



**Forward Education Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
Annual Report and Financial Statements
Year ended 31 August 2024**

**Company Registration Number:
10680422 (England and Wales)**

**Period of account
1 September 2023 - 31 August 2024**

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**Reference and administrative details
For the year ended 31 August 2024**

Members:

Mrs Constance Henry
Mr Simon Topman (Chair)
Mr Patrick Ricketts
Mr Gregg Barton (to 24/05/24)
Mr Navdeep Kainth

Trustees:

Mrs Helen Redican
Ms Catherine Canty (Chair)
Mr Brensley Taylor (to 17/10/23)
Mrs Maria Earl
Mr Patrick Ricketts (to 31/12/23)
Mr Paul Roberts
Mrs Susan Casey (to 01/04/24)
Mr Ian Tuddenham
Mr Mark Morgan
Ms Leanne Mahony (from 24/06/24)
Mr Paul Joesbury (from 14/06/24)

Executive Leadership Team:

Chief Executive Officer – Mr Simon Dilkes
Director of Education and Deputy CEO - Dr Debbie Bailey
Director of Operations – Ms Wendy Mercer (to 14/9/23)
Director of Governance and Development – Ms Emma Arnott

Bankers:

Lloyds Bank
1098 Warwick Road
Acocks Green
Birmingham
B27 6BJ

Solicitors:

Anthony Collins Solicitors
134 Edmund Street
Birmingham
B3 2ES

Independent Auditor:

Crowe U.K. LLP
Black Country House
Rounds Green Road
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 2DG

**Chief Executive Officer and
Accounting Officer:**

Simon Dilkes

Company Secretary:

Ms Emma Arnott

Chief Financial Officer:

Interim Finance Consultant –
Ms Jessica Hathaway (to
07/07/24)
Chief Financial Officer – Mr
Andrew Pole (from 08/07/24)

Company Name and Registered Office:

Forward Education Trust
Leycroft Avenue
Tile Cross
Birmingham
West Midlands

Company Registration Number: 10680422

Forward Education Trust

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable company for the year ended 31 August 2024. The annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report, and a Directors' report under company law.

The Multi-Academy Trust (or the "Trust") operated 7 special schools in Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull during 2023-24. The Trust had 3 primary schools for children 2-11 years (Brays School, The Bridge School and Leycroft Academy), one school for Primary and Key Stage 3 boys (Lea Hall Academy), one secondary school (High Point Academy), one school for children in Primary Key Stage 2 and Secondary Key Stages 3 and 4 (The Heights Academy) and one all through school for children 4-19 years (Hallmoor School). During 2023-24 the Trust had a combined pupil capacity of 879 and had a roll of 819 in the school census of October 2023.

The Trust successfully opened The Heights Academy (a free school) in September 2023, with pupils first starting their education at the off-site provision at Sans Souci, Shirley before transitioning to the new building, following handover by the contractor to the Trust during October.

Structure, Governance and Management

a. Constitution

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the Trust. The Trustees of Forward Education Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as Forward Education Trust. Details of the Trustees who served during the year are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 1.

b. Members' Liability

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

c. Trustees' Indemnities

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

The Trustees have liability insurance through the DfE Academies Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) scheme. There is a limit of indemnity of £10,000,000 (no excess) per case or per annum.

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For the year ended 31 August 2024

d. Method of Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

The Articles of Association states that there shall be a minimum of 3 trustees and that up to 9 trustees may be appointed by the Members. The Trust Board may additionally co-opt trustees above this number, and co-opted trustees have the same powers as those appointed by Members, other than that they do not have the power to co-opt other Trustees.

In the event that there is no parent representation on local governing bodies there is a requirement for two parent trustees but there are currently local governing bodies (Local Academy Councils) with parent representation, with the exception of at Lea Hall Academy. At Lea Hall Academy, as the school has an inadequate judgement and is in "special measures", Trustees have decided to replace Local Academy Council arrangements with an Education Advisory Board to provide additional scrutiny, especially around education and standards. The terms of reference and constitution of the EAB are different to those of the LACs. For this Trust, Local Academy Councils and the EAB form part of the governance structure and parent representation is on Local Academy Councils, so there is no requirement for parent representation on the Trust Board.

Trustees serve for a term of 4 years and may stand for re-appointment if eligible. Local Academy Council members serve for a period of two years. Trust-appointed Local Academy Council members may put themselves forward for re-appointment if eligible.

The CEO may act as a trustee appointed by resolution of the Members for the duration of their office. However, it has been agreed that the CEO should no longer be appointed as a trustee, therefore, the current CEO is not a trustee, but no permanent change to the Articles is considered necessary.

At 31 August 2023, the Board had a membership of 9 Trustees, one of whom was co-opted by the Board, so there was a vacancy for a member-appointed trustee. Between September 2023 and May 2024 there were 3 trustee resignations, so the Chair was tasked by Members and the Board to identify and propose new Trustees for recruitment to the Board. The Board explored a wide range of possible avenues for recruitment, including personal and professional contacts, use of social media and engagement with corporate organisations

The recruitment process comprised:

- Review of skills audits and Board profile to identify skills gaps and focus for recruitment.
- Use of the trust website, social media and direct approach through personal and professional networks to attract and engage with potential candidates.
- Initial conversations with the Chair of the Board and Trust Director of Governance and Development
- Review of CV and agreement to interview.
- Online checks and requests for references for all shortlisted candidates.
- Informal interview with the Chair of the Board, another trustee, the CEO and the Director of Governance and Development.
- Recommendation to the Members for approval by Ordinary Resolution.

As a result, in June 2024, two new trustees were appointed by the Members.

As of 31 August 2024, the Board has 2 vacancies for Member-appointed trustees. Once those vacancies have been filled, the Board will look to co-opt at least one other trustee to provide additional capacity and as part of the succession planning strategy.

Forward Education Trust

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

As at 31 August 2024 there are four Members, and the Members are not actively recruiting an additional Member. Should a suitable candidate be identified, Members may seek to appoint in order to bring their number to 5.

e. Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

Upon appointment, all new Trustees and Local Academy Council (LAC) members were provided with documents relating to their role, including an Induction Handbook, and attended an induction training session. This included information relating to the schools and services within The Trust as well as documentation relating to the safeguarding of children in line with the Keeping Children Safe in Education requirements. The Trust continues to use two online platforms: TES Develop and Flick Learning, for Trustees and LAC members to complete the required safeguarding, Prevent, cyber-security and GDPR training at the point of induction and on an annual basis thereafter. Both platforms contain a wide range of training and development sessions on various topics, and Trustees and LAC members are encouraged to access these – for example, a number of trustees completed the safer recruitment training provided by Flick Learning.

All Members and Trustees received the link to the Academy Trust Handbook and the 'Schedule of Musts', the calendar for submissions to ESFA and the Academy Trust Governance Guide issued by the DfE. All Members, Trustees and those on schools' Local Academy Councils were required to complete a declaration of business and pecuniary interests, and to declare any related party transactions. This information was recorded in the Trust register of interest and published on the Trust and schools' websites in line with Academy Trust Handbook regulations.

All Trustees and Local Academy Council members completed an annual skills audit, the outcomes of which were analysed and used to inform training and development opportunities. Members of the schools' Local Academy Councils and several Trustees took part in two Trust-specific training sessions, covering a range of topics including finance, the Ofsted Inspection process, the DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance, with specific focus on the responsibilities for those in governance and protocols for school visits – topics identified through analysis of the skills audits and consultation with LAC members.

The Trust has MAT membership of the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) and National Governance Association (NGA), which provides Trustees and Local Academy Council members with access to a wealth of information, resources, updates, training and networking opportunities. In addition, all Members and Trustees received electronic updates from key agencies to keep The Trust compliant and working efficiently and effectively.

f. Organisational structure

Members appoint Trustees, delegate policies and procedure to the Board of Trustees, undertake the duties for Financial responsibility as described in the Academy Trust Handbook, review the Articles of Association to ensure regularity within the Academy Trust, approve the appointment of external auditors and receive The Annual Accounts return and the Audited Financial Statements.

Trustees have defined roles as described in the Statement of Trustee responsibilities, see page 40.

At school level, each school is supported and challenged by a Local Academy Council (LAC). LACs are approved and appointed by the Board of Trustees, and their delegated responsibilities are set out in the scheme of delegation. Parent and staff representation is sought for the LACs along with other members with appropriate skills, knowledge and experience. Up to the end of August 2023, the meeting pattern

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For the year ended 31 August 2024

was that LACs meet five times per academic year. From September 2024, LACs will meet four times per academic year, with the expectation that LAC members will have two other 'contact points' with the school during the year which may be attending an event, undertaking a school visit or meeting with a member of staff. For LAC meetings, quorum is 50% of the LAC membership, rounded down.

The following roles are not Members or Trustees but rather paid employees:

The Chief Executive Officer is appointed as The Accounting Officer in the Multi Academy Trust and is a paid employee. The Chief Executive Officer attends all Board and Sub-Committees.

