies £'000	Other costs excluding depreciation and losses on disposal £'000	2023 Total £'000
Carrfield Primary Academy	1,177	194	74	256	1,701
Castle Academy	707	126	78	164	1,075
Edenthorpe Hall Academy	838	160	45	167	1,210
Gooseacre Primary Academy	1,338	140	64	264	1,806
Hartley Brook Primary Academy	2,421	633	153	657	3,864
Hatfield Primary Academy	1,353	496	98	176	2,123
Highgate Primary Academy	1,181	277	95	303	1,856
Lower Meadow Primary Academy	1,297	245	102	174	1,818
The Hill Primary Academy	1,562	331	86	649	2,628
Byron Wood Primary Academy	1,734	339	111	184	2,368

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

Greengate Lane Academy	882	152	64	187	1,285
Hexthorpe Primary Academy	1,537	380	131	319	2,367
Denaby Main Primary Academy	821	192	47	181	1,241
Kingfisher Primary Academy	1,402	258	101	275	2,036
Netherwood Academy	4,974	1,029	672	1,900	8,575
Cottenham Centre	1,677	239	692	289	2,897
Cottenham Village College	3,582	1,041	607	821	6,051
Intake Primary Academy	1,004	194	63	642	1,903
Atlas Academy	1,307	394	69	540	2,310
Astrea Academy Sheffield	4,223	922	580	857	6,582
Waverley Academy	804	176	46	287	1,313
Ernulf Academy	2,874	735	361	1,161	5,131
Longsands Academy	7,044	1,228	1,045	2,131	11,448
Astrea Academy Woodfields	3,303	1,188	388	719	5,598
Astrea Academy Dearne	5,476	855	601	1,509	8,441
St Ivo Academy	6,715	1,731	950	901	10,297
Central services	3,535	2,846	549	2,962	9,892
Total expenditure	64,768	16,501	7,872	18,675	107,816

17 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 are represented by:

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted General Funds £'000	Restricted Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Total 2024 £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	157,345	157,345	159,738
Current assets	3,773	8,215	991	12,979	15,038
Current liabilities	—	(8,157)	—	(8,157)	(9,050)
Defined benefit pension liability	—	(6,009)	—	(6,009)	(8,605)
Total net assets	3,773	(5,951)	158,336	156,158	157,121

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 are represented by:

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted General Funds £'000	Restricted Fixed Asset Fund £'000	Total 2023 £'000
Tangible fixed assets	—	—	159,738	159,738
Current assets	3,682	9,098	2,258	15,038
Current liabilities	—	(9,050)	—	(9,050)
Defined benefit pension liability	—	(8,605)	—	(8,605)
Total net assets	3,682	(8,557)	161,996	157,121

18 Capital Commitments

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Expenditure contracted for, but not provided in the financial statements	1,398	1,824

19 Commitments under operating leases

At 31 August 2024 the total of the Academy Trust's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases was:

	Buildings		Equipment	
	2024 £'000	2023 £'000	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts due within one year	2,459	2,399	198	126
Amounts due between one and five years	10,437	10,197	338	69
Amounts due after five years	21,847	24,547	—	—
	34,743	37,143	537	195

Building leases relate to Dearne Academy and Netherwood Academy which are held under PFI contracts. The trust itself is not party to this service concession contract, however the academy trust has entered into a supporting agreement towards the costs of the local authority. The above relates to commitments to operating payments including costs for catering, cleaning, utilities, and other ancillary services. The annual charges under the PFI agreement are subject to fixed formula which includes RPI but will vary over time. At 31 August 2024, the remaining term on both PFI contracts was 14 years.

20 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.

21 Pension and similar obligations

The Academy 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. LGPS is managed by South Yorkshire Pension Fund and Cambridgeshire Pension Funds.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2020 and of the LGPS to the period ended 31 March 2022.

Contributions amounting to £1,755,000 (2023: £1,017,000) were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2024 and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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 to which both the member and employer makes contributions, as a percentage of salary - these contributions are credited to the Exchequer. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

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 ensure scheme costs are recognised and managed appropriately and the review specifies 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 latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 27 October 2023, with the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, applying a notional investment return based on 1.7% above the rate of CPI. The key elements of the valuation outcome are:

- Employer contribution rates set at 28.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy). This is an increase of 5% in employer contributions and the cost control result is such that no change in member benefits is needed.
- Total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £262,000 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £222,200 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £39,800 million

The result of this valuation will be implemented from 1 April 2024. The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2028.

