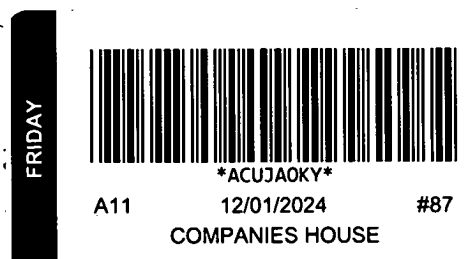


Sussex Learning Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2023

Company Registration Number:
07705100 (England and Wales)



Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

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Sussex Learning Trust

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Reference and Administrative details

Members

R Clark (Appointed 30/3/23)	R Stoneley
S Carter (Resigned 27/9/23)	S Watt
C Homer (Resigned 3/11/22)	

Trustees / Directors registered at Companies House

J Ash-Edwards (Chair)	J Packham (resigned 29/03/23)
J Allik	P Potter
J Gray	S Robertson
E Gunter	R Stevens
H Hill	J Thompson
P Hiscock	S Veluswamy

Senior Executive Team

CEO & Accounting Officer	J Morris
Deputy CEO	S Davis
CFO & Company Secretary	J Howard
Operations & Commercial Director	A Drury
HR Director	J Keylock

Senior Management Team – Secondary Academy

Headteacher	D Kenrick
Deputy Headteacher	K Fitzgerald
Deputy Headteacher	N Simmons
Deputy Headteacher	M Sorrell

Senior Management Team – Warden Park Primary Academy

Headteacher	S Davis
Deputy Headteacher	E Brodie

Senior Management Team – Northlands Wood Primary Academy

Headteacher	M Sears
Deputy Headteacher	P Johnson

Senior Management Team – Woodgate Primary Academy

Headteacher	S Neller
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Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Reference and Administrative details (continued)

Principal and Registered Office	Broad Street Cuckfield Haywards Heath West Sussex RH17 5DP
Company Registration Number	07705100 (England and Wales)
Independent Auditor	Crowe U.K. LLP Riverside House 40-46 High Street Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1JH
Bankers	HSBC Bank Plc 38-40 South Road Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 4LU
Solicitors	Browne Jacobson LLP 15th Floor 6 Bevis Marks London EC3A 7BA

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report

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 purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

Sussex Learning Trust operates three primary academies and one secondary academy in Mid Sussex. The pupil capacity and number of students on roll as per the January 2023 census is detailed in the table below.

Academy	Pupil capacity	Number on roll (Jan 23)
Warden Park School	1500	1523
Warden Park Primary Academy (Year R to 6)	420**	415
Warden Park Primary Academy nursery	32*	45
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	420**	415
Woodgate Primary Academy (Year R to 6)	70	Joined trust post Jan 23
Woodgate Primary Academy nursery	24	Joined trust post Jan 23

* Per session

** The Pupil capacity for these academies was increased to two form entry in 2017 at the request of the Local Authority. The difference between the pupil capacity and number on roll relates to the older year groups.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

Sussex Learning Trust (referred to herein as the "Trust") is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. It was established on 14 July 2011. Warden Park Secondary Academy (WPSA) converted to academy status on 1 September 2011 and Heyworth Primary School joined the Trust on 1 January 2012 changing its name on conversion to Warden Park Primary Academy (WPPA). Northlands Wood Community Primary School joined the Trust on 1 May 2017 changing its name on conversion to Northlands Wood Primary Academy (NWPA). On the 1 June 2023, Woodgate Primary Academy joined the Trust. On 1 September 2023, Chichester Free School joined the Trust.

The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust. The Trust Articles of Association were last updated in 2016. The trustees of Sussex Learning Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as Sussex Learning Trust (SLT). This governance structure for the Trust is shown on page 1 of this report. Details of the trustees who served throughout the year except as noted are included in the Governance Statement.

Trustees are appointed by the members with representation from the governing bodies of individual member academies. The articles of association also permit a member appointed trustee to appoint a co-opted trustee.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Members' Liability

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

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the Trust are to:

- advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum; and
- promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Haywards Heath and the surrounding area the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of said inhabitants.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

Trustees are appointed by the members or co-opted by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association, having regard to the approved role description for trustees. Any vacancies are openly advertised and consideration is given to the skills mix of the Board of Trustees.

The formal requirement for parental representation is met by the presence of elected parent governors on each Local Governing Body, although there are current parents of children at Trust academies serving as trustees.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

New trustees are inducted into the workings of the Trust at briefing sessions held with the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. These sessions cover both educational and business matters. trustees are issued with appropriate background material and are subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Trustees are encouraged to attend both internal and external training sessions organised for the education sector. Governance resources are available to the Trust through subscriptions to the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and The Key for Governors and School Leaders.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Organisational Structure

The Trust structure is made up of 5 members who appoint the trust board, comprising 11 trustees. Currently there are two member vacancies which are being advertised. The trust board appoints its sub-committees (where required) and Local Governing Bodies for each academy. A scheme of delegation sets out the specific roles and responsibilities of the trust board, sub committees and Local Governing Bodies.

The trustees have overall responsibility and ultimate decision making authority for all the work of the Trust, including the establishment and running of academies. The responsibilities of the trustees are set out in the Scheme of Delegation with due adherence to the Articles of Association.

In order to discharge these responsibilities, the trustees appoint people who are locally based to serve on the Local Governing Body (LGB) which has been established to ensure the good governance of each academy. Each LGB is formally a committee of the trustees. The role of the LGB is an important one. LGBs carry out their functions on behalf of the trustees and in accordance with the Trust's policies. The Trust wishes to avoid the duplication of governance and for decisions to be made as close to the impact of decision making as possible. The Trust therefore wishes LGBs to have considerable autonomy to act in the best interests of their academy, within the framework and support provided by the Trust.

The trustees appoint a Chief Executive Officer (Accounting Officer), a Deputy Chief Executive Officer and a Chief Financial Officer. The CEO line manages all the academy Headteachers on behalf of the LGBs and trustees ensuring all statutory duties are executed and standards are high and improving. The Trust bases its work on close collaboration between the academies in a spirit of working partnership. The Trust Officers are responsible for furthering this aim. The CEO is charged by the trustees to ensure that the Trust fulfils its responsibilities to the region via liaison with the Regional Schools Commissioner. The CEO is also responsible for project managing any new schools joining the Trust or Free Schools being established under the auspices of the Trust.

The Scheme of Delegation and Articles of Association are available on the Trust website and on request.

The CEO is appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the Academy Trust in consultation with the Headteachers of the Academies. In order to facilitate effective operations, the CEO and CFO have delegated authority within the terms approved by the trustees for operational matters including educational, finance and employment matters.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Organisational Structure (continued)

The pay and remuneration of key management personnel is set in accordance with the Academy Trust's appraisal and pay policy. The salary range for all staff paid on the leadership spine will take into consideration the provisions of the STPCD together with any broader responsibilities that may be attached to the role. The CEO is responsible for the appraisal and pay awards for key management personnel subject to Trustee review and approval. The remuneration and performance management of the CEO is led by a panel of trustees.

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Trust continues to have several successful partnerships with a number of local primary schools where it provided some areas of specialist curriculum support.

The Trust has also worked successfully with other schools through the Haywards Heath schools' locality network. The Trust continues to play an active role in the Bentswood Community Partnership (BCP).

These partnerships have enabled the Trust to not only support education for other schools in the Haywards Heath area, but have also brought benefits to the education of the young people at our academies. For example, students at the secondary academy have had many opportunities to develop their leadership and team-building skills through their work with pupils in the primary schools.

The CEO of the Trust is a National Leader of Education (NLE) and WPSA is a National Support School. This has brought a wide range of CPD opportunities for the CEO and wider staff in addition to the related revenue generating opportunities for the Trust. The work of an NLE challenges the holder to find ways to support school improvement elsewhere but naturally encourages and stimulates initiatives that benefit the host school. The designation also attracts other schools to consider joining the Trust which naturally brings cost saving and other educational collaborative benefits.

Objects and Aims

The Trust's mission is summarised by its academies' maxims:

'The Best from All' and ***'Reach for the stars'*** and ***'Together we learn and grow'***

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Objects and Aims (continued)

The Trust aims to:

- Provide a happy, safe, secure, healthy, stimulating, well-resourced and caring learning environment for the whole community.
- Meet the needs of all learners including students, adult learners and staff as part of our commitment to inclusion and equal opportunity.
- Challenge all learners to have high expectations, to broaden their horizons, embrace change, adopt a dynamic approach to their future life plans, achieve the highest standards and celebrate their success.
- Offer a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum relevant to the needs of our economy in which we celebrate cultural diversity and promote creativity, a love of learning, independence, confidence, the flexibility needed for a rapidly changing world, international understanding and excellent communication skills.
- Encourage all teachers and support staff to attain the highest standards of teaching and support through high-quality professional development and rigorous self-evaluation.
- Promote learners' self-confidence, self-respect, self-esteem, self-discipline and self-motivation in the context of encouraging them to develop their skills and valuing their achievements.
- Develop an awareness of others, in all members of the academy community, which leads to excellent interpersonal relationships and the ability to form friendships appropriately.
- Maintain strong partnerships with families, other schools, colleges and universities in Britain and overseas, local businesses and community organisations to promote excellence and progression in learning.
- Encourage and expect high standards of behaviour based on personal responsibility, good manners and courtesy, mutual respect and the peaceful resolution of conflict.
- Involve learners, families and staff in making a positive contribution to the academy and wider community by encouraging active citizenship, promoting sustainable development and supporting other people locally and overseas who may need our help.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Objects and Aims (continued)

In order to realise these aims, trustees, governors and staff of the Trust seek to:

- Promote excellence by working in close partnership with families to fulfil the potential of every learner to do their best as individuals and as members of teams.
- Foster the habits that will enable our students to enjoy learning for life.
- Encourage our students to respect themselves, other students, their families and their teachers within a safe, secure and caring environment.
- With the crucial support of families, develop healthy and hard-working young citizens with an international outlook who will play an active, responsible, creative and positive role in the academy and wider community.

Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty in Section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England & Wales. Trustees have referred to the guidance in the Charities Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Academy Trust's objectives and aims and in planning future activities for the year. Trustees consider that the Academy Trust's aims are demonstrably to benefit the public, as the academies within the Trust meet the educational needs of young people living in the areas appropriately designated by the Local Authority and the needs of other young people who meet the agreed admission criteria should further places be available.

The Academy Trust has strengthened its links with other local schools through the Haywards Heath schools' locality network. The CEO, as an NLE, is a systems leader supporting many schools in West Sussex to improve.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

Our Educational Vision for children who attend our academies:

Irrespective of background, all children and young people deserve the very best educational provision and should therefore attend ambitious and dynamic establishments. Sussex Learning Trust academies work collaboratively to provide 'world class' formational and transformational opportunities helping our young people realise their potential and equipping them in their journey towards personal fulfilment and responsible citizenship.

Below is a summary of the Trust's main priorities.

- By July 2024 the majority of our academies will be self-evaluating as 'outstanding' because of student achievement, behaviour & safety, leadership & management and teaching.
- To promote our newly ratified Growth Strategy that has the well-being and outcomes of all children at its heart.
- To be recognised as a local Trust operating for the benefit of all children in the area, because of our commitment to mid Sussex communities.
- We will be at the heart of collaboration within Mid Sussex and West Sussex schools helping to shape and deliver improvements for the children of the area.
- The Quality of Education will be at least good or better, typified in each academy, or across the Trust where relevant by:-
 1. a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all learners, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life
 2. a coherently planned and sequenced curriculum towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment
 3. the same academic, technical or vocational ambitions for almost all learners. Where this is not practical – for example, for some learners with high levels of SEND – its curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs
 4. a curriculum that enriches all learners and that reaches far beyond the classroom. It includes the entire ethos of each academy, assemblies, relationships, trips, experiences and opportunities.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

5. Teachers that have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders will provide effective support, including for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise
6. Teaching will be clear and it will be informed by regular formative assessment. Summative assessment will be used to check understanding, but it will not create unnecessary burdens on staff.
7. Teaching will be 'knowledge and skills' rich.
8. The Language development for all learners across the Trust, including reading, oracy, literacy and vocabulary, will be given very high priority.
9. Our learners develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well.
10. Learners are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. Where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations and the intention of their course of study.

Governance and consolidating the Trust

- Trust values and aims are thoroughly embedded. As other schools approach us to enquire about joining the Trust we are able to continually reassess our values and aspirations and ensure we remain compliant with all legislation and policy.
- Academy freedoms have been exercised.
- The policy review process is responsive to need and location. Policy & practice reflects the needs of our students.
- The trustees and governors are confident that safeguarding arrangements are entirely compliant, including the duties to address radicalisation and terrorism.

Community

- The Trust continues to take a role in Haywards Heath and environs and our premises continue to be widely used for community use.
- Partnerships with families at all academies are strong.
- Staff from WPPA and NWPA play significant roles in supporting the collaborative work of the Haywards Heath group of primary schools. Likewise WPSA enjoys excellent links with many schools in West Sussex for shared CPD opportunities.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Objectives, Strategies and Activities (continued)

Admissions

- WPSA accommodated an additional 30 pupils in Year 7 in 2022 and has also taken an additional 10 pupils in Year 7 in 2023.
- WPPA and NWPA are the schools of choice within their communities and are over-subscribed in reception.
- WGPA is also oversubscribed in reception and have accommodated 30 pupils in Year R in 2023.

Strategic report

Financial health

The financial health of the Trust remains sound particularly given the national educational funding environment and the factors specific to the Trust outlined below.

- **Reserves**
The Trust started the year with a strong reserves position and this has been maintained through prudent management of funds. The level of reserve carried forward to 2023/24 has been retained as a precaution against future uncertainty. Given the national funding position and the challenges of the increasing staff cost base, it will be necessary for those reserves to be used very carefully whilst awaiting more information on future funding allocations. Further details of the Trust's reserves policy can be found on page 20.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Strategic report (continued)

Financial health (continued)

- Expansion of WPSA and WGPA
WPSA took an additional 30 pupils in Year 7 in September 2022 which resulted in a year group of 330. The Year 7 intake for 2023 was also above PAN at 310. WGPA also exceeded its PAN in September 2023 taking 30 rather than 10 pupils in Year R. The ESFA per pupil funding allocation is provided on a lagged basis using census data from the previous academic year. Some growth funding has been provided by WSCC for 2023-24 but additional costs have been incurred in the short term. In the medium term, the increase in the PAN will re-enforce the financial stability of the academies and contribute to the financial health of the Trust.
- Nursery at WPPA
This is now embedded and has proved to be highly successful and self-financing.
- Best use of resources and maximising income
The Trust has continued to focus on ensuring value for money in all activities undertaken by maximising income and controlling costs as outlined in the Value for Money section of the Governance report.

Pupil Premium

Our use of Pupil Premium across the Academy Trust is consistent with the Department for Education's aim to eliminate barriers to learning and achievement based on home circumstances.

The Trust has fully engaged with the principles of Pupil Premium funding and has embedded those principles in planning and monitoring of attainment to ensure that these funds have the desired impact.

Full details of Pupil Premium grant expenditure, impact of the strategy and the strategy for 2022-23 can be found on the separate academies' websites.

Fundraising

The majority of the Trust's income is derived from grant funding. The Trust does receive a small number of donations but does not raise any funds direct from the public

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Key Performance Indicators - Trust

The Trust is very proud of its constituent academies. The standards achieved and maintained are derived from outstanding leadership driven by the ethos of the Trust that 'good is not good enough!' The Headteachers (line managed by the CEO) and their teams work collaboratively and positively together in order to provide stronger outcomes and opportunities for the children. Such collaboration is one of the few imperatives the Trust directs any 'good' school investigating conversion and joining in. The Headteachers benefit from the 24/7 access to the CEO as an NLE, deriving support, challenge and advice.

Warden Park Primary Academy

Leadership and Management

Leaders at all levels remain unwavering and untiring in their drive for excellence and staff have shown positivity towards their and pupil safety and its positive impact on morale.

There is an on-going focus from leaders on developing subject knowledge and pedagogy through INSET and curriculum development. The headteacher, senior team and governing body, share the same sense of moral purpose and determination to provide the best possible education for pupils. Staff and parents are highly supportive of the school and the care and education provided. The following development priorities were the focus for the academic year 2022/23:

Priorities for Improvement from Self-evaluation	
Quality of Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It's evident from what teachers do that they have a firm and common understanding of our school's curriculum intent and the work given to our pupils is successfully designed and adapted to be ambitious and meet the needs of all pupils, with a focus on ensuring pupils with SEN and/or disabilities/neurodiversity and the most able achieve consistently well.
Leadership and Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Our leaders and those responsible for governance ensure that subject leaders effectively support and monitor the planning and teaching of subjects across the wider curriculum to ensure that the most able pupils are routinely challenged so that more achieve the higher standards.2. Our leaders ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development which consistently builds their subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge over time. This translates into improvements in the teaching of the curriculum.3. Our leaders ensure that safeguarding is effective

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Behaviours and Attitudes	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Our pupils behave consistently well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and consistently positive attitudes to their education. If our pupils struggle with this, we take intelligent, fair and highly-effective action to support them to succeed in their education.2. Our pupils actively support the wellbeing of other pupils.3. Our pupils make a highly positive, tangible contribution to the life of the school and/or the wider community.
Personal Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pupils have access to a wide rich set of rich experiences through the curriculum and these experiences considerably strengthen our school's offer.2. Pupils have access to a wide rich set of extra-curricular activities, and there's strong take-up by pupils of the opportunities provided by our school. The most disadvantaged pupils consistently benefit from this excellent work. Opportunities for our pupils to develop their talents and interests are of exceptional quality.

Staff understand the academy's ambitious vision. They value the opportunities they are given to develop their professional skills successfully. Morale is high and there is a palpable sense of teamwork across the school. Developing the skills and capabilities of leaders is a long-term priority in building a culture in which distributed leadership unpins the academy's future success. Staffing is stable, particularly amongst teaching staff. Academy development planning is based on rigorous data monitoring and accurate self-evaluation. Plans are SMART and realistic and regular monitoring of pupil progress is rigorous and has an impact on learning and intervention programs. Arrangements for appraisal (Review, development and progression) are effective and up to date.

WPPA meets all safeguarding legislation and gives priority to pupils' safety. Governors are rigorous in ensuring this. Leaders effectively tackle discrimination and promote harmony and tolerance amongst all pupils. Leaders ensure that great care and attention is given to vulnerable pupils and their families. Concerns are swiftly followed up and the school seeks the support of other agencies, when appropriate, to ensure the safety of pupils in their care. This is a school where policy is firmly put into practice and care for pupils extends beyond the school gates.

Parents and carers feel welcome at the school. 100% of parents would recommend the school to others.

The curriculum is well organised, broad and exciting.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Warden Park Primary Academy (continued)

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Most pupils have closed attainment gaps created by the periods of school closure due to Covid. Attainment At EYFS, Y1 and Y2 is in line with national data. Y6 SATs data demonstrated attainment that was lower than national averages. The Y6 cohort had significantly higher than average proportions of SEND pupils, disadvantaged pupils and pupils joining the school in Y5 or 6, often from countries outside of the UK and for whom English was an additional language. Research has shown these pupils' attainment was the most significantly impacted by the pandemic.

Pupils at WPPA are challenged, based on each teachers' on-going, short-term assessments. The focus on developing each child's 'growth mindset' is aimed at encouraging a 'can-do' attitude, higher levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy and a general raising of expectations from all stakeholders, including the children themselves. Children complete adapted learning and are supported with the appropriate scaffolds and resources as necessary. We have focused on adapting and extending our curriculum so that all pupils are challenged and able to fulfil their potential, with many more small steps of progress evident in lessons than previously – Teachers sequence learning opportunities effectively and adopt an approach of moving learning quickly on within a mastery approach.