The Director of Education – attends Board, Audit, Risk & Finance and Education Committees.

The Chief Financial Officer (and before his appointment) the Interim Finance Consultant (who undertook the duties of the Chief Financial Officer) – attends Board and ARF Committee.

The Director of Governance and Development - attends Board, ARF and Education Committees.

The Trust has in place a Scheme of Delegation, in addition to which financial procedures exist detailing financial decision-making processes.

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

No Trustees and Members are remunerated for their work within the Trust. Members and Trustees are entitled to receive reimbursements for return journeys to and from Trustee and Board meetings and any school visits at an agreed rate of 45p per mile subject to the submission of an approved claim form and receipt for any parking fees. Subsistence allowance is not paid by the Trust. Expenses incurred on Trust business are reimbursed subject to appropriate receipts.

On behalf of the Trust Board, The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board set the pay of the Chief Executive Officer.

As part of the development of the CEO, along with the Chair of the Trust, he has given consideration to the Chief Executive Officer content framework published by the Department for Education as part of his leadership development.

Trustees must be on appointment panels for any appointments to headship roles (along with the LAC Chair or their representative) and the appointments of Executive Team members reporting to the CEO. Trustees recognise that, due to operational constraints and availability, this might not always be possible and in order not to delay appointment processes, agreement was given to waive this requirement in exceptional circumstances, such instances being reported to the Board.

The pay for each school leadership team is reviewed by the CEO, with recommendations made to the HR & Pay Committee (under their Terms of Reference) at least annually. The individual salary ranges of each post for Head Teachers and their Senior Leadership Teams are set by the Trust and are in line with the school group size as calculated by the National Pay and Conditions Policy for teachers. Each pay range must be approved by the delegated sub-committee, according to the agreed Terms of Reference.

The Trust has continued to adopt the national pay policy for teachers in accordance with STPCD, recognising the recommendations to Government by the STRB. The Trust sets remuneration for support staff in line with Forward Education Trust custom scales introduced in September 2021. These custom scales take account of pay policies across the local authorities the Trust draws from. The Trust considers the economic climate, the long-term financial position and any other relevant factors, and has

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continued to keep in line with national recommendations around pay rises and inflation awards. The Trust tracks the local pay markets to ensure that we continue to attract the best staff.

The Trust agreed that where performance is good a single point pay progressions is available to staff and exceptional performance could attract the maximum of a two point pay increment. This must be evidenced robustly and in line with good or better school performance.

The Trust does not engage in any bonus or share schemes or any other additional remuneration or benefits other than salary for any of its school employees.

All parties within the Trust are indemnified against Public and Employers liability claims through a policy procured at a cost to the Trust.

h. Trade Union Facilities Time

We make the following disclosures in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulation 2017:

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant unions officials during the year	Full-time equivalent number
2	0.4

Percentage of time spent on facilities time

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

Percentage of pay bill spent on facilities time

	£000's
Total cost of facilities time	£20
Total pay bill	£18,347
Percentage of total pay bill spent on facilities time	0%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours calculated as: <i>(total hours spent on paid trade union activities by relevant union officials during relevant period / total paid facility time hours) x 100</i>	0%
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For the year ended 31 August 2024

The Trust continued to work effectively with the JCNC (Joint Consultative & Negotiating Committee), with representatives of trade unions for teaching staff and support staff. A Recognition Agreement was committed to in March 2023 and remains current. The Trust has a desire to work actively with trade unions on a range of matters including policy and terms & conditions. The Trust meets regularly with the JCNC to update on their plans and developments for the future.

The Trust also pays into "Facilities Time" via each of the Local Authorities in which it operates including Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull.

i. Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

There are no related party transactions to note and no other connected charities or organisations.

j. Engagement with employees (including with disabled persons)

The Trust respects and values the opinions of staff. In 2022 the Trust launched its first staff well-being survey, in conjunction with the external partner Edurio and these surveys have continued. The confidential surveys are answered with good engagement levels by 67% of staff in the June 2024 survey. Results are analysed at school, Executive and Trust Board level and discussed with school staff teams and Local Academy Councils. Action plans are developed and implemented, and further surveys continue to be undertaken to assess and evidence that impact and progress is achieved. The Trust believes this is an essential tool for measuring how things are in the organisation and to monitor progress.

The Trust also appreciates the importance of effectively providing information to staff colleagues on matters of concern to them. The Trust has held whole Trust Conferences on the first day of the Autumn term in September 2022 and 2023 but decided to review this approach and no Conference was held in September 2024. The Chief Executive Officer recorded a short video which was shared with all school and Central team staff at the start of the new academic year 2024/25, to provide an opportunity for the Trust to share with all staff information about the vision & values of the Trust and key priorities. The CEO also addressed key successes and gave thanks to staff colleagues for their hard work with children.

The Trust continues to develop its approach to equality of employment for all individuals, whatever their race, colour, religion, sex, age, national origin and physical or mental disability. The Trust aims to continue to actively develop its approach to equality, diversity & inclusion, in conjunction with trade unions and employees.

The principles of equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of this Trust and school life, and Forward Education Trust expects all employees, pupils, parents/carers and members of the wider school community to be treated equitably and with respect.

The Trust is developing its approach, by creating policy, the aims of which are:

- to promote equal treatment within the Trust for all members of the Trust community.
- to communicate the commitment of the Trust to the promotion of equal opportunities.
- to create and maintain an open and supportive environment which is free from discrimination.
- to foster mutual tolerance and positive attitudes so that everyone can feel valued within the Trust. and
- to actively promote and safeguard the welfare of children, staff and others who come into contact with the Trust.

As a result of this policy the Trust has:

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

- Included on recruitment adverts that we welcome applications from disabled persons.
- Ensured that arrangements for interview are accessible and that each of our schools positively supports access for employment for disabled persons.
- Ensured that staff training promotes a tolerance and mutual respect for disabled persons or for current employees who become disabled.
- Ensured that career development, promotion and professional learning is accessible to disabled persons or existing employees who become disabled.

The principles are already at play, but the Trust intends to formalise this approach through Policy and to maintain a commitment to raising awareness across the organisation.

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

The Trust actively seeks to foster good relationships with suppliers, customers and others. Trustees and executive leaders act in ways in which they consider, in good faith, are most likely to promote the success of the trust for the benefit of pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders as a whole. We actively engage with our customers and other stakeholders to understand issues which they may be facing against the backdrop of the economic climate in the country. The trust holds review meetings to ensure effective relationships are maintained.

Objectives and activities

a. Objects and aims

The Trust's objective is to advance, for the public benefit, education for children with special educational needs aged 2-19, by establishing and maintaining schools which offer a broad and balanced curriculum.

Forward Education Trust's purpose is to ensure the children in our schools receive the best possible education, care and life chances by being the West Midlands bespoke provider of choice for children with high levels of special educational needs.

The mission of the Trust is to provide a good education for all members of our schools' communities. Our aim is to ensure that children with high level of special educational needs are able to thrive and learn in a safe and secure environment and leave school and be able to play an active part in their local community.

The Vision and Values statements were reviewed in this reporting year and no changes were made. The Scheme of Delegation was also reviewed in-year.

b. Our Vision, Ethos and values

Our Vision

Forward Education Trust's purpose is to ensure the children in our schools receive the best possible education, care and life chances by being the West Midlands bespoke provider of choice for children with high levels of special educational needs.

Our Ethos

Moving forward together, striving for and achieving opportunities to improve outcomes and provide stability and success for all.

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

Our values

- We are Forward Thinking: Always looking to move things forward and embrace change to provide the best outcomes for all.
- We are Ambitious: Always working to the best of our ability. Instilling a 'can do' culture by encouraging others to share knowledge, skills and expertise.
- We are Principled: Always looking to do the right thing, being conscientious, polite and friendly, speaking out and challenging accepted thinking for the greater good.
- We are Motivated: Always looking to overcome obstacles and move forward to ensure educational excellence.
- We are Trustworthy: Always being honest, open and consistent in our approach to any issues we face. Being steadfast in our desire to improve outcomes for all.
- We are nurturers of talent: Our vision, ethos and values are not achievable without a great workforce, and their personal development, contentment and enjoyment in working for Forward Education Trust really matters to our Trust.