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £10,119,000 (2023: £8,689,000).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The academy trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the plan. Accordingly, the academy trust has taken advantage of the exemption in FRS 102 and has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The academy trust has set out above, the information available on the scheme.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contributions made were as follows:

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Total contributions made		
Employer's contributions	5,243	3,824
Employees' contributions	1,407	1,250
Total contributions	6,650	5,074

The agreed contribution rates for future years are between 10.6% to 24.0% for employers and 5.5% to 12.5% for employees depending on the specific LGPS fund.

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of an Academy Trust closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. 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 GOV.UK.

Principal Actuarial Assumptions

The following information is based upon a full actuarial valuation of the fund at 31 March 2022 updated to 31 August 2024 by a qualified independent actuary.

	2024 %	2023 %
Rate of increase in salaries	3.2	3.5
Rate of increase for pensions in payment	2.7	3.0
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.0	5.2
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.7	3.0

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

The assumed life expectations on retirement age 65 are:

	2024	2023
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.7	20.7
Females	24.4	24.4
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	21.8	21.9
Females	25.5	25.5

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Sensitivity analysis		
Discount rate -0.1%	1,461	1,600
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	3,056	2,761
CPI rate +0.1%	1,770	1,502

The Academy Trust's share of the assets in the scheme

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Equities	49,508	44,394
Bonds	17,500	13,660
Cash	1,569	665
Property	9,901	7,848
Other assets	—	—
Total fair value of assets	78,478	66,567
Present value of scheme liabilities		
- Funded	(76,429)	(69,059)
Surplus (deficit) in the scheme as determined by the actuary	(2,049)	(2,492)
Adjustment recognised in the actuarial losses to cap the scheme surplus	(8,058)	(6,113)
Deficit in the scheme as recognised on the balance sheet	(6,009)	(8,605)

The Trust is a member of South Yorkshire Pension Authority (SYPA) and Cambridgeshire Pension Fund Local Government Pension Schemes. As at 31/08/2023 the Trust's position with SYPA was a liability of £6,009,000 (2023: £8,612,000), the balance with Cambridge was an asset of £8,058,000 (2023: £6,113,000)

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Amounts recognised in statement of financial activities		
Current service cost (net of employer contributions)	(1,311)	(90)
Past service cost	-	1
Interest income	(3,585)	(2,721)
Interest cost	3,680	3,127
Total amount operating charge	(1,216)	317

	2024 £'000	2023 £'000
Changes in the present value of defined benefit obligations		

Notes to the financial statements 31 August 2024

At 1 September 2023	(69,059)	(71,541)
Current service cost	(3,932)	(4,346)
Past service cost	-	(1)
Interest cost	(3,680)	(3,127)
Employee contributions	(1,407)	(1,250)
Actuarial gain (loss)	(129)	9,923
Benefits paid	1,778	1,283
At 31 August 2024	(76,429)	(69,059)

Changes in the fair value of the Academy's share of scheme assets:	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
At 1 September 2023	66,567	61,948
Interest income	3,585	2,721
Actuarial (loss) gain	3,453	(2,505)
Employer contributions	5,243	4,436
Employee contributions	1,407	1,250
Benefits paid	(1,778)	(1,283)
At 31 August 2024	78,477	66,567

22 Related party transactions

Other than as disclosed in note 10, there were no related party transaction, falling under the definition in the Academies Accounts Direction and Charities SORP (FRS 102) during the year (2023: none).

23 Post balance sheet events

No post balance sheet events have occurred.

24 Agency Arrangement

The academy trust distributes 16-19 bursary funds to students as an agent for ESFA. In the accounting period ending 31 August 2024 the academy trust received £16,169 and disbursed £20,069 from the fund. As at 31 August 2024, the cumulative unspent 16-19 bursary fund is £12,399. Comparatives for the accounting period ending 31 August 2023 are £20,775 received, £33,134 disbursed, total cumulative unspent fund of £11,455.

25 Prior Year Restatement

During the year the Trustees identified that an amount of £4,514k had been wrongly classified as cash at bank on the Trust's balance sheet as at 31 August 2023 when it should have more accurately been classified as a short term deposit.

Accordingly, the Trust's balance sheet at 31 August 2023 has been restated by way of a prior period adjustment to correctly reflect an increase in short term deposits and a decrease in cash and cash equivalents by the same amount.

The Statement of Cash Flows has been restated to reflect the reconciliation of net cash flows in cash and cash equivalents only excluding the short-term deposits.