

Company Registration Number: 07523884 (England & Wales)

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	Jean Charlton Hems de Winter Andrew Evans Lisa Green Philip Hamilton Paul Heath Bank of America Merrill Lynch (Corporate)
Trustees	Euan Imrie, Chair of Trustees Paul Carter Jean Charlton Nick Crowther, Vice Chair Paul Heath Vicky Higham Kayte Parlevliet
Company registered number	07523884
Company name	The Learning Trust
Principal and registered office	Christleton High School Village Road Christleton Chester CH3 7AD
Chief executive officer	Nigel Follos
Senior management team	Nigel Follos, Chief Executive Officer Damian Stenhouse, Education Improvement Partner Lesley Carding, Chief Financial Officer Darran Jones, Headteacher (CHS) Lyndsay Watterson, Headteacher (QPHS) Katrina Brown, Principal (CIS)
Independent auditor	Crowe U.K. LLP 3rd floor The Lexicon Mount Street Manchester M2 5NT
Bankers	Lloyds Bank PLC 8 Foregate Street Chester CH1 1XP

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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the Financial Statements and Auditor's Report of the charitable company for the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021. The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report and a Directors' report under company law.

During the year The Learning Trust ("the Trust") operated three secondary academies in Chester. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 2,580 and had a roll of 2,211 in the school census in October 2020. Each school has its own defined admissions policy to reflect individual school characteristics.

Principal Activities

The principal activity is to advance education for the public benefit by establishing, maintaining, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum for students of different abilities up to the age of 19.

As at 31 August 2021, those schools were Christleton High School (CHS), Queen's Park High School (QPHS) and Chester International School (CIS). There were no other schools in the Trust during the year.

Structure, governance and management

a. Constitution

The Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is a charitable company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Memorandum and Articles of Association, dated 9 February 2011 and revised on 3 September 2016, are the primary governing documents of the MAT.

During the year, the MAT had seven individuals, who acted as the Trustees for the charitable activities of the Trust and are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as the Trust. The Trustees are normally appointed on a four year rolling basis.

Details of the Trustees who served during the year are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

b. Members' liability

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

To provide greater separation between Members and Trustees, three Members were appointed during 2019/20 and the Trust now has seven Members five of which are not also Trustees.

c. Trustees' indemnities

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees, governors and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on the Trust's business.

The limit of this indemnity is £10,000,000 maximum aggregate in any one membership year.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Structure, governance and management (continued)

d. Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Trustees

On 1 September 2016 the members appointed six Trustees, five of whom had served the predecessor academy school (CHS), as Trustees of the newly formed MAT. These Trustees were initially appointed on a four year term of office, to provide initial stability.

It was agreed at the time that, on expiry of the initial term, future appointments would be of varying terms, to ensure a staggered re appointment or replacement process. That has again taken place during 2020/21 with the re-appointments of Jean Charlton and Euan Imrie for a further 3 years and Nick Crowther for a further 2 years following the 1 year extensions that were granted to them the previous year. Members will continue to carry out the reviews during 2021/22 to determine any further extensions or recruit replacements for those whose terms end within 2022.

No new Trustees were appointed to the Trustee Board within 2020/21.

When appointing new Trustees, the Members give consideration to the skills and experience mix of existing Trustees in order to ensure that the Board has the necessary skills to contribute fully to the Trust's development. This approach has been successfully used within recent recruitment processes.

All Trustees annually complete a Skills audit and Training Needs Analysis. All Trustees submit a comprehensive curriculum vitae and skills audit, which are used as a key part of the appointment process and to determine future training needs.

All Members and Trustees have signed an appointment letter outlining the role, expectations and responsibilities. Trustees have a rolling programme of performance reviews.

e. Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of Trustees

Despite there being no appointments during the year, there is a comprehensive Trustee Induction Programme in place, which is normally managed by the Chief Executive Officer throughout the year tailored to the individual and includes briefings by senior staff, tours of the schools to meet staff and students as well as being provided with papers necessary for the fulfilment of the role. Members also undergo a detailed Induction Programme, albeit the induction of our most recent Members has been severely curtailed by Covid-19 restrictions.

All Members and Trustees have signed relevant appointment letters and their roles and responsibilities are set out in Code of Governance Guidelines, previously adopted by Members and Trustees. These are consistent with the guidance contained within Academies' Financial Handbook.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Structure, governance and management (continued)

f. Organisational structure

Organisational Structure – Trust level

The Members formally meet once a year but do normally meet up to three times per year.

The following decisions are reserved for the Members:

- Amending Trust's Articles of Association
- Appointing and removing Members
- Appointing and removing Trustees
- Directing Trustees
- Appointing and removing Auditors

The Trustees formally meet a minimum of six times per year although typically there are additional meetings to cover particular topics. They have established an overall framework for the governance of the Trust and determine membership, terms of reference and procedures of Committees and other groups, which are reviewed whenever deemed necessary or annually as a minimum.

They receive reports including policies from its Committees and reports from the Executive team for review and approval and monitor the activities of the Committees through the minutes of their meetings. The Trustee Board may from time to time establish working groups to perform specific tasks over a limited timescale.

Nominally, there are two sub committees, meeting termly, both of which are responsible for Trust policy, practice and performance and to monitor aspects of their work by discussion/ review/ challenge:

- Audit and Finance Committee - financial management, compliance with reporting and regulatory requirements, receiving reports from the Auditors and drafting the annual budget.
- Staffing Committee - performance management, staffing levels, strategic appointments, salaries, CPD, work life balance and personnel policies.

During the year, to enhance the governance of the MAT during Covid-19 lockdown, the number of full Business meetings were again increased and the sub-committee agenda items were discussed in the additional Business meetings.

Therefore, during the year, seven Business meetings, one Audit and Finance meeting and one Annual General Meeting were held.

Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the majority of the meetings were held virtually via conference calls or digital platforms. In addition, specific topic meetings were held during the year as required.

The following decisions are reserved for the Trustees:

- To consider any proposals for changes to the status or constitution of the Trust and its committee structure, to appoint or remove the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman, to appoint the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Clerk to the Trustees and to approve the Trust Strategic Development Plans and budget.
- The Trustees are responsible for the overall performance of the Trust, setting general policy, approving the statutory accounts, monitoring the Trust by the use of budgets and other data, and making major decisions about the direction of the Trust, its schools, capital expenditure and staff appointments.

The Trustees devolved responsibility for day to day management of the MAT to the CEO, Headteachers of the schools and the Education Improvement Partner.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Structure, governance and management (continued)

During the year, the CEO was the Accounting Officer and the Chief Financial Officer was the Financial Officer.

To best seize the opportunities that exist to both develop and improve the schools in the Trust in the medium term future, a new central structure was agreed and this will be implemented in 2021/22.

This will involve a strengthened Executive Team with the part time appointments of a Development Director, the engagement of a part time Strategic HR consultant and the full time appointment of a Deputy Headteacher responsible for the Quality of Education within and across the Trust's secondary Schools.

Organisational structures - Schools level

Each school within the Trust has a leadership structure, which consists of a Local Governing Body (LGB) of elected and appointed Governors and a Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The aim of the leadership structure is to devolve responsibility and encourage involvement in decision making at all levels, particularly to those that operate closest to students.

The SLT's within each school, normally consist of a Headteacher or Principal, Deputy Headteacher / Principal, Support Operations / Business Manager, Assistant Headteachers / Principals and Senior Teachers. The exact numbers and make up at each school varies with the specific needs of that school.

The SLT controls the school at an executive level, implementing the policies laid down both by the Trustees and by LGBs and reporting back to them. The Headteacher and the LGB (or a designated Committee) are responsible for the authorisation of spending within agreed budgets.

Departmental spending control is devolved to budget holders. The Headteacher is responsible for the appointment of staff, through appointment panels for teaching posts, which normally include a Governor.

Each Scheme of Delegation (Terms of Engagement) between the Trust and the respective LGB outlines that each LGB, in carrying out its role, shall:

- Initiate all measures necessary to promote high standards and aim to ensure that students are attending a successful school which gets the best for, and from, each student, so that they can "Be the best they can be". We intend to enable each student to realise his or her full academic, creative and physical potential, and to develop positive social and moral values;
- Be responsible to the Trustees for its actions and follow the expectations of Governors as laid down by the Trustees;
- Ensure that it is competent, accountable, always working in the best interests of its students and working in co operation with other schools within the Trust and one that promotes best practice in governance, within the context set by the Trust; and
- Aim to ensure that its Governors promote and uphold high standards of conduct, probity and ethics.

and that the Trustees shall support the work of the LGB by:

- Setting a clear strategic vision to allow the LGB to set and achieve its own aims and objectives within such vision; and
- Ensuring that systems are put in place to allow the Governors to be presented with timely and high quality data to allow the LGB to analyse school performance in order to support and challenge the Principal/Headteacher and the SLT of the school.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Structure, governance and management (continued)

g. Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

A Performance Review Committee has been set up to monitor performance and remuneration for key Trust personnel. Performance targets and salaries for key Trust personnel are agreed annually by the committee. Remuneration for key management personnel is reviewed as roles change. Similar arrangements exist at each school level.

The Trustees consider the CEO and the Senior Management Team as comprising the key management personnel of the MAT in charge of directing, controlling, running and operating the charity on a day to day basis. The Performance Management of the Headteachers/Principal and SLTs are delegated by Trustees to LGB's via the Terms of Engagement.

All Trustees give of their time freely and no Trustee remuneration was paid in the year for their role as Trustees. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 30 to the accounts.

Trustees are required to disclose all relevant interests on an annual basis and as a standing agenda item at all board meetings, then in accordance with the Trust's policy withdraw from decisions where a conflict of interest arises.

h. Trade union facility time

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the year	2
Full-time equivalent employee number	-

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	2
1%-50%	-
51%-99%	-
100%	-

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time	£000
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Total cost of facility time	-
Total pay bill	-
Percentage of total pay bill spent on facility time	- %

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours	-	%
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Structure, governance and management (continued)

i. Connected organisations, including related party relationships

Brio Leisure (a Community Interest Company) manages the leisure facilities, which are owned by Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council (CWAC) and there is a shared use agreement between CWAC and CHS, which initially took effect on 1st September 2014. Despite the challenges of forced closure created by Covid-19 lockdowns within the financial year, this contract continues to deliver the anticipated benefits to the school.

The MAT has strong collaborative links with its feeder primary schools, three other high schools in the area, Tarporley, Neston and Bishop Heber as part of the REAP group and with the University of Chester.

The MAT has active parent teacher associations within each of its schools the Christleton High School Association which actively supports the work of CHS, Queen's Park Parents Association supporting the work of QPHS and The Friends of CIS supporting CIS.

At the time of transfer of QPHS to The Learning Trust, the boathouse was decrepit with a proposed investment from local community groups' grants and local authority support for a rebuild costing circa £3m. In amicable discussions, supported with legal advice to all parties (DfE acting for the MAT), it was decided to exclude the land transfer of the boathouse site to support the projects continuation. The future funding of the development is uncertain and the Trust continues to be involved in discussions to secure the future use of the premises. The MAT currently has access to the facilities for students and collects the lettings income from community groups for its use, in return for caretaking the site.

Queen's Park High School Rowing Club is a sports club set up for the benefit of QPHS students and is run by a separate committee with its own constitution. There are strong links with the school and transactions have taken place with them to reimburse the school for purchases made for the club's activities.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch are connected with The Learning Trust as a registered Corporate Member. No financial transactions took place between the Trust and BAML.

There are no other related parties, which either control or significantly influence the decisions and operations of the school. There are no sponsors.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Objectives and activities

a. Objects and aims

The vision of the MAT is "to continuously achieve better outcomes for the students entrusted within its care" and the object of the MAT is to enable, manage, improve, develop and grow its current and future schools in offering a broad and balanced curriculum to allow its students to be the best they can be.

The MAT is an inclusive and nurturing trust that seeks to create opportunity through inspiring an ambition for limitless excellence, which provides students with high quality learning to provide them the best possible life chances.

We aim to get the best for, and from, each student, so that they can "Be the best they can be". We intend to enable each student to realise his or her full academic, creative and physical potential, and to develop positive social and moral values.

These objectives are encapsulated in the Trust's strapline of "Nurturing, Ambition, Excellence". We also see our core values as critical elements in helping to both drive the Trust forward and to also measure behaviours and expectations.

- Students are always first - the prime consideration in all decisions will be the best interests and educational outcomes of current and prospective students.
- Mutual benefit - the interests of the Trust will always be combined with the interests of individual schools, seeking the very best and co operating to share resources and success.
- Inclusivity - the Trust will welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities.
- Fairness - all students and staff will be treated with fairness and parity whilst encouraging diversity and identity.
- Excellence and learning - every student will be supported and challenged to achieve their potential. All adults employed by and associated with the Trust will have and exhibit a 'learning mindset'.
- Partnership - the Trust will continually seek to work in partnership to achieve better outcomes for current and prospective students, and to improve education in the area.
- Freedom to innovate and make decisions - optimum delegation to LGBs and individual schools commensurate with the Trust's statutory responsibilities and efficiency.
- Integrity - all those associated with the Trust will act with kindness, courtesy and integrity, in accordance with both school and Trust ideals and values.

Our MAT is a community in which students, staff and parents are all a part of this nurturing and caring environment.

We currently have three schools with strong, purposeful leadership determined to pursue excellence, to challenge existing norms and to be even more ambitious in our aspirations for the schools and their students. Our primary focus is to ensure all of our students make significant progress, achieve high degrees of success in their examinations and develop as young adults.

We are continuing to work through and deliver the objectives laid out in each school's Strategic Development Plan to ensure that teaching and learning is of the highest standard so that our students receive a truly comprehensive education and achieve the very best they can.

We remain committed to growing the number of schools in our Trust to allow more students to benefit from the core values of the Trust, which we believe can help improve educational standards for all.

However, any potential schools joining the Trust must be of strategic benefit to both the Trust and the school

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Objectives and activities (continued)

itself. Given its current experience and expertise, the Trust will initially consider other secondary schools that can bring synergistic benefits to its existing schools or will consider partnering with those primary schools (such as Belgrave Primary School with whom the conversion process to become an Academy within The Learning Trust has continued throughout the financial year) for which a partnership can provide tangible benefits for both parties in terms of either providing a future flow of students or in allowing the greater continuity in curriculum to improve students' future outcomes or both.

Any schools offered to or wishing to join the Trust will be subject to effective financial due diligence, detailed operational reviews and to its tried and tested Schools' Improvement process. Any decisions to allow a school to join the Trust will be made solely within those frameworks.

Capital work and grants

At both sites, we continue to upgrade our buildings and enhance the learning environment for our students on an on going basis.

During the 2019/20 financial year, of the three CIF grants bid for, two bids were successful. CHS' bid to improve the site's kitchen facilities was worth £148,262 but was only made in June 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the work, given the need to maintain an operational kitchen, was delayed and was not completed until the summer of 2021. QPHS were successful with its re-fenestration bid, worth £499,224, with work completed during 2020/21.

An appeal was lodged against the QPHS bid for roof repairs but was unsuccessful.

Further bids for both of the sites at CHS and QPHS were made during the 2020/21 period. CHS was successful with its internal heating refurbishment bid (value : £625K) and QPHS with its Phase 2 re-fenestration bid (value : £431K) but was again unsuccessful with its roofing bid, which will again be re-submitted in 2021/22 bidding cycle. This is becoming more critical with each passing year and a further bid will submitted within the next round of bidding.

However, to help generate further income, the future use of the Trust assets on the Handbridge site has been reviewed and a potential opportunity is currently being explored with a third party. Opportunities will only be entered into that would not negatively impact on the sites ability to cater for expected future student number growth, whilst also providing immediate tangible benefits for the students educated at Handbridge.

In addition, the opportunities for increased collaboration, particularly in regard to post 16, between QPHS, CHS and CIS, designed to both improve student outcomes and enhance the financial position of the schools were formally reviewed during the year and are being, and will continue to be implemented where appropriate.

Initial first steps include the availability of a Protective Services Course and an Explora course for Post 16 students from September 2021. Schools have also registered an interest in introducing Technical Levels (T Levels) from September 2023, albeit exact courses and implementation plans need to be developed.

During the year, CHS was approached by CWaC with a request to permanently increase the Year 7 entry PAN to 224. This was initially implemented by the school on a temporary basis in direct response to changing demographics resulting from the expansion of a feeder primary school following a major residential development and, therefore, to attempt to reduce the number of disappointed parents and students, who, when placing CHS as their first preference, and with previous demographic trends, would have been more likely to gain a place at Christleton High School in previous years.

However, given the footprint of the school, this was unsustainable without further investment in the infrastructure of the buildings. From CWaC High Needs funding, the offer was made to provide up to £1.7m of investment capital to CHS provided the PAN was permanently increased to 224.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Objectives and activities (continued)

Following debate amongst Local Governors, the decision was reached, and ratified by Trustees, to accept the investment and permanently increase the PAN. An initial £50k was advanced within 2020/21 to carry out a detailed Feasibility and Suitability study ahead of the balance of the further investment to carry out building works in 2021/22.

b. Achievements and Performance

As a general objective, the Trust's primary aim is to ensure that all of our students reach their maximum potential and are given a wide range of opportunities to ensure that they are able to progress to the next level of their education or career.

At a school level, whilst accepting that every year group is different, the Trust also hopes to improve progress overall on the previous year's outcomes, whether by achievement, attainment or both. Each school has its own specific improvement objectives. These generally involve GCSE and Post 16 results, Progress 8 and Ofsted ratings.

However, the continued COVID-19 crisis, together with the associated school lockdowns and, for the second year running, revised Examinations protocols, has meant that, again, this year's results are more difficult to compare given that students were awarded the Teacher Assessment Grade (TAG) based on a number of assessments rather than year end exams. These grades are, however, more representative than in 2020 when the better grade of Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) or standardised grades were applied to students and clearly demonstrate that our schools continue to make good progress.

Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown

Following the disrupted end to the previous Academic school year, the 2020 Autumn term resumed with fewer restrictions in place. When students returned in Spring 2021, lateral flow testing was in place to allow the schools to run remarkably well at first but this remained a disrupted environment particularly at CHS where a surge in positive tests led to surge testing and PCR testing. The challenges for schools, resulting from contextual and local factors, remain large and concerning, such is the continued disruption to education.

The loss of in-school Teaching and Learning for the majority demanded, and continues to demand, a new way of working for our staff and students alike. Despite a steep learning curve for all in 2019/20, the more widespread move to digital lessons in 2020/21, whether they were live or recorded, was much more the norm and was, we believe, much more an effective and positive experience for our students than in the past, notwithstanding the fact that such learning can never replace face to face in class teaching.

We would like to thank and praise both our teachers for their commitment to preparing the work and our students for adapting to a 'new norm' and completing the work set in the positive ways that they have. Our parental feedback would indicate that parents also share these views.

The loss of an exams season for our year 11 and 13 students for a second consecutive year was particularly disappointing for both our students and for our schools. Again, for those students, who have worked hard and diligently over a number of years, to not have the full closure of sitting their exams and not being able to enjoy and celebrate their successes as their compatriots in previous years would have, could be damaging to their mental health. This is something we remain concerned about. To help mitigate and alleviate some of these impacts, each Trust school has taken structural steps provide greater practical support to its students. These include enhanced pastoral support and professional counselling support where required

In truth, after nearly 18 months of disruption and challenging circumstances, those concerns about mental health and general wellbeing apply to all year groups. As we hopefully return to a more normal school environment than

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Objectives and activities (continued)

in 2020/21, the task of re-integrating all students both pastorally and educationally, so that they can fully resume their education in a safe and comfortable environment to best optimise their future outcomes, will be challenging and, with the possibility of further disruption throughout the coming year, could be longer lasting.

Whilst we have started the 'catch up' process by using tutoring, Summer schools, mental health support and stronger 121 mentoring with those students most affected, we do remain particularly concerned that the most disadvantaged of our students will be the ones who have suffered most from the various lockdowns. We are acutely aware that we will have to continue to work particularly hard throughout the next 12 months and beyond to help them catch up as best as possible.

Financially, the support offered by Central Government was both welcomed and needed, albeit smaller than hoped for and required.

Again the Trustees would like to place on record their thanks to all of the Trust's staff for their hard work and selflessness in continuing to provide on-going face to face provision to our most vulnerable students, providing pastoral support to all students, delivering virtual teaching to all year groups and introducing robust assessments to aid Teacher Assessment Grades, as well as providing face to face teaching with all year groups whenever restrictions allowed. It is also important to recognise our support staff, volunteers and Senior Leaders, who were responsible for managing operational responses to Covid-19, whether it was carrying out testing protocols, managing internal track and trace procedures or simply supporting concerned and worried students, parents and carers.

It is difficult in this medium to fully convey the full level of disruption Covid-19, particularly the Delta variant within the second half of the Summer term across all of our schools, has caused to the normal operations of our schools as gyms were transformed into testing centres and halls into holding centres for those students potentially demonstrating Covid-19 symptoms and awaiting collection.

As Trustees, we readily and publicly recognise that all of our people had their own anxieties, fears and family concerns, which made their support and commitment all the more remarkable.

Christleton High School



Christleton High School, under the continued stewardship of Darran Jones, has again achieved outstanding exam results, in this again disrupted school year. Throughout previous years, school forecasts indicated that this GCSE cohort, in particular, were destined for good outcomes with improved Progress. We were delighted that the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAGs) process was able to reflect the high achievement expectations we had for our students.

Christleton prides itself on being a truly inclusive sixth Form and its A2 (including equivalent) results for 157 students (2020: 127) were ahead of those of previous years, with the average points per entry reaching 40.13 (2020: 36.98). The average grade was B (2020: B-). The Value add reached 0.40 (2020: 0.28). These results have translated into the vast majority taking up or deferring places at universities or pursuing their preferred pathway.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Objectives and activities (continued)

GCSE results remained particularly strong this year. 89% (2020: 91%) of all students achieved 9-4 grades including English and Maths with 72% of disadvantaged students achieving these grades (2020: 69%). On the more difficult measure, 74% of all students achieved 9-5 including English and Maths (2020: 70%). These results placed CHS well ahead of the local and national average. Sadly, no formal school measures are being published but, on the GCSE results key measure of progress, had it been published, the provisional Progress8 figure would have been strong. Attainment8 results were slightly improved for all students at 60.38 (2020: 59.96) and for Disadvantaged students consistent at 46.44 (2020: 46.46).

These fantastic results, of which we are very proud, are, we believe, due in large part to the school's determination to develop independent and creative approaches to learning, together with the hard work of students, inspirational teachers and supportive parents.

Whilst we know our responsibilities in helping students in achieving the best possible educational outcomes, we are also acutely aware of our wider responsibilities to the personal development and growth of those entrusted in our care. Therefore, we believe that extra-curricular activities are vital in helping students' personal development and desire to be the best they can be.

Sadly, the continued Covid-19 crisis has undermined our best efforts to hold extra-curricular events. Sports competitions were cancelled and school productions were shelved. The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – a hugely popular activity amongst CHS students – was also severely curtailed during the year.

Given that further possible restrictions could be imposed in the 2021/2022 academic year, it is likely that extra-curricular activities may well be curtailed again – this is the hidden impact that Covid-19 will have.

The Trustees remain incredibly impressed with the way in which Darran Jones and his Senior Leadership team have led the school in the most difficult and trying of circumstances. We are both lucky and pleased that the future direction of the school rests in safe hands and is operating smoothly despite the challenges of the last 18 months.

Queen's Park High School



Led by Lyndsay Watterson, QPHS, having been awarded a GOOD rating in its Ofsted inspection in January 2020, has seen, despite the pandemic, during 2020/21 continued increasing interest in the school, rising student numbers in excess of 12% per annum and improving student results.

We fully expect that this Ofsted rating coupled with its improving results will provide further impetus for continued growth and success for the school. However, the speed of student growth continues to bring its own challenges.

The decision of the EFSA to provide interim financial support to allow us to recruit extra staff to teach the increasing student roll is much needed. However, Year 1 of the potential 3 year programme saw us exceed the minimum 5% growth target by a further 8%. Year 2 is tracking at a further 8% above minimum targets to qualify, which potentially places a strain on the Year 3 target.

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Objectives and activities (continued)

At the end of Year 2 of the programme of support, we have easily exceeded the 3 year target of pupil numbers and are very close to achieving our own stretch pupil growth targets in the 3 years. We do not wish to be victims of our own success and will continue discussions with the EFSA to ensure support is forthcoming for the full 3 years of the support programme even if the Year 3 hurdle of 5% is not reached.

Given that both A Levels and GCSE results have been awarded on the basis of Teacher Assessment Grades (TAGs), with a small Sixth form of 36 students, A level results at QPHS were relatively strong with the average grade being B- (2020: C+) and average points per entry being 35.6 (2020: 31.93). The numbers entering the sixth form for 2021/22 were again encouraging and increasing, with almost one third of entrants now coming from other schools. Given that the current year 11 is a small cohort, it is expected that those entering Sixth Form in 2022/23 will be smaller.

The GCSE results at QPHS again improved with 75% of all students achieving 9 4 grades including English and Maths (compared to 73% in 2020). Disadvantaged students also achieved an increase in these subjects and grades from 43% in 2020 to 50% in 2021. On the harder measure of 9 5 passes in English and Maths, 62% achieved both (2020: 56%).

Despite the nature of the awarding of grades again this year, we do feel that these outcomes were fully justified and largely in line with our own expectations of the levels that this year group would have achieved had they actually taken their examinations. The school had always targeted achievement in line with FFT20 targets, which is what was largely achieved.

Attainment8 results were, as expected with the relative nature of the two cohorts, were slightly reduced for all students at 51.10 (2020: 53.74) and for Disadvantaged students, 35.55 (2020: 38.55)

Sadly, the vast majority of extra curricular activities were curtailed within this year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The end of this year saw the departure from QPHS of Lyndsay Watterson as Headteacher. Lyndsay is moving to a central Trust role as Trust Development Director from 1 September 2021.

Lyndsay has provided strong and inspirational leadership for QPHS for nearly 7 years. The Academisation of the school, the turnaround in results, growth in pupil numbers, greater financial stability and the achievement of a GOOD Ofsted rating are testament to her total commitment, compassion, dedication and hard work during her time in charge.

The Trust, students, parents and staff owe her a great deal for transforming the school during her time at the helm, often in difficult and trying circumstances. On behalf of them all, we would like to take this opportunity to place on record our thanks for her tremendous efforts in such a highly pressured and stressful environment, particularly during the last 12 months throughout the period of school closures and remote learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lyndsay's replacement, Tom Kearns, has already ably demonstrated, through his actions and approach, that our hopes and expectations in appointing him are being met. We are excited by the future development of QPHS.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Objectives and activities (continued)

Chester International School (CIS)



Another of our schools, CIS also saw a new Principal in 2019/20 and, in this her second year, Katrina Brown has again surpassed the Trust's expectations. Despite a challenging year, the school continued to grow and improve its academic outcomes and, as a result, CIS has performed ahead of our expectations in both attracting new students to the School during the year and in retaining existing students through improved Teaching and Learning. It has been particularly pleasing to see both objectives being achieved and, as we moved into 2021/22, both Years 10 & 11 are near to PAN.

This year should have seen the school enter its third round of GCSE and International Baccalaureate (IB) students taking examinations. Both of these clearly were again badly affected by Covid-19 restrictions.

IB results have been awarded based on a combination of both Teacher Assessment Grades (TAGs) and coursework, we were pleased with the results with 91% (2020: 83%) of IB students achieving the diploma a package of 6 subjects plus the full core with a global pass rate of 85%. Our average point score per student improved to 33.7 (2020: 28.5) against a global average of 31. Average UCAS points improved to 199 from 147. Our IB career programme students all gained the full career programme with average UCAS points improved to 144 from 102.

It was particularly heartening that these IB results, whether it be the Diploma or Career Programme, were strong enough to allow all students to progress to the next stage on their chosen pathway, with a number of students moving to international universities. One student in particular received remarkable results by achieving the maximum Diploma point score - a feat that less than 0.5% of all students worldwide achieved.

These results at Post 16 level are real vindication of our decision to adopt the IB qualification when originally setting up the school and are proving to be a real point of difference.

Despite the TAGs process employed this year, GCSE results were also particularly encouraging with 82% achieving 9 4 grades including English and Maths (2020: 68%) with 80% of Disadvantaged students achieving these subjects and grades (2020: 54%). On the higher measure, 53% achieving at 9 5 including English and Maths (2020: 40%). We expect that, as the school becomes more established and its teaching and learning more embedded, these results will improve further.

It is also pleasing to be able to report that a number of students have embraced the enrichment activities on offer including a series of student elective programmes, such as First Aid, Driving Theory and Mindfulness.

The school is now well established and the numbers attending for 2021/22 Academic year are extremely encouraging and are also well in line with our original initial expectations. It was particularly pleasing that CIS was able to continue its Teaching and Learning during the lockdowns caused by Covid-19 crisis, by utilising the Canvas teaching platform upon which the school was originally conceived, with minimal educational disruption. This experience was both helpful and beneficial in allowing all of our schools to introduce remote learning both quickly and effectively.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Objectives and activities (continued)

c. Public benefit

In setting our objectives and planning our activities, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

The Trustees met 7 times during the year in addition to the (at least) 4 Business meetings of each of the Governing Bodies of CHS, CIS and QPHS. In all their discussions and decision making, they were conscious of their use of public funds for the furtherance of student education and the betterment of their experience whether this be employing the best staff or using capital to create a welcoming environment.

The respective Terms of Reference provide a framework for information and challenge.

In support of Trustee and Governing Body decisions, the School Leadership Groups have used data to support their actions and proposals as well as creating an atmosphere for new initiatives and opportunities and challenging standing procedures. There is a culture of celebration of student achievement.

Further information is contained in the sections on Objectives and Activities and Achievement and Performance.

Strategic report

Achievements and performance

a. Key performance indicators

A key financial performance indicator is the level of reserves held at the Balance Sheet date. In particular, we give specific focus to the management of spending against General Annual Grant (GAG). It is the Trust's management policy that, in general terms, the income received in any one year is spent for the benefit of those students in the schools that year.

As funding is based on student numbers, this is also a key performance indicator. Student numbers at CHS for September 2021 were 1,102 in Years 7-11 (2020: 1099) and 320 (2020: 320) in Sixth Form. It is anticipated that this number will marginally increase in Years 7-11 in future years, as the school has recently been oversubscribed, but Sixth Form numbers can vary and this is a matter discussed regularly by the Governors and SLT, bearing in mind Sixth Form funding. However, the new academic year sees a small increase to Sixth Form numbers. The current number of Sixth Form students is just about the optimum level for the school to best balance both educational standards and operational effectiveness.

As a result of us receiving in-year funding for 2021/22, qualifying for funding Student numbers at QPHS for September 2021 were 533 (2020: 487) in Years 7-11 and 117 (2020: 106) in Sixth Form. This represents an increase of 48 students (8%). We have seen consistent and strong growth in student numbers at the school in the years since academisation within our Trust and we expect this trend to continue for the next few years. This has however placed an increasing strain on the school's ability to teach the extra children, given the lagged nature of funding.

We were therefore both pleased and appreciative to receive DfE adjusted funding for both 2020/21 and 2021/22. In theory, this will remain in place for 2022/23 year provided that we continue to see growth in our student numbers by at least 5% in that year. Potentially, as numbers are increasingly so rapidly, this remains more challenging but, in the first two years of the scheme, we have more than surpassed the 3 year target set by DfE so are hopeful that, if we fall marginally short of the percentage target, the cumulative 3 year actual student number growth when viewed against target will be taken into consideration. Discussions with local DfE contacts have already begun.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

Given the in year nature of funding at CIS, student numbers at CIS at September 2021 were 151 in Key Stage 4 (Year 10 & 11) (2020: 121) and 81 in Key stage 5 (Year 12 & 13) (2020: 78). This is an increase of 33 students (17%) on the same time last year. This is the final year of in-year funding and therefore these numbers will also be the baseline funding figures for 2022/23. It is particularly pleasing that Key Stage 4 is almost at PAN.

Therefore, total student numbers, generating funding for 2021/22, at CHS within the 2020 Autumn Term census totalled 1,419 and student numbers at QPHS & CIS within the Autumn Term census of 2021 totalled 873. In summary 2,292 Trust students qualified for funding (2020: 2,166).

Total student numbers, generating funding for 2022/23, at CHS and CIS within the 2021 Autumn Term census totalled 1,654. QPHS student numbers, qualifying for funding, will not be known until October 2022, but are expected to be an increase of at least 5% on this year.

The Trustees and Governors are kept aware of employee matters, with particular emphasis on staff development and well-being. One potential indicator of both is the number of staff leavers and the summer of 2021 saw a slightly increased turnover in teaching staff across the Trust, attributable largely to contract expiry, promotions and retirements. The numbers were well within expected levels and are not a matter of concern.

The Trust remains committed to recruiting, developing and retaining the very best staff available and to this end, it supplements competitive pay and conditions with a strong programme of continuing professional development and proactive succession planning. The Trust always replaces, wherever possible, with 'the best staff available' and are confident this year's new recruits will again prove to be so.

b. Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries and given recent future funding and pay and pensions support announcements, the Board of Trustees has a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

For this reason, the Trustees continue 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 Accounting Policies.

c. Changes during the year

Strategy

As we entered the financial year, the MAT comprised the three secondary schools, which is its current portfolio. Against this backdrop, the Trustees decided that the key Strategic focus in the year was four fold:

- **Enabling:** To ensure the financial base of the Trust was secure and robust enough to create a balanced budget for 2020/21 against the uncertain background of National Fairer Funding and an increasing cost base over which the Trust had limited control. To further develop and improve the infrastructure and resources to support three or more schools effectively to allow the SLT's to focus on improving outcomes for students
- **Improving:** School Improvement for CHS, QPHS and CIS to continue and further drive their school improvement activities to improve outcomes for students.
- **Growing:** To seize future opportunities to grow both the number and type of schools within the growth platforms agreed.

These strategies remain current as we enter the new financial year but have been supplemented, following a strategic review, by further one for 2021/22

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

- Developing: To seize future opportunities to enhance the curriculum offering at schools within the growth platforms agreed.

d. Changes in Management Structure

During the financial year, a number of planned management changes have been confirmed and implemented with effect from 1 September 2021.

Trust level

Nigel Follos remains in the role of CEO and Accounting Officer albeit in 2021/22, he will, as previously planned, reduce his working time to 3 days/week. This role will focus on the financial, growth and support elements of the Trust's strategy and the change is only possible as we have strengthened the Trust team in other key areas.

Lesley Carding remains as Chief Financial Officer and Phil Hill continues as Site and Establishments Manager for the Trust.

However, against the backdrop of a recent Trust strategic review into the priority areas for its future direction, Lyndsay Watterson (previously Headteacher of QPHS) will head up the Development strand of the recently updated strategy as Development Director. This will focus on developing new initiatives designed to both improve student outcomes but also to enhance the financial performance of the Trust. This part time role will primarily focus on curriculum development and the decision to introduce a Public Services Course within QPHS for the 2021/22 academic year to provide more options for the Trust's students is just the first example of this.

Lyndsay will also work with external stakeholders to develop meaningful relationships that can enhance student employment opportunities, work on the transitions from Primary to Secondary, whilst also providing valuable insight into future Ofsted Inspections for our other secondary schools.

As planned, Damian Stenhouse stepped down from his role as Education Improvement Partner in the Summer but has agreed to continue to advise Trustees and to mentor the senior Trust team for the forthcoming Academic year. His experience, insight and challenge will continue to be invaluable.

The strategic responsibilities of Improvement challenge and development at all Secondary schools in the Trust will pass to Darran Jones (Headteacher, Christleton High School). This will be in addition to his current role at Christleton. He will also mentor and support the Trust's Secondary Heads.

Sarah Chesworth, who had been seconded into the Trust team for the last 12 months with a remit to support and deliver operational improvements, will continue fully in that role for at least the forthcoming Academic year.

The constraints of Covid-19 have meant that the capacity to drive improvement has been frustratingly curtailed in recent months so, in the coming year, we firmly believe that, with more time allocated to her Trust Improvement role, Sarah will be best placed to fully realise the benefits that will come from working closely with the Secondary Headteachers and Senior Leadership teams to deliver the improvement initiatives, designed to improve the educational outcomes of all of our Trust's students.

With over 250 employees, the Trust has taken the decision that the time is now right to bolster its people management and has engaged a part time Strategic HR consultant to ensure that strategically we are focussed on developing our staff to achieve the best educational outcomes for the future.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

Schools level

Clearly, as a result of Lyndsay Watterson moving to the Trust role, a new Headteacher at QPHS was needed to be appointed with effect from 1 September 2021. Following a rigorous recruitment process, with a number of outstanding applicants, Tom Kearns assumed the role and joined the school at the start of the new academic year, having been a Deputy Headteacher within a number of other North West based Trusts.

It was vitally important that we appointed the best possible candidate to build on the strong foundations built at QPHS and we are confident that, after an extensive recruitment process that we have appointed the best possible individual to fill the role.

Tom is specifically charged with further developing Teaching and Learning, further enhancing Pastoral care and improving student outcomes at QPHS.

To further support the growth in numbers at QPHS, the SLT team has also been strengthened with the secondment of a Deputy Headteacher.

At the other schools in the Trust, with the new role for Sarah Chesworth, the SLT at CHS has been strengthened to absorb her previous responsibilities and at CIS, those colleagues who were in temporary SLT roles have now been confirmed in position on permanent basis.

The Trustees believe that the above appointments will correctly position the Trust to better capitalise on the short and medium term opportunities presented and to best meet the ever changing needs and challenges.

The Trustees will always be pragmatic in their approach to the optimum structure to best achieve strategic objectives and always aim to be responsive to changing needs.

e. Energy and Emissions Reporting

In the year, the Trust took the following energy efficiency actions:

- This was first full year of using gas heating at the Handbridge site
- Some inefficient windows at the Handbridge site were replacement in phase 1 of several projects to refenestrate the whole site
- Continued use of solar panels and LED lighting at all sites

The energy emissions and usage include the Trust's share of Sports facilities usage, which includes a swimming pool and sports centre.

Activities during the period were dramatically affected by closures due to Covid-19 with the comparative year 2019/20 figures seeing decreases in usage in the summer months and the year 2020/21 seeing closures in January to March 2021

Energy use for all activities across the Christleton and Handbridge sites is reflected in the table and graph overleaf.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
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Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

	YE 2021	YE 2020
UK energy use		
kWh	2,318,212	2,840,810
Associated Greenhouse gas		
emissions Tonnes CO2 equivalent	473	600
Intensity ratio		
Emissions (Tonnes CO2e per	0.03	0.05
£1,000 income)		

Associated Greenhouse gases have been calculated using *UK Government GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting 2021*

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Strategic report (continued)

Achievements and performance (continued)

Source of Information

Activity	Source of information
Electricity use	Supplier records
Natural gas use	Supplier records
Fuel used in company owned vehicles & staff travel	Mileage records
	Included
Fuel in fleet vehicles (minibuses & tractors)	Yes
Fuel reimbursed to employees for own cars	Yes

Financial review

a. Reserves policy

The Trustees review the reserve levels of the MAT annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The Trustees take into consideration the future plans of the Trust and its schools, the uncertainty over future income streams and other key risks (such as pupil numbers) identified during the risk review.

In 2020/21, the Trustees maintained the minimum level of unrestricted reserves at approximately £440,000. The reason for this was to provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected emergencies.

Total funds as at 31 August 2021 were £28,093k. Of these, £27,426k related to restricted funds, leaving £667k as free reserves. This is in excess of the agreed minimum of £440k.

Pupil numbers are increasing at all schools and there are uncertainties over the future funding. Therefore, the Trustees consider that the excess is likely to be utilised in the coming years and maybe required for expenditure on capital projects for which other funding is unavailable.

Small funds for 2021/22 future school development have also been created and a number of projects have been highlighted within the strategic planning process.

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b. Investment policy

All funds surplus to immediate requirements are invested to optimal effect. Where cash flow allows, sums may be invested on deposit for extended periods.

Due to the nature of funding, the MAT may at times hold cash balances surplus to its short term requirements. The Trustees have authorised the opening of additional short term bank investment accounts to take advantage of higher interest rates, ensuring the institution has an appropriate credit rating.

Trustees are committed to ensuring that all funds under their control are managed in such a way as to maximise return whilst minimising risk. Day to day management of the surplus funds is delegated to the Chief Financial Officer under approvals by the Board of Trustees.

c. Principal risks and uncertainties

Notwithstanding the fact that the COVID-19 crisis will have exposed risk registers across the world, the Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Trust is normally exposed, in particular those relating to the proposed MAT developments to specific teaching, provision of facilities and other operational areas, and its finances.

The Trustees were, however, pleased at how robust the Trust's Risk Management processes and action plans proved to be in response to the unprecedented events surrounding the pandemic and subsequent national school lockdown.

The Trustees have implemented a system to assess risks to the MAT, especially in operational areas (e.g. in relation to teaching, health & safety, child protection and trips) and in relation to the control of finances. They have introduced systems, including operational and internal financial controls in order to minimise risk. Where significant financial risk still remain, they have ensured adequate insurance cover is in place and have remained within the Government's RPA Programme within the financial year. A number of smaller risks, not covered by the scheme, are insured via commercial organisations.

The MAT has a formal Risk Management process to assess business risks and to implement risk management strategies. This process involves identifying the types of risk, scoring and prioritising the risks in terms of their potential operational and financial impact, assessing the likelihood of occurrence and identifying means of mitigating the risks. A MAT Risk Register is maintained and reviewed on a regular basis, and a formal end of year review within the Summer Term Business Meeting.

Specific school risks are delegated to the LGBs and are formally reviewed on a regular basis including an annual review. The management process is a mirror image of the Trust's Risk management process.

The principal risks and uncertainties facing the MAT are as follows:

- Financial & Political - the MAT has considerable reliance on continued Government funding through the ESFA and whilst this level is expected to continue, there is no assurance that Government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same levels or on the same terms beyond the short term. The Trust mitigates these risks through careful financial planning and its policy on reserves.
- Failures in governance and/or management - the risk in this area arises from potential failure to effectively manage the MAT's finances, internal controls, compliance with regulations and legislation, statutory returns, etc. The Trustees continue to review and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate these risks.
- Reputational - the continuing success of the MAT is dependent on continuing to attract student applications in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk Trustees ensure

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

that student success and achievement are closely monitored, reviewed and celebrated both internally and externally.

- Safeguarding, Safety and child protection - the Trustees, via the LGBs, continue to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the areas of selection, monitoring and training of staff, the operation of safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures, health & safety and behaviour management. Full Risk assessments are being maintained and reviewed in respect of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Staffing - the success of the MAT is reliant on the quality of its staff and so the Trustees and Governors monitor and review policies and procedures to ensure continued development and training of staff as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning.
- Fraud and mismanagement of funds - The MAT has appointed Auditors to carry out checks on financial systems and records as required by the Academies Financial Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep them up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area.

d. Financial risk management objectives and policies

The MAT has agreed a Risk Management Policy incorporating a Risk Register. There are also business continuity plans in place, which were severely tested within the COVID-19 crisis. These have been discussed by Trustees and include the financial risks to the MAT. The register and plans are constantly reviewed in light of any new information and formally reviewed annually.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the MAT is exposed, in particular those relating to its finances, teaching, facilities and other operational areas. The Trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess and minimise those risks, including internal controls described elsewhere. Where significant financial risk still remains they have ensured they have adequate insurance cover through the DfE RPA scheme.

GAG Funding - CHS

Despite a recent increase in the Published Admission Number at Year 7 to 224, CHS remains over subscribed at year 7. Therefore, risks to revenue funding from a falling roll are relatively small.

However, 6th Form numbers can vary and this is a matter discussed regularly by the Governors and the SLT, bearing in mind the continued real time reduction in post 16 funding levels and Raising the Participation Age (RPA). Entry level requirements to the 6th Form were again reviewed and some uneconomic courses did not run, whilst new courses were introduced to ensure that an inclusive 6th Form remained.

However, despite improvements in funding related to National Fairer Funding (NFF), recent significant changes in the ever increasing employment and premises costs mean that budgets for CHS will become increasingly tight in coming years, especially as the footprint of the school remains challenging to allow any further increases to the PAN, without the further investment promised by CWaC.

GAG Funding - QPHS

QPHS's circumstances remain significantly different with difficult and differing challenges resulting from pupil numbers across both the uniformed school and in the Sixth Form. The Trustees had previously recognised this risk and approved and resourced an effective Marketing Communications Plan designed to build the brand perceptions of QPHS and to generate greater pupil numbers.

Whilst still below PAN in all year groups, the student numbers are increasing rapidly as, for the last few years, larger Year 7 and Year 12 entry numbers have more than offset the lower numbers leaving in Year 11 and Year 13. This pattern will continue for the next couple of years and Year 7 entry numbers joining in September 2021 (129) and the high number of in year transfers within Years 7-11 were again encouraging indicators that the strategies are working and the reputation of the school improves.

However, although again improved for 2021/22, Sixth Form entry will remain challenging in the immediate future due to the legacy of lower numbers passing through the uniformed school and, whilst there is still plenty of work

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still to do in this area, progress to date is encouraging. Great credit is due to the team for their work in this area.

Therefore, the Trustees, whilst being well aware that optimising student numbers at QPHS will take time, are confident that with improving results, the GOOD Ofsted rating, more beneficial demographics, more choice in courses Post 16 and an enhanced brand reputation, longer term success in the numbers of student growth will be achieved.

However, this growth in student numbers continues to raise the challenge of cash flow management, as increasing student numbers with lagged funding needs extra resource and subsequent costs to effectively teach them. The Trust is thankful to DfE for financial support to help alleviate the burden through the Adjusted Funding support.

GAG Funding - CIS

Student enrolment at CIS remained largely in line with our original expectations in creating the school and, pleasingly, student numbers grew consistently throughout the year. An effective admissions drive, strong leadership and excellence in Teaching and Learning leading to improving examination results, have all provided the added impetus and springboard to accelerate student number growth further in 2020/21 and beyond.

The Trustees are aware that optimising student numbers at CIS has taken time but remain confident that, consistent longer term success in student numbers will be achieved and years 10 and 11 already at PAN. Given that funding is currently made directly within the same year, the cost base can be flexed to match the income and pupil numbers. However, 2021/22 is the last year when in-year funding applies and therefore Financial Risk is reduced by the two year groups being at PAN.

Reporting

The Trustees formally financially review the MAT's finances every term, reviewing performance against budgets and overall expenditure by means of regular update reports at all full Trustee meetings. Monthly reports are sent to the CEO/Accounting Officer, Chair of Trustees and members of the Finance Committee by the Chief Financial Officer. Regular cash flow forecasts ensure sufficient funds are held to cover all known and anticipated commitments.

At the year end, the MAT had no liabilities arising from trade creditors or debtors where there would be a significant effect on liquidity

The Trust Board recognises that the defined benefit scheme deficit (Local Government Pension Scheme), which is set out in the Notes to the financial statements, represents a significant potential liability. However, as the Trustees consider that the MAT is able to meet its known annual contribution commitments for the foreseeable future, the risk from this liability is minimised.

The balance of unrestricted reserves at the year-end were £629k, maintaining the reserves above the minimum set level of £440k.

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e. Review

Most of the Trust's income is obtained from the DfE via the ESFA in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the DfE during the year ended 31 August 2020 and the associated expenditure are shown as Restricted Funds in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 35.

During the period ending 31 August 2021, total expenditure was £13,940k (2020: £13,127k) and total income was £13,922k (2020: £11,917k).

Net assets on the balance sheet at 31 August 2021 were £28,093k (2020: £29,204k) after accounting for the local government scheme pension deficit of £4,314k (2020: £2,719k). The vast majority of the movement in the pension scheme liabilities is attributable to actuarial calculations – these have had no direct cash impact.

Net cash flow from operating activities was a surplus of £1,907k (2020: £604k) and cash balances have risen in the year from £1,562k to £1,643k.

The land, buildings and other assets at CHS were transferred to the School upon conversion in April 2011. Land and buildings were professionally valued at that time. Other assets were included in the financial statements at a best estimate at that date, taking into account purchase price and remaining useful lives. The Sports Centre Buildings at Christleton site were retained by the Local Authority.

The net book value of fixed assets and movements in tangible fixed assets are shown in the notes to the financial statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the students of each School.

The premises at Queen's Park site were transferred to the Trust on 1 April 2017 on a 125 year lease in line with current academisation guidelines.

Key financial policies adopted or reviewed during the year include the Financial Handbook which lays out the framework for financial management, including financial responsibilities of the Trustees, CEO, Headteachers, managers, budget holders and other staff, as well as delegated authority for spending. Other policies reviewed and updated included (Allegations of Financial Impropriety, Retention of Records, Charges and Risk Management) as well as a review of Insurance needs. All financial and staff related policies were reviewed in line with the new MAT structure to ensure consistency across MAT schools.

Trustees appointed Hall Livesey Brown to undertake a programme of internal checks on financial controls to ensure compliance with the conditions of the revised Financial Handbook, and acted fully on the small number of low risk, low impact suggestions made.

Fundraising

The Trust had no fundraising activities requiring disclosure under the provision of the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016.

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Future developments

Our primary focus in 2021/2022 is four fold.

- Firstly, in the immediate short term, given the disruption to Teaching and Learning from the COVID-19 lockdowns of the last 18 months, our key priority is to ensure that all of our students re-integrate back into the structure and discipline of attending school and positively re-engage with in-class learning to optimise catch-up in any gaps in their learning. Whilst a priority for all students, this is particularly important for those Pupil Premium and Vulnerable students. Given that Year 11s and Year 13s have critical examinations at the end of this year, they will be at the heart of our focus but all year groups will need our support. We are also well aware of the impact on students' wellbeing and mental health.
- Secondly, in the medium-term, we will be striving to ensure that our students can be the very best they can be and therefore make significant progress to both achieve high degrees of success in their examinations and personal development. The continual drive to further improve our schools remains a key platform in achieving this.
- Thirdly, given that two of our schools still remain below optimum student capacity, the need to optimise students at each of the schools will also receive focus.
- Fourthly, it is important to effectively and successfully integrate Belgrave Primary School into the Trust. Belgrave is expected to finally join within Q1 2021/22 and the Trust hopes to use this as a platform for further possible growth in that sector.

The effective and efficient development of the smooth operational running of the MAT will continue to ensure that policies, terms of reference, accountabilities and responsibilities between the Trust and the LGBs will best allow future improvement and development.

The Trustees have set clear objectives to ensure the Trust enables the schools to improve, whilst ensuring that the school development plans are effectively delivered.

As a subsidiary objective, it is also likely that the Trustees will continue to actively seek new opportunities for new schools to join the MAT but will review any and all opportunities on their merits in relation to the Trust's founding principles.

However, the Trustees will only look at further opportunities once they are assured the Trust can thrive and allow all of our current students to be the very best they can be.

Funds held as custodian on behalf of others

The financial statements include the results of the CHS Prize Fund, a registered charity (number 1031383) which is under the control of the Trust. The objects of the Fund are to provide benefits of any kind to CHS not normally provided by public funds. At 31 August 2021 the Trustees were Mrs J Charlton, Mr N Follos and Mr P Heath.

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Employee involvement and employment of the disabled

The Trust fully understands the principles of the Act and the work needed to ensure that those with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and are given equal opportunities.

A protected characteristic, under the Act, is as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Sex (including transgender people)
- Gender reassignment
- Maternity and pregnancy
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership (for employees).

Information relevant to employees is available via:

- Equality Policy
- Racial Equality Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Application forms for prospective employees
- Information pack for prospective employees

Disclosure of information to auditor

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

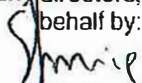
- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware, and
- that Trustees have taken all the steps that ought to have been taken as a Trustee in order to be aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's auditor is aware of that information.

Auditor

For the year 2020/2021 Crowe UK were re-appointed as the Trust Auditors by the members.

The Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on 26 November 2021 and signed on its

behalf by:



.....
Euan Imrie
(Chair of Trustees)

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of responsibility

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

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day to day responsibility to the CEO, as Accounting Officer, and The Chief Financial 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 The Learning 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. In addition to ad-hoc Strategic Topic meetings, the board of Trustees has formally met 7 times during the year. As a result of the Coronavirus crisis, most of these were held virtually by Microsoft Teams.

Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Euan Imrie, Chair of Trustees	7	7
Paul Carter	4	7
Jean Charlton	6	7
Nick Crowther, Vice Chair	6	7
Paul Heath	7	7
Vicky Higham	5	7
Kayte Parlevliet	7	7

Paul Carter requested, and was granted, Leave of Absence during the year due to a family illness and subsequent bereavement. Paul returned fully to Trustee duties at the start of the 2021/22 Financial year.

The Audit and Finance Committee is a sub committee of the main board of Trustees. Its purpose is to monitor the financial administration of the school to ensure efficient and effective use of funds in accordance with current regulations by discussion, review and challenge at its meetings.

This was included within an increased number of Business Meetings within 2020/21, but met once for presentation of the report of the Auditors.

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Review of value for money

As Accounting Officer, the CEO has responsibility for ensuring that the MAT 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 achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The Accounting Officer considers how the MAT'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 appropriate.

Student Attainment and Welfare

Our focus here is demonstrated by the longer-term trends in exam results, particularly as GCSE results for 2020/21 academic year were again relatively strong and improving across the MAT.

The MAT tracks attendance and behaviour of all students, these are significantly better than national and local averages and continue to improve.

At all schools, Pupil premium funds are utilised to try to narrow the educational attainment gap. Accountability is through direct reporting (including VFM reviews) by the relevant Assistant Headteachers to the Head and to the relevant governor committees. Pupil Premium strategies are published on school websites and achievement outcomes are reported to full governors at least annually.

Trustee challenge, awareness and oversight of MAT finances

The MAT benefits from the provision of a suitably qualified Audit Committee which reviews key financial policies, systems and procedures, including the use of tenders. Auditors present reports on compliance to the Finance and Audit Committee.

The Finance and Audit Committee receives termly budget monitoring and cashflow reports, whilst LGBs receive regular updates on their respective school's budget. The Accounting Officer, members of the Finance Committee and Chair of Trustees receive monthly statements with full explanations of budget variances and has day to day access to all staff involved in purchasing.

The full Board of Trustees approves the budget each year and is mindful of the need to best balance expenditure against income to ensure a secure financial foundation for the MAT.

Before presentation to Members, the Board of Trustees receives and approves the Annual Accounts and the External Auditors Management Reports. The MAT benchmarks financial performance against other academy Trusts to demonstrate that the Trust provides good value for money.

Tender exercises are undertaken to ensure that high value contracts are assessed against the marketplace on a regular basis to ensure that long term contracts remain competitive.

Controls and Managing Risks

Monthly budget monitoring reports are produced and reviewed by the CEO, CFO and the relevant Headteacher and any necessary remedial actions taken to address any significant variances that may have an impact on the budget out turn. These are shared with Chair of Trustees and Finance committee members.

The MAT ensures that all surplus cash balances are invested in interest bearing accounts to maximise interest earning potential with recorded Trustee approval of the transaction.

The Leadership Groups within each school, review expenditure within each budget heading both on a quarterly

THE LEARNING TRUST
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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

Review of value for money (continued)

and annual basis. As a result, adjustments are made based on the effectiveness of strategies introduced in previous years, the curriculum offer and any new strategies identified in the School Development Plans.

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 systems of internal control are based on an ongoing processes designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of academy policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage these risks efficiently, effectively and economically.

The systems of internal control have been in place in The Learning Trust for the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 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 Multi 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 ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy's significant risks, that has been in place for the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the board of Trustees.

The risk and control framework

The MAT's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability.

In particular, it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the board of Trustees;
- regular reviews by the Trust Board of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines.
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- identification and management of risks.

The Board of Trustees has decided to employ Hall Livesey Brown, to carry out a programme of internal checks.

The reviewer's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the academy's financial systems. In particular the checks carried out in the current period included:

- Budgeting
- General ledger
- Account reconciliations
- Petty Cash

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)

The risk and control framework (continued)

- Payroll processing
- Expenditure and Creditors
- Income and Debtors
- Fixed Assets
- The impact of COVID-19
- Cyber Security

On an annual basis, the reviewer reports to the board of Trustees on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of Trustees' financial responsibilities.

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 reviewer;
- the work of the external auditor;
- the financial management and governance self assessment process;
- the work of the executive managers within the academy who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 26 November 2021 and signed on their behalf by:


.....

Euan Imrie
Chair of Trustees


.....

Nigel Follos
Chief Executive Officer

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

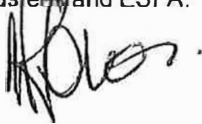
STATEMENT ON REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As Accounting Officer of The Learning Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy Trust board of Trustees and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non compliance with terms and conditions of all funding received by the Multi Academy Trust, under the funding agreement in place between the Multi Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education.

As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2020.

I confirm that I and the Academy Trust Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of 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 Academies Financial Handbook 2020.

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.



N Follos
Accounting Officer

Date: 26 November 2021

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction published 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 . 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:

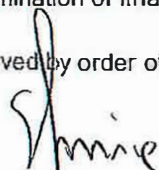
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- 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 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 and signed on its behalf by:



.....
Euan Imrie

Date: 26 November 2021

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
LEARNING TRUST**

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The Learning Trust (the 'academy') for the year ended 31 August 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and the related notes, 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 (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the academy's affairs as at 31 August 2021 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; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

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 academy in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the United Kingdom, including the Financial Reporting Council'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'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.

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
LEARNING TRUST (CONTINUED)**

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 statements 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.

Opinion 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 Strategic Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.
- the Trustees' Report and the Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the academy and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report including the Strategic Report.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, 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.

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
LEARNING TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the academy 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'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 or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
LEARNING TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We identified and assessed the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements from irregularities, whether due to fraud or error, and discussed these between our audit team members. We then designed and performed audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company/group operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), Companies Act 2006, Academies Accounts Direction and the Academy Trust Handbook. We assessed the required compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which might be fundamental to the charitable company/group's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. We also considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the charitable company/group for fraud. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context were General Data Protection Regulation, health and safety legislation, Ofsted and employee legislation.

Auditing standards limit the required audit procedures to identify non-compliance with these laws and regulations to enquire of the Trustees and other management and inspection of regulatory and legal correspondence, if any. We identified the greatest risk of material impact on the financial statements from irregularities, including fraud, to be within the timing and completeness of income recognition and the override of controls by management. Our audit procedures to respond to these risks included enquiries of management and the Board about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities, sample testing on the posting of journals, reviewing accounting estimates for biases, reviewing regulatory correspondence with the ESFA, and reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance.

Owing to the inherent limitations of an audit, there is an unavoidable risk that we may not have detected some material misstatements in the financial statements, even though we have properly planned and performed our audit in accordance with auditing standards. For example, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations (irregularities) is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely the inherently limited procedures required by auditing standards would identify it. In addition, as with any audit, there remained a higher risk of non-detection of irregularities, as these may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal controls. We are not responsible for preventing non-compliance and cannot be expected to detect non-compliance with all laws and regulations.

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.

THE LEARNING TRUST
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE
LEARNING TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Use of our report

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



Vicky Szulist (Senior statutory auditor)

for and on behalf of
Crowe U.K. LLP

Statutory Auditor

3rd floor

The Lexicon

Mount Street

Manchester

M2 5NT

Date: 16th December 2021

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE
LEARNING TRUST AND THE EDUCATION AND SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY**

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 1 July 2019 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by The Learning Trust during the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 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 The Learning Trust and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to The Learning Trust and 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 The Learning Trust and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of The Learning Trust's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Learning Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 20 April 2017 and the Academies Financial Handbook, extant from 1 September 2020, 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 2020 to 2021. 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 year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw our conclusion includes a review of the design and implementation of the Academy's internal controls and review processes on regularity, supported by detailed tests on samples of costs incurred by the Academy and specific transactions identified from our review.

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT REPORTING ACCOUNTANT'S ASSURANCE REPORT ON REGULARITY TO THE
LEARNING TRUST AND THE EDUCATION & SKILLS FUNDING AGENCY (CONTINUED)**

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggest in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Crowe UK LLP

Reporting Accountant
Crowe U.K. LLP

Statutory Auditor

Date: 16th December 2021

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2020 £000
Income from:					
Donations and capital grants	3	15	-	1,052	1,067
Other trading activities		51	161	-	212
Investments	6	1	-	-	1
Charitable activities		-	12,642	-	12,642
Total income		67	12,803	1,052	13,922
Less expenditure on:					
Raising funds		-	25	-	25
Charitable activities		29	13,151	735	13,915
Total expenditure		29	13,176	735	13,127
Net income/(expenditure) before net gains/(losses) on investments		38	(373)	317	(18)
Net gains/(losses) on investments		-	-	9	9
Net income/(expenditure)		38	(373)	326	(9)
Transfers between funds	19	37	-	(37)	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		75	(373)	289	(9)
Other recognised gains/(losses):					
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	27	-	(1,102)	-	(1,102)
Net movement in funds		75	(1,475)	289	(1,111)

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
(CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Note	Unrestricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	592	(2,707)	31,319	29,204	30,407
Net movement in funds	75	(1,475)	289	(1,111)	(1,203)
Total funds carried forward	<u>667</u>	<u>(4,182)</u>	<u>31,608</u>	<u>28,093</u>	<u>29,204</u>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 45 to 73 form part of these financial statements.

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 07523884

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2021

	Note	2021 £000	2020 £000
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	13	31,030	31,027
Investments	14	22	12
		31,052	31,039
Current assets			
Stocks	15	27	3
Debtors	16	1,148	801
Cash at bank and in hand		1,643	1,562
		2,818	2,366
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(1,150)	(1,199)
Net current assets		1,668	1,167
Total assets less current liabilities		32,720	32,206
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(314)	(283)
Net assets excluding pension liability		32,406	31,923
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	27	(4,314)	(2,719)
Total net assets		28,092	29,204
Funds of the academy			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	19	31,608	31,319
Restricted income funds	19	132	12
Restricted funds excluding pension asset	19	31,740	31,331
Pension reserve	19	(4,314)	(2,719)
Total restricted funds	19	27,426	28,612
Unrestricted income funds	19	666	592
Total funds		28,092	29,204

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 07523884

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2021

The financial statements on pages 40 to 73 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 26 November 2021 and are signed on their behalf, by:



.....
Euan Imrie

The notes on pages 45 to 73 form part of these financial statements.

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

	Note	2021 £000	2020 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	21	1,907	604
Cash flows from investing activities	23	(1,793)	(1,330)
Cash flows from financing activities	22	(33)	(25)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		81	(751)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,562	2,313
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	24, 25	<u><u>1,643</u></u>	<u><u>1,562</u></u>

The notes on pages 45 to 73 form part of these financial statements

THE LEARNING TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements of the academy, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historic 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 accounts 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 2020 to 2021 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

1.2 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 academy 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 has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the academy'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 their assessment of going concern the Trustees have considered the current and developing impact on the business as a result of the COVID-19 virus. This has not had a significant, immediate impact on the Academy's operations, but the Trustees are aware that if the current situation becomes prolonged then this may change.

Having regard to the above, the Trustees believe it appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.3 Income

All incoming resources are recognised when the academy 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 year for which it is receivable and any abatement in respect of the year 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.

1.4 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

• **Expenditure on raising funds**

This includes all expenditure incurred by the academy 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's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the academy apportioned to charitable activities.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

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1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.5 Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the academy; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

Assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

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 requiring 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 other than freehold land and assets under construction, at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Freehold property	- 2% straight line
Long-term leasehold property	- 2% straight line
Leasehold land	- 0.8% straight line
Furniture and equipment	- 20-25% straight line

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.

1.7 Investments

Fixed asset investments are a form of financial instrument and are initially recognised at their transaction cost and subsequently measured at fair value at the Balance sheet date, unless the value cannot be measured reliably in which case it is measured at cost less impairment. Investment gains and losses, whether realised or unrealised, are combined and presented as 'Gains/(Losses) on investments' in the Statement of financial activities.

1.8 Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value after making due allowance for obsolete and slow-moving stocks. Cost includes all direct costs and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.9 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

1.10 Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

1.11 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 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.

1.12 Financial instruments

The academy only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and financial liabilities of the academy and their measurement bases are as follows:

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 16. Prepayments are not financial instruments. Amounts due to the academy's wholly owned subsidiary are held at face value less any impairment. Cash at bank is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

Cash at bank is 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 as detailed in notes 17 and 18. 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. Amounts due to the academy's wholly owned subsidiary are held at face value less any impairment.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.13 Pensions

Retirement benefits to employees of the academy are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS") and the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). These are 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 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 prospective unit credit method. TPS is an unfunded multi-employer scheme with no underlying assets to assign between employers. Consequently, the TPS is treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions recognised in the period to which they relate.

The LGPS is a funded multi-employer scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the academy 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 Balance sheet date. The amounts charged to operating surplus 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.

1.14 Fund accounting

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

Restricted fixed asset funds are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the 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 Department for Education Group.

Investment income, gains and losses are allocated to the appropriate fund.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

Estimates and judgments 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.

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 27, 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 2019 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2021. 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.

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000
Donations	15	-	-	15
Capital Grants	-	-	1,052	1,052
Salix & CIF Loans	-	-	-	-
	<u>15</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,052</u>	<u>1,067</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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3. Income from donations and capital grants (continued)

	<i>Restricted funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Restricted fixed asset funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
Donations	14	-	14
Capital Grants	-	690	690
Grants	-	(215)	(215)
	<u>14</u>	<u>475</u>	<u>489</u>

4. Funding for the academy's educational operations

	Restricted funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000
DfE/ESFA grants		
GAG	11,077	11,077
Other DfE/ESFA grants		
Start Up Grants	10	10
Other DfE Group grants	922	922
SEN Income	235	235
Other incoming resources	81	81
School trip income	7	7
	<u>-</u>	<u>12,332</u>
COVID-19 additional funding (DfE/ESFA)		
Catch-up Premium	187	187
Support Costs	14	14
Mass testing	109	109
	<u>310</u>	<u>310</u>
	<u>12,642</u>	<u>12,642</u>

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4. Funding for the academy's educational operations (continued)

The Trust has been eligible to claim additional funding in year from government support schemes in response to the coronavirus outbreak. The funding received is shown above under "exceptional government funding". The funding received for coronavirus exceptional support covers £272k (2020: £38k) of staff, premises, catering and cleaning costs. These costs are included in notes 7 and 8 below as appropriate. £38k of catchup funding will be spent in 21/22.

	<i>Restricted funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
DfE/ESFA grants		
GAG	9,997	9,997
Other DfE/ESFA grants		
Start Up Grants	46	46
Other DfE Group grants	469	469
Local Authority Grants	88	88
Local Authority Grants	132	132
Other incoming resources	113	113
School trip income	312	312
	-	11,157
COVID-19 additional funding (DfE/ESFA)		
Support Costs	38	38
	38	38
	11,195	11,195

Following the reclassification in the Academies Accounts Direction 2020/21 of some grants received from the Department of Education and ESFA, the academy's funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals and Pupil Premium is no longer reported under the Other DfE Group grants heading, but as separate lines under the Other DfE/ESFA grants heading. The prior year numbers have been reclassified.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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5. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000
Hire of facilities	25	-	25
Sundry Sales	18	-	18
Other income	8	161	169
	<u>51</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>212</u>

	<i>Unrestricted funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Restricted funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
Hire of facilities	40	-	40
Sundry Sales	20	-	20
Other income	22	146	168
	<u>82</u>	<u>146</u>	<u>228</u>

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000
Investment income	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

	<i>Unrestricted funds 2020 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
Investment income	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

7. Expenditure

	Staff Costs	Premises	Other	Total
	2021	2021	2021	2021
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure on fundraising trading activities:				
Direct costs	-	-	25	25
Educational Operations:				
Direct costs	8,154	-	969	9,123
Allocated support costs	2,831	695	1,266	4,792
	<u>10,985</u>	<u>695</u>	<u>2,260</u>	<u>13,940</u>

	<i>Staff Costs</i>	<i>Premises</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>2020</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2020</i>
	<i>£000</i>	<i>£000</i>	<i>£000</i>	<i>£000</i>
Expenditure on fundraising trading activities:				
Direct costs	-	-	41	41
Educational Operations:				
Direct costs	7,671	710	947	9,328
Allocated support costs	2,438	594	726	3,758
<i>Total 2020</i>	<u>10,109</u>	<u>1,304</u>	<u>1,714</u>	<u>13,127</u>

8. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly	Support costs	Total funds
	2021	2021	2021
	£000	£000	£000
Educational Operations	<u>9,123</u>	<u>4,792</u>	<u>13,915</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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8. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

	<i>Activities undertaken directly 2020 £000</i>	<i>Support costs 2020 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
Educational Operations	9,328	3,758	13,086

Analysis of support costs

	<i>Total funds 2021 £000</i>	<i>Total funds 2020 £000</i>
Staff costs	3,197	2,438
Catering	172	87
Governance	23	17
Professional	132	168
Other Support Costs	291	249
Premises Costs	765	656
Technology	212	143
	<u>4,792</u>	<u>3,758</u>

9. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	<i>2021 £000</i>	<i>2020 £000</i>
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets owned by the charity	735	710
Auditor's remuneration - audit	15	15
Auditor's remuneration - other services	7	4
Operating lease rentals	27	27

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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10. Staff

a. Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Wages and salaries	7,764	7,184
Social security costs	832	702
Pension costs	2,269	2,042
	<u>10,865</u>	<u>9,928</u>
Agency staff costs	120	181
	<u>10,985</u>	<u>10,109</u>

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Severance payments	4	-
	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>

b. Non-statutory/non-contractual staff severance payments

Non-contractual staff severance payments amounted to £4k (2020: £nil) in the year.

c. Staff numbers

The average number of persons, based on headcount, employed by the academy during the year was as follows:

	2021 No.	2020 No.
Teachers	146	137
Administration and support	103	94
Management	18	18
	<u>267</u>	<u>249</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

10. Staff (continued)

c. Staff numbers (continued)

The average headcount expressed as full-time equivalents was:

	2021 No.	2020 No.
Teachers	124	123
Administration and support	70	61
Management	17	17
	<u>211</u>	<u>201</u>

d. Higher paid staff

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

	2021 No.	2020 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	6	6
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	2	-
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	-	2
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	3	1
	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>

e. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the academy comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy was £570k (2020 £495k).

11. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2020 - £NIL).

During the year ended 31 August 2021, no Trustee expenses have been incurred (2020 - £NIL).

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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12. 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. The scheme protects trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business, and provides cover of 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.

13. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £000	Long-term leasehold property £000	Assets under construction £000	Furniture and equipment £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation					
At 1 September 2020	15,568	17,897	34	1,052	34,551
Additions	709	-	34	-	743
Disposals	-	-	-	(5)	(5)
Transfers between classes	34	-	(34)	-	-
At 31 August 2021	<u>16,311</u>	<u>17,897</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>1,047</u>	<u>35,289</u>
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2020	2,015	808	-	700	3,523
Charge for the year	429	188	-	118	735
At 31 August 2021	<u>2,444</u>	<u>996</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>818</u>	<u>4,258</u>
Net book value					
At 31 August 2021	<u>13,867</u>	<u>16,901</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>229</u>	<u>31,031</u>
At 31 August 2020	<u>13,553</u>	<u>17,089</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>352</u>	<u>31,028</u>

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14. Fixed asset investments

	Listed investments £000
Cost or valuation	
At 1 September 2020	12
Revaluations	9
At 31 August 2021	22

15. Stocks

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Finished goods and goods for resale	27	3

16. Debtors

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	57	35
Other debtors	195	82
Prepayments and accrued income	896	684
	1,148	801

17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Trade creditors	219	116
Other taxation and social security	195	175
Other creditors	253	618
Accruals and deferred income	483	290
	1,150	1,199

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	2021 £000	2020 £000
Resources deferred during the year	65	-

Deferred income of £65k relates to funding for potential future new schools to join the MAT and funding for a feasibility study of a new building at Christleton High School..

18. Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Other creditors	314	283

Other creditors consists of Salix and CIF loans totalling £366k (2020: £329k) which are repayable in instalments over the next 9 years. The total amount repayable after more than 5 years is £197k (2020: £110k).

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2020 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2021 £000
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds	592	66	(29)	37	-	666
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	11,077	(10,995)	-	-	82
Other DfE/ESFA grants	12	892	(892)	-	-	12
Other restricted funds	-	213	(213)	-	-	-
SEN funding	-	235	(235)	-	-	-
COVID funding	-	386	(348)	-	-	38
Pension reserve	(2,719)	-	(493)	-	(1,102)	(4,314)
	<u>(2,707)</u>	<u>12,803</u>	<u>(13,176)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(1,102)</u>	<u>(4,182)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Transfer on conversion	17,870	-	(734)	-	9	17,145
DfE group capital grants	8,617	1,052	(1)	-	-	9,668
Capital expenditure from GAG	489	-	-	-	-	489
Football Foundation Grant	316	-	-	-	-	316
Donation from DfE	4,356	-	-	-	-	4,356
Salix Loan Funding	(329)	-	-	(37)	-	(366)
	<u>31,319</u>	<u>1,052</u>	<u>(735)</u>	<u>(37)</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>31,608</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2020 £000	Income £000	Expenditure £000	Transfers in/out £000	Gains/ (Losses) £000	Balance at 31 August 2021 £000
Total Restricted funds	28,612	13,855	(13,911)	(37)	(1,093)	27,426
Total funds	29,204	13,921	(13,940)	-	(1,093)	28,092

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

a) Restricted General Fund

The General Annual Grant (GAG) is core funding for the educational activities of the academy provided via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Other ESFA grants are grants received from the ESFA which can only be utilised for the purpose intended. Other funds generated by the Academy include specific donations.

The Pension Reserve is the deficit in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

b) Restricted Fixed Asset Fund

This includes fixed assets transferred on Academy conversion, together with capital grants, including capital grants from the Football Foundation for the all weather pitch, from the Academies Capital Maintenance Fund and Conditional Improvement Fund for the Renewal of External Curtain Walling, renewal of Crittle Steel Framed Windows, Roof Covering renewals and a Boiler replacement programme. Additional amounts in prior years include income in relation to new roof repairs work and safety compliance work. This has been continued in the current year.

Also included within this fund is the cost of the new CIS building which was donated by the DfE for £4.5m.

c) Unrestricted funds

These include surpluses transferred on Academy conversion, and any other funds generated by the Academy, or donations received by the Academy with no specific purpose attached.

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG it could carry forward at 31 August 2021.

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19. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2019 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2020 £000</i>
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds - all funds	738	85	(255)	24	-	592
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	381	9,996	(10,377)	-	-	-
Start up Grants	-	46	(46)	-	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	541	(529)	-	-	12
Other restricted funds	-	553	(553)	-	-	-
Local Authority grants	-	88	(88)	-	-	-
SEN funding	-	132	(132)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(2,295)	-	(436)	-	12	(2,719)
	<u>(1,914)</u>	<u>11,356</u>	<u>(12,161)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>(2,707)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Transfer on conversion	18,275	-	(405)	-	-	17,870
DfE group capital grants	8,016	690	(180)	90	-	8,616
Capital expenditure from GAG	505	-	(10)	-	(5)	490
Football Foundation Grant	325	-	(8)	-	-	317
Donation from DfE	4,462	-	(107)	-	-	4,355
Salix Loan Funding	-	(215)	-	(114)	-	(329)

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. Statement of funds (continued)

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2019 £000</i>	<i>Income £000</i>	<i>Expenditure £000</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £000</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £000</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2020 £000</i>
	31,583	475	(710)	(24)	(5)	31,319
Total Restricted funds	29,669	11,831	(12,871)	(24)	7	28,612
Total funds	30,407	11,916	(13,126)	-	7	29,204

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2021 were allocated as follows:

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Central Services	798	604
Restricted fixed asset fund	31,608	31,319
Pension reserve	(4,314)	(2,719)
Total	28,092	29,204

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching & educational support staff costs £000	Other support staff costs £000	Educational supplies £000	Other costs excluding depreciation £000	Total 2021 £000
Christleton High School	5,024	1,314	160	1,113	7,611
Queen's Park High School	2,160	888	64	515	3,627
Chester International School	952	191	65	215	1,423
Central services	17	3	-	32	52
Academy	8,153	2,396	289	1,875	12,713

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19. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	<i>Teaching and educational support staff costs £000</i>	<i>Other support staff costs £000</i>	<i>Educational supplies £000</i>	<i>Other costs excluding depreciation £000</i>	<i>Total 2020 £000</i>
Christleton High School	4,836	1,244	148	1,253	7,481
Queen's Park High School	2,007	735	70	520	3,332
Chester International School	826	76	49	156	1,107
Central services	-	-	1	71	72
Academy	<u>7,669</u>	<u>2,055</u>	<u>268</u>	<u>2,000</u>	<u>11,992</u>

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20. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted funds 2021 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £000	Total funds 2021 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	31,031	31,031
Fixed asset investments	-	-	22	22
Current assets	1,764	132	921	2,817
Creditors due within one year	(1,098)	-	(52)	(1,150)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(314)	(314)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(4,314)	-	(4,314)
Total	666	(4,182)	31,608	28,092

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £000	Restricted funds 2020 £000	Restricted fixed asset funds 2020 £000	Total funds 2020 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	31,028	31,028
Fixed asset investments	-	-	12	12
Current assets	1,746	13	606	2,365
Creditors due within one year	(986)	-	(213)	(1,199)
Creditors due in more than one year	(167)	-	(116)	(283)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,719)	-	(2,719)
Total	593	(2,706)	31,317	29,204

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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21. Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Net expenditure for the year (as per Statement of financial activities)	(9)	(1,215)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	734	710
Loss on investment	(8)	4
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(1)	(4)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	5	-
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	(27)	-
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(346)	544
Increase in creditors excl loans	15	8
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	1,051	121
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	443	391
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	50	45
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,907	604

22. Cash flows from financing activities

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Repayments of borrowing	(33)	(25)
Net cash used in financing activities	(33)	(25)

23. Cash flows from investing activities

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	1	4
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(743)	(1,213)
Capital grants from DfE Group	(1,051)	(121)
Net cash used in investing activities	(1,793)	(1,330)

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24. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Cash at bank and in hand	1,643	1,562
Total cash and cash equivalents	1,643	1,562

25. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2020 £000	Cash flows £000	At 31 August 2021 £000
Cash at bank and in hand	1,562	81	1,643
	1,562	81	1,643

26. Capital commitments

Contracted for but not provided in these financial statements

Whilst there were no capital commitments as at 31 August 2021, shortly after the year end a contract for refenestration works at Queens Park High School was signed to the value of £407k (2020: £422k).

27. Pension commitments

The academy'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, which is managed by Cheshire Pension Fund. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2019.

Contributions amounting to £199k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2021 (2020 - £178k) and are included within creditors.

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27. Pension commitments (continued)

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 full-time 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 specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2016. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 5 March 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

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

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2023.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £1,411k (2020 - £1,275k).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website (<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/news/employers/2019/04/teachers-pensions-valuation-report.aspx>).

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The academy has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The academy has set out above the information available on the scheme.

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27. Pension commitments (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2021 was £460k (2020 - £403k), of which employer's contributions totalled £349k (2020 - £314k) and employees' contributions totalled £ 111k (2020 - £89k). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 24.65% per cent for employers and a range for employees.

As described in note the LGPS obligation relates to the employees of the academy, who were the employees transferred as part of the conversion from the maintained school and new employees who were eligible to, and did, join the Scheme in the year. The obligation in respect of employees who transferred on conversion represents their cumulative service at both the predecessor school and the academy at the balance sheet date.

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of academy closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013.

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2021	2020
	%	%
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	1.65	1.70
Rate of increase in salaries	3.6	2.90
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.9	2.20

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement age 65 are:

	2021	2020
	Years	Years
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	21.4	21.2
Females	24.0	23.6
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	22.4	21.9
Females	25.7	25.0

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27. Pension commitments (continued)

Sensitivity analysis

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Discount rate -0.1%	256	198
CPI/pension increase rate +0.1%	225	171
Salary increase rate +0.1%	27	23
	508	392

Share of scheme assets

The academy's share of the assets in the scheme was:

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Equities	3,023	2,449
Corporate bonds	2,760	2,177
Property	657	544
Cash and other liquid assets	131	273
Total market value of assets	6,571	5,443

The actual return on scheme assets was £860k (2020 - £294k).

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows:

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Current service cost	792	681
Net interest cost	50	45
Past service cost	-	24
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities	842	750

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27. Pension commitments (continued)

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligations were as follows:

	2021 £000	2020 £000
At 1 September	8,162	7,236
Current service cost	792	681
Interest cost	146	137
Employee contributions	111	89
Actuarial losses	1,746	66
Benefits paid	(72)	(71)
Past service costs	-	24
At 31 August	10,885	8,162

Changes in the fair value of the academy's share of scheme assets were as follows:

	2021 £000	2020 £000
At 1 September	5,443	4,941
Interest income	96	92
Actuarial gains	644	78
Employee contributions	111	89
Benefits paid	(72)	(71)
Employer contributions	349	314
At 31 August	6,571	5,443

28. Operating lease commitments

At 31 August 2021 the academy had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2021 £000	2020 £000
Not later than 1 year	24	24
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	12	23
	36	47

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29. 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/she is a member, or within one year after he/she ceases to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10 for the debts and liabilities contracted before he/she ceases to be a member.

30. Related party transactions

Owing to the nature of the academy and the composition of the Board of Trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, transactions may take place with organisations in which the trustees have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook, including notifying the ESFA of all transactions made on or after 1 April 2019 and obtaining their approval where required, and with the academy's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures relating to connected and related party transactions.

31. Post balance sheet events

Belgrave Primary School, previously a local authority school, will join The Learning Trust as an academy Trust on 1 December 2021.

After the year end a contract for refenestration work at Queens Park High School was signed to the value of £407k.

32. Agency arrangements

The Academy administers the disbursement of the discretionary support for learners, 16-19 Bursary Funds, on behalf of the ESFA. In the year it received £25k (2020: £38k) and disbursed £33k (2020: £31k) plus an administration fee of £1k (2020: £2k), therefore leaving an amount of £8k (2020: £17k) included in other creditors.