Leadership Behaviours

The Trust developed a model of leadership behaviours which has been rolled out to all staff. Our Trust behaviours are the way that all who work for Forward Education Trust demonstrate that they are living out our ethos, vision and values. We call them our **Forward Focus on Five**:

1. Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion success: engender a climate of possibility and celebrate success • Build great relationships: foster trust and teamwork at all levels • Share practice: foster an environment that encourages co-construction, openness and learning from each other
2. Inclusivity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden horizons: make connections beyond your role and context; create partnerships across and outside of the Trust • Bring people together: build inclusive teams that embrace diversity and celebrate differences • Treat others with respect
3. Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate empathy and understanding to our staff, pupils and the communities we serve • Hold service before self: act with selflessness, solely in the public interest • Demonstrate fairness and impartiality: make ethical decisions based on merit not on personal self-interest • Demonstrate commitment and moral purpose: support the Trust, schools and all with whom we work
4. Accountability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive: identify and be willing to tackle issues, including underperformance; take ownership for outcomes and follow through to completion with resilience • Empower People: encourage others to take personal responsibility and enhance their personal potential • Grow yourself: take responsibility for your own growth and development by pushing yourself to do your best • Be authentic: role model desired behaviours and act with integrity and transparency
5. Ambition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise standards: go above and beyond expectations; focus on improvements and high standards of excellence, ensuring consistent and high-quality outcomes for all • Challenge with humility: engage in constructive debate about ideas in a solution-focussed way

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- Lead with a spirit of progress: be knowledgeable in your field and embrace lifelong learning
- Inspire others: communicate with passion and purpose in a timely and consistent manner

During the year, the Trust Executive Team worked with the Trust Board to continue to develop their thinking about the future of the Trust. Reference was made to documents including “Building Strong Trusts” (Confederation of School Trust), “Trust Quality Descriptions” (Department for Education) and “Thriving Trusts: Think Pieces” (Forum Strategy). Further development of thinking about the Strategic Plan for the Trust is likely to result in the publication of a new Strategic Plan 2025-27.

c. Objectives, Strategies and Activities

Leadership & Management

- Ensure that governance in all of our schools is effective and that Local Academy Councils have a real and accurate self-evaluation of their schools and act to address any areas for development. Work on this has been successful but is ongoing. The Trust has successfully worked with an external partner to recruit several well-qualified Local Academy Council Chairs, who will receive induction and training support as they develop in their roles.
- Recruit, induct, support and develop the Headteachers within the Trust. The Trust has worked effectively with an external recruitment partner to recruit good Headteachers to schools. The Trust has found the recruitment market challenging at all levels but has continued to be able to attract new people to the organisation.
- Support the recruitment, induction and retention of high-quality staff at all levels. The country is affected by challenges nationally in recruiting teachers and this is even more acute in special needs education. Retaining support staff has been difficult, but the Trust has concentrated on the culture and environment in the Trust, as well as offering attractive well-being benefits in order to support the recruitment & retention strategy.
- Support all staff through a robust CPD and appraisal programme to ensure that they can meet the needs of the pupils. This is a work-in-progress, but significant improvements have been made. A mixture of online training coupled with peer-to-peer support and external training has proved to be beneficial. This has included specialist training, relevant to the needs of our children.
- To maintain the effectiveness of the Trust by keeping the curriculum and organisational structure under review. Enhancing our HR capability has been key to enabling progress in this area, the Trust is aware of the need to share best practice, to reach out to other Trusts for ideas and to continue to innovate.
- To conduct the Trust business in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, probity and openness.

Pupil Progress and Teaching and Learning

- Ensure that the progress of our pupils in all of our schools is above median quartile and that the majority is at upper quartile against our reporting and analysis system for pupils with special educational needs. During the year, the Trust has worked to identify a new assessment system, which will support our approach in this area. A new system was launched in Autumn 2023 and will be fully embedded during the coming academic year.
- Operate a robust quality assurance framework which monitors the quality of standards of education, teaching and learning and includes work scrutiny. The Trust is looking at ways to enhance its capabilities in this area, through peer-to-peer support in schools and across our network.

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- Ensure that the best practice is shared across the schools. Collaborative networks are set up across specialisms, phases and staff groups. The Trust sees this as critical to its future development.
- Develop pathways for pupils to leave school ready for the world. The Trust recognises that academic achievement cannot be the only measure for our children, there are many other important skills and qualities for our children to acquire so that they can take their place as a valued member of society.
- Provide a series of visits to the Trust schools by school improvement professionals to scrutinise, challenge and validate educational standards.

Leading into this year, the Trust agreed some key development areas for the period September 2023 to August 2024, which were:

For pupils: Our focus on their attendance in school was supported by the 5 Foundations Programme delivered with help from Birmingham Education Partnership throughout the year. This was successful in engaging teams across the Trust to work together, share good practice and supporting pupils and families with solutions. In future years we intend to publish tracking data to show evidence of impact. There's still a lot more to do, as we face challenges and barriers to maintaining positive momentum. External factors can adversely impact on success in this area, but we remain of the view that for all our children, being in school is imperative, as this creates an opportunity to learn. There was clear evidence of progress on school improvement, we strive for greater pace and scale to deliver the improvements needed. The Trust is always exploring for those schools that need to receive additional capacity how this can be delivered effectively and that those which have capacity to give are able to support the Trust as we look to realise the benefits of improvement at scale which we should be delivering as a Trust.

Our collaborative networks have been developing, engagement at many different levels inspires us with confidence that if we focus networks on solutions, give them structure and rigour as well as enabling them to make change, these will be a powerful part of what we do. Implementation of our assessment and tracking system, Evidence for Learning, is gaining traction and our focus on improvement, achievement and ambitious outcomes for children and young people is developing. We see this as an essential tool to deliver quality teaching in our classrooms and to develop our practitioners.

For staff: Every school has had an acute focus on supporting staff to come to work, acknowledging that ill-health does arise, and our staff may deal with challenges in their family unit. Absence can create a capacity gap, our HR team effectively supports Headteachers to implement process and policy effectively, with a sense of care and humanity.

We have recruited great people. We have more people working permanently in the Trust than ever before and our attention is focused on retention and personal development, as this will create strong foundations and platforms for growth within our schools. The well-being of our staff remains a priority, and we are looking at developing strands relating to prevention of problems arising for staff and focused support, which includes a commitment to looking at staff workload and how to reduce the impact of it, with a possible introduction of AI tools and technology.

d. Public Benefit

The Trustees consider that they have complied with the duty in Section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission. The Trustees consider that the Trust's aims and objectives demonstrate that it acts to the benefit of the public. The

Forward Education Trust

Trustees' Report

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Academy Trust refers to the Charity Commission public benefit guidance in setting its objectives and aims in planning future activities for the coming year.

The Trust meets these objectives by

- Providing value for money for the funds expended.
- Conducting the Trust's business in accordance with the highest standards of probity, integrity and openness.
- Ensuring that the standards are continually raised by the Trust and the Local Academy Councils.

The Trust recognises that equal opportunities should be an integral part of good practice within the workplace. They do this by creating an environment where contributions by all stakeholders are fully valued.

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Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance (including key performance indicators)

Brays School 2023/24	
Context	<p>Brays is a primary special school in Birmingham, supporting children aged 4-11 with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), significant learning difficulties (SLD), and complex medical needs.</p> <p>By way of articulating the nature of the complex needs of some children at Brays, of the children currently on roll, roughly 26% are enterally fed and 39% have epilepsy. Notably, 29% of pupils receive Pupil Premium, which exceeds the national average. The school community is ethnically diverse with around 43% who speak English as an additional language, significantly higher than the national figure of 22%. The local area of Sheldon where the school is situated shows 15% unemployment, with 20% of families living in poverty. The community comprises 30% ethnic minorities, and the student body reflects a gender balance of 54% male and 46% female.</p> <p>Brays has 9 classes, and many families utilise Early Help or have social care involvement. In response to pupils' needs, Brays maintains exceptional relationships with multi-agency professionals, including onsite NHS school nursing and physiotherapy teams, who are present daily.</p> <p>Brays also hosts various specialist clinics, including a community paediatric consultant, dietician, wheelchair services, and orthotic clinic. As a trailblazer within the local special school community, Brays uniquely offers access to an onsite community dentist.</p>
Curriculum	<p>There are three main pathways at Brays: Explorers (pre-formal), Discoverers (semi-formal) and Adventurers (formal). The pathway a pupil is on is linked to their stage of communication, engagement and play, as well as their individual characteristics. These help us distinguish the specific needs of pupils. By identifying the right pathway for pupils, Brays can ensure that children are provided with the correct support and learning strategies tailored to each learner's journey. This way Brays can create an environment where every pupil can thrive and reach their full potential.</p> <p>Brays' adapted National Curriculum includes core subjects along with Understanding the World, Creative Arts and personal, social and emotional development (PSED).</p>
Highlights	<p>The Trust appointment of a substantive Headteacher, has led to a more stable leadership, evidenced by the results from the Summer Term staff survey. The school has engaged stakeholder consultation for the creation of Brays' values.</p> <p>A review of the curriculum has resulted in a faculty-based curriculum with a reduction in workload for staff regarding the assessments of non-core subjects. Reading for pleasure is a key priority with the updating of Brays Classics to ensure that all children have access to a diverse wide range of genres.</p> <p>Brays have created community links, enabling income generation from lettings of the therapeutic swimming pool. Other community links include charity donations from several sources and local groups, which are acknowledged via school newsletters and social media.</p>

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	Children at Brays have participated in outdoor education and school trips, including visits to an allotment, the MAC theatre and a residential at Beaudesert Outdoor Centre. Brays has also introduced a school dog, called Rusty.
Developments for 2024-25	<p>In 2024 the key areas for development include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating consistent expectations for teaching and learning to focus on independence and play-based learning - Assessing pupil progress against IEP (Individual Education Plan) targets using a tracking system utilised by all schools in the Trust called Evidence for Learning - Working with the whole school community to improve attendance, specifically persistent absence - Improving the offer for character development including the way in which school captures pupil voice. - Improving outdoor spaces, especially for Early Years.

The Bridge 2023/24	
Context	<p>The Bridge School is a primary school in Sutton Coldfield, for children with a cognition and learning designation. Pupils have a range of needs including profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), severe learning difficulty (SLD), autism spectrum condition (ASC) sensory processing issues, additional physical needs, communication difficulties and behaviour that can be challenging. The school has a capacity to educate 90 pupils.</p> <p>The Bridge offers 3 learning pathways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-formal pathway - pupils are assessed using the Engagement Model. Their curriculum is non-subject specific, and pupils learn to engage through motivating, play-based and multi-sensory experiences. Pupils are working developmentally between the ages of 0-18 months. • Semi-formal pathway – within which there is some subject specific learning. Pupils start to work in small groups, with some 1:1 work, following 6 key areas of learning: Communication, Literacy and Language, Thinking, Problem Solving and Numeracy, The World Around Me, Technology and Personal and Physical Development. Pupils are working developmentally between the ages of 18 months to around 3-4 years of age. • Formal pathway – which is based around subject specific learning. Pupils work towards statutory assessment, if appropriate. Pupils are working in small groups and pairs, as well as some 1:1 work. They are working developmentally from around 4 years of age and upwards. <p>There are approximately 7-11 pupils in each class. Pupils are grouped according to need, friendship groups and ability.</p>
Curriculum	<p>We aim to provide a curriculum that is ambitious and personalised and has been designed to meet the needs of all pupils. Although based on the National Curriculum, it has been carefully adapted, keeping the pupils and their personal learning goals at the centre of all teaching and learning. Pupils' Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) targets, as well as their Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets are woven into all aspects of the curriculum, whilst maximising opportunities for pupils to develop their speech, language and communication skill, their personal and social development, and ultimately their independence.</p>

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	<p>We aim to engage and include all our pupils in a curriculum that is stimulating and exciting, where they can learn and achieve through play and sensory-based experiences. The curriculum has been carefully sequenced to ensure it builds upon pupils' prior learning, where they know more, remember more and do more, and have the confidence to apply their learning in all aspects of their life.</p> <p>At The Bridge, we strongly believe that by prioritising Communication, Personal, Social & Emotional Development (PSED), and pupils' Physical Development (PD), we can support them to become as independent as they can be for their transition into secondary school. We work collegiately with a range of key professionals including Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, the Special School Nursing team and a Behaviour Consultant.</p> <p>Classes are timetabled for sessions in our Sensory Rooms and pupils either have access to the hydrotherapy pool or the local swimming baths. We have large grounds where opportunities to learn outside the classroom are maximised. Pupils also take part in regular off-site visits. This helps to support learning across the curriculum and to give pupils the opportunity to develop and generalise their prior learning in different environments. All pupils have an EHCP which is reviewed annually, and where new short-term (12 monthly) targets are agreed and set. Pupils also have IEP (Individual Education Plan) targets which their short-term targets broken down further and reviewed termly. All targets are shared with parents/carers, and we work closely with our families to ensure pupil progress is maximised.</p> <p>All our pupils participate in a range of activities linked to the wider curriculum, which includes 'Bridge to the Future'. This is a set of 50 enrichment activities designed to help children, play, explore and experience new things. At The Bridge, we want children to not only be happy and healthy but to lead a fulfilling life. It is important that they enjoy learning, are excited about activities and curious about the world and people around them. 'Bridge to the Future' has been developed by stakeholders, taking inspiration from a variety of sources including the DfE Activity passport and The National Trust 50 things to do before you're aged 11¾.</p> <p>We aim to support children to have the chance to try things out, to see, and do things that they would not normally do, or go to places they would not normally go, and to meet people they would not normally meet. These things are important because education is not only about academic progress: it is also about character and wellbeing. We develop our character from taking on challenges and pursuing our interests, by doing things that we feel are worth doing.</p>
<p>Highlights</p>	<p>During the academic year, pupils were able to participate in swimming lessons and hydrotherapy sessions to support their development.</p> <p>The reintroduction of lunchtime activity clubs was implemented following our pupil council meetings. Pupils voted on their favourite lunchtime clubs and expressed an interest in going swimming. The clubs they chose included football, basketball and art club.</p> <p>All classes took part in a trip to Sutton Park or enjoyed a picnic in our beautiful grounds. Families supported these events and had fun taking part in class challenges. Our philosophy of 'Being the Best you Can Be' was clear to see when all pupils participated in sports day with pupils being supported in events such as bean bag throwing, egg & spoon and obstacle course events.</p>

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	<p>The Bridge offered 'WOW' days throughout the year that linked with national events including harvest festivals for pupils and families, a Christmas extravaganza and a tear-jerking leavers assembly where we said farewell to 11 of our Bridge superstars.</p> <p>Our attendance for the year was 84.4% and we continued to work alongside the Birmingham Education Partnership to follow the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice, in a similar way to all Trust schools.</p> <p>Assessment for pupil progress has been redirected to implement Evidence for Learning. This will further enhance pupils' development as their individual targets are based upon their personal learning goals that include their EHCP and IEP goals.</p> <p>Our pupils continue to be assessed in Phonics and Reading with pupils able where appropriate to complete standard testing.</p>
<p>Developments for 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence for Learning is fully embedded and used effectively to record pupil progress and inform next steps in learning. • White Rose and Jigsaw PSHE is fully embedded within the curriculum. • Topic plans are revised and driven by subject specific leads. • Upskilling staff pedagogy to ensure quality teaching and learning. • A focus on staff wellbeing as a priority

Hallmoor School 2023/24	
<p>Context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallmoor School has 224 pupils from Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 11, and an additional 70 pupils in the post-16 department. • Hallmoor School is dedicated to supporting pupils with a range of learning difficulties. • The school provides pupils with access to outdoor playgrounds, including grassed areas. • Hallmoor School has recently installed a new outdoor classroom, complete with a firepit, to enhance the learning environment for its pupils, especially during the chilly winter months.
<p>Curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils across the primary phase follow a primary style curriculum and are based with their class teacher for most lessons. • Pupils in KS4 and Post 16 have opportunities to study with specialist teachers for some vocational areas. These students now enjoy a range of options for four afternoons a week. • The curriculum is designed to develop independence for all pupils to maximise their independence in adulthood.
<p>Highlights</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Ofsted outcome in December 2023, which rated the school "Good" overall and in each judgement area, with specific comments: • <i>"This is a community focused on helping young people find their voices and their place in modern-day Birmingham,"</i> • The inspectors praised the school's strong relationships between staff, parents, carers, and pupils, noting that <i>"Pupils are happy and content. This is because the school treats pupils with kindness and care."</i> • <i>"Pupils were excited to welcome the inspectors into school and to wish them a great day. They told inspectors that 'everyone is welcome at Hallmoor',"</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallmoor School's commitment to inclusive practises is evident in its efforts to support English as an Additional Language (EAL) groups, using pupil premium funds to provide translation services. • The school continues to develop community awareness among its pupils and prepare them for the expectations and responsibilities of adulthood. • The school's attendance rates are currently above the national average for special schools, and the relationships with parents and carers are exceptionally strong. • Pupils are well-mannered, polite, and proud of their school, as evidenced by their confidence in contributing ideas to the student council. • Hallmoor School's dedication to staff development is also noteworthy. The school provides an effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme, both during and outside of directed time, ensuring that its staff are reflective practitioners who are keen to learn and develop together. <p>This sentiment reflects the school's inclusive ethos and its commitment to ensuring that all pupils feel valued and supported.</p>
Developments for 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As Hallmoor School looks ahead to the 2024-2025 academic year, it remains focused on further developing its inclusive practices, creating a rigorous quality assurance and standardisation model for functional skills. • With its strong foundations and dedicated staff, Hallmoor School is poised to continue its journey of empowering its pupils and helping them to fulfil their capacity.