Feedback is consistently good. Lesson observation and work monitoring shows teachers give clear points to pupils to improve and the teachers follow them up. Pupils say they understand teachers' feedback and find it useful. Pupils learn from their mistakes and are not afraid to 'have a go'. We have progressed our definition of feedback beyond written marking and teachers now focus on giving high quality verbal feedback, on discussing outcomes with year group colleagues and adjusting planning for subsequent lessons than on lengthy written marking.

Under a structured termly approach to communicating with parents, they are provided with good-quality information that tells them how well their child is doing and, crucially, what they need to do to improve. Using a digital system of sharing learning called 'Seesaw', parents regularly receive personalised feedback on their child's successes. They have fed back incredibly positively on this initiative.

Assessment processes are rigorous and robust. Pupil Progress meetings provide a supportive approach to ensuring children are on track to meet targets. These were led effectively by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Inclusion lead. These have been further enhanced by our use of Arbor (MIS) which allows us to have a more refined and useful assessment monitoring system. Staff had received training and support in developing ISPs (Individual Support Plans) and parent meetings have continued to grow in their rigour, bringing a 'team around the child' sense to the work which we do in supporting our SEND children alongside their families.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Warden Park Primary Academy (continued)

Cross Trust opportunities remain strong and numerous. We have a number of projects, including English, Maths, PE and History. Despite the obvious challenges and barriers, teachers from across the Trust have continued to forge working relationships, drawing on each other's experience and expertise to plan together and ensure a strong route from primary to secondary. Senior leaders continue to work together closely, strategically deploying resources to aid the progression of children and staff in a range of different ways. Sharing of resources has become more streamlined and the benefit of this has been clear to see and value for money has been improved.

Northlands Wood Primary Academy

Northlands Wood continues to develop as a flourishing academy with the Sussex Learning Trust. The school is excited about the recent and upcoming additions to the Trust as a way of further developing the work we do with our staff and pupils. The leadership and management team continues to drive forward timely changes as a way of ensuring the very best is achieved from all. This team of leaders remains consistent, all being in post for the past six years. Staff continue to be overwhelmingly supportive of the improvements in the school and the plans to improve the school further.

Northlands Wood has a strong culture of continual improvement, encapsulating a forward-thinking school which remains a key establishment in West Sussex. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is outstanding and visitors always comment on this as being a real strength and something they experience when coming in to run sessions, volunteer their time or lead assemblies and events.

Quality of Education enhancements

Outcomes for pupils across the school are very good. This is particularly true of our Early Years 'Good Level of Development' data, phonics results in Year One and also our Key Stage 2 outcomes for Maths, Reading and Grammar. Writing is a subject where more children should be achieving higher outcomes. This has led to a laser focus on this area of the curriculum supported by the Trust as we look to improve the quality of writing being produced and bring it in line with the other high achieving subjects we already have success with. Our CPD programme, including Staff Meeting time and INSET day inputs, is built around this and staff are drawing on expertise to reconsider how English lessons are planned and delivered as well as the accuracy of the assessment in writing. Our approach to improvement focuses on ensuring that all staff have the necessary skills, knowledge and resources to teach writing in the way which is required. This is being led and implemented by our Writing Subject Leader in conjunction with our Reading Subject Leader and her fellow English leaders across the Trust.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Northlands Wood Primary Academy (continued)

School developments continue to be a focus. There is a high level of investment being made in a number of areas - both financially but also in training and support for staff and pupils.

In addition to Writing, other key developments include:

Forest School is in its sixth year, delivering high quality provision and continues to allow the children to flourish and improve their personal development significantly. This has extended to us taking on a second site in a nearby ancient woodland, allowing our children to learn different skills in a Forest setting with supervision from highly qualified instructors. New Early Years children had induction sessions involving Forest School tool work, something which was highly commended and praised by the new cohort of parents. We have two Level 3 trained Forest School leaders who hold the full qualification including outdoor First Aid certification and training to plan and run sessions for all year groups. Northlands Wood is partnering with Sussex Wildlife Trust and Borde Hill Gardens with increasing frequency as we undertake projects at school as well as in the local nature reserves. This partnership is improving our environment and also educating our young people and staff in how to attract more wildlife into the area.

Computing has been another area which has continued to grow year on year; seeing lots of improvements. From a systemic perspective we are increasing our resilience around cyber security and working with the Trust to roll out training to all staff across the academy. The curriculum is currently being revised and software refined in conjunction with this. Children continue to grow in confidence when using different devices, ranging from iPads to laptops, robotics to chromebooks. There is an increasing amount of computing being delivered across the curriculum, something notable in the recent Art day when Digital Art was prevalent across the school. Northlands Wood remains fundamental in the West Sussex e-learning group, helping to shape the agenda and guide the direction of travel, both from a systems perspective as well as a curriculum aspect.

We place an emphasis on **Pupil leaders** across the school as we know the positive impact this has on our children, elevating them into positions of responsibility and giving them opportunities to lead on aspects of our school and its development. Current roles include: Digital Leaders, Art Ambassadors, Junior STEM Ambassadors, School Councillors, Eco-Warriors, Forest School Rangers and Autism Ambassadors. As groups, they are empowered to make a difference to pupils across the whole school and improve the experience for all. These pupils are now operating in conjunction with fellow pupil leaders and ambassadors from other schools in the Trust which provides new ideas and opportunities and which they thrive from.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Northlands Wood Primary Academy (continued)

Therapeutic Thinking is continuing to develop as a schoolwide concept in line with West Sussex's whole county approach to behaviour. Senior Leaders are busy delivering the programme across the school and this is being rolled out through INSET day sessions as well as staff meetings. Lots of emphasis is being placed on positive language and a focus on generating prosocial behaviour and feelings across all dynamics. This has further moved into assemblies so that children become fully cognizant of the language we are using across the school and what it means when we talk about prosocial behaviour and antisocial behaviour.

Parents and Carers have continued to be very supportive of the school and survey results demonstrate a high level of trust in the school and its leadership. There are always a high number of volunteers in and around the school, both during the day and also at events put on in conjunction with the very active PTFA committee. The strengths of the parent body are well understood and these are harnessed to the benefit of our children and community.

School to School support

We continue to be an outreaching establishment, offering support and guidance to schools which require additional input. We are currently working in partnership with a locality Primary school to support the development of leadership and the Head Teacher is mentoring two new Head Teachers as part of the West Sussex 'new to headship' programme. This is providing additional opportunities for Northlands Wood staff as they draw on their leadership strengths to nurture and grow colleagues in other schools to improve outcomes in their subject areas. Early Years remains a key strength of the school, with the Early Years leader providing opportunities for Early Years staff from other establishments to visit and see the practice we operate here as well as leading on locality shared networking events.

The Head Teacher chairs the locality English Subject Leader group. This provides English leaders with the chance to network with other leaders, share good practice and moderate across a wider network of schools. There are opportunities for Primary and Secondary schools to come together in this forum and feedback is always very positive.

Cross Trust opportunities remain strong and numerous. There are increasing opportunities for colleagues across the academies to come together and learn from one another under a framework of 'peer reviews'. These have been incredibly successful in History, Art, Dance and English already, with other subjects exploring similar threads. The Trust INSET day provided staff with the chance to hear more about oracy and explore strategies which they can use in class with their children and additionally there was time spent 'cross phase' building on work already started across subject areas. The role of Digital Services across the Trust continues to be evolved as different models are considered and roles of the team are further understood and strengths leveraged on for maximum efficiency and impact.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Northlands Wood Primary Academy (continued)

Inclusivity is at the heart of our school and in all we do. We have a very experienced and knowledgeable inclusion team who support numerous children and families right across the school. This is true for before they join us, right up until they transition from our school and move onto their new setting. There is an increasing number of pupils in Northlands Wood who have additional needs and we support them exceptionally. Feedback from parents and their successes in school provide this evidence and many parents reach out to us, wanting their child to join our school because of the positive reputation we have in this field. We listen to all our pupils and meet their needs wherever possible. Groups of pupils work hard to represent their peers, particularly in the area of autism, where we have a thriving group of Autism Ambassadors. These children help others understand their diagnoses and also work with external agencies to ensure the school does its best to allow them to reach their true potential and remain regulated.

Woodgate Primary Academy (joined 1st June 2023)

Woodgate Primary School, formerly known as Warninglid Primary, is a smaller than average primary school with 93 children on roll. The school is situated in a new housing development in the village of Pease Pottage, attracting pupils both from the local area and further afield. Woodgate Primary opened on its new site (five miles from its previous location) in September 2021. The move was necessary to ensure an economically viable future and came about as part of West Sussex School Effectiveness Strategy. Although Woodgate is not technically a new school, it has undergone so many changes- location, staffing and pupil composition, that in many respects it is new and has needed to find its new identity since September 2021. In this time, the school has seen its population grow from 32 pupils on roll (July 2021) to 93 in September 2023. This growth has incorporated a significant change in pupil demographics in a very short period of time. This change has proven to be a significant challenge for leaders and governors to manage and has resulted in a significant decline in overall school effectiveness since the previous inspection in 2017.

Since joining Sussex Learning Trust in June 2023, a new headteacher has been appointed and took up post as of 1st September 2023. All areas of the school's effectiveness require improvement as they are not yet good and the following areas are being addressed as a matter of urgency:

- Improving the quality of education to ensure the proportion of pupils reaching age related expectations improves significantly.
 - To ensure the Woodgate curriculum implementation, particularly for early reading (inc phonics) and writing and Mathematics, is coherent and there is a consistent approach to quality First Teaching and lesson structure to ensure the proportion of pupils reaching age related expectations improves significantly.
 - To ensure consistent application of the school's Learning and Teaching, Assessment and feedback and marking policies.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

Woodgate Primary Academy (joined 1st June 2023) (continued)

- Embed the school's behaviour policy and therapeutic approaches to behaviour management to ensure all staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct.
- To ensure a significant reduction in the rate of pupil absence, particularly those who are persistently absent and where punctuality to lessons is an issue. Where pupils do not have high attendance, staff must take consistently appropriate, swift and effective action.

Led by the new headteacher, there is a determination to improve from all stakeholders. The academy's self-evaluation is now accurate and robust and the 2023/24 School improvement plan is focused on rapidly improving pupils outcomes and includes:

- A clearer and more concise focus on the main areas of weakness.
- A balance between rapid school improvement with the capacity currently in the school, linking closely to staff CPD and training
- SMART targets, including pupil progress and attainment data
- Clearly identified monitoring activities

All staff have a greater awareness of the short-term, medium-term and long-term plans for the academy and the Central Trust Executive team are confident that the school will rapidly increase its effectiveness as 2023/24 progresses.

Warden Park Secondary Academy

Students achievements:

In 2023 GCSE exams saw the planned return to the grade boundaries last implemented in 2019. The aim being to remove grade inflation and secure a similar proportion of students achieving grade 4+ and grade 7+ as that achieved in 2019. Across almost all GCSE subjects this was implemented and therefore all schools were advised to expect a drop in the raw attainment achieved by students. The table below indicates the impact of these national measures on our Attainment 8 score for GCSE:

All	A8	% 4+ Eng/Ma	% 5+ Eng/Ma	Including English + Maths	
				% 5 9-4 grades	% 5 9-5 grades
2023	53.6	81	61	76	58
2022	55.6	78	56	76	55
2019	54.2	77	60	73	54

In this context, it has been very pleasing to see that we have achieved further improvement against the Basics measure.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Trustees' report (continued)

Warden Park Secondary Academy (continued)

Provisional DfE data, October 2023, detailed below:

	All	High Prior Attainers	Middle Prior Attainers	Low Prior Attainers	Disadvantaged
Progress 8	0.3	0.37	0.3	0.18	-0.78

Once again student progress overall as measured by ALPS Qi indicator is a 3 which places the progress achieved by our students between KS2 and GCSE in the top 25% of schools nationally.

In the ALPS analysis of subjects, 14 subjects are graded red (top 25% nationally); 12 graded in the middle 50%; 2 subjects graded blue (bottom 25%). 6 subjects graded ALPS 2 (top 10% nationally). Strong progress rates in subjects with high cohort numbers, English Language, English Literature, Maths, History, and Business have underpinned the success.

The achievement of Disadvantaged students remained an ALPS 7. Against the national picture of disadvantaged students' achievement falling away, it is perhaps a success to have held our position. However, improving outcomes for this cohort remains a focus in 2023/24.

Curriculum developments:

A major refurbishment of a space has brought a new facility online to allow for an expansion of Drama into our Key Stage 3 curriculum. This comes at a time when a new Expressive and Performing Arts Faculty has been created to encapsulate our work across the art subjects i.e. Art, Dance, Drama and Music.

A faculty for Personal Development has also been created to draw together themes covered in historically separate curriculum areas of Learning About Life (our PSHE programme) and Health and Wellbeing. This faculty is being led by our Senior Mental Health Lead.

During the year we were assessed by the SSAT Leading Edge as 'Transforming' with regards to 'Principled Curriculum Design'. This adds to our other accreditation from the SSAT of 'Engaging with evidence and research'. Our feedback from the SSAT is available.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Warden Park Secondary Academy (continued)

Teaching and learning:

Oracy: We continue to work closely with Voice 21 in developing strategies to develop students' oracy skills. We continue to share good practice and relevant reading via department meetings and weekly updates, such as examples from MFL which has a heavy oracy focus) and geography and the daily digest. Examples of good practice that have been shared. Next year we plan to continue with an oracy focus as a key area of our students' language development. Whereas this year the aim has been to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to build oracy into their lessons on a frequent basis, next year we will move onto looking at how all curriculum areas can use guidance that makes sure students are not only speaking regularly but also developing the quality of their speaking during both exploratory and presentational talk opportunities.

Developments against the OFSTED framework:

WPSA was inspected by OFSTED in February 2022 and was judged to be 'Good' on the new inspection framework. Since then a number of strategic improvements and developments have further strengthened the quality of education, leadership and management, personal development and behaviour and attitudes in the academy:

- The introduction of a Faculty structure for the Expressive and Performing Arts and for Personal Development.
- Under our 'Character' agenda, our Tutor time programme, Assembly themes and Enrichment week programme.
- The identification of five core virtues, Curiosity, Kindness, Responsibility, Resilience and Respect, to sit at the heart of our approach to the development of students' character. An Excellent Character Framework has been developed and made bespoke to each curriculum subject area. This framework is also the basis for our rewards system.

Developing leadership remains a strong feature of our strategic approach to professional development. During 2022/23, two teachers completed a year-long Leadership Legacy programme with SSAT; one teacher completed the NPQSL apprenticeship; one teacher completed the SSAT Aspirant Headteacher programme. In 2023/24, we will have four teachers undertaking middle leader training with the SSAT, five teachers following the NPQSL programme and one teacher following the SSAT Leadership Legacy route.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Warden Park Secondary Academy (continued)

Special Support Centre (SSC):

This year we secured funding from West Sussex Local Authority for a new building to house our growing SSC provision. Demand for specialist places to support students with social communication needs is growing and our track record of success has been the driving force to accommodate more students. We hope that the new facilities will be open early in the 2024/25 academic year.

Admissions:

The academy's success means that we remain over-subscribed each year for the 300 places in Year 7. In 2022/23 we admitted an additional 30 students over PAN in order to meet exceptional demand and in 2023/24 we admitted an additional 10 students.

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.

Reserves Policy

At 31 August 2023, the Trust has total funds of £39,341,000 (2022: £35,509,000) and fixed asset funds at the same date total £38,422,000 (2022: £34,671,000). At 31 August 2023, the Restricted General Fund had a nil balance (2022: nil balance).

For its own purposes, the Academy Trust excludes the FRS102 Section 28 calculated liability when calculating free reserves but has considered the cash flow implications that may arise from the accounting disclosure in terms of increased contributions. Trustees have approved a plan to work towards holding a reserve of c £727,000 at the end of 2023/24. This level of reserve will allow the Trust to undertake some development activity, manage funding uncertainty and provide some security against unexpected issues or events.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

The Academy Trust has £919,000 in the Unrestricted General Fund as at 31 August 2023 (2022: £838,000). This reserve has been generated over a number of years through academy commercial activity such as catering and letting and from fundraising activities. This fund is freely available for its general purposes and has been held as an accumulating fund for major capital projects to enhance teaching and learning facilities in accordance with the Trust and member Academy Development Plans as well as supporting core activities in the current funding environment. During the year, a transfer of £750,000 (2022: £535,000) was made from the unrestricted fund to restricted funds to support core activity as well as contributing to capital expenditure.

Investment Policy

In the year ended 31 August 2023, higher interest deposit accounts have been used to achieve a more favourable return on funds where appropriate.

Risk Management

The trustees have assessed the key risks to which the Academy Trust may be exposed, in particular those relating to pupil numbers, educational outcomes, the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff in shortage subjects, estate management and Health & Safety, the development of our facilities, academy funding, finance and Trust expansion.

Trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess and mitigate the risks that the Academy Trust faces in relation to all the areas mentioned above, most notably a robust risk register.

As part of a long-term strategic approach to risk management; the trustees have developed, and will maintain, a risk register identifying the major areas of risk to which the Academy Trust and its member academies are exposed. The register identifies actions and procedures to mitigate those risks. This register is overseen and monitored by the CEO, Deputy CEO, CFO, Operations and Commercial Director and by Board of Trustees and via the Local Governing bodies and Audit & Risk committee. The principal risks facing the Academy Trust at a strategic level are outlined below in the principal risks and uncertainties section; those facing the Academy at an operational level are addressed by its systems and by internal financial and other controls; for further details see the Governance Statement below.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Principal risks and uncertainties

The risks below are risks faced by independent Trusts and are not specific to Sussex Learning Trust.

External

- The cost of living crisis and high levels of inflation
- The continued impact of Brexit on and how this could affect the Academy Trust's operations in the short and medium term
- Additional cost pressures which are not sufficiently funded such as a change to financial legislation affecting the employment of staff such as minimum wage levels or pension and NI contributions
- Reductions in Government spending (such reductions would be likely to apply in a similar way to all schools).
- Demographic changes affecting the number of children requiring educational provision in the Mid Sussex area.
- More academies operating in Mid Sussex with better facilities - possibly sponsored by large organisations.

Legal

- Operating outside the Academy Trust's charitable objects.
- Health and safety infringements.
- Falling foul of employment law.

Estates management

- Premises related issues may restrict the ability to educate students and pupils
- Costs of maintaining premises
- Health and safety related risks
- Expansion of premises may be required to secure desired growth

Governance

- Inability to attract appropriately qualified new Governors and Trustees
- Failure to respond to changes in external compliance requirements.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

The trustees have identified the following potential risks and uncertainties as applying specifically to the Sussex Learning Trust:

- **Falling rolls.** This is seen to be highly unlikely based on current admissions information and forecasts.
- **Branding/reputation.** Our reputation remains strong as evidenced by high and increasing levels of interest and applications at each of our academies.
- **Delays in expansion and opening planned academies.** Such delays impact on budget plans and cashflows for a specific year and are hard to manage due to factors related to stakeholders in the projects that are beyond the Trust's control. The academic year 22-23 saw one academy join us and another on 1st September 23.
- **Decrease in income affecting provision.** Given the UK public sector economic outlook, political and policy uncertainty, changes in NI and pension contribution rates and on-going changes in formula funding, there is still some uncertainty over funding levels in the near future. The budget strategy for 2023/24 provides for some contingency against future developments but this remains a key area of risk and focus for management and trustees.
- **Lagged funding.**
- **Level of reserves.** Given the historic impact of Covid 19 and Brexit on UK economic outlook and the significant uncertainty regarding the potential impact on the Academy Trust's activities, there needs to be continued careful consideration of the reserves policy, level of reserves held and funds set aside for future commitments and trust development which beyond the Trust's direct control.

Estates management risk

- **Estates plan.** The Operations and Commercial Director (O&CD) has responsibility for developing and implementing a trust-wide Estates Management plan that incorporates all aspects of effective estate management including Health & Safety, compliance, scheduling maintenance and planning capital projects.
- The O&CD is supported by the Operations and Commercial Manager who is also acts as Compliance Officer. Both of these members of staff have completed IOSH training.

Financial risks

- **Bank balances and investments.** There is no significant risk other than a financial institution ceasing to trade. The Academy Trust is therefore seeking a prudent spread for future investment over a number of very reliable and / or government-backed institutions.
- **Bad debts.** There are no material debtors which are not government backed institutions.
- **Credit rating.** The Academy Trust's credit rating is not in jeopardy and there has been no need as yet for advanced credit facilities since conversion.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

- **Cashflow.** If the funding position does not improve, there will be increasing pressure on academy cashflow in future years which will require even more careful management.
- **Pensions related risk.** The increased cost of contributions required to support the continued membership of Defined Benefit pension scheme for the Trust's staff is a financial risk to the Trust.

Effective risk management involves three types of action:

Transferring the risk

Insurance is a means of transferring those risks the Trust decides not to accept. It limits the Trust's exposure to risk but it is not a substitute for active risk management. To the extent that the Trust manages its risks effectively, its insurance premiums will be lower, providing better value for money.

Reducing the probability of risk

The Trust will seek to identify the risks to Trust funds, property and people using their premises, collect them in a risk register and assess the potential frequency and severity of each risk, where possible based on careful analysis or recent experience. Action will be taken to prevent or reduce the probability of risk, particularly of those risks identified as high frequency and/or high severity.

Limiting the impact of risk

The Trust will continue to complete and review the risk register as a formal record of problems that could occur in the future which will impact on day to day operations. Effective monitoring of Academy Trust operations by the Trustees, Trust Officers, Local Governing Bodies and leadership teams in each academy will contribute to mitigate risks. This monitoring includes an annual review of the risk register and ongoing reporting of newly identified risks.

The Trust will continue to develop an Emergency / Critical Incident and Business Continuity Procedures aimed at both protecting personal health and safety and minimising the disruption to normal operations that an unforeseen emergency would cause. Where necessary, the Trust will continue to develop contingency plans for particular risks identified as high frequency and/or high severity.

The Academy Trust operates systems, including operational procedures and internal financial controls in order to minimise risk.

The key controls used by the Academy Trust include:

- formal agendas for all trustees' meetings
- formal agendas and work programme for the Audit & Risk Committee
- detailed terms of reference for all committees
- formal written policies that are subject to regular and systematic review
- strategic planning, budgeting and management accounting according to a rigorous agreed timetable
- clear authorisation and approval levels as well as clearly defined purchasing guidelines

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Plans for the future

Without repeating the aims and objectives above:

1. The Trust intends that each of its first 3 academies will be outstanding by 2024 and implementation of Improvement Plans to this end are well advanced.
2. We will welcome into the Trust additional schools. These will meet our Growth Strategy plan benefiting the children in the joining and existing schools of SLT. The CEO will continue to work in a consultancy capacity to fee earn on behalf of the Trust assisting schools in challenging situations to improve. This is widening to include opportunities for talented staff to be involved in school to school support projects too, providing much needed support and excellent CPD in addition. Thus, the children of our Trust will benefit as will those in receiving schools.
3. We will continue to embed the Trust wide focus on Character Education addressing the increasing need for children to develop resilience, fortitude and inspiration to take their place in our increasingly complex society.
4. Ministerial approval has been given for our planned free-school, Hurst Farm Primary Academy. The proposed opening date is currently under consideration.
5. The pleasing improvements to the achievement of Disadvantaged Learners across the Trust in 2019 will be built upon to eradicate the achievement gap by 2023.
6. We will redouble our efforts towards the intention to expand the Trust's influence within the immediate and wider West Sussex vicinity. The RSC is very positive about the work of the Trust and is keen to support this intention.

Trade union facility time

Under the provisions of the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017, where an academy trust has more than 49 full time equivalent employees throughout any 7 months within the reporting period, it must include information included in Schedule 2 of the Regulations as outlined below

Relevant union officials

<i>Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period</i>	<i>Full-time equivalent employee number</i>
4	3.5

Sussex Learning Trust**Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023****Trustees' report (continued)****Trade union facility time (continued)****Percentage of time spent on facility time**

<i>Percentage of time</i>	<i>Number of employees</i>
0%	0
1-50%	4
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

<i>First Column</i>	<i>Figures</i>
Provide the total cost of facility time	£3k
Provide the total pay bill	£12,120k
Provide the percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time, calculated as: (total cost of facility time ÷ total pay bill) x 100	0.02%

Paid trade union activities

As a percentage of total paid facility time hours, how many hours were spent by employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period on paid trade union activities?

50%

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023	Current Reporting Year 2022/23	Comparison Reporting Year 2021/22
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	2,056,007	2,410,071
Energy consumption break down (kWh) (optional):		
• gas	1,435,487	1,767,368
• electricity	607,645	626,305
• transport fuel	12,875	16,398
Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e		
Gas consumption	262.06	322.62
Owned transport – mini-buses	3.30	3.93
Total Scope 1	265.36	326.55
Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e		
Purchased electricity	125.83	121.11
Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO2e		
Business travel in employee owned vehicles	1.09	1.59
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO2e	392.28	449.25
Intensity ratio Tonnes CO2e per pupil	0.16	0.19

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 2022 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 intensity ratio in 2022-23 is a 16% decrease on 2021-22 which is largely due to reductions in gas consumption. Boiler improvement work at NWPA has made a significant contribution to this. As we have moved out of the Covid-19 pandemic, the ventilation requirements have diminished which has improved our energy efficiency since last year.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Trustees' report (continued)

The trustees wish to acknowledge the following:

- The leadership provided by the CEO, the Headteachers and their senior leadership teams as trustees seek to develop and expand the Academy Trust.
- The commitment of all of the staff, teaching and support, for the manner in which they have continued to deliver an increasingly effective learning and support environment for our learners.
- The parent teachers associations for their continued enthusiasm and commitment to fund raising to provide additional opportunities and facilities for our learners.
- The continued support of West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council.
- The strong support from pupils, families and the whole community.

The trustees' thanks go to all, for their part in the continued success of the Trust.

Auditor

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.

This report, incorporating the strategic report, was approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 13 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards

Chair

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

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

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the CEO, as Accounting Officer, 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 Sussex Learning Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the board of trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

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

Trustees	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
J Ash-Edwards (Chair)	6	6
J Allik	6	6
J Gray	5	6
E Gunter	6	6
H Hill (Vice Chair)	5	6
P Hiscock	5	6
J Packham (resigned 29/03/23)	2	3
P Potter (appointed 07/12/22)	5	5
S Robertson	6	6
R Stevens	6	6
J Thompson	5	6
S Veluswamy	5	6

The Local Governing Bodies have delegated responsibilities as set out in the Scheme of Delegation (see SLT website) in respect of governance, finance and contracts, curriculum and standards, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Sussex Learning Trust

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Governance Statement (continued)

Warden Park Secondary Academy Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
J Ash-Edwards (Chair)	6	6
N Dyson	3	6
S Gabriel	5	6
S Hashemi (appointed 7/6/23)	1	1
T Hosking	4	6
D Kenrick	6	6
N Mortimer	5	6
R Scourfield (09/10/22)	0	1
J Simpson (resigned 09/11/22)	1	1
R Stevens (appointed 15/03/23)	2	3
R Stoneley	6	6
G Stewart	5	6
E Upsdell	6	6

Warden Park Primary Academy Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
J Allik (Vice Chair)	4	6
J Ash-Edwards	4	6
D Ayres (appointed 03/10/22)	6	6
E Barrington (resigned 05/10/22)	0	0
E Brodie (appointed ex-officio 26/01/23)	4	4
M Burbidge (appointed 11/05/23)	1	1
S Davis (end of ex-officio 25/01/23)	2	2
L Doe	4	6
M Field	4	6
E Gunter (Chair)	6	6
R Jowett (appointed 03/12/22)	4	4
L Meagher	5	6
B Swithenbank	6	6
A Whittle (appointed 03/12/22)	4	4

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Governance Statement

Governance (continued)

Northlands Wood Primary Academy Local Governing Body attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
R Allen	3	6
A Bromage-Hughes	5	6
Lauren Brown (appointed 22/11/22)	5	5
M Downham	5	6
C Edgell	6	6
L Hother	4	6
M Hutton	4	6
K James	6	6
J Newton	6	6
T Parker (resigned 13/10/22)	0	0
M Sears	6	6
S Sedgley	5	6
R Stevens (Chair since 01/10/23)	6	6

Woodgate Primary Academy Local Governing Body was convened 1 June 2023 and attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Governor	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
J Bird	2	2
J Hartwell	1	2
Martin Parnell	2	2
Paul Rycroft	2	2
Janet Warwick	2	2
Ruth Whaley	2	2
Marion West	2	2

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Governance Statement

Audit and Risk committee attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Committee member	Meetings Attended	Out of a possible
S Gabriel (appointed 19/10/22)	3	3
P Hiscock	3	4
J Newton	3	4
S Robertson (Chair)	4	4
B Swithenbank	3	4
J Thompson	3	4

Review of Value for Money

As accounting officer, the CEO has responsibility for ensuring that the Academy Trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The accounting officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes 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 available. The accounting officer for the Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by:

- Key contracts are appraised or renegotiated in a timely manner to get the best mix of quality and effectiveness. One, two and three year contract have been entered into to ensure reduced cost. Where appropriate, detailed reviews of key contracts and ways of providing services were performed prior to renewal or where there is an opportunity to do things differently to ensure best value in both financial and non-financial terms. Specific examples include the tendering and selection of Utilities, ICT equipment and products.
- A Trust-led procurement system is used to negotiate contracts for services required to support students including Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language which has attracted high calibre professionals and secured cost savings across the Trust.
- The Trust regularly takes opportunities to work collaboratively with others to reduce and share administration or procurement costs.
- Developing our approach to income generation and fundraising as an important part of the Trust's financial planning and achieving our objectives. All the academies in the Trust have active PTAs who contribute to annual fundraising and the Trust is actively engaged with local businesses / charitable organisations and successfully negotiated donations and sponsorship towards educational equipment, arts and sports events.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Governance Statement (continued)

- Maximised income generation through a renewed focus on maintaining lettings activity have returned to post pandemic levels. Hiring our facilities also supports local community and not for profit organisations who will need this support. There are regular income streams from long-term core bookings which have achieved significant sums for example from hiring of academy halls and 3G Pitch.
- Value for money is also an important part of the Estate Management plan to ensure any safety or condition issues are addressed in a timely but cost effective way for example, by completing preventative works to avoid deterioration in the building condition which would lead to greater future expenditure. The risks related to RACC have been considered and none has been identified on Trust premises.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of 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 Sussex Learning Trust for the year ended 31 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 on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the year ending 31 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.

Managing conflicts of interest

The Board of Trustees manages conflicts of interest by maintaining and publishing an up-to-date and complete register of interests and by following the principles set out in the NGA Model Code of Conduct for example, if a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, the trustee or governor will offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion and any subsequent vote.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Governance Statement

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:

- 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 trustees and LGBs of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes;
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance;
- clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines;
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties;
- identification and management of risks

The Board of Trustees appointed Carpenter Box as internal auditor for 2022/23. The internal auditor's role included giving advice on financial and other matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial and other systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the current period included:

- testing of payroll systems
- testing of purchase systems
- testing of control account/ bank reconciliations

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 and annually prepares an annual summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

Review of Effectiveness

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

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

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Governance Statement (continued)

No material weaknesses have been identified through the above review. The Accounting Officer and management are committed to a process of continuous improvement and will continue to review and assess the system of internal control going forward in light of any changes to the Trust or developments in best practice.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 13 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards
Chair



J Morris
Accounting Officer

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance

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

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

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance have been discovered to date.

If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the Board of Trustees and the ESFA.



J Morris
Accounting officer

13 December 2023

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

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 Annual 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 charitable company and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards [FRS 102] have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business

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

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

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 13 December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards

Chair of Trustees

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Sussex Learning Trust for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the Statement of financial activities incorporating income and expenditure account, the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 August 2023 and of its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, including the Academies' Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the academy'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.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited (continued)

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report other than the financial statements and our Auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the Annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matter prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

- the information given in the trustees' report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report prepared for the purposes of company law, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the strategic report and the directors' report included within the trustees' report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the trustees' report. We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited (continued)

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities statement set out on page 36, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the 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 charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

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

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Sussex Learning Trust Limited (continued)

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

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

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

Use of our report

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



Darren Rigden

Senior Statutory Auditor

For and on behalf of

Crowe U.K. LLP, Statutory Auditor

Riverside House, 40-46 High Street, Maidstone, ME14 1JH

21st December 2023

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Independent Auditor's Report on Regularity to the Trustees of Sussex Learning Trust Limited and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 11 October 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 the Academy Trust during the period 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 Sussex Learning Trust and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Sussex Learning Trust and the ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than Sussex Learning Trust and the ESFA, for our work, for this report or for the conclusion we have formed.

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Sussex Learning Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 1 September 2011 and the Academies Financial Handbook, extant from 1 September 2020, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in our engagement letter.

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

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

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Independent Auditor's Report on Regularity to the Trustees of Sussex Learning Trust Limited and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (continued)

Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the Academy Trust's income and expenditure. The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes a review of the design and implementation of the Academy Trust's internal controls and review processes on regularity, supported by detailed tests on samples of costs incurred by the Academy Trust and specific transactions identified from our review.

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 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.

Crowe OK CCP

Darren Rigden

Senior Statutory Auditor

For and on behalf of

Crowe U.K. LLP, Statutory Auditor

Riverside House, 40-46 High Street, Maidstone, ME14 1JH

21st December 2023

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 August 2023

(including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and losses)

		Unrestricted	Restricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		Funds	General	Fixed	2023	2022
	Note	£000	£000	Asset Funds	£000	£000
Income and endowments from:						
Balances on conversion	4	-	(98)	3,676	3,578	-
Donations and capital grants	4	604	237	584	1,425	1,579
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
. Funding for the Academy Trust's educational operations	7	470	13,641	-	14,111	13,211
Other trading activities	5	166	-	-	166	172
Investments	6	-	-	-	-	-
Total incoming resources		1,240	13,780	4,260	19,280	14,962
Expenditure on:						
Balances on conversion		-	-	-	-	-
Raising funds	8	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Charitable activities:</i>						
. Academy Trust's educational operations	9	409	14,871	463	15,743	15,305
Total resources expended	8	409	14,871	463	15,743	15,305
Net incoming resources (before transfers)		831	(1,090)	3,796	3,537	(343)
Transfers						
Gross transfers between funds	20	(750)	795	(45)	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year		81	(295)	3,751	3,537	(343)
Other recognised gains and losses						
Actuarial gains / (losses) on defined benefit pension schemes	30	-	295	-	295	6,512
Net movement in funds		81	-	3,751	3,832	6,169

Sussex Learning Trust**Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023****Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 August 2023****(including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and losses) (continued)**

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	Funds	General	Fixed	2023	2022
	£000	Funds	Asset Funds	£000	£000
		£000	£000		
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward at 1 September	838	-	34,671	35,509	29,340
Total funds carried forward at 31 August	919	-	38,422	39,341	35,509

Sussex Learning Trust (Company number: 07705100)

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Balance sheet as at 31 August 2023

	Notes	2023 £000	2023 £000	2022 £000	2022 £000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	14		38,231		33,864
Total fixed assets			38,231		33,864
Current assets					
Stock	15	9		11	
Debtors	16	1,244		1,143	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,839		1,602	
Total current assets		3,092		2,756	
Liabilities:					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	17	(1,632)		(1,054)	
Net current assets		1,460		1,702	
Total assets less current liabilities			39,691		35,566
Creditors: Amounts falling due after one year	18	(350)		(57)	
Net assets excluding pension liability			39,341		35,509
Pension scheme liability			-		-
Net assets including pension liability			39,341		35,509
Funds of the academy Trust:					
Restricted income funds					
. Fixed asset fund(s)	20		38,422		34,671
. General fund(s)	20		-		-
. Pension reserve	20		-		-
Total restricted funds			38,422		34,671
Unrestricted funds					
. General fund(s)	20		919		838
Total unrestricted funds			919		838
Total Funds			39,341		35,509

The financial statements on pages 46 to 75 were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 13 December 2023 and signed on their behalf by:



J Ash-Edwards - Chair

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Cash flow statement for the year ended 31 August 2023

		2023	2022
		£000	£000
Net cash inflow / (outflow) from operating activities	23	840	(213)
Returns on investments and servicing of finance	24	-	-
Capital expenditure & financial investment	25	(603)	595
Increase / (decrease) in cash in the year	26	237	382
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Net funds at 1 September		1,602	1,220
Net funds at 31 August		1,839	1,602

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements

1. Company information

Sussex Learning Trust is company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales (company registration number 07705100). The principal activity is that of provision of primary and secondary school education. Its registered address is at Broad Street, Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH17 5DP

2. Accounting Policies

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

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements of the Academy Trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Sussex Learning Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

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 company to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of one year from the date of approval of the financial statements.

When satisfying themselves that the trust remains a going concern, management and trustees consider the level of current reserves, future forecast levels of funding and expected spending. Given the known and potential future increases in salaries and pension contributions, assumptions have been made in preparing the forecasts regarding the future funding of these additional costs. In the commentary accompanying the budget strategies for 2022-2025 for each member academy and for the central trust, the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the wider education funding environment, the assumptions over the cost base and the prospects for trust expansion were all considered.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Going Concern (continued)

Although there is considerable uncertainty over the factors outlined above, the trust has a track record of managing such uncertainty and the model presented to the trustees shows that the reserves are sufficient to avoid short term decision making and to secure the future of the trust going forward.

This is on the basis that the current assumptions relating to the staff cost base and inflation remain appropriate. Management and trustees are aware of the significance of such assumptions and update the reforecasts when new information becomes available.

Incoming Resources

All incoming resources are recognised when the Academy Trust has entitlement to the funds, certainty of receipt and the amount can be measured with sufficient reliability.

- **Grants receivable**

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of entitlement of receipt its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the year for which it is receivable and any unspent amount is reflected as a balance in the restricted fund.

Capital grants are recognised when receivable and are not deferred over the life of the asset on which they are expended. Unspent amounts of capital grant are reflected in the balance in the restricted fixed asset fund.

- **Donations**

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis where there is certainty of receipt and the amount can be reliably measured.

- **Other income**

Other income, including the hire of facilities, is recognised in the period it is receivable and to the extent the goods have been provided or on completion of the service.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

- **Donated Services and gifts in kind**

The value of donated services and gifts in kind provided to the Academy Trust are recognised at their open market value in the period in which they are receivable as incoming resources, where the benefit to the Academy Trust can be reliably measured. An equivalent amount is included as expenditure under the relevant heading in the Statement of Financial Activities, except where the gift in kind was a fixed asset in which case the amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with Academy Trust policies.

- **Resources Expended**

All expenditure is recognised in the period in which a liability is incurred and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to that category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated on a basis consistent with the use of resources, with central staff costs allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use. Other support costs are allocated based on the spread of staff costs.

- **Costs of generating funds**

These are costs incurred in attracting voluntary income, and those incurred in trading activities that raise funds.

- **Charitable activities**

These are costs incurred on the Academy Trust's educational operations.

- **Governance Costs**

These include the costs attributable to the Academy Trust's compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements, including audit, strategic management and Governor's meetings and reimbursed expenses.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment. Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the Balance Sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. The related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities and carried forward in the Balance Sheet. Depreciation on such assets is charged to the restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities so as to reduce the fund over the useful economic life of the related asset on a basis consistent with the Trust's depreciation policy.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Tangible Fixed Assets (continued)

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful lives, as follows:

Long leasehold buildings	125 years
Leasehold improvements	20 years
Fixtures, fittings and equipment	5 – 10 years
ICT equipment	4 years
Motor Vehicles	5 years

Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use.

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

Leased Assets

Rentals under operating leases are charged on straight line basis over the lease term.

Stock

Catering stocks are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

Taxation

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

Pensions Benefits

Retirement benefits to employees of the Academy Trust are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ('TPS') and the Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS'). These are defined benefit schemes, are contracted out of the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme ('SERPS'), and the assets are held separately from those of the Academy Trust.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Pension Benefits (continued)

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the Academy Trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary on the basis of quinquennial valuations using a prospective benefit method. As stated in Note 30, the TPS is a multi-employer scheme and the Academy Trust is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities of the scheme on a consistent and reasonable basis. The TPS is therefore treated as a defined contribution scheme and the contributions recognised as they are paid each year.

The LGPS is a funded scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the Academy Trust in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit 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 gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the Statement of Financial Activities if the benefits have vested. If the benefits have not vested immediately, the costs are recognised over the period until vesting occurs. The expected return on assets and the interest cost are shown as a net finance amount of other finance costs or credits adjacent to interest. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other gains and losses.

Fund Accounting

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

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

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received and include grants from the Education Funding Agency and Department for Education.

It is the Academy Trust's policy to transfer any amounts in the Unrestricted Fund that have been spent on capitalised fixed assets to the Restricted Fixed Asset Fund. This policy has been formally approved, minuted and adopted by the Governing Body.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements

2. Accounting Policies (continued)

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The Academy Trust makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

i) Pension scheme: The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 30, 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.

ii) Tangible fixed assets: the trustees annually assess both the residual value of these assets and the expected useful life of such assets based on experience

iii) Building valuations: The basis for valuing buildings transferred to the Trust on conversion is to use the most recent valuation provided by the Local Authority.

iv) Going concern: When satisfying themselves that the trust remains a going concern, management and trustees consider the level of current reserves, future forecast levels of funding and expected spending. Given the known and potential future increases in salaries and pension contributions, assumptions have been made in preparing the forecasts regarding the future funding of these additional costs. In the commentary accompanying the budget strategies for 2023-2026 for each member academy and for the central trust, the uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the National Funding Formula (NFF) and the wider education funding environment, the assumptions over the cost base and the prospects for trust expansion were all considered.

Although there is considerable uncertainty over the factors outlined above, the trust has a track record of managing such uncertainty and the model presented to the trustees shows that the reserves are sufficient to avoid short term decision making and to secure the future of the trust going forward.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Going concern (continued)

This is on the basis that the current assumptions relating to the staff cost base and inflation remain appropriate. Management and trustees are aware of the significance of such assumptions and update the reforecasts when new information becomes available.

Transfer on conversion

Where assets and liabilities are received by the Trust on schools joining the Trust, 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 Trust. An equal amount of income is recognised as transfer on conversion within donations and capital grant income to the net assets received.

3. General Annual Grant (GAG)

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State the Academy Trust was subject to limits at 31 August 2022 on the amount of GAG that could be carried forward from one year to the next. An amount equal to 12% of GAG could be carried forward, of which up to 2% could be used for general recurrent purposes, with any balance being available for premises/capital purposes. The Academy Trust has not exceeded these limits during the year ended 31 August 2023.

4. Donations and capital grants	Unrestricted	Restricted	2023	2022
	Funds	Funds	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balances on conversion	-	(98)	(98)	-
Capital grants	-	584	584	836
Donated fixed assets	-	3,676	3,676	-
Other Donations	604	237	841	743
	604	4,399	5,003	1,579

5. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2023	2022
	Funds	Funds	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Hire of Facilities	166	-	166	172
	166	-	166	172

6. Investment income

	2023	2022
	Total	Total
Bank interest	-	-

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

7 Funding for Academy Trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	Total 2023 £000	Total 2022 £000
DfE / ESFA revenue grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	11,865	11,865	11,460
UFSM	-	130	130	133
Pupil premium	-	393	393	369
Other	-	736	736	376
	-	13,124	13,124	12,338
Other Government grants				
Local authority grants	-	517	517	450
	-	517	517	450
Catering income	470	-	470	423
	470	13,641	14,111	13,211

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

8. Resources Expended

	Staff Costs	Premises	Non Pay Expenditure	Total	Total
	2023	2023	2023	2023	2022
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure on raising funds	-	-	-	-	-
Academy Trust's educational operations					
. Direct costs	10,381	438	1,255	12,074	11,855
. Allocated support costs	1,739	24	1,906	3,669	3,451
	12,120	462	3,161	15,743	15,306

Net Incoming/outgoing resources for the year include:	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Operating leases	359	303
Fees payable to auditor – Statutory audit	20	16
– Other services	3	3
Legal costs	29	4
Profit/(loss) on disposal of fixed assets	-	-

9 Charitable Activities

	2023	2022
	Total	Total
	£000	£000
Direct costs – educational operations	12,074	11,855
Support costs – educational operations	3,669	3,451
	15,743	15,306

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	2023 Total	2022 Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Analysis of support costs				
Support staff costs	-	1,739	1,739	1,548
Depreciation	-	24	24	26
Technology costs	-	116	116	102
Premises costs	-	781	781	758
Other support costs	406	542	948	916
Governance costs	-	61	61	101
	406	3,263	3,669	3,451

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

10. Staff costs	Total 2023 £000	Total 2022 £000
Staff costs during the period were:		
Wages and salaries	9,169	8,444
Social security costs	891	837
Other pension costs	2,036	1,853
	12,096	11,134
Supply teacher costs	24	7
Staff restructuring costs	0	8
	12,120	11,149

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

Severance payments	0	8
	0	8

The average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the Academy Trust during the year was as follows:

	2023 No.	2022 No.
Charitable Activities		
Teachers	140	127
Administration and support	197	193
Management	13	12
	350	332

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

	2023 No.	2022 No.
£60,000 - £70,000	2	6
£70,001 - £80,000	5	1
£80,001 - £90,000	1	1
£90,001 - £100,000	1	2
£100,001 - £130,000	1	0
£130,001 - £140,000	1	1

All 11 of the above employees in 2023 participated in the Teachers' Pension Scheme. The employees whose benefits exceed £100k are the CEO and WPSA Headteacher.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

10. Staff costs (continued)

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £1,207,000 (2022: £1,015,000). Key management personnel are defined as the CEO, ACEOs, CFO, Operations & Commercial Director, Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers for each member academy.

11. Central Services provided by the Multi Academy Trust

The central services provided by the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) include educational support and challenge for the Headteachers and leadership team, reviews of key educational strategies including standards, Academy development plan support & guidance, line management / performance management of Headteacher, governance support and guidance, whole trust projects, finance (including budget setting, monitoring & reporting and payroll services), HR, ICT strategy, contract procurement, operational consultancy, estates and facilities support.

The Partnership charge is calculated as a percentage of GAG (less FSM funding) with 3% for secondary and 5% for primary for converter academies who are rated as good or outstanding by OFSTED. Specific rates are agreed for sponsored academies as appropriate to their specific circumstances.

The Catering service charge for WPPA is based on the FSM and UIFSM funding received.

Academy	Partnership charge (£'000)	Catering charge (£'000)
Warden Park Secondary Academy	244	56
Warden Park Primary Academy	83	100
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	85	-

12. Related Party Transactions - Trustees' remuneration and expenses

No trustees have been paid remuneration or have received other benefits from an employment with the Academy Trust in the financial year 2022-23 (2021-22 – nil). During the year ended 31 August 2023, no travel and subsistence expenses were paid directly or reimbursed to trustees. (2022: nil).

Related party transactions involving the trustees are set out in note 31.

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

13. Directors' and Officers' Insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice the Academy Trust has purchased insurance to protect trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on Academy Trust business. The insurance provides cover up to £5,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £240 (2022: £240).

14. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Long leasehold land	Long leasehold building	Leasehold improve- ments	Furniture & equipment	Computer equipment	Motor vehicles	Assets under construction	Total
Cost	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
At 1 September 2022	14,942	16,315	4,903	1,639	497	61	68	38,425
Assets inherited on conversion	518	3,026	-	87	12	-	-	3,643
Additions	-	-	18	68	35	-	1,065	1,186
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	-33	-	-33
At 31 August 2023	15,460	19,341	4,921	1,794	544	28	1,133	43,221
Depreciation								
At 1 September 2022	-	1,194	1,316	1,612	380	59	-	4,561
Charge	-	137	246	23	54	2	-	462
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-	(33)	-	(33)
At 31 August 2023	-	1,331	1,562	1,635	434	28	-	4,990
NBV								
As at 31/08/2023	15,460	18,010	3,359	159	110	0	1,133	38,231
As at 1/09/2022	14,942	15,121	3,587	27	117	2	68	33,864

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

15. Stock

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Catering	<u>9</u>	<u>11</u>

Stock recognised in resources expended during the year as an expense was £386k (2022: £369k). The difference between purchase price and their replacement cost is not material.

16. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
VAT recoverable	330	101
Other debtors	27	39
Prepayments & accrued income	887	1,003
	<u>1,244</u>	<u>1,143</u>

17. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Trade creditors	363	161
Other taxation and social security	215	194
Other creditors	798	374
Accruals and deferred income	606	325
	<u>1,982</u>	<u>1,054</u>

Included within other creditors is a loan of £15k (2022: £15k) from SALIX which is an interest free loan for energy efficiency improvements and £31k (2022: £3k) CIF Public works loan.

Deferred income

	£000
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	(237)
Amounts released from previous years	237
Resources deferred in year	<u>(352)</u>
Deferred income at 31 August 2023	<u>(352)</u>

Deferred income relates to funding for UIFSM for 2022-23 and Pupil premium received in advance from the ESFA and SEN related funding and growth funding received in advance from West Sussex County Council.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

18. Creditors: amounts falling due in over one year	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Other creditors	350	57
	<hr/> 350	<hr/> 57

19. Creditors: amounts falling due in over 5 years	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Other creditors	89	7
	<hr/> 89	<hr/> 7

The balances above relates to a loan from CIF which is a low interest loan for a capital condition improvement project.

20. Funds

Restricted Fixed Asset Funds

Represents the value of fixed asset held by the Academy Trust, with the exception of funds either of an inherently capital nature, or allocated by the governing body for future capital spend, that remain unspent at the year end.

The difference of £191,000 between the fixed asset fund and the value of tangible fixed assets represents unspent CIF & DFC funding.

Transfers

These relate to monies spent from unrestricted funds to purchase capitalised assets in during the year and from unrestricted funds to GAG to support and enhance the quality of the education provided by the trust beyond that facilitated by core GAG funding.

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds

	Balance at 31-Aug-22 £000	Incoming Resources £000	Resources Expended £000	Gains, losses & transfers £000	Balance at 31-Aug-23 £000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	11,865	(12,660)	795	-
UIFSM	-	130	(130)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	393	(393)	-	-
Other DfE/ ESFA income	-	736	(736)	-	-
Other voluntary income (restricted)	-	765	(765)	-	-
Pension reserve	-	(108)	(187)	295	-
	-	13,781	(14,871)	1,090	-
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Fixed assets donated on conversion	26,788	3,676	(463)	-	30,001
Fixed asset additions	408	-	-	(45)	363
DfE/ESFA capital grants	7,187	583	-	-	7,770
Capital expenditure from GAG / unrestricted funds	288	-	-	-	288
	34,671	4,259	(463)	(45)	38,422
Total restricted funds	34,671	18,040	(15,334)	1,045	38,422
Unrestricted funds					
Unrestricted funds	838	1,240	(409)	(750)	919
Total unrestricted funds	838	1,240	(409)	(750)	919
Total funds	35,509	19,280	(15,743)	295	39,341

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds (continued)

	Balance at 31-Aug-21 £000	Incoming Resources £000	Resources Expended £000	Gains, losses & transfers £000	Balance at 31-Aug-22 £000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	11,460	(11,977)	517	-
UIFSM	-	133	(133)	-	-
Pupil premium	-	369	(369)	-	-
Other DfE/ ESFA income	-	376	(376)	-	-
Other voluntary income (restricted)	-	707	(707)	-	-
Pension reserve	(5,609)	-	(903)	6,512	-
	(5,609)	13,045	(14,465)	7,029	-
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Fixed assets donated on conversion	27,248	-	(460)	-	26,788
Fixed asset additions	390	-	-	18	408
DfE/ESFA capital grants	6,322	836	-	-	7,188
Capital expenditure from GAG / unrestricted funds	287	-	-	-	287
	34,277	836	(460)	18	34,671
Total restricted funds	28,668	13,881	(14,925)	7,047	34,671
Unrestricted funds					
Unrestricted funds	672	1,081	(380)	(535)	838
Total unrestricted funds	672	1,081	(380)	(535)	838
Total funds	29,340	14,962	(15,305)	6,512	35,509

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds (continued)

Analysis of academies by fund balance

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 were allocated as follows:

	Total
	£000
Warden Park Secondary Academy	744
Warden Park Primary Academy	150
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	18
Woodgate Primary Academy	7
Central Trust	-
Total before fixed assets and pension reserve	919
Restricted fixed asset fund	38,422
Pension reserve	-
Total	39,341

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Funds (continued)

	Teaching & Educational support staff costs £000	Other support staff costs £000	Educational supplies £000	Other costs (excluding depreciation) £000	Total £000
Warden Park Secondary Academy	6,421	1,035	354	1,467	9,277
Warden Park Primary Academy	1,868	183	105	186	2,342
Northlands Wood Primary Academy	1,683	124	26	277	2,110
Woodgate Primary Academy	156	14	5	22	197
Central Trust	222	414	-	719	1,355
Academy Trust	10,350	1,770	490	3,239	15,281

20. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 August 2023
are represented by:

	Unrestricted general funds £000	Restricted general funds £000	Restricted fixed asset funds £000	Total funds 2023 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	38,231	38,231
Current assets	919	1,982	191	3,092
Current liabilities	-	(1,632)	-	(1,632)
Non-current liabilities	-	(350)	-	(350)
Pension scheme liability	-	-	-	-
Total net assets	919	-	38,422	39,341

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

20. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Fund balances at 31 August 2022
are represented by:

	Unrestricted general funds £000	Restricted general funds £000	Restricted fixed asset funds £000	Total funds 2022 £000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	33,864	33,864
Current assets	838	1,111	807	2,756
Current liabilities	-	(1,054)	-	(1,054)
Non-current liabilities	-	(57)	-	(57)
Pension scheme liability	-	-	-	-
Total net assets	838	-	34,671	35,509

21 Capital commitments

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Contracted for, but not provided in the financial statements	-	-

22 Financial commitments

Operating leases

The charitable company had the following future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases for each of the following periods:

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Due not later than one year	285	220
Due between 1 and 5 years	655	755
Due more than 5 years	-	-
	940	975

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
23 Reconciliation of net income to net cash inflow from operating activities		
Net income / (expenditure)	3,537	(344)
Depreciation (note 14)	462	460
Capital grants from the ESFA	(583)	(836)
Fixed assets inherited on conversion	(3,643)	-
Defined benefit liability inherited on conversion	108	
Decrease /(Increase) in stock	2	(3)
(Increase) / Decrease in debtors	(101)	(528)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	871	135
FRS 102 Pension cost	138	804
FRS 102 Pension interest cost	49	99
Net cash inflow from operating activities	840	(213)
	2023	2022
	£000	£000
24 Returns on investments and servicing of finance		
Interest received	-	-
Net cash inflow from returns on investment and servicing of finance	-	-
	2023	2022
	£000	£000
25 Capital expenditure and financial investment		
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(1,186)	(241)
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA/ LA	583	836
Net cash outflow from capital expenditure and financial investment	(603)	595

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

26 Analysis of changes in net funds

	At 1 September 2022 £000	Cash flows £000	At 31 August 2023 £000
Cash in hand and at bank	1,602	237	1,839
	1,602	237	1,839

27 Financial instruments

	2023 £000	2022 £000
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	1,866	1,641
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	1,415	699

Financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise cash at bank, trade debtors and other debtors.

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost comprise other loans, trade creditors, other creditors and accruals.

28 Contingent Liabilities

Sussex Learning Trust Limited had no contingent liabilities as at 31 August 2023 (2022: nil).

29 Members' Liability

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

Sussex Learning Trust

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

30 Pension and similar obligations

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

The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS 31 March 2016.

Contributions amounting to £242,000 (2022 £209,000) were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 and are included in creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers in academies. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment. The TPS is an unfunded scheme to which both the member and employer makes contributions, as a percentage of salary - these contributions are credited to the Exchequer. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2016. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 5 March 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

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

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

30 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2024.

The pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £1,469,000 (2022: £1,354,000).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website. Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The trust has set out above the information available on the scheme.

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £720,000 (2022:£642,000) of which employer's contributions totalled £567,000 (2022: £499,000) and employees' contributions totalled £153,000 (2022: £143,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 20.15% for employers and between 5.5% and 12.5% for employees.

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

Principal Actuarial Assumptions	At 31 August 2023	At 31 August 2022
Rate of increase in salaries	4.50%	3.55%
Rate of increase for pensions	3.00%	3.05%
Discount rate	5.20%	4.25%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	50% - 75%	50% - 75%

Sussex Learning Trust
Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023

Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

30 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

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

	At 31 August 2023	At 31 August 2022
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.0	21.9
Females	24.8	24.2
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	21.9	22.8
Females	25.4	25.9
	Fair value at 31 August 2023 £000	Fair value at 31 August 2022 £000
Equities	5,638	5,400
Bonds	3,298	3,527
Property	1,489	1,763
Cash	213	331
Total market value of assets	10,638	11,021

The actual return on the scheme assets was £481,000 (2022: £180,000).

The expected rates of return are set equal to the discount rate.

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Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

Total expenditure recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Current service cost (net of employee contributions)	690	1,300
Past service cost	-	-
Total operating charge	690	1,300

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

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
At 1 September	9,758	16,286
Transfer on conversion	224	-
Current service cost	690	1,300
Interest cost	432	279
Employee contributions	153	143
Actuarial (gains) / losses	(2,222)	(8,140)
Benefits paid	(129)	(110)
Past service costs including curtailments	-	-
At 31 August	8,906	9,758

	2023	2022
	£000	£000
Opening fair value of fair value of employer assets	9,758	10,677
Transfer on conversion	116	-
Interest income	481	180
Return on plan assets	(2,025)	(1,628)
Actuarial gains / (losses)	-	-
Employer contributions	552	496
Employee contributions	153	143
Benefits paid	(129)	(110)
At 31 August	8,906	9,758

In accordance with FRS 102, a potential asset of £1,732,000 (2022- £1,263,000) has not been recognised as the Trustees do not consider this to be recoverable.

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Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

31 Related Party Transactions

Owing to the nature of the Academy Trust's operations and the composition of the Board of Trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it is inevitable that transactions will take place with organisations in which a member of the Board of Trustees may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Academy's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures. There are no related party transactions in the year (2022: nil).

32 Woodgate Conversion to an Academy Trust

On 1 June 2023, the Woodgate Primary School converted to academy status under the Academies Act 2010 and all the operations and assets and liabilities were transferred to Sussex Learning Trust from the West Sussex Council County for £nil consideration. The transfer has been accounted for as a combination that is in substance a gift. The assets and liabilities transferred were valued at their fair value and recognised in the balance sheet under the appropriate headings with a corresponding net amount recognised as a net gain in the Statement of Financial Activities as Donations – transfer from local authority on conversion.

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

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted General Funds £000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £000	Total £000
Tangible fixed assets				
Leasehold land and buildings	-	-	3,544	3,544
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	99	99
Current assets				
Cash – representing budget surplus on LA funds	-	8	33	41
Cash – representing budget surplus on other school funds	-	2	-	2
Non-current liabilities				
LGPS pension deficit	-	(108)	-	(108)
	-	(98)	3,676	3,578

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Notes to the Financial statements (continued)

33 Post balance sheet event

On 1/9/23, Chichester Free School transferred from Sussex Education Trust to Sussex Learning Trust.