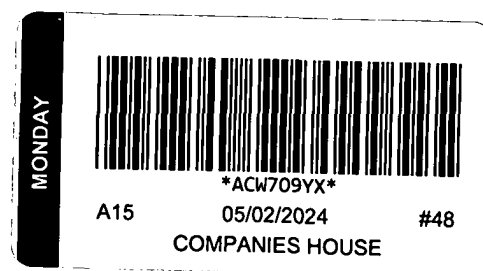


ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023



**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

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ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	D Middleton - Chair & Foundation Member A Armstrong T Morgan - Foundation Member
Trustees	D Middleton, Chair of Trustees ^{1,3} S Edwards, Chief Executive ^{1,2,3,4} J Cowan ³ R Hendrickse ² D Johnson ³ A Sedgley ⁴ G Gosling (resigned 21 July 2023) ¹ A Edwards ^{1,2} S Whitehead-Whiting ^{3,4} S Vodden ² O Evans (appointed 9 November 2022) ¹ ¹ Finance, Health & Safety and Estates Committee ² Risk & Audit Committee ³ People & Wellbeing Committee ⁴ Safeguarding, Standards and Improvement Committee
Company registered number	07654902
Company name	Acorn Education Trust
Principal and registered office	Kingdown School Woodcock Road Warminster Wiltshire BA12 9DR
Company secretary	F Simpson
Chief executive officer	S Edwards
Senior management team	S Edwards, CEO C Robinson, Executive Headteacher R Price, Executive Headteacher S Porter, Executive Headteacher (resigned 31 December 2022) M Burr, Executive Headteacher A Williams, Director of HR J Evans, Head of School Services F Simpson, Head of Finance S Fullbrook, Head of SEND J Ronxin, Head of Marketing & Communication R Knott, Head of IT
Independent auditors	Bishop Fleming LLP Chartered Accountants Statutory Auditors 10 Temple Back Bristol BS1 6FL

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

Bankers	Lloyds Bank 37 Market Place Warminster BA12 9BD
Solicitors	Stone King LLP 13 Queen Square Bath BA1 2HJ

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the Charitable Company for the year ended 31 August 2023. The annual report serves the purpose of both a Trustees' report, and a Directors' report under company law.

The Trust operates 14 primary and 3 secondary academies in Wiltshire. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 6,750 and had a roll of 5,191 in the school census on 1st October 2023.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution

The Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust. The Trustees of Acorn Education Trust are also the directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law. The Charitable Company operates as Acorn Education Trust.

Details of the Trustees who served throughout the year, and to the date the accounts are approved are included in the Reference and Administration Details.

Trustees' Liability

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

Trustees' Indemnities

Trustees benefit from indemnity insurance purchased at the Academy Trust's expense to cover the liability of the Trustees which by virtue of any rule of law would otherwise attach to them in respect of any negligence, default or breach of trust or breach of duty of which they may be guilty in relation to the Academy Trust, provided that any such insurance shall not extend to any claim arising from any act or omission which the Trustees knew to be a breach of trust or breach of duty or which was committed by the Trustees in reckless disregard to whether it was a breach of trust or breach of duty or not and provided also that any such insurance shall not extend to the costs of any unsuccessful defence to a criminal prosecution brought against the Trustees in their capacity as Directors of the Academy Trust. The limit of this indemnity is £10 million.

In accordance with normal commercial practice the Academy has purchased insurance to protect Trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Academy business. The insurance provides cover up to £10 million on any one loss and any one membership year.

Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Trustees

The Board of Trustees comprises the Chief Executive Officer, up to 5 directors appointed by the Members and up to six foundation members approved by the Diocesan Board of Education. The number of Trustees who are employees of the Company, including the Chief Executive Officer, must not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees.

Trustees are appointed for a four-year period, except that this time limit does not apply to the Chief Executive Officer. Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Trustee, any Trustee can be re-appointed or re-elected.

When appointing new Trustees, the Board will 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.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

Policies and Procedures adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

The training and induction provided for new Trustees will depend upon their existing experience but would always include a tour of the Academy and a chance to meet staff and pupils. All Trustees are provided with copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. As there are normally only two or three new Trustees a year, induction tends to be done informally and is tailored specifically to the individual. Advantage is taken of specific courses offered by the Local Authority and other bodies.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees normally meets twice each term. The Board establishes an overall framework for the governance of the Academy and determines Trusteeship, terms of reference and procedures of Committees and other groups. It receives reports including policies from its Committees for ratification. It monitors the activities of the Committees through the minutes of their meetings. The Board may from time to time establish Working Groups to perform specific tasks over a limited timescale.

There are four committees as follows:

- Finance, Health & Safety and Estates Committee - this meets at least nine times a year and is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing policy and performance in relation to financial management, health & safety and estates.
- Risk & Audit Committee – this meets at least six times a year and is responsible for compliance with reporting and regulatory requirements and reporting, and receiving reports from the internal and external audit.
- People & Wellbeing Committee - The Trust, through the People & Wellbeing Committee, ensures its decisions about levels of executive pay follow a robust, evidence-based process and are reflective of roles and responsibilities. Good quality pay award decisions are dependent on good quality strategic planning for the Trust and well executed appraisal processes.
- Safeguarding, Standards and Improvement Committee - this meets at least eight times a year to monitor, evaluate and review Academy policy, practice and performance in relation to curriculum planning, communications, target setting and assessment, examinations and all pastoral issues.

The following decisions are reserved to the Board of Trustees: to consider any proposals for changes to the status or constitution of the Academy and its committee structure, to appoint or remove the Chairman and/or Vice Chairman, to appoint the Headteacher and Clerk to the Trustees, to approve the Annual Development Plan and budget.

The Trustees are responsible for setting general policy, adopting an annual plan and budget, approving the statutory accounts, monitoring the Academy by the use of budgets and other data, and making major decisions about the direction of the Academy, capital expenditure and staff appointments.

The Trustees and Board of Trustees have devolved responsibility for day to day management of the Academy to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Executive Team. The Senior Executive Team comprises the CEO, Executive Headteachers, HR Director and Heads of Departments. The Senior Executive Team implement the policies laid down by the Trustees and report back to them on performance.

Each Academy has a leadership structure which consists of the Academy Council and Senior Leadership Team. The aim of the leadership structure is to devolve responsibility and encourage involvement in decision making at all levels. Academy Councils are responsible for the day to day operations and management of the school including standards, attendance, behaviour and rewards, safeguarding, school development, parental and community engagement, culture, vision and ethos.

The Chief Executive Officer is the Accounting Officer.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The Trustees consider the Board of Trustees and the senior executive team comprise the key management personnel of the Trust in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the Trust on a day to day basis. All Trustees, with the exception of the CEO, give their time freely and no Trustee received remuneration in the year.

Details of Trustees' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in the notes to the accounts. The pay of key management personnel is reviewed annually and normally increased in accordance with average earnings.

The Trustees benchmark against pay levels in other Academies of a similar size. The responsibility of the post, size of the Trust and staff retention are all considered when determining pay levels. Advice is sought from external stakeholders, such as external auditors, and value for money principals are observed at all times. Roles are also compared for parity against other roles within the Trust, comparing levels of responsibility of the posts.

Trade union facility time

There were no relevant union officials for the year ended 31 August 2023.

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

There are no related parties which either control or significantly influence the decisions and operations of Acorn Education Trust. There are no sponsors or formal Parent Teacher Associations associated with the Academy.

Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

The Trust engages with their employees through many means and methods, including:

- Consulting with employees on key matters, including engaging the relevant union officials
- Regular updates and newsletters, plus a dedicated staff portal with latest news and policies
- Employee HR portal to put staff in control of their own personal details; additional hours claims and absence requests
- Line managers regularly meet with staff, even with those working from home, to enable staff to communicate regularly and check on their colleague's well-being

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

The Trust fosters business relationships with its students by acting on feedback, ensuring safeguarding and by maintaining a continuous commitment to school improvement. The Trust fosters business relationships with its suppliers by supporting a number of local suppliers, ensuring relationships are mutually beneficial and paying invoices within agreed payment terms.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objects and Aims

The principal object and activity of the Trust is to advance, for the public benefit, education in the United Kingdom. In particular by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools and offering a broad range of curriculum for pupils of different abilities from nursery to age 19.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

About Acorn Education Trust

The overall aim of the Charitable Group is to promote excellent education, providing strong schools which enable all young people to make a success of their lives. Our strength as a group of schools lies in our collaboration, our dedication to continuous improvement, developing each pupils' whole character and our pursuit of excellence. Aligned structures and systems ensures high expectations, rigour, energy and breadth in all that we do.

As of 31st August 2023, Acorn Education Trust comprises 2 nurseries, 14 primary schools, 3 secondary schools and a central office team that serves all our settings.

Acorn Education Trust's vision is: transforming lives through education. Our mission is to prepare young people for their world in their time, by ensuring the following foundations of excellence are embedded in all our schools and nurseries:

- Active and visible leadership
- Care, support and challenge
- Opportunities for all
- Readiness to reach out
- The needs of all are paramount

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commissioner's general guidance on public benefit in exercising their powers or duties. They have referred to this guidance when reviewing the Academy's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities.

The Academy aims to advance for the public benefit, education in Wiltshire and the surrounding area. In particular, but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by estimating, maintaining, managing and development of schools and offering a broad curriculum for pupils of all abilities.

The Academy provides facilities for recreational and other leisure time occupation for the community at large in the interests of social welfare and with the interest of improving the life of the said community.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

STRATEGIC REPORT

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Achievements and Performance

The academic year 22/23 has seen a return to a period of relative normality. All schools and nurseries have been covering the academic curriculum, addressing gaps in learning, as well as providing an extensive range of extracurricular and enrichment opportunities. At the same time, we have been mindful of the well-being of our staff and are always considering their workload.

Our maturity and respectability as a Trust have been the overarching themes this year. We have shown we are capable of growth at scale; we know and understand the local need, our business teams are developing efficient and effective systems, and our school improvement model is very effective. Respectability is demonstrated in the 7 Ofsted inspections; improving results; the development of our estate; our reputation – people want to work for Acorn; financial stability and stronger networking regionally and nationally.

The key priorities for the year have focused on:

- Quality First Teaching and Subject Communities.
- Every decision through the lens of our SEND/Disadvantaged students to ensure their provision and outcomes improve.
- Improving reading and writing at all stages and ages.
- Our students behaving and attending well.
- Succession planning for key leadership roles.
- Improving our estates and IT.
- Developing our staff to perform their very best and take on new opportunities.
- Listening and learning from all our stakeholders.

Our key strategy to achieve our objectives has been to continue to maintain a culture across Acorn of belonging. Ensuring there is fundamental trust in and between the senior executive, our heads, our leaders, our staff as well as making sure everyone matters, they know they matter, and, we all stay safe and well, both physically and mentally.

Foundations of excellence

The foundations of excellence demonstrate the principles we follow as a group to ensure we achieve our aims.

1. Active and visible leaders

Our success as a group is dependent on excellent leadership at all levels across the central team and in all schools/nurseries. The quality of leadership was reflected in the 7 Ofsted reports; those with strong and stable leadership secured Good, while those missing strong leadership at every level struggled to demonstrate consistency in curriculum implementation.

Every adult in the school/nursery is a leader. In every word, tone and gesture, they set the direction and expectation. AET expects every adult to take responsibility and the initiative to do what is right for the pupils. All those in formal leadership positions create the climate and culture in which others work. They demand the highest standards, build a performance culture, develop their teams, and create the space for others to lead. All leaders listen, grow relationships, act with integrity and care and expect the best from themselves and others in building a successful, happy, and confident school/nursery. We aim to give all aspiring and current leaders the opportunity to develop all aspects of their leadership. Three headteachers continued with NPQH, a number of middle leaders completed the NPQSL course, and, on the Executive Team, one member is

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

completing SIAMS inspection training, two are on the NPQEXL and another on the REACH Leading Trusts 100 programme.

2. Care, Support and Challenge

The mental and physical welfare of all pupils and staff as mentioned earlier, is always our top priority. Our staff have been amazing and truly inspirational throughout the year. Their resilience, dedication, care and support has been immense.

The annual Stop, start, carry on...questionnaire yet again provided some very positive comments, alongside excellent ideas on how we can improve. At the same time as the latter, and for the first time, we introduced the annual Welfare Survey. 44% of staff completed, which isn't enough. The summary is below:

1. I feel cared for in my setting	88.47%
2. I feel cared for in my role	87.67%
3. I feel valued and appreciated in my role	82.84%
4. I understand what my role entails	97.32%
5. I understand how I fit into my setting	95.98%
6. I understand how I fit into my team	96.25%
7. I have opportunities to develop within my setting	75.33%
8. I have opportunities to develop within the Trust	64.61%
9. I have someone at my setting who I can go to for support	93.83%
10. I have someone at my setting who listens to my concerns	92.5%
11. I receive enough support to do my role effectively	77.75%
12. I receive enough CPD to do my role effectively	81.5%
13. Overall, on an average day, are you happy in your role, team and school?	79.62%

Continuous improvement and collaboration is at the heart of our work with all our schools. However good we are, we can always be better. We are always learning from each other as well as visiting leading-edge schools and other Trusts. We constantly strive for excellence; we learn with pride and endeavour always to give the children and staff in our schools the best possible opportunities. High levels of attainment and progress are expected in every AET school and nursery. Centrally, school improvement is delivered through a team around a school Strategy. The central team meet fortnightly to review progress on each setting and support is provided to each school depending on the category the school/nursery is placed in at a 360 meeting – low, medium or high. Headteachers meet weekly to share, support and learn. School Improvement support is weekly, fortnightly or termly depending on the category.

An annual external quality assurance visit by an independent teaching and learning consultant is also accelerating school improvement practices in every school.

Attendance remains a challenge in some of our schools, notably for some of our SEND and disadvantaged families. The primary school average attendance was 95% with all except 2 schools, finishing the year above the national average. At secondary school, 2 schools had attendance above the national average.

Our schools continued to offer excellent pastoral care and sought to look after the physical and mental well-being of our pupils in whichever ways they could. The Thrive approach is becoming embedded in all our schools; play therapy is supporting our younger children while enhanced provision and counselling is essential in our secondary schools.

3. Opportunities for all

Projects to improve school estates and IT were completed in all schools during the school term and holidays.

Our 6 curriculum principles – every child/student feels they belong, is challenged, develops a love of learning, has aspiration, makes a unique contribution to their school and is ready for their world in their time are established in every school. We seek to develop the disciplinary and substantive knowledge of our young

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

people so they are fully literate and extremely capable mathematicians, scientists, geographers, historians, artists, musicians, athletes etc. Establishing the small school hub, to overcome the challenges faced in these schools and ensuring consistency of implementation in every subject, is beginning to show impact.

The subject communities – a group of people who share a passion for a subject and want to improve together are now established and driving pedagogy. The central lesson planning and sharing of resources is enabling every teacher to play to their own strengths and adapt materials for their local context and the needs of their pupils.

Across the Trust, The Great Teaching Toolkit, supported by Walkthrus in primary schools, are being used to underpin all work in teaching and learning, to support personal development, continuous professional development, lesson observation and leadership. The toolkit is based on research on how the brain acquires and uses new information as well as successful classroom practice.

Extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities are flourishing in all schools.

4. Readiness to reach out

An area of growth in the last year has been the development of our networking both regionally and nationally. Working with local trusts through the RSC Learning Set structure and membership of the Confederation of School Trusts continues to help us enormously; it gives us confidence in our own planning, subsequent actions and developments but also ensures we look outwards and learn from colleagues on a regular basis. We have recently joined the Church of England Flourishing Trust's Network.

Being the local provider for the Teaching School Hub remains a real strength. The secondary ECT programme has gone very well as evidenced in the evaluations.

5. Outcomes for all are paramount

GCSE - Headline Measures

Significance shown for ± 0.15 (green = $\geq +0.15$, red = ≤ -0.15)

Measure – Progress*	Avon Valley	Clarendon	Kingdown	Trust	Trust Target
Progress 8	-0.29	-0.07	-0.10	-0.12	0.00
Progress – English	-0.60	-0.13	-0.28	-0.28	-0.15
Progress – Maths	-0.22	-0.35	-0.04	-0.17	0.00
Progress – EBacc Bucket	-0.08	+0.05	0.00	0.00	+0.10
Progress – Open Bucket	-0.33	+0.05	-0.13	-0.10	0.00

* Based on G4S / 4Matrix estimates

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Measure – Attainment	Avon Valley	Clarendon	Kingdown	Trust
Attainment 8	34.1	44.2	46.2	43.8
Attainment – English	3.5	4.7	4.7	4.5
Attainment – Maths	3.3	4.0	4.6	4.2
Attainment - EBacc Bucket	3.3	4.3	4.5	4.3
Attainment – Open	3.4	4.6	4.6	4.4

Measure – E + M	Avon Valley	Clarendon	Kingdown	Trust	Trust Target*
Basics 4+	40.9	58.0	65.4	59.0	70
Basics 5+	13.6	31.8	42.3	34.6	43
English 4+	53.0	75.8	75.4	72.0	79
English 5+	19.7	55.6	58.8	52.0	61
Maths 4+	53.0	64.1	72.1	66.3	74
Maths 5+	21.2	37.3	47.5	40.2	49

* Targets set based on 2022 outcomes; return to 2019 comparative outcomes made these overly-optimistic

Post-16 – Headline Measures

Significance shown for ALPS 3+ (red, top 25% of schools) and ALPS 7- (blue, bottom 25% of schools)

Measure	Clarendon	Kingdown
ALPS Score – A Level*	3	6
ALPS Score – Applied*	4	8
APS per Entry – A Level	32.0	33.8
Mean Grade	C+	C+
APS per Entry – Applied	36.0	24.1
Mean Grade	Di	Me

* No progress figures available for post-16 outcomes this year

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Measure		Clarendon	Kingdown	Trust	Trust Target*
A Level	A* - B	48.4	46.2	46.9	50
	A* - C	77.2	76.5	76.7	76
	A* - E	98.2	99.6	99.1	98
Applied	Di* - Di	67.7	16.7	33.7	52
	Di* - Me	89.2	73.1	78.5	79
	Di* - Pa	100	100.0	100.0	99

* Targets set based on 2022 outcomes; return to 2019 comparative outcomes made these highly challenging

Key Stage 2 – Headline Figures

Progress Indicators

Sig+	Sig-

School (No. of Pupils)	Reading		Writing		Maths		Combined
	Progress	Expected Standard+	Progress	Expected Standard+	Progress	Expected Standard +	Expected Standard+
Bulford St Leonard's (20)	+1.7	65	+3.0	65	+1.7	60	45
Dilton Marsh (25)	+3.0	84	+2.0	88	+2.1	72	72
Great Wishford (9)	+5.3	78	+8.2	89	+1.4	44	33
Heytesbury (12)	+3.3	67	+3.7	83	-0.1	67	67
Keevil (13)	+4.8	92	+1.3	85	+2.5	77	77
Netheravon All Saints (19)	+0.9	68	+2.5	63	+0.3	68	53
New Close (15)	+1.9	80	-0.6	73	+2.9	93	67
Rowde (18)	-0.6	67	-1.9	61	-2.6	39	39
St John's (12)	+1.5	92	+4.2	92	-0.7	83	83
St Michael's (57)	-2.4	63	-0.4	70	+0.3	70	54
The Avenue (22)	-1.3	82	+2.5	91	-0.6	82	68
Wansdyke (30)	+0.5	87	+0.2	83	+1.3	100	77

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

West Ashton (11)	+1.4	82	-1.9	73	+1.0	82	73
Trust Average	+0.7	75.3	+1.2	76.7	+0.7	73.3	61.6
Trust Target	+1.0	78	+0.5	72	+1.0	76	65
Dinton (10)	+2.1	80	+1.8	80	+3.0	80	70
Longmeadow (15)	-3.4	53	-6.7	40	-8.3	33	33

* The Avenue and Wansdyke schools exclude RB pupils

Key Stage 1 – Headline Figures

Progress Indicators*

At / Above FFT50	Within 5% FFT50	Within 10% FFT50	>10% Below FFT50

School	Reading Expected Standard+	Writing Expected Standard+	Maths Expected Standard+	Combined Expected Standard+
Bulford St Leonard's (26)	42	42	46	27
Dilton Marsh (29)	79	76	86	76
Durrington (44)	71	61	75	55
Great Wishford (7)	86	57	86	57
Heytesbury (13)	92	69	85	69
Keevil (4)	100	100	100	100
Netheravon All Saints (18)	56	39	50	33
New Close (20)	60	40	65	40
Rowde (4)	75	50	100	50
St John's (18)	83	78	78	61
St Michael's (60)	75	65	82	63
The Avenue (41*)	68	68	68	59
Wansdyke (29*)	62	69	66	62
West Ashton (14)	71	50	71	43
Trust Average	69.7	61.7	72.5	56.0
Trust Target	68	59	70	50
Dinton	80	60	80	60
Longmeadow	40	13	40	13

* The Avenue and Wansdyke schools exclude RB pupils

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Year 1 - Phonics

School	% at Expected Standard	Mean Score
Bulford (20)	90	34.7
Dilton Marsh (17)	88	33.8
Durrington (51)	68	30.5
Great Wishford (6)	100	37.7
Heytesbury (8)	88	34.6
Keevil (12)	83	34.3
Netheravon (25)	84	34.1
New Close (20)	75	32.0
Rowde (14)	93	38.5
St John's (11)	100	35.8
St Michael's (60)	75	32.3
The Avenue (23)	78	32.7
Wansdyke (30)	77	32.0
West Ashton (9)	100	35.9
Trust Average	80.3	33.1
Trust Target	75	
Dinton (10)	90	
Longmeadow (16)	69	

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

EYFS

School	Pupils	GLoD
Bulford (25)	25	60
Dilton Marsh (19)	19	74
Durrington (48)	48	63
Great Wishford (8)	8	63
Heytesbury (6)	6	83
Keevil (10)	10	70
Netheravon (20)	20	55
New Close (16)	16	75
Rowde (11)	11	64
St John's (14)	14	88
St Michael's (52)	52	65
The Avenue (29)	29	55
Wansdyke (24)	24	75
West Ashton (13)	13	77
Trust Average		66.1
Trust Target		67
Dinton	12	92
Logmeadow	12	25

Key Performance Indicators

The main financial performance indicator is the level of reserves held at the Balance Sheet date. In particular, the management of spending against General Annual Grant (GAG) requires special attention. In period under review, £nil was carried forward representing 0% of GAG.

As funding is based on pupil numbers this is also a key performance indicator. Pupil numbers for 2022/23 were 5,109, a decrease of 73 over 2021/22 (5,182).

Another key financial performance indicator is staffing costs as a percentage of restricted revenue income. For 2022/23 this was 81%, compared to 85% in 2021/22.

The following non-financial objectives are also monitored regularly:

- Expert, ethical leadership is strong at every level
- There is high quality, inclusive education in all our schools/nurseries
- School improvement is at scale and driving standards
- Our workforce, their resilience and wellbeing is fundamental in all that we do
- Operationally we are effective and efficient
- We demonstrate public benefit and civic duty

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

Going Concern

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

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Most of the Academy'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 2023 and the associated expenditure are shown as Restricted Funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The Academy also receives grants for fixed assets from the DfE which are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the Fixed Asset Fund. The Restricted Fixed Asset Fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation charges over the useful life of the assets concerned, as defined in the Academy's accounting policies.

During the year ended 31 August 2023 the Academy received total income of £36,417,182 and incurred total expenditure of £35,812,159. The excess of income over expenditure for the year was £605,024.

At 31 August 2023 the net book value of fixed assets was £56,019,482 and movements in tangible fixed assets are shown in note 14 to the financial statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the pupils of the Academy.

The Academy has taken on the deficit in the Local Government Pension Scheme in respect of its non-teaching staff transferred on conversion of its schools. The pension position is incorporated within the Statement of Financial Activity with details in note 25 to the financial statements. In the current year the actuarial valuation has returned a surplus. As described in Note 25 the Academy has not recognised this surplus.

Key financial policies reviewed during the year include the Finance Regulations Policy, which lays out the framework for financial management, including financial responsibilities of the Board, Head Teacher, managers, budget holders and other staff. Other policies reviewed and updated include the Scheme of Delegation, which sets out the delegated authority for spending, Risk Register and Charges and Remissions.

Reserves Policy

Acorn considers 4 risk areas in developing its reserves policy. These are:

1. the ability to sustain operations in the event of a cyber-attack or other event resulting in a total loss of income to the Trust
2. the impact of the national economic picture on the Trust's ability to invest in schools and achieve strategic objectives
3. that trust schools are unable to make good the educational deficit of the covid pandemic
4. that the trust is required or decides to integrate new schools that require additional capacity in order to retain the capacity to support all schools in the Trust

Risk area 1: The Trust's peak monthly expenditure is approximately £3m. Trustees have determined that this figure must be retained in order to counter the risk of a total loss of income for 1 month. Trustees consider that in subsequent months, a resumption of normal business, which may include commercial insurance support, negates the need to hold more than one month's expenditure in reserve. Trustees will furthermore consider how and where this sum is held, in light of the cybersecurity risk.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Risk area 2: Trustees have determined that the Section 106 capital investment project at Kingdown School, scheduled for 2025 completion, represents the greatest exposure to pressures in the national economy. Trustees have determined that £680k (10% of projected costs) may be required to offset inflationary impacts that would otherwise reduce the operational capability of the build. Trustees note that the Section 106 monies have now been paid to the LA, but that the LA intends to retain any interest earned prior to transfer of funds to the Trust, which will take place in arrears. This is a mitigation opportunity that has been denied to the Trust.

Risk areas 3 & 4: Trustees have designated a fund of £430,000 to be applied if required against the educational deficit arising from the covid pandemic, and to increase capacity to support new schools joining Acorn.

Trustees are considering the designation of funds against the future costs of achieving the Trust's Net0 by 2030 programme, as well as the potential for costs arising from the decommissioning of Local Authority leisure facilities on shared sites.

The Trust's current level of reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted funds) is £4,583,535, which includes £437k ring-fenced for use by schools transferring from Salisbury Plain Academies and represents the remaining balance of reserves brought into the Trust on joining in 2022. Excluding the ringfenced reserves and funds designated to the Section 106 project at Kingdown School, the Trust's current reserves represent 109% of the requirement set out above.

The Trust's current level of reserves are prudent in the current circumstances and remain balanced in line with future plans. Along with the balance sheet, healthy reserves are a key indicator of the financial resilience of the Trust.

Investment Policy

Due to the nature of funding, the Trust 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. No other form of investment is authorised.

Trustees are committed to ensuring that all funds under their control are managed in such a way as to maximise return whilst minimising risk. Any cash not required for operating expenses may be placed on deposit at the most favourable rate available from providers covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Day to day management of the surplus funds is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer within strict guidelines approved by the Board of Trustees.

PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

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

IT security - IT risks include hardware and software failure, human error, spam, viruses and malicious attacks, as well as natural disasters such as fires, cyclones or floods. The IT disaster recovery plan is reviewed annually to ensure it is fit for purpose. The increase in the threat of malicious cyber attacks has been mitigated by enhanced insurance and additional training for staff.

Financial - the Trust has considerable reliance on continued Government funding through the ESFA. In the last year 95% of the Trust's incoming resources was ultimately Government funded 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. The unfunded pay awards for both Teaching and Business staff have added considerable financial pressure for 2022/23 and future years.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Failures in governance and/or management - the risk in this area arises from potential failure to effectively manage the Trust'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 Trust is dependent on continuing to attract applicants in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk Trustees ensure that student success and achievement are closely monitored and reviewed.

Safeguarding and child protection - the Trustees continue to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the areas of selection and monitoring of staff, the operation of child protection policies and procedures, health & safety and discipline.

Staffing - the success of the Trust is reliant on the quality of its staff and so the Trustees 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 Trust has appointed an independent internal auditor to carry out checks on financial systems and records as required by the Academy Trust Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep them up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area.

The Trust has continued to strengthen its risk management process throughout the year by improving the process and ensuring staff awareness. A risk register is maintained and reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Trust 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.

Whilst the risks to revenue funding from a falling roll are small, the reduction in post 16 funding levels, changes in funding arrangements for special educational needs and increasing employment and premises costs mean that budgets will be increasingly tight in coming years.

The Trustees examine the financial health formally every term, reviewing performance against budgets and overall expenditure by means of regular update reports at all full Trustees' and Finance Committee meetings.

The Trustees also regularly review cash flow forecasts and ensure sufficient funds are held to cover all known and anticipated commitments. At the year end, the Trust had no significant liabilities arising from trade creditors or debtors where there would be a significant effect on liquidity.

The Board of Trustees recognises that the defined benefit scheme deficit (Local Government Pension Scheme), which is set out in note 25 to the financial statements, represents a significant potential liability. However, as the Trustees consider that the Trust is able to meet its known annual contribution commitments for the foreseeable future, this risk from this liability is minimised.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period	1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023	1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	6,191,983	4,571,264
Energy consumption break down (kWh) (optional) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gas, • electricity, • transport fuel 		
<u>Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Gas consumption	624.31	547.04
Owned transport – mini-buses	26.97	31.02
<u>Total scope 1</u>	651.28	578.07
<u>Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Purchased electricity	294.5	299.28
<u>Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>		
Business travel in employee owned vehicles	14.09	13.80
<u>Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e</u>	1,250.32	891.14
<u>Intensity ratio</u>		
Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.24	0.17

Quantification and Reporting Methodology

We have followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol – Corporate Standard and have used the 2023 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity measurement

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

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

The Department for Education announced additional capital funding for FY2022/23 to improve energy efficiency in schools. To date, eleven schools have had LED lighting installed and various works have taken place to update heating systems and improve system management.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Strategic aspirations:

- To be a 'strong' trust of 20-40 schools in 2030, in a mutually supporting trust system.
- To be a leader in the quality and equality of education.
- To provide inspirational experiences and opportunity for every child.
- To be a NetO organisation by 2030 at the latest.

Operational Goals

Schools/nurseries:

- Our vision for schools/nurseries, teaching, learning and life skill development is at the core of all we do.
- Every school an Ofsted "Good" within 3 years of joining, with an excellent teacher and targeted support for every child – Highly effective curriculum, with high standards of behaviour and attendance.
- By 2025 70%, by 2027 80%, by 2030 90% of primary children to have reached the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.
- All secondary schools to achieve an average of 5 in English and Maths by 2028.
- Every student achieves a destination route which meets their career aspirations.

Estates & Infrastructure:

- Fully identified estate and fleet sustainment programme to a 10 year horizon.
- Enable the Trust's Information and Digitisation Plan to achieve full operating capability by 2026.
- All schools with gigabit internet by 2025.
- Enable the Trust's Environmental Plan to achieve Net0 by 2030.

People and Wellbeing:

- Fully recruited, qualified and trained staff.
- Succession planning in place out to 24 months for SLT and governance roles.
- A resourced professional and personal development programme with fair accessibility for all staff.
- A robust appraisal and feedback system for all staff.

The Acorn Growth Framework:

- Grow capacity for sustained school improvement.
- Enable people and talent development.
- Secure Acorn's future within a rapidly evolving sector.
- Retain as a golden thread the family feeling, humility and pride of being part of Acorn.

The Acorn Budget:

- Balanced budget forecast out to 2 years.
- Forecast of budget out to 5 years.
- Planning options for unfunded goals.
- A clear, defined reserves plan and policy.

FUNDS HELD AS CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

The Academy and its Trustees do not act as the Custodian Trustees of any other Charity.

**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

SECTION 172 STATEMENT

The board of trustees recognises their responsibilities under section 172(1)(a) to (f) of the Companies Act 2006, being that directors of a company must act in a way most likely to promote the success of the company, and in doing so must have regard to:

- the likely consequences of any decision in the long term
- the interests of the company's employees
- the need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others
- the impact of the company's operations on the community and the environment
- the desirability of the company maintaining a reputation for high standards of business conduct
- the need to act fairly as between members of the company

Evidence of the board's compliance with section 172 can be found in the records and minutes of the board and its sub-committees.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO AUDITORS

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

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

The auditors, Bishop Fleming LLP, are willing to continue in office and a resolution to appoint them will be proposed at the annual general meeting.

Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on 19 December 2023 and signed on the board's behalf by:



D Middleton
Chair of Trustees

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

As Trustees we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Acorn Education 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 Chief Executive Officer, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Acorn Education Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

GOVERNANCE

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 6 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
David Middleton	6	6
Sara Edwards	6	6
John Cowan	4	6
Richard Hendrickse	6	6
David Johnson	4	6
Alan Sedgley	6	6
Gill Gosling	6	6
Rev Prof Allen Edwards	6	6
Susan Whitehead-Whiting	6	6
Sarah Vodden	6	6
Olivia Evans	4	5

The Board recognises the increased opportunity to bring and retain relevant experience to Board proceedings that is provided by blended or fully online meetings. A number of members and trustees now bring key skills whilst living outside of the geographical footprint of the trust. This enables a more diverse set of perspectives for key decisions, something that the Trust is keen to develop further. Further refinements in information management, especially with regard to financial and business data, allow the Board to remain confident in the information presented. The Board continues to operate a structure of sub committees that allow the detailed interrogation of data and information presented to governors. A robust risk management culture is embedded in the Trust. More detail on this activity can be found, below.

Governance Review

The Board operates a process of continuous review of governance practice across the trust. Examples of this in the period include further review and adjustment of Academy Council structures and roles; accompanying revision of the scheme of delegation; and an external review of Governance conducted by Browne Jacobsen LLP. In its governance review work, the trust consults broadly with internal and external stakeholders, such as Head Teachers and Salisbury Diocese of Education. The MAT landscape continues to evolve and the Trust maintains a membership of the Confederation of School Trusts (CST). This assists with situational awareness and broader MAT trend analysis.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The Finance, Health & Safety and Estates Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to:

- Assess implications of the indicative funding from DfE for each Academy in advance of the financial year, drawing any matters of significance/concern to The Board.
- Ensure key spending links to the Trust Development plan and the School Development Plans.
- Receive and make recommendations on the broad budget headings and areas of expenditure to be adopted each year.
- Liaise with and receive reports from appropriate committees and make recommendations to those committees about the financial aspects of matters being considered by them.
- Consider requests for supplementary expenditure and make appropriate recommendations to the Trust Board.
- Review financial policy
- Monitor and review expenditure on a regular basis, ensure compliance with the overall financial plans and DfE regulations, and draw matters of concern to the attention of the Board.
- Monitor and review procedures for ensuring effective implementation and operation of financial procedures.
- Monitor and review of Health and Safety policy to ensure compliance and effective implementation
- Monitor and follow the Department's Health and Safety: responsibilities and duties for schools' as well as Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance for Education.
- Strategically manage and maintain the trust's estate in a safe working condition.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
David Middleton	10	11
Sara Edwards	11	11
John Cowan	2	2
Allen Edwards	10	11
Gill Gosling	10	11
Olivia Evans	6	8

The Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to:

- Promote the highest standards of propriety in the use of public funds and encourage proper accountability for the use of those funds
- Advise the Board on the appointment and remuneration of external auditors and internal audit arrangements
- Review the external financial statements including the external auditor's opinion, advising the Board on audit aspects and monitoring management action in response to issues raised by external audits
- Promote a climate of financial discipline and control
- Receive the financial statement to form part of the annual report of the Trust Board to stakeholders and for filing as per the Companies Act, Charity Commission and Funding Agreement
- Review the report and recommendations made through the internal audit programme
- Oversee the Trust policies on Fraud, data protection, health and safety, freedom of information and whistle blowing
- Receive reports on the outcomes of investigations of suspected or alleged impropriety
- Review the effectiveness of internal controls, governance and risk management systems
- Identify key risks in the Trust and agree actions to reduce each risk

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Richard Hendrickse	6	6
Rev Prof Allen Edwards	6	6
Sara Edwards	6	6
Sarah Vodden	5	6

The People and Wellbeing Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to:

- To agree the CEO's key performance indicators with the Chair of Trustees prior to the start of each performance year.
- Building on the work of the SSI cttee, develop a set of Trust KPIs for the Board to approve, and review progress against the KPIs, including those relating to academic performance, quality of care and quality of provision.
- To determine whether the outcome of the CEO's appraisal meets the criteria for pay progression as covered under the AET pay policy.
- To make recommendations to the Trust Board as to remuneration, benefit and incentives that should be paid to the CEO and other senior executives.
- To ensure that appropriate and fair procedures are followed for setting pay, and to moderate pay decisions across the Trust as required, drawing on appraisal reports from HR Director which will be available in December.
- Ensure Executive contracts are consistent with their responsibilities and to monitor appropriate procedures are in place and followed for setting levels of executive pay which are transparent, proportionate and justifiable.
- Ensure decisions on pay are fair in accordance with our Equal Opportunities at work policy.
- To deal with any other matters relating to pay, appraisal and employment as may be referred by the Board.
- To create, maintain and update the pay policy as recommended by the Government or make an alternative decision on annual pay awards.
- Implement STPCD recommendations.
- To put in place a CEO and senior executive succession structure.
- To ensure a talent management policy/process is in place which is monitored and reviewed annually.
- To address and monitor any risks on succession including any that are identified by the Risk and Audit Committee.
- To receive reports and make recommendations to the Trust Board on all aspects of matters relating to:
 - Staff recruitment and retention data
 - Vacancies at executive level
 - Staff wellbeing and long-term sickness absence, persistent absenteeism
 - Review the Trust's approach to recruitment and reward packages, career progression and CPD for educational and non-education staff
- Evaluate responses to the annual staff survey and identify areas where action may be needed to address any concerns raised.
- To work with the Senior Executive Team to review the training requirements of the trust, linked to the curriculum and the School Development Plan and make recommendations to the Board.
- Policy reviews to be agreed and ratified by the full Trust Board.
- Profile of employees to be reported to the committee annually.
- To receive annual report of complaints made to the Trust and its academies; timescale of complaints, outstanding complaints.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
David Middleton	4	5
Sara Edwards	5	5
John Cowan	4	5
David Johnson	5	5
Susan Whitehead-Whiting	5	5

The Standards and School Improvement Committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to:

- Hold the Senior Executive to Account for Self-Evaluation, Quality Assurance and School Improvement
- Benchmark the performance of all schools and nurseries against national expectations and targets
- Agree the framework for target setting at school and nursery level.
- Monitor and evaluate the educational aspects of the Trust Development Plan.
- Monitor improvements in schools and nurseries alongside key performance risks, as identified on the risk universe and register.
- Monitor local governance effectiveness.
- Monitor admissions in all schools and nurseries.
- Reviews the impact of the pupil premium spend and the PE and Sport Grant.
- Monitor's progress of all students in all schools including the most vulnerable, SEND and Looked After children.
- Safeguards and promotes the welfare of children.
- Has regard to any statutory guidance on safeguarding issued by the Secretary of State.
- Ensures the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and proprietors with guidance from the Trust Safeguard Lead.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Alan Sedgley	7	8
Sara Edwards	8	8
Susan Whitehead-Whiting	8	8

REVIEW OF VALUE FOR MONEY

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

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

- Robust financial governance and budget management
- Value for money purchasing
- Reviewing controls and managing risk
- Challenging proposals and examining their effectiveness and efficiency
- Deploying staff effectively
- Reviewing quality of curriculum provision and quality of teaching
- Reviewing quality of children's learning to enable children to achieve nationally expected progress

**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

THE PURPOSE OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks the achievement of Academy Trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Acorn Education Trust for the period from 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

CAPACITY TO HANDLE RISK

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks that have been in place for the period from 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023 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 Academy Trust's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- Ensuring compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook
- 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 Finance, Health & Safety and Estates Committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance
- Clearly defined purchasing guidelines
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties
- Identification and management of risks

The Board of Trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has decided to appoint Academy Advisory as internal auditor for academic year 2022/23.

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

- Payroll
- Personnel
- Governance
- Safeguarding
- GDPR

On an annual basis the auditor reports to the Board of Trustees, through the Audit and Risk Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities. The internal auditor delivered their schedule of work as planned and the report identified one risk which required immediate remedial action. The testing undertaken did not indicate any imminent risk to the Trust.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

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

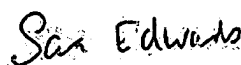
- the work of the internal auditor
- the work of the external auditor
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process
- the work of the executive managers within the Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework

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

Approved by order of the Trustees of the Board of Trustees on 19 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



D Middleton
Trustee



S Edwards
Accounting Officer

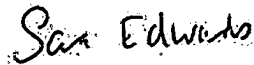
**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

STATEMENT ON REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

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

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

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



S Edwards
Accounting Officer

Date: 19/12/2023

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

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 year. Under company law, the Trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Group and the charitable company and of their incoming resources and application of resources, including their 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 2022 to 2023;
- 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 group will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Group and the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Group and 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 Group and 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 their conduct and operation the Group and the charitable company apply 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 group'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:



D Middleton
Chair of Trustees

Date: 19/12/2023

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF ACORN
EDUCATION TRUST**

OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of Acorn Education Trust (the 'parent Trust') and its subsidiaries (the 'Group') for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities, the Consolidated Balance Sheet, the Trust Balance Sheet, the Consolidated 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 2022 to 2023 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 Group's and of the parent Trust's affairs as at 31 August 2023 and of the Group's 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 2022 to 2023 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 Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the Group in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the 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 Group's or the parent Trust's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

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

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF ACORN
EDUCATION TRUST (CONTINUED)**

OTHER INFORMATION

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report other than the financial statements and our Auditors' 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 Group and the parent Trust 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:

- the parent Trust has not kept adequate accounting records, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent Trust financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of Trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

As explained more fully in the Trustees' Responsibilities Statement, the Trustees (who are also the directors of the Trust 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 Group's and the parent Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Trustees either intend to liquidate the Group or the parent Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF ACORN
EDUCATION TRUST (CONTINUED)**

AUDITORS' 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 Auditors' Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we considered the following:

- the nature of the Academy sector, control environment and the Group's and of the parent Trust's performance;
- results of our enquiries of management and the Trustee board, including the committees charged with governance over the Group's and of the parent Trust's finance and control, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities;
- any matters we identified having obtained and reviewed the Group's and of the parent Trust's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to: identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance; detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; the internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or noncompliance with laws and regulations;
- how the Group and the parent Trust ensured it met its obligations arising from it being financed by the ESFA and other funders, and as such material compliance with these obligations is required to ensure the Group and the parent Trust will continue to receive its public funding and be authorised to operate, including around ensuring there is no material unauthorised use of funds and expenditure;
- how the Group and the parent Trust ensured it met its obligations to its principal regulator, the Secretary of State for Education; and
- these matters were discussed among the audit engagement team who also considered any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud, which included incorrect recognition of revenue, management override of controls using manual journal entries, procurement and payroll. We identified the greatest potential for fraud as incorrect recognition of revenue and management override using manual journal entries.

In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override. We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the Group and the parent Trust operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context included the Academies Accounts Direction, Academy Trust Handbook, UK Companies Act and tax legislation.

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 may be fundamental to the Group's and of the parent Trust's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. These included safeguarding regulations, data protection regulations, occupational health and safety regulations, education and inspections legislation, building legislation and employment legislation.

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF ACORN
EDUCATION TRUST (CONTINUED)**

Our procedures to respond to risks identified included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess the recognition of revenue;
- enquiring of Trustees and management and those charged with governance concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- performing procedures to confirm material compliance with the requirements of its regulators;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and reviewing internal control reports; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; and assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias.

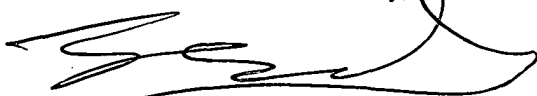
We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members, and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

Our audit procedures were designed to respond to risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, recognising that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from an error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery, misrepresentations or through collusion. There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures performed and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.

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 Auditors' Report.

USE OF OUR REPORT

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



Joseph Scaife FCA DChA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of
Bishop Fleming LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
10 Temple Back
Bristol
BS1 6FL

Date: 22/12/2023

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 13 December 2023 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Acorn Education Trust during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

This report is made solely to Acorn Education Trust and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Acorn Education 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 Acorn Education Trust and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

**RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACORN EDUCATION TRUST'S ACCOUNTING OFFICER
AND THE REPORTING ACCOUNTANT**

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Acorn Education Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 22 December 2014 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2022, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

APPROACH

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw our conclusion includes:

An assessment of the risk of material irregularity and impropriety across all of the Trust's activities;

Further testing and review of the areas identified through the risk assessment including enquiry, identification of controls processes and examination of supporting evidence across all areas identified as well as additional verification work where considered necessary; and

Consideration of evidence obtained through the work detailed above and the work completed as part of our audit of the financial statements in order to support the regularity conclusion.

In line with the Framework and guide for external auditors and reporting accountants of academy trusts issued April 2023, we have not performed any additional procedures regarding the Trust's compliance with

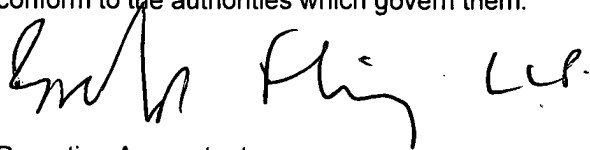
**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

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

safeguarding, health and safety and estates management.

CONCLUSION

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



Reporting Accountant
Bishop Fleming LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
10 Temple Back
Bristol
BS1 6FL

Date: 22/12/2023

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND
EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants:	4					
Transferred with existing academy		-	-	-	-	10,179,326
Other donations and capital grants		42,201	389,742	1,861,304	2,293,247	6,919,770
Other trading activities	6	1,422,962	-	-	1,422,962	1,018,322
Investments	7	6,025	58,000	-	64,025	619
Charitable activities		867,068	33,631,185	-	34,498,253	28,564,330
Total income		2,338,256	34,078,927	1,861,304	38,278,487	46,682,367
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds		1,164,003	-	-	1,164,003	758,806
Charitable activities		647,209	34,000,947	1,653,659	36,301,815	31,211,215
Total expenditure		1,811,212	34,000,947	1,653,659	37,465,818	31,970,021
Net income		527,044	77,980	207,645	812,669	14,712,346
Transfers between funds	19	-	(123,741)	123,741	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		527,044	(45,761)	331,386	812,669	14,712,346
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	25	-	1,617,000	-	1,617,000	13,641,000
Pension surplus not recognised	25	-	(1,388,000)	-	(1,388,000)	(1,498,000)
Net movement in funds		527,044	183,239	331,386	1,041,669	26,855,346

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

**CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND
EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT) (CONTINUED)**
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward	3,873,252	-	64,202,244	68,075,496	41,220,150
Total funds carried forward	4,400,296	183,239	64,533,630	69,117,165	68,075,496

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

The notes on pages 40 to 71 form part of these financial statements.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
REGISTERED NUMBER:07654902

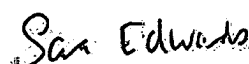
CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	14	56,019,482	55,954,884
		<u>56,019,482</u>	<u>55,954,884</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	16	9,305,624	9,195,769
Cash at bank and in hand		6,893,567	6,290,116
		<u>16,199,191</u>	<u>15,485,885</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(3,014,970)	(3,257,099)
Net current assets		<u>13,184,221</u>	<u>12,228,786</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>69,203,703</u>	<u>68,183,670</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(86,538)	(108,174)
Total net assets		<u><u>69,117,165</u></u>	<u><u>68,075,496</u></u>
Funds of the Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	19	64,533,630	64,202,244
Restricted income funds	19	183,239	-
Total restricted funds	19	<u>64,716,869</u>	<u>64,202,244</u>
Unrestricted income funds	19	<u>4,400,296</u>	<u>3,873,252</u>
Total funds		<u><u>69,117,165</u></u>	<u><u>68,075,496</u></u>

The financial statements on pages 35 to 71 were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and are signed on their behalf, by:



D Middleton
Chair of Trustees



S Edwards
Accounting Officer

Date: 19/12/2023

The notes on pages 40 to 71 form part of these financial statements.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
REGISTERED NUMBER:07654902

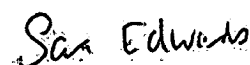
TRUST STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	14	56,019,482	55,954,884
Investments	15	1	1
		<u>56,019,483</u>	<u>55,954,885</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	16	9,298,910	9,185,246
Cash at bank and in hand		6,887,593	6,282,449
		<u>16,186,503</u>	<u>15,467,695</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(3,099,997)	(3,362,470)
Net current assets		<u>13,086,506</u>	<u>12,105,225</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>69,105,989</u>	<u>68,060,110</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year	18	(86,538)	(108,174)
Total net assets		<u><u>69,019,451</u></u>	<u><u>67,951,936</u></u>
Funds of the Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	19	64,799,001	64,202,244
Restricted income funds	19	183,239	-
Total restricted funds	19	<u>64,982,240</u>	<u>64,202,244</u>
Unrestricted income funds	19	<u>4,037,211</u>	<u>3,749,692</u>
Total funds		<u><u>69,019,451</u></u>	<u><u>67,951,936</u></u>

The financial statements on pages 35 to 71 were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and are signed on their behalf, by:



D Middleton
Chair of Trustees



S Edwards
Accounting Officer

Date: 19/12/2023

The notes on pages 40 to 71 form part of these financial statements.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	21	297,379	(4,890,299)
Cash flows from investing activities	22	306,072	6,319,134
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		603,451	1,428,835
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		6,290,116	4,861,281
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	23, 24	6,893,567	6,290,116
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The notes on pages 40 to 71 form part of these financial statements

**ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Acorn Education Trust is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Kingdown School, Woodcock Road, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 9DR.

2. 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.

2.1 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the Trust 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 2022 to 2023 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Acorn Education trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

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

The Trust has taken advantage of the exemption allowed under section 408 of the Companies Act 2006 and has not presented its own Statement of Financial Activities in these financial statements.

2.2 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 Trust 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 Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern, thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

2.3 INCOME

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

- **Grants**

Grants are included in the Consolidated 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 Consolidated 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.

- **Other income**

Other income, including the hire of facilities, is recognised in the year it is receivable and to the extent the Group has provided the goods or services.

- **Transfer of existing academies into the Group**

Where assets and liabilities are received on the transfer of an existing academy into the Group, the transferred assets are measured at fair value and recognised in the Balance Sheet at the point when the risks and rewards of ownership pass to the Group. An equal amount of income is recognised for the transfer of an existing academy into the Group within 'Income from Donations and Capital Grants' to the net assets acquired.

2.4 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 Group to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities events and non-charitable trading.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

2.4 EXPENDITURE (CONTINUED)

- **Charitable activities**

These are costs incurred on the Group's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Group apportioned to charitable activities.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

2.5 INTEREST RECEIVABLE

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

2.6 TAXATION

The Trust is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Accordingly, the Trust is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by Part 11, chapter 3 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

2.7 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

Assets costing £5,000 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 Consolidated 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 Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities. Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with unrestricted funds, depreciation on such assets is charged to the unrestricted fund.

Land and buildings occupied under a Church Supplemental Agreement are not recognised as assets in the balance sheet. These land and buildings are occupied free of charge under a rolling two-year licence from the landowner. Due to the specialised nature of these land and buildings it is not considered practical to place a value on the notional rent donated by the landowner.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

2.7 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS (CONTINUED)

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 basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

Long-term leasehold property	- 10 - 50 years straight line
Long-term leasehold land	- 125 years straight line
Fixtures and fittings	- 5 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 3 years straight line
Motor vehicles	- 4 years 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 Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities.

2.8 INVESTMENTS

Investments in subsidiaries are valued at cost less provision for impairment.

2.9 DEBTORS

Trade and other debtors with no stated interest rate and due within one year are recorded at the amount of the cash or other consideration expected to be received. Prepayments are valued at the amount paid

2.10 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 and cash on deposit that has a notice period of less than 30 days.

2.11 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 Group anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

2.12 OPERATING LEASES

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

2.13 PENSIONS

Retirement benefits to employees of the Group 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 Group 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 Group 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 Consolidated 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.

Under FRS 102 an entity shall only recognise a plan surplus as a defined benefit plan asset only to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan. Therefore when a pension scheme is valued at a surplus, it is recognised at a £Nil value.

2.14 AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

The Trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary funds from the ESFA. Payments received from ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the Statement of Financial Activities as the Trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The Trust can use up to 5% of the allocation towards its own administration costs and this is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities. The funds received, paid and any balances held at year end are disclosed in note 29.

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

2.15 FUND ACCOUNTING

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

Transfers are made between restricted funds and restricted fixed asset funds where restricted funds are used to purchase fixed assets.

3. 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 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 25, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2023. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

Critical areas of judgment:

The Trust obtains use of fixed assets as a lessee. The classification of such leases as operating or finance lease requires the Trust to determine, based on an evaluation of the terms and conditions of the arrangements, whether it retains or acquires significant risks and rewards of ownership of these assets and accordingly whether the lease requires an asset and liability to be recognised in the Balance Sheet.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

4. INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND CAPITAL GRANTS

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Transferred with existing academy	-	-	-	-	10,179,326
Donations	42,201	389,742	-	431,943	260,733
Capital Grants	-	-	1,861,304	1,861,304	6,659,037
SUBTOTAL	<u>42,201</u>	<u>389,742</u>	<u>1,861,304</u>	<u>2,293,247</u>	<u>6,919,770</u>
	<u>42,201</u>	<u>389,742</u>	<u>1,861,304</u>	<u>2,293,247</u>	<u>17,099,096</u>
TOTAL 2022	<u>179,204</u>	<u>(1,422,269)</u>	<u>18,342,161</u>	<u>17,099,096</u>	

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

5. FUNDING FOR THE TRUST'S EDUCATIONAL OPERATIONS

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
DFE/ESFA GRANTS				
General Annual Grant	-	25,373,221	25,373,221	20,182,487
OTHER DFE/ESFA GRANTS				
16-19 Funding	-	1,914,805	1,914,805	1,755,088
Pupil Premium	-	1,402,979	1,402,979	1,043,397
UIFSM	-	318,476	318,476	212,174
PE & Sport Premium	-	242,660	242,660	195,490
Rates Relief	-	140,677	140,677	106,645
Teacher Pay & Pension Grant	-	84,559	84,559	121,551
Schools Supplementary Grant (SSG)	-	747,965	747,965	311,768
Mainstream Schools Additional Grant (MSAG)	-	373,823	373,823	-
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	-	78,905	78,905	1,815,819
	-	30,678,070	30,678,070	25,744,419
OTHER GOVERNMENT GRANTS				
Enhanced Learning Provision	-	749,846	749,846	532,216
Named Pupil Allowance	-	715,174	715,174	390,432
Resource Base Funding	-	378,680	378,680	317,235
Nursery	468,688	-	468,688	302,796
Young People's Support Service	-	408,812	408,812	325,552
Other LA Grant	23,293	395,447	418,740	463,884
	491,981	2,647,959	3,139,940	2,332,115
Other income from the Trust's activities	375,087	14,741	389,828	331,139
COVID-19 ADDITIONAL FUNDING (DFE/ESFA)				
Recovery premium	-	253,198	253,198	114,312
National Tutoring Programme	-	37,217	37,217	42,345
	-	290,415	290,415	156,657
	867,068	33,631,185	34,498,253	28,564,330
TOTAL 2022	632,043	27,932,287	28,564,330	

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

6. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Lettings	48,232	48,232	41,493
Breakfast and Afterschool clubs	237,955	237,955	-
Trading subsidiary activities	1,136,775	1,136,775	976,829
	<u>1,422,962</u>	<u>1,422,962</u>	<u>1,018,322</u>

7. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Bank interest	6,025	-	6,025	619
Pension income	-	58,000	58,000	-
	<u>6,025</u>	<u>58,000</u>	<u>64,025</u>	<u>619</u>
 TOTAL 2022	 <u>619</u>	 <u>-</u>	 <u>619</u>	

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

8. EXPENDITURE

	Staff Costs 2023 £	Premises 2023 £	Other 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Expenditure on raising funds:					
Direct costs	706,888	-	457,115	1,164,003	758,806
Education:					
Direct costs	23,860,338	1,215,432	1,904,964	26,980,734	23,145,176
Allocated support costs	3,474,405	2,986,630	2,860,046	9,321,081	8,067,039
	<u>28,041,631</u>	<u>4,202,062</u>	<u>5,222,125</u>	<u>37,465,818</u>	<u>31,971,021</u>
TOTAL 2022	<u><u>24,591,021</u></u>	<u><u>3,762,697</u></u>	<u><u>3,617,303</u></u>	<u><u>31,971,021</u></u>	

9. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITIES

	Activities undertaken directly 2023 £	Support costs 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Education	<u>26,980,734</u>	<u>9,321,081</u>	<u>36,301,815</u>	<u>31,212,215</u>
TOTAL 2022	<u><u>23,145,176</u></u>	<u><u>8,067,039</u></u>	<u><u>31,212,215</u></u>	

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

9. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

ANALYSIS OF DIRECT COSTS

	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Pension finance cost	-	127,000
Staff costs	23,472,445	20,425,684
Depreciation	1,212,027	1,063,135
Educational supplies	839,132	550,364
Examination fees	309,232	244,433
Staff development	14,796	12,422
Other costs	745,215	568,024
Supply teachers	387,887	154,114
	<u>26,980,734</u>	<u>23,145,176</u>

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

9. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Pension finance cost	-	51,000
Staff costs	3,474,411	3,599,951
Depreciation	441,632	415,076
Staff development	48,176	64,607
Other costs	172,652	90,907
Recruitment and support	153,435	97,727
Maintenance of premises and equipment	672,939	701,272
Cleaning	526,728	343,333
Rent and rates	247,254	190,535
Energy costs	974,043	703,337
Insurance	111,330	81,531
Security and transport	143,601	84,882
Catering	796,788	554,323
Technology costs	557,168	347,189
Office overheads	223,509	211,911
Legal and professional	747,295	489,376
Bank interest and charges	120	662
Governance	30,000	39,420
	<u>9,321,081</u>	<u>8,067,039</u>

10. NET INCOME

Net income for the year includes:

	2023 £	2022 £
Operating lease rentals	89,102	36,221
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	1,653,659	1,478,211
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	26,850	26,100
- other services	3,050	2,025
	<u>1,749,661</u>	<u>1,532,557</u>

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

11. STAFF

a. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Trust 2023 £	Trust 2022 £
Wages and salaries	20,729,227	16,723,611	20,100,290	16,205,053
Social security costs	2,053,434	1,674,600	2,014,476	1,644,308
Pension costs	4,871,083	6,038,696	4,832,090	5,999,274
	27,653,744	24,436,907	26,946,856	23,848,635
Agency staff costs	387,887	154,114	387,887	154,114
	28,041,631	24,591,021	27,334,743	24,002,749

b. STAFF NUMBERS

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

	Group 2023 No.	Group 2022 No.	Trust 2023 No.	Trust 2022 No.
Teachers	368	332	368	332
Administration and support	453	360	453	360
Managers	11	11	11	11
	832	703	832	703

The average headcount expressed as full-time equivalents was:

	Group 2023 No.	Group 2022 No.	Trust 2023 No.	Trust 2022 No.
Teachers	328	297	328	297
Administration and support	251	217	251	217
Managers	11	11	11	11
	590	525	590	525

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

11. STAFF (CONTINUED)

c. HIGHER PAID STAFF

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

	Group 2023 No.	Group 2022 No.
In the band £60,000 - £70,000	15	7
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	15	12
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	4	-
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	1	1
In the band £130,001 - £140,000	-	1
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	1	-

d. KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

The key management personnel of the Trust 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 Trust was £1,175,616 (11 staff) (2022: £1,107,149, 11 staff).

12. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

The Executive Head and other staff Trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of Executive Head and staff under their contracts of employment, and not in respect of their services as Trustees. Other Trustees did not receive any payments from the Trust in respect of their role as Trustees. The value of Trustee' remuneration and other benefits was as follows: S Edwards: Remuneration £155,000 - £160,000 (2022: £135,000 - £140,000), Employer's pension contributions £35,000 - £40,000 (2022: £15,000 - £20,000). Other related party transactions involving Trustees are set out in note 28.

During the year ended 31 August 2023, expenses totalling £NIL were reimbursed or paid directly to no Trustees (2022 - £NIL). Expenses paid were for travel costs and mobile phone allowances.

13. TRUSTEES' AND OFFICERS' INSURANCE

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

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

14. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

GROUP AND TRUST

	Long-term leasehold property £	Assets under construction £	Fixtures and fittings £	Computer equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
COST OR VALUATION						
At 1 September 2022	59,730,895	339,724	2,211,455	1,759,653	203,982	64,245,709
Additions	478,076	291,849	614,808	333,524	-	1,718,257
Transfers between classes	242,611	(339,725)	97,114	-	-	-
At 31 August 2023	60,451,582	291,848	2,923,377	2,093,177	203,982	65,963,966
DEPRECIATION						
At 1 September 2022	5,709,774	-	1,082,851	1,389,781	108,419	8,290,825
Charge for the year	1,065,665	-	311,789	245,291	30,914	1,653,659
At 31 August 2023	6,775,439	-	1,394,640	1,635,072	139,333	9,944,484
NET BOOK VALUE						
At 31 August 2023	53,676,143	291,848	1,528,737	458,105	64,649	56,019,482
At 31 August 2022	54,021,121	339,724	1,128,604	369,872	95,563	55,954,884

The Academy Trust has been granted use of certain school buildings in respect of Bulford St Leonard's Church of England Primary School, Durrington All Saints Church of England Infant School, St Michael's Church of England Primary School. The Trustees consider that under this agreement the risks and rewards of ownership remain with the Diocese. Therefore the relevant land and buildings have not been included within the long-term leasehold property of the Academy Trust.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

15. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	Investments in subsidiary companies £
TRUST	
COST OR VALUATION	
At 1 September 2022	1
	<hr/>
AT 31 AUGUST 2023	1
	<hr/> <hr/>
NET BOOK VALUE	
	<hr/>
AT 31 AUGUST 2023	1
	<hr/>
AT 31 AUGUST 2022	1
	<hr/> <hr/>

PRINCIPAL SUBSIDIARIES

The following was a subsidiary undertaking of the Trust:

Name	Company number	Holding	Included in consolidation
Academy Collaborative Services Limited	09360756	100%	Yes

The financial results of the subsidiary for the year were:

Name	Income £	Expenditure £	Profit/(Loss) for the year £	Net assets £
Academy Collaborative Services Limited	1,136,775	(1,162,621)	(25,846)	97,715

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

16. DEBTORS

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Trust 2023 £	Trust 2022 £
DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR				
Trade debtors	19,959	15,977	13,245	5,454
Other debtors	3,323	2,551	3,323	2,551
Prepayments and accrued income	8,875,624	8,819,044	8,875,624	8,819,044
Tax recoverable	406,718	358,197	406,718	358,197
	9,305,624	9,195,769	9,298,910	9,185,246

17. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Trust 2023 £	Trust 2022 £
Other loans	21,831	21,830	21,831	21,830
Trade creditors	597,133	468,187	597,133	465,910
Amounts owed to group undertakings	-	-	92,309	112,099
Other taxation and social security	471,796	435,326	464,514	430,875
Other creditors	650,706	595,887	650,706	595,887
Accruals and deferred income	1,273,504	1,735,869	1,273,504	1,735,869
	3,014,970	3,257,099	3,099,997	3,362,470

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Trust 2023 £	Trust 2022 £
Deferred income				
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	459,806	350,476	459,806	350,476
Resources deferred during the year	485,212	459,806	485,212	459,806
Amounts released from previous periods	(459,806)	(350,476)	(459,806)	(350,476)
	485,212	459,806	485,212	459,806

At the balance sheet date the Trust was holding funds received in advance for School Led Tutoring, High Needs and Universal Infant Free School Meals relating to 23/24 academic year.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

18. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE AFTER MORE THAN ONE YEAR

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Trust 2023 £	Trust 2022 £
Other loans	86,538	108,174	86,538	108,174

Other loans represents a Salix loan for LED lighting. This loan is interest free and repayable by instalments by 1st March 2028.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS						
General Funds	<u>3,873,252</u>	<u>2,338,256</u>	<u>(1,811,212)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>4,400,296</u>
RESTRICTED GENERAL FUNDS						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	25,373,221	(25,249,480)	(123,741)	-	-
16-19 Funding	-	1,914,805	(1,914,805)	-	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	1,402,979	(1,402,979)	-	-	-
UIFSM	-	318,476	(318,476)	-	-	-
SSG	-	747,965	(747,965)	-	-	-
High Needs	-	1,809,476	(1,633,837)	-	-	175,639
Other ESFA Grants	-	1,211,039	(1,203,439)	-	-	7,600
Other LA Grants	-	838,483	(838,483)	-	-	-
Other restricted	-	404,483	(404,483)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	-	58,000	(287,000)	-	229,000	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>34,078,927</u>	<u>(34,000,947)</u>	<u>(123,741)</u>	<u>229,000</u>	<u>183,239</u>

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
RESTRICTED FIXED ASSET FUNDS						
Fixed Assets - Transferred in	53,378,605	-	(1,071,061)	-	-	52,307,544
Fixed Assets - Grants Funded	2,576,281	-	(582,598)	1,718,254	-	3,711,937
Devolved Formula Capital	44,876	450,676	-	(202,714)	-	292,838
SCA	416,937	507,628	-	(392,257)	-	532,308
CIF	143,120	-	-	(143,120)	-	-
Section 106	7,642,425	500,000	-	(737,502)	-	7,404,923
Resource Based Funding	-	403,000	-	(10,551)	-	392,449
Salix Loan	-	-	-	(108,369)	-	(108,369)
	<u>64,202,244</u>	<u>1,861,304</u>	<u>(1,653,659)</u>	<u>123,741</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>64,533,630</u>
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	<u>64,202,244</u>	<u>35,940,231</u>	<u>(35,654,606)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>229,000</u>	<u>64,716,869</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>68,075,496</u>	<u>38,278,487</u>	<u>(37,465,818)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>229,000</u>	<u>69,117,165</u>

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

General Annual Grant - Income from the ESFA which is to be used for the normal running costs of the Academy, including education and support costs.

16-19 Funding - Funding received from the ESFA to fund 14-16-year-olds when they are enrolled in sixth form or FE colleges that meet specified criteria.

Pupil Premium - This represents funding received from the ESFA for children that qualify for free school meals to enable the Academy to address the underlying inequalities between those children and their wealthier peers.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) - This represents funding received from the ESFA to support the Trust in delivering the legal requirement to offer free school meals to all their reception, year 1 and year 2 pupils.

School Supplementary Grant (SSG) - Funding from the ESFA which provides support for the costs of the Health and Social Care Levy and wider costs.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

High Needs - Funding comprises named pupil allowance and enhanced pupil provision. Named pupil allowance is funding received to fund further support for pupils with additional needs.

Other ESFA grants - This represents funding received from the ESFA, including PE and Sport Premium, Rates Relief, Teachers Pay & Pension Grants, MSAG, Recovery Premium and National Tutoring Programme.

Other local authority funding - This represents other funding from Wiltshire County Council including Pupil Premium, Resource Base funding, Enhanced Learning Provision.

Other restricted funding - includes student catering income and other small restricted donations made to the Trust.

Pension reserve represents the Trust's share of the assets and liabilities in the Local Government Pension Scheme. As with most pension schemes this is currently in deficit due to an excess of scheme liabilities over scheme assets which was inherited on conversion to an Academy. The Trust is following the recommendations of the actuary to reduce the deficit by making additional contributions over a number of years

RESTRICTED FIXED ASSET FUNDS

Fixed assets transferred on conversion represents the land, buildings and equipment donated to the Trust on conversion from the local authority.

Fixed assets purchased from GAG and other restricted funds represents amounts spent on fixed assets from the GAG funding received from the ESFA and other specific capital grants.

School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding represents amounts awarded by the ESFA for significant works in order to keep the Trust buildings safe and in good working order.

Devolved Formula Capital - represents funding received from the ESFA to cover the maintenance and purchase of the Federation's assets.

Section 106 Funding - represents funding received from Wiltshire County Council towards the costs of providing community and developing social infrastructure.

Other capital grants - Resource Base Funding - This is funding from Wiltshire County Council and is to be spend on increasing specialist provision/placements. This money will be utilised to expand the existing footprint of the current resource base enabling an increased capacity of pupils for the Trust as such it has been included as a Restricted Fixed Asset Fund.

Salix loan - loan provided to supplement CIF funding received from the ESFA for capital projects.

OTHER INFORMATION

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the Trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG it could carry forward at 31 August 2023.

ACORN EDUCATION TRUST
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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2022 £
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS						
General Funds	2,992,987	1,830,188	(949,923)	-	-	3,873,252
RESTRICTED GENERAL FUNDS						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	21,937,577	(21,612,984)	(324,593)	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	1,043,397	(1,043,397)	-	-	-
PE Grant	66,552	195,490	(262,042)	-	-	-
Other ESFA Grants	-	2,405,795	(2,405,795)	-	-	-
Rates Relief	-	106,645	(106,645)	-	-	-
High Needs	-	1,239,883	(1,239,883)	-	-	-
Other Local Authority Funding	-	463,882	(463,882)	-	-	-
Other Restricted Income	-	227,466	(227,466)	-	-	-
Deficit on conversion	-	(1,019,843)	1,019,843	-	-	-
UIFSM	-	212,174	(212,174)	-	-	-
Young People's Support Service	-	325,552	(325,552)	-	-	-
Capital Grants - Revenue Expenditure	-	-	(146,910)	146,910	-	-
Pension reserve	(9,000,000)	(628,000)	(2,515,000)	-	12,143,000	-
	<u>(8,933,448)</u>	<u>26,510,018</u>	<u>(29,541,887)</u>	<u>(177,683)</u>	<u>12,143,000</u>	<u>-</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

	Balance at 1 September 2021 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2022 £
RESTRICTED FIXED ASSET FUNDS						
Fixed Assets - Transferred in	41,806,515	11,676,433	(104,343)	-	-	53,378,605
Fixed Assets - Grants Funded	2,720,842	-	(1,373,868)	1,229,307	-	2,576,281
Devolved Formula Capital	27,580	144,290	-	(126,994)	-	44,876
SCA	472,541	630,586	-	(566,968)	-	536,159
CIF	178,413	20,947	-	(175,462)	-	23,898
Section 106	1,954,720	5,869,905	-	(182,200)	-	7,642,425
	<u>47,160,611</u>	<u>18,342,161</u>	<u>(1,478,211)</u>	<u>177,683</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>64,202,244</u>
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	<u>38,227,163</u>	<u>44,852,179</u>	<u>(31,020,098)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,143,000</u>	<u>64,202,244</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>41,220,150</u>	<u>46,682,367</u>	<u>(31,970,021)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,143,000</u>	<u>68,075,496</u>

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances for each academy at 31 August 2023 and 31 August 2022 were zero, hence a breakdown by academy is not included in these accounts.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

TOTAL COST ANALYSIS BY ACADEMY

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Kingdown School	6,776,593	646,424	226,351	1,255,129	8,904,497	8,529,961
Dilton Marsh C of E Primary School	691,472	35,654	23,805	160,947	911,878	867,880
The Avenue Primary School	1,354,090	111,070	39,083	255,542	1,759,785	1,609,279
Keevil C of E Primary School	420,660	42,804	39,366	114,888	617,718	560,919
West Ashton C of E Primary School	391,215	45,869	14,839	112,637	564,560	518,027
Heytesbury C of E Primary School	327,017	39,375	17,541	78,122	462,055	574,009
St John's C of E Primary School	375,471	35,068	27,018	133,776	571,333	621,195
Great Wishford C of E Primary School	342,091	27,033	-	107,330	476,454	462,563
New Close Primary School	524,526	29,288	7,547	150,180	711,541	611,232
The Clarendon Academy	4,166,051	671,096	94,557	1,362,744	6,294,448	5,674,809
Rowde	478,143	47,115	33,515	167,007	725,780	699,444
Wansdyke	1,059,351	61,312	54,017	269,323	1,444,003	1,502,083
Avon Valley Academy	1,732,150	388,270	57,639	770,087	2,948,146	873,586
Bulford St Leonard's C of E Primary School	702,339	87,538	10,740	231,995	1,032,612	359,587
Durrington All Saints Church of England Infant School	539,851	59,008	31,464	222,008	852,331	264,500

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
St Michael's Church of England Primary School	1,650,624	81,404	64,183	363,009	2,159,220	638,276
Netheravon All Saints Primary School	605,639	40,095	18,850	185,983	850,567	268,934
Central Services (including Trading subsidiary)	1,550,049	1,901,710	51,377	1,022,095	4,525,231	3,316,918
TRUST	23,687,332	4,350,133	811,892	6,962,802	35,812,159	27,953,202

20. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS - CURRENT YEAR

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	56,019,482	56,019,482
Current assets	4,400,296	3,176,378	8,622,517	16,199,191
Creditors due within one year	-	(2,993,139)	(21,831)	(3,014,970)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(86,538)	(86,538)
TOTAL	4,400,296	183,239	64,533,630	69,117,165

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20. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS (CONTINUED)

ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS - PRIOR YEAR

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2022 £	Total funds 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	55,954,884	55,954,884
Current assets	3,873,252	3,235,269	8,377,364	15,485,885
Creditors due within one year	-	(3,235,269)	(21,830)	(3,257,099)
Creditors due in more than one year	-	-	(108,174)	(108,174)
TOTAL	3,873,252	-	64,202,244	68,075,496

21. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2023 £	2022 £
Net income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	812,669	14,712,346
ADJUSTMENTS FOR:		
Depreciation	1,653,659	1,478,211
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(2,018,304)	(6,826,169)
Interest receivable	(6,025)	(619)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	287,000	2,338,000
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	(58,000)	177,000
Increase in debtors	(112,065)	(5,934,981)
Decrease in creditors	(261,555)	(654,761)
Net assets transferred on conversion or on joining the Trust	-	(10,179,326)
NET CASH PROVIDED BY/(USED IN) OPERATING ACTIVITIES	297,379	(4,890,299)

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

22. CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £
Interest receivable	6,025	619
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(1,718,257)	(1,229,307)
Capital grants from DfE Group	2,018,304	6,826,169
Net cash acquired upon conversion or joining the Trust	-	721,653
NET CASH PROVIDED BY INVESTING ACTIVITIES	306,072	6,319,134

23. ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £
Cash in hand and at bank	6,893,567	6,290,116
TOTAL CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	6,893,567	6,290,116

24. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET DEBT

	At 1 September 2022 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	6,290,116	603,451	6,893,567
Debt due within 1 year	(21,830)	(1)	(21,831)
Debt due after 1 year	(108,174)	21,636	(86,538)
	6,160,112	625,086	6,785,198

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS

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

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

Contributions amounting to £512,103 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022 - £472,327) and are included within creditors.

TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for 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 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 26 October 2023. The key elements of the previous valuation as at 31 March 2016 which was effective for the year ended 31 August 2023 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 2020 valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2024 and effective until 31 March 2027. The employer contribution rate for this period will be 28.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £3,232,214 (2022 - £2,584,127).

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>) for 2016 and www.teacherspensions.co.uk/news/employers/2023/10/valuation-result.aspx for 2020.

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

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 2023 was £1,633,000 (2022 - £1,133,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £1,295,000 (2022 - £904,000) and employees' contributions totalled £ 338,000 (2022 - £229,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 23 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 12.5 per cent for employees.

As described in note 25 the LGPS obligation relates to the employees of the Trust, 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 Trust 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

	2023	2022
	%	%
Rate of increase in salary	3.50	3.45
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	3.00	3.05
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.20	4.25

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

	2023	2022
	Years	Years
Retiring today		
Males	21.3	21.7
Females	24.1	24.2
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	21.5	22.6
Females	25.6	26

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Discount rate +0.1%	(446)	(475)
Salary increase rate +0.1%	40	39
Pension increase rate +0.1%	414	440

SHARE OF SCHEME ASSETS

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

	At 31 August 2023	At 31 August 2022
	£	£
Equities	12,690,000	11,640,000
Bonds	6,691,000	6,682,000
Property	3,230,000	3,233,000
Cash and other liquid assets	461,000	-
Total market value of assets	23,072,000	21,555,000

The actual return on scheme assets was £-346,000 (2022 - £-1,033,000).

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

	2023	2022
	£	£
Current service cost	(1,582,000)	(2,338,000)
Interest income	953,000	300,000
Interest cost	(895,000)	(477,000)
Total amount recognised in the consolidated statement of financial activities	(1,524,000)	(2,515,000)

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

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

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 September	20,057,000	24,966,000
Transferred in on existing academies joining the trust	-	6,946,000
Current service cost	1,582,000	2,338,000
Interest cost	895,000	477,000
Employee contributions	338,000	229,000
Actuarial (gains)/losses	(2,820,000)	(14,674,000)
Benefits paid	135,000	(225,000)
At 31 August	20,187,000	20,057,000

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

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 September	21,555,000	15,966,000
Transferred in on existing academies joining the trust	-	5,414,000
Interest income	953,000	300,000
Actuarial gains	(1,203,000)	(1,033,000)
Employer contributions	1,295,000	904,000
Employee contributions	338,000	229,000
Benefits paid	135,000	(225,000)
At 31 August	23,073,000	21,555,000

The Group has an unrecognised surplus of £2,886,000 (2022 - £1,498,000) in respect of its defined benefit pension scheme as it does not expect to recover the plan surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan.

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26. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

At 31 August 2023 the Group and the Trust had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	Group 2023 £	Group 2022 £	Trust 2023 £	Trust 2022 £
Not later than 1 year	92,147	76,243	92,147	76,243
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	113,201	138,700	113,201	138,700
Later than 5 years	12,324	4,972	12,324	4,972
	217,672	219,915	217,672	219,915

27. 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.

28. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

No related party transactions took place in the period of account, other than certain trustees' remuneration and expenses already disclosed in note 12.

Owing to the nature of the Trust 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 Academy Trust Handbook, including notifying the ESFA of all transactions made on or after 1 April 2019 and obtaining their approval where required, and with the Trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures relating to connected and related party transactions.

29. POST BALANCE SHEET EVENTS

On 1 December 2023 Dinton Primary School joined the Academy Trust donating its assets and liabilities.

30. AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

The academy distributes 16-19 bursary funds to students as an agent for ESFA. In the accounting period ending 31st August 2023 the Academy Trust received £24,057 (2022: £28,229) and disbursed £12,822 (2022: £28,229). An amount of £11,235 (2022: £Nil) is included in other creditors relating to undistributed funds which is repayable to ESFA.

31. CONTROLLING PARTY

There is no controlling party.