The Heights Academy 2023/24	
Context	<p>The Heights Academy, an Academy Free School, opened in September 2023. Initially, Year 7 pupils were accommodated in temporary facilities at Sans Souci, Shirley. In late October 2023, we transitioned to our permanent building and subsequently welcomed pupils in Key Stage 2 alongside our Year 7 pupils, in November 2023.</p> <p>Admission to The Heights Academy requires an EHCP with a primary diagnosis of Autism with associated Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Pupils should also be working at or no more than 2 years below age-related expectations. In the first academic year, there were 32 available places for Key Stage 2 pupils, 8 per year group, 16 for Year 7 and as we progress into the next academic year there will be 16 places for Year 8 as children progress from Year 7. Upon reaching full capacity, the Planned Admission Number (PAN) will be 116 pupils across Key Stages 2 to 4.</p>
Curriculum	<p>The curriculum at The Heights Academy is designed based on the national curriculum and tailored to pupils who are working within 2 years of age-related expectations or have the capacity to be able to do this with appropriate support and interventions.</p> <p>Lessons are adapted to ensure that gaps in learning and misconceptions are addressed through robust and regular assessment and personalised learning goals. An emphasis is placed on personal development and acquisition of skills that will support lifelong successful learners, confident individuals and respectful citizens. Alongside the National Curriculum we also offer a range of interventions, wellbeing and personal development opportunities, which work on pupils' holistic skills. Pupils have access to a Personal Development afternoon once a week and access to a wide range of activities.</p>

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<p>Highlights of the year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a skilled and high-quality staff team. • Development of a robust and appropriate curriculum to support pupils learning. • Offering a range of opportunities for pupils to participate in, both on and off site. • Creation of the school library. • Development of internal sensory spaces to support the individual needs of pupils. • Festivals and concerts to allow pupils to express themselves and develop personal skills
<p>Developments for 2024/25</p>	<p>Curriculum and Assessment Intent: Review the long-term intent of the curriculum, ensuring alignment with assessment methods and intended outcomes, such as GCSEs and Functional Skills. Consider developing strategies that enhance exam skills and foster independence among pupils.</p> <p>Teaching and Learning Model Define clear and consistent approaches to learning that promote engagement and understanding. This may include a variety of methodologies and classroom strategies that support our autistic learners and cater to different learning styles.</p> <p>Use of Assessment to Inform Practice and Targets Utilise a range of assessment methods—formative, summative, and diagnostic—to inform teaching practices and set realistic, achievable targets for pupils. Discuss how data analysis can drive improvements in curriculum delivery and pupil outcomes.</p> <p>Integration of EHCP Outcomes Ensure that EHCP outcomes are seamlessly integrated into daily learning and interventions. Create a structured approach for tracking and monitoring these interventions, measuring their impact on pupil progress and engagement. Regular reviews will guide necessary adjustments.</p> <p>Future Development of Pathways Explore opportunities for new and enhanced pathways that cater to diverse learning needs and aspirations. This could involve vocational routes, apprenticeships, or tailored support that prepares pupils for future education or employment.</p> <p>Communication Review and update the school's website to ensure it accurately conveys the curriculum, assessment methods, and support offered. This includes showcasing success stories, resources for parents, and clear communication regarding academic and pastoral support.</p>

<p>High Point Academy 2023/24</p>	
<p>Context</p>	<p>High Point Academy is a Secondary Free School in Sandwell exclusively for pupils with a diagnosis of Autism and an EHCP. The school has a capacity to educate of 90 pupils, but this offer has extended within the academy year 23-24 to 96 pupils. Pupil numbers are being increased to 106 for the academic year 24-25, with further development plans moving forward.</p> <p>The school caters for two formal learning pathways:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connector Pathway pupils (Around Age Related Expectations (ARE)-2 years below ARE) • Developer Pathways pupils (Around year 2 ability upon entry in year 7) <p>There are approximately 8-10 pupils in each class. Each year we have one class per pathway from year 7-year 11.</p>
Curriculum	<p>Our curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum, for all our learners. Our curriculum builds upon skills taught within the Primary sector and supports pupils to progress onto further education. At High Point Academy our curriculum prepares pupils for life beyond High Point Academy by promoting independence.</p> <p>Our curriculum aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a high-quality level of literacy and numeracy skills throughout all elements of the curriculum which encourages enquiring minds with the desire to learn more every day • Promote independent pupils who are confident, willing to accept change and able to cooperate with others • Develop imaginative and creative learners • Develop pupils who are inclusive of our multi-cultural society who are tolerant and respect others' values • Develop pupils who are proud of their achievements and desire to celebrate success • Develop a love for learning • Be a curriculum which enables pupils to excel in all areas of their learning and achieve the best possible outcome to equip them for the future <p>Throughout the school year we offer 'WOW' days, which focus on key skills and cultural aspects of learning.</p> <p>For pupils on the Connecting Steps Pathway, they will be working at age related expectations to approximately two years below ARE. Each pupil will have a communication need, and their learning priorities will be identified by their teachers, with activities having a focus on the National Curriculum and accredited outcomes. Pupils' targets will be reflected as part of their EHCP Outcomes and Progress standards which are reviewed on a termly basis, which will be linked to their EHCP specifically related to communication and Numeracy/ Literacy Targets. They will have access discrete lessons in some subject areas and where appropriate will achieve specific qualifications such as entry level, functional skills and GCSEs.</p> <p>For pupils on a Developing Steps Pathway, Literacy, Numeracy and communication will be embedded across their curriculum. Activities focused on developing the pupils' communication skills are planned and differentiated as part of the wider curriculum, ensuring that each pupil has ample opportunity to develop their skills in Literacy in a way which is personalised and relevant for them as individuals. Pupils' targets will be reflected as part of their EOPs on a termly basis which will be linked to their EHCP specifically related to communication and Numeracy/ Literacy Targets. Developing Steps Pupils will access all aspects of the curriculum, but it will be adapted and differentiated to meet their needs to enhance their independence. Accredited courses which focus on the range of areas may be considered as a preferred accredited outcome at Key Stage Four.</p>

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<p>Highlights</p>	<p>We are particularly proud of our Ofsted outcome which we achieved in May 2024 (Good overall, but outstanding in Personal Development and Behaviour and Attitudes).</p> <p>We have developed an extensive KS4 Developer curriculum which will provide pupils with a qualifications to support them for the future, including development of their life skills. The outcomes of our KS4 pupils this academic year are a true reflection of the quality of education and determination of our staff to ensure that ambitious aspirations are being achieved at High Point.</p> <p>We have improved our overall school attendance by 3% and have continued to reduce the modified timetable offer.</p> <p>Our extensive curriculum development of holistic and life skills has been further enhanced this year and was recognised as a significant strength of our school, which equips pupils for lifelong learning beyond High Point. These sessions have been developed by the use of HPA time (Holistic Pupil Activities) these targets are personalised to form groups and individuals. They link to the EHCPs and annual review process. These sessions are conducted by our level 3 TAs which means all staff members are aware of pupils' targets and where we are aiming for pupils to be by the end of the term/academic year.</p>
<p>Developments for 2024/25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are further advancing the pastoral support for 24-25 which will focus on interventions and prevention work to support all pupils to be able to access learning and lessons and be emotionally ready to learn. • We are looking towards achieving the Well-being Charter Mark and starting the journey of the autism accreditation. • We are also ensuring that staff members' well-being continues to be a priority for leaders. • For curriculum developments, we are looking to introduce a new reading system for our early readers, link cross-curricular subjects and SMSC opportunities across the curriculum. • Along with the full introduction of Evidence for Learning to support our assessment goals.

At High Point Academy, during the academic year 2023/24, our first year 11 group reached the stage of formal examinations. Their GCSE results and qualifications were a fantastic achievement, a credit to the children and our staff. 80% of these pupils had been out of education for a period of time in their school life, due to Covid and the fact that some pupils had been accessing part-time education prior to starting at High Point.

The table below shows the number of pupils who achieved the different qualifications:

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Subject/ Exam	English	Maths	Biology	Computing	DT/Art	Food Technology	Employability
ELC 2 (Entry level)	3	2		4 pupils Distinction Level 1 2 pupils Pass Level 2			
ELC3 (Entry level)	6	6			1 Pupil "Award"	4 pupils "Award"	2 pupils "Award"
					4 Pupils "Certificate"		3 Pupils "Certificate"
GCSE 1	1	2	4				
GCSE 2	2						
GCSE 3		1	1				
GCSE 4	1	1	1				
GCSE 5	2	2	2				
GCSE 6							

Lea Hall Academy 2023/24	
Context	<p>68 boys in years 2 to year 9 who are primarily identified as having Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.</p> <p>Access to outdoor playground space is limited, along with the Trust, school is looking at plans for improvement.</p> <p>Lea Hall has 85.7% FSM. FSM for pupils with an EHCP nationally is 42.2%. 89.3% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium grant which is 47.1% higher than the national average for pupils with an EHCP.</p> <p>Recruitment, induction and retention of staff has remained a critical issue across the last academic year however, the school leadership team was fully recruited and in place from April 2024 and the majority of roles were filled for September 2024.</p>
Curriculum	<p>Pupils have been organised according to age and their social ability. In September 2023, a clearly defined timetable was introduced across both Primary and Key Stage 3 to ensure that pupils receive a broader and more balanced curriculum offer to address some of the issues raised by Ofsted in July 2023.</p> <p>Expectations around assessment have been established and monitored throughout the year and standardised assessment has been used to develop accurate baseline data for pupils so that next steps can be more accurately identified, and curriculum delivery is more purposeful.</p> <p>A curriculum vision and overview were established early in 2023 to give clarity over the curriculum purpose.</p> <p>Work has been done to develop a sequenced curriculum that builds knowledge and skills over time as pupils progress from Year 2 through to year 9. As a part of this development specific learning journeys were developed for Maths, Science and PE and other areas of the curriculum are in development.</p>

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	<p>As well as the ongoing use of the White Rose Maths and Science schemes we have reviewed other schemes of work to build our curriculum, particularly focusing on ensuring that Key Stage 3 have an age appropriate and robust curriculum. We have chosen to use Oak Academy as the basis for our curriculum delivery.</p> <p>We also introduced the Join in Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) which enables pupils to develop wider outcomes through activities related to outdoor adventurous activity, sport, hobbies and interests, and community projects. Pupils access graded awards at different levels across the school and this will act as an excellent precursor to Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme which we hope to introduce to year 9 as this becomes more established.</p>
Highlights	<p>Work on safeguarding, behaviour and curriculum has seen the school transform over the last twelve months and although there is still much more to do, we were heartened with the outcome of the Ofsted Monitoring Visit in July 2024.</p> <p>Safeguarding is now judged to be effective, and the progress made, particularly around behaviour in school, was also recognised. Pupils themselves reflected that they feel safer and feel like they are achieving more at school.</p> <p>We were also pleased to be able to take some of our year 8 and 9 boys on their first residential visit where they were able to experience a range of outdoor and adventurous activities as well as developing team building and independence skills as a part of their JASS award as mentioned above.</p> <p>Phonics and reading have also developed well over the past year. Staff have been trained in the delivery of Read, Write Inc. and more robust structures around delivery. One year 8 pupil made 6 levels of progress over the course of the year.</p>
Developments for 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop and embed the new curriculum, particularly at Key Stage 3 and with a particular focus on English, PSHE and Careers and Humanities. • Continue to develop and embed changes to the school approach to reading and developing a love of reading. • Further develop and embed our strategies and structures to support the development of behaviour and attitudes across the school. • Implement new systems around pupil attendance and improve attendance across the coming academic year.

Leycroft Academy 2023/24	
Context	<p>Leycroft Academy is for primary-aged children aged 4-11 years. The school location deprivation indicator was in quintile 5 (most deprived) and the pupil base is in quintile 5 (most deprived) of all schools in terms of deprivation.</p> <p>Leycroft was formally established in September 2021, having previously being a satellite provision of Brays School, but following de-amalgamation Leycroft became a school in its own right. As such, the school was subject to Ofsted inspection during the year, the school being rated as “requires improvement” across all areas.</p> <p>The school's capacity is 170. All pupils have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and an education, health and care plan (EHCP). 53% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average. The school building is an old secondary school, so some aspects of the building continue to be in the process of being improved. Improvements over recent years include two</p>

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	<p>outside playground areas, two movement rooms and one sensory room, and communication pathway signage to support pupils' movement and transition around the building. Work is scheduled to improve parts of the building that are not currently accessed by pupils.</p>
Curriculum	<p>A deliberate decision has been made to move away from age-related expectations to stages. Age-related expectations are focused on a pathway neuro-typical learners would follow through the National Curriculum. The curriculum content has been organised into sequenced stages. This allows for a provision that is respectful of neurodiversity and encourages learning opportunities that are bespoke to individual needs.</p> <p>Leycroft caters for a range of learners who are all at different points of their individual learning journey. Broadly speaking children at Leycroft will either be at a stage where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They acquire knowledge and skills through explorational opportunities. • Or through a more formal approach where acquired knowledge is applied in new contexts to deepen understanding and develop competency. <p>Explorers Explorers are at the early stages of development and are developing the skills of engagement using a range of motivating activities. Communication and interaction form a key part of the curriculum and learning is fun, active and multi-sensory. Making choices, taking turns, eye-contact and sustained attention are key at this stage of development. Explorers will access opportunities to develop learning behaviors to access a range of activities with adult support with the view of to use their acquired skills to complete early English and Maths tasks.</p> <p>Connectors Connectors follow a more formal style of learning. Although some learning may look traditional in nature, the approach to the curriculum is still highly tailored to meet individual needs. Pupils in Connectors have acquired sufficient skills to be able to process and memorise new information and have sufficient working memory to be able to connect it to stored information. Connectors may demonstrate early signs of applying known information to new contexts and combining it with other information to problem-solve. Connectors will have some form of functional communication will be developing their known vocabulary. The curriculum increases the focus to reading for information.</p>
Highlights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointments of new assistant Headteacher and Phase Leaders have increased expertise and capacity to the leadership of the school. • Improvements to the sports hall mean pupils are now accessing a purpose-built sport environment to access the physical aspects of their curriculum. <p>The appointment of a new Safeguarding and Attendance officer have provided addition support the leadership of the school. Attended of pupils at school has remained above 90% since this appointment.</p>
Developments for 2024/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the curriculum is implemented effectively. • To ensure agreed communication strategies to support pupils learning, are implemented effectively and consistently. • To improve pupils' attendance at school, with a particular focus on persistent absence and severe absence.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure pupils progress against key milestones set out within the curriculum and EHCP plans are tracked are used to inform future target setting.
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b. 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.

c. Promoting the success of the company

Under section 172 of the Companies Act 2006 the Trust ensures that any decisions made in line with its daily operations or regarding furthering its strategic aims and objectives have due regard to:

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

The strategic objectives of the Trust are agreed by the Board of Trustees, to ensure that the areas of focus are considered and their implications across the wider Trust for pupils and staff are assessed. The Trust Board engaged with the Executive Team to agree a strategic plan for the Trust with key elements including:

- Education – to develop high-quality teaching, to enable pupils to reach their full potential, through an engaging curriculum, developed through sharing of best practice, in an environment where children feel safe.
- People – aiming to staff schools fully with high calibre staff, with effective management of performance, retaining good people through career development and professional learning strategies and positive well-being programmes.
- Governance – responsible governance at all levels, with the right people around the table and an effective succession plan in place.
- Finance – able to demonstrate best value for money, long-term financial sustainability, meeting regulatory compliance deadlines.
- Estates & Facilities – safe, warm & dry, with a co-ordinated maintenance plan and regulatory compliance.

Financial Review

The Trust's primary source of income is from central government funding mainly comprising of the General Annual Grant ("GAG") received directly from the DfE which is funded from the Education and Skills Funding Agency ("ESFA") and is received monthly. Local Authorities in which our schools are located (currently Birmingham, Sandwell and Solihull) also commission places within our schools through an annual commissioning conversation which generate monthly funding allocations (which we

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refer to as Top-up Funding) from the Local Authority High Needs Block, to support children with special educational needs. Where pupils join us from Local Authorities other than the Authority in which the school is located, agreed financial arrangements are in place to claim funding in-year for those pupils. In addition, for Birmingham Schools only, there is a mechanism to apply for ESN (Exceptional Special Needs) funding which can relate to a pupil transitioning for one setting to another or could relate to the specific needs of that child, such that an additional funding allocation is warranted.

Use of this funding is restricted to a particular purpose. The grants received from these sources during the year ended 31 August 2024 and the associated expenditure are shown as Restricted General funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The net Income and Expenditure (Restricted and unrestricted funds) for the year ended 31 August 2024 is a surplus of £179,944 (2023: a deficit of £2,252,789). Trustees and Executive Leaders have worked to understand the Trust's complex income streams in fine detail, robust management accounting has supported Headteachers in effectively managing their allocated budgets and the Trust has taken steps to focus the people and other resources to support children, maximising efficiencies to create improved impact for children's care & education.

The Trust continued to invest in schools, either via School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding, or from retained reserves. During this financial year, the Trust consciously decided to be more cautious about spending but remained mindful of risk, as well as prioritising projects that had a direct impact on teaching & learning or the welfare of pupils. Projects included:

- Maintaining the hydrotherapy pools at both The Bridge School and Brays School, as these positively support the health & well-being of many students.
- Providing ramp access at Brays School for the safe evacuation of children and staff in emergencies, in response to feedback from staff and surveys undertaken.
- Replacement of fire doors at Hallmoor School, in response to a survey.
- Investment in a movement room at Leycroft Academy, to support the behaviour for learning in school.

The Trust continues to seek external advice to appraise the needs of each school on balance, to prioritise projects based on the grounds of risk, health & safety, condition and the needs of children and staff.

During the year, the Trust reviewed its position regarding management of its finances. Following extensive review and use of the Crescent Purchasing Dynamic Purchasing Framework, the Trust entered contractual arrangements with SAAF Education for an external (off-payroll CFO) and provision of finance management services to the Trust. The Trust obtained agreement from ESFA for the off-payroll CFO arrangement.

Like consumers and businesses across the country, the Trust was subject to price movement changes for energy contracts, which had less impact of increasing costs of operations in this financial year than in previous years. The Trust actively manages energy contracts via external framework providers, to manage the impact of price fluctuations. The Trust sees a more favourable outlook, with less inflationary pressure, but this is impacted upon by world events.

The Trust is impacted upon by the general cost-of-living pressures being experienced across the country. It recognises the need for staff to maintain the family budgets, as part of our valuing the contribution that our staff teams make to the education & welfare of our pupils. The Department for Education does not fully fund all pay increases, in particular for a Trust with a high number of support

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staff, so these pressures add a further dynamic to the Trust's financial position, which Executive Leaders are actively managing with the support of Trustees.

a. Reserves Policy

Trustees review the level of reserves at least annually. The policy of the Trustees is to maintain a level of reserves that will be adequate to provide a stable base for the continuing operations of the Trust, whilst ensuring that excessive funds are not accumulated. The Trustees always try to closely match income with expenditure in the current year by setting a balanced budget, but where they consider that investment in resources and the curriculum is justified, they may set an in-year deficit budget, whilst maintaining an overall net positive position on reserves overall.

The total funds held at the balance sheet were £39,347,646 of which £37,569,036 was represented by fixed assets, leaving a residual reserve of £3,683,945 excluding the defined pension scheme liability of £1,905,335. This reserve of £3,683,945 is represented by an unspent capital reserve of £688,349 and £2,995,596 of further funds (as per note 18 of the financial statements). The unrestricted funds of the Trust total £1,769,835.

The minimum reserve level agreed by Trustees currently is approximated to one months' total salary costs which is c. £1.2m currently.

b. Investment policy

The Trust does not make investments per se. The Trustees have agreed that surplus cash funds can be placed on deposit with Lloyds Bank on terms agreed by the Chief Executive Officer which might range between notice and no longer than 1-year fixed. Funds placed on deposit are notified to Audit, Risk and Finance and are included in the financial reports received by that sub-committee.

Day-to-day management of cashflow rests within the Executive Team.

c. Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The Trust's Risk Register is reviewed between the Trust Executive Team and the Board (including via sub-committees) on a regular basis, to ensure the assessment of risk remains relevant. The Risk Register is very much a working document. The Trust has assessed its priority risks as:

- Long-term financial sustainability. In an environment when income is relatively flat (in fact it is being eroded by inflation) and costs are rising (through non-staff costs inflationary pressure and nationally agreed cost-of-living pay settlements), the Trust is regularly evaluating the resources which can be deployed in pursuit of core aims and objectives. This Trust is experiencing pressures which are common across the education sector, but Trustees believe the Trust has the capability of responding to and managing these pressures in an effective way.
- Quality of education. Providing education that ensures good outcomes for children is at the core of our purpose. Having gone through a rapid period of change in recent years, with now 3 new schools opened since 2021, the Trust is aware of the need to ensure that the curriculum, teaching and learning is fit for purpose for the wide variety of needs of our children. The adverse Ofsted outcome at Lea Hall was a disappointment for everyone at the time, but significant work by the Trust has brought beneficial impacts for the school. Further work is still to be done. The Trust has been requested to re-broker Lea Hall Academy to another Trust, which has been accepted, and the due diligence process has begun. Via regular contact with Headteachers and discussions about school accountability, the Trust is developing quality assurance frameworks to ensure that Trustees are aware of where schools are in their stage of development. The Trust drew confidence from the positive Ofsted inspection outcomes at

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

- Hallmoor School and High Point Academy but recognises that consistency needs to be developed across the whole Trust, as evidenced by the Ofsted inspection at Leycroft Academy.
- School improvement capacity. Within the Trust Central Team and our school leadership more widely, the Trust is identifying where capacity is needed and where capacity can be given. There is a lot of talent which is already being shared across the Trust, to support common areas of the curriculum in each of our schools. There is sharing of good practice across areas such as EYFS, assessment, leader-level networking and many other areas, with more developments in the pipeline, as we continue to build our internal capacity via networking groups. The trust is also outward-looking, considering where external support may be needed to provide an objective view and/or additional capacity.
 - Staff attendance at work. The picture nationally, whether in education or other public service, shows concerning levels of absence, due to many factors both outside of and within the control of the Trust. The Trust schools have a supportive approach to all employees, some of whom experience health and other related issues which affect their ability to attend work. In all instances, the supportive approach is coupled with a clear Policy that is fairly and equitably applied. The Management of Attendance Policy launched in January 2024, which was consulted on with trade unions via the JCNC, has had a positive impact. The Trust believes that policy, when coupled with the strategy around employee well-being, will see further improvements in future.
 - Staffing (teaching and non-teaching). Across the sector, attracting and retaining staff is challenging. This Trust has developed new initiatives to ensure it is well-placed to attract the right staff at every level and to provide effective career development opportunities. The Trust also looks at how it can creatively deploy resources between schools where pressures are being experienced.

Fundraising

Fundraising is limited due to the nature of the organisation. Some fundraising occurs which is donated to charities for a specific purpose such as Children in Need. The Trust does not use any external fundraisers. Any fundraising activity is notified to Trustees. There were no complaints received related to fundraising. The Trust has supported schools in identifying their own fundraising capacity and it is allowing schools to flexibly adopt the approach which best suits their setting. Voluntary contributions were not requested.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR)

UK energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions

Annual energy usage and associated annual greenhouse gas ("GHG") emissions are reported pursuant to the Companies (Directors' Report) and Limited Liability Partnerships (Energy and Carbon Report) Regulations 2018 ("the 2018 Regulations") that came into force 1 April 2019.

Organisational boundary

In accordance with the 2018 Regulations, the energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions are for those assets owned or operated within the UK only as defined by the operational control boundary. This includes all seven schools controlled during the reporting period and minibuses along with the mandatory inclusion of scope 3 business travel in employee-owned or hire vehicles (grey fleet). This reporting year saw the addition of The Heights Academy in September 2023.

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

Reporting period

The annual reporting period is 1 September to 31 August each year and the energy and carbon emissions are aligned to this period.

Quantification and reporting methodology

The 2019 UK Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines and the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard (revised edition) were followed. The 2022 UK Government GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting were used in emission calculations. The report has been reviewed independently by Briar Consulting Engineers Limited.

The electricity, gas, biomass and minibus diesel consumption were compiled from invoice records. claims were used to calculate energy use and emissions associated with grey fleet and the direct comparison technique was used for the year 2021/2022. On site renewable solar photovoltaic electricity is provided for free by a third party so is included within scope 2 and excludes exported energy. Exported energy is not measured but estimated to be 50%. Generally gross calorific values were used except for grey fleet mileage energy calculations as per Government GHG Conversion Factors.

The associated emissions are divided into mandatory and voluntary emissions according to the 2018 Regulations, then further divided into the direct combustion of fuels and the operation of facilities (scope 1), indirect emissions from purchased electricity (scope 2) and further indirect emissions that occur because of Trust activities but occur from sources not owned or controlled by the organisation (scope 3).

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

Breakdown of energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh):

Energy type	2023/24	2022/23
<u>Mandatory:</u>		
Gas	2,750,573	2,673,642
Purchased electricity from the grid	1,196,247	1,076,385
Transport fuel	23,853	12,723
Total energy (mandatory)	3,970,673	3,762,750

Note: figures may not sum due to rounding

Intensity ratio

Two intensity ratios are reported showing emissions (tCO₂e) per pupil and per square meter floor area. Emissions per pupil is the recommended ratio for the sector for consistency and comparability and pupil numbers are based on the Autumn 2023 Census. Emissions per square meter floor area is reported to reflect the energy efficiency of the buildings, which are the source of most emissions.

Intensity ratios	2023/24	2022/23
<u>Mandatory emissions only:</u>		
Tonnes of CO ₂ e per pupil	0.924	0.942
Tonnes of CO ₂ e per square meter floor area	0.034	0.037

Energy efficiency action during current financial year

The Trust is committed to reducing emissions and this year has seen the implementation or continuation of the following energy efficiency measures:

- Building Management Systems (BMS): Actively monitored in Hallmoor, Lea Hall, High Point and The Heights, for optimised energy control.
- Leycroft Academy: Entire site's windows upgraded in 2020/21 through CIF funding, enhancing insulation and reducing heat loss. The Trust continues to reap the benefits of that investment.
- LED Installation: Exploration underway for implementing energy-efficient LED lighting systems across schools. Surveys undertaken, it is expected that projects will be delivered in the year to 31st August 2025 at The Bridge, Brays, Hallmoor and Leycroft.
- Future Consideration: Plans in progress for potential installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems to harness renewable energy sources. The Trust is also in the process of signing up

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

to initiatives around the sustainability agenda, it is developing its thoughts into a coherent strategy and has signed up to initiatives including Let's Go Zero, as well as partnership with Energy Sparks, both of which are expected to deliver new knowledge and ideas to contribute in positive ways to the Trust's sustainability strategy.

Breakdown of emissions associated with the reported energy use (tCO₂e):

Emission source	2023/24	2022/23
Mandatory:		
Scope 1		
Gas	503.1	489.1
Trust-owned vehicles (minibuses)	1.8	2.2
Scope 2		
Purchased electricity (location-based)	247.7	222.9
Scope 3		
Category 6: Business travel (grey fleet)	4.0	1.0
Total gross emissions (mandatory)	756.6	715.1

Note: figures may not sum due to rounding

Plans for future periods

The Trust Executive Leaders work effectively with Trustees to identify the key priorities. In the last year, these have moved in a positive direction and some of last year's initiatives remain current for the year ahead:

Forward Education Trust strongly advocates that our principal purpose (for students and staff) is to help them to be the very best version of themselves that they possibly can be. We recognise, value and celebrate the unique talents and expertise within our community and aim to create a culture of dignity, inclusivity, respect and ambition, where everyone can thrive.

In addition, Executive leaders are developing with the Trustees the core objectives for 2025 -2027, which will be based around:

Strategic Goal 1: Following a further review of vision and values, the Trust will have a well-defined, clearly understood strategic direction and all involved in governance will understand their roles and responsibilities and carry them out effectively.

Strategic Goal 2: Through a supportive and challenging model of school improvement, all our pupils will receive a high-quality education that is appropriate to their needs and that demonstrates that pupils are achieving ambitious outcomes.

Strategic Goal 3: The Trust will have a high-performing working culture which promotes collaboration, support and ambition, ensuring that every member of staff works within an effective system to maintain high performance and actively encourage staff development.

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

Strategic Goal 4: As part of a long-term sustainable financial strategy, all schools and the Trust will have robust and accurate financial and people information & processes, that contribute to effective planning and maximise the impact of funds for the benefit of all our pupils.

Strategic Goal 5: The Trust will be at the heart of our communities, providing a focal point for strategic partnerships that maximise opportunity for staff, pupils and our schools.

The Trust is conscious of a request, with which the Trust is compliant, from the Regional Director West Midlands to re-broker Lea Hall Academy to another trust. Trustees have accepted that this is likely to be in the best interests of the boys who attend Lea Hall. A re-brokerage process has commenced, including due diligence, with a projected transfer date of 1st June 2025. Executive Leaders are actively supporting the process but continue to be mindful of the responsibility for stewardship of Lea Hall until the transfer takes place. Trustees are of the opinion that there is a risk that the transfer may not proceed, such that it has highlighted those concerns to the Regional Director and is factoring in that risk as part of its assessment of the overall Trust position. An impact of the potential loss of Lea Hall will be a consequential reduction in top-slice income to support the Central Services. Executive Leaders are working with Trustees to articulate how Central Service may need to respond in an agile way to a reduction in income, at the same time as continuing to deliver the required support to what would be the remaining 6 schools.

Trustees are also actively reviewing Department guidance around Commissioning High-Quality Trusts, so that the Trust can look to place itself in a position of considering further growth prospects at some point during late 2025 or 2026.

Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others

There are no funds held.

Reporting relating public bodies use of money

The Trust Board is aware of the requirements laid out in the Academy Trust Handbook, relating to use of public funds. It is aware of the limits set, beyond which approval must be obtained from ESFA. The Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Financial Procedures ensure compliance with the requirements of the ATH.

Good estate management in schools

The Trust is aware of the guidance published by the Department for Education around good estate management for schools. This includes a responsibility for health & safety, on which the Trust receives support from a qualified health & safety adviser (Workplace Risk Management). Additional advice around fire safety is received via the facilities management contract with Bellrock FM, which supports the Trust generally to ensure compliance with statutory testing & maintenance.

In 2022 the Trust undertook external condition surveys for all schools with Barker Associates. This data continues to be referred to when making decisions around estate management to ensure proactive management is balanced with reactive requests which arise from time to time. The Trust continues to investigate projects around LED lighting, energy efficiency and Solar PV, as well as general energy saving measures as part of its good estate management strategy.

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31 August 2024

Along with Trustees the Executive Leaders are developing and agreeing a broad approach to better estates management, including utilisation of funds in the short-term and long-term.

Disclosure of information to auditor

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware.
- The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees on 17 December 2024 and signed on the Trustees' behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Canty", is written over a faint, large watermark of the word "FORWARD" in the background.

Catherine Canty
Chair of Trustees

Governance statement For the year ended 31 August 2024

Governance Statement

Scope of responsibility

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

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Forward Education Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the Board of Trustees any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of Trustees and sub-committees was as follows:

Governance statement

For the year ended 31 August 2024

Forward Education Trust															
Attendance: September 2023 to August 2024															
Key 1= Present 0 = Absent A = Apologies * = In the committee	Trustees														
	Azite Canty (Chair of Trust Board)	Helen Redican (Chair of Education Committee)	Maria Earl (Chair of ARF and HR & Pay Committee)	Belen Taylor (Resigned 17.10.23)	Suje Cooney (Resigned 22.03.24)	Patrick Ricketts (Resigned 01.01.24)	Paul Roberts	Mark Morgan	Ian Tuddenham	Paul Joesbury (Resigned 19.06.24)	Leanne Mahony (Resigned 27.08.24)	PW Coleman (Resigned 22.11.24)	Attended	Apologies	Absent
Trust Board Meetings															
19.09.2023	1	1	1	A	1	1	1	1	1				8	1	0
23.01.2024	1	1	1		A			1	1	1			6	1	0
06.02.2024	1	1	1					1	1	1			6	0	0
23.04.2024	1	A	1					1	A	1			4	2	0
08.08.2024	1	A	A					1	1	A	1	A	4	4	0
Total Attendance	5/5	3/5	4/5	0/1	1/2	1/1	5/5	4/5	4/5	1/1	0/1				
COMMITTEE Meetings															
Education Committee															
	*	*		*	*	*	*								
08.10.2023		A		0	1	1	1						3	1	1
21.11.2023		1			1	A	1						3	1	0
02.02.2024	1	1			1		1						4	0	0
03.05.2024	1	1					1						3	0	0
21.06.2024	1	1					1						3	0	0
Total Attendance	3/3	4/5		0/1	3/3	1/2	5/5								
Audit:Risk & Finance Committee (ARF)															
	*		*	*			*				*				
17.10.2023	1		1	A			1						3	1	0
12.12.2023	1		1				1						3	0	0
27.02.2024	1		1				1				1		4	0	0
16.04.2024	1		1				1				1		4	0	0
16.07.2024	1		1				1				0		3	0	1
Total Attendance	5/5		5/5	0/1			5/5				2/3				
HR & Pay Committee															
	*	*	*		*				*						
10.11.2023	1	1	1		1				1				5	0	0
22.03.2024		1	1		1				1				4	0	0
05.07.2024		1	1						1				3	0	0
Total Attendance	1/1	3/3	3/3		2/3				3/3						

The Board of Trustees has met formally 5 times during the year. The Audit, Risk and Finance committee and the Education Committee have both met 5 times during the year. The HR and Pay committee met 3 times during the year.

The Trust maintains an up-to-date register of interests to support positive process to manage potential conflicts of interests. A standing agenda item at all Board and Committee meetings checks that there have been no changes to the register of interests since the Board start-up meeting held in September annually and that there are no additional items of potential conflict relating to items on each meeting agenda. The information on the register is maintained centrally and overseen within the Trust governance function.

The Trust conducts a skills audit via self-assessment annually at Board and Local Academy Council levels. An external review of local governance was conducted by the National Governance Association in the year 2021/22 and significant work has been undertaken to address the areas for development identified. The Trust Board believes the external review conducted enabled it to effectively regenerate

Forward Education Trust

Governance statement

For the year ended 31 August 2024

the Local Academy Council tier of governance, as effective advocates for each individual school. The Trust has been able to recruit well-qualified individuals to be Chairs of Local Academy Councils and representation from staff & parents has improved significantly. The Trust Executive Team will continue to offer nurture and support to continuously improve the role that governance plays in holding school and Trust leaders to account.

In May 2024, the Trust Board commissioned the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) to carry out a full external review of governance. The review took place May – September 2024, and the final feedback, recommendations and report were presented to the Board in their first meeting of the 2024/25 academic year. The review highlighted key areas of strength, including the commitment of Trustees to resolve challenges, the skills of Trustees in fulfilment of their role and that effective governance of safeguarding matters was evident. Areas were identified for development and Trustees will meet in the forthcoming period to discuss and agree how the action plan should be implemented.

During the year, the Trust Board and Executive team reviewed and implemented a revised Scheme of Delegation, which remains a working, active document.

Review of Value for Money

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

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

- Continuing to develop strategies to raise education outcomes through collaboration, by sharing skills and expertise across the Trust and extending partnership working.
- Ongoing alignment of contracted services, and collective purchasing to provide the schools better value on existing services and enable more accurate budget monitoring and forecasting.
- Proactive procurement of energy contracts and review of energy saving options including reducing usage continued to take place, making use of Crown Commercial Services frameworks, as well as competitive procurement via national framework supplier Zenergi.
- Ensuring that the Trust's financial procedures have been implemented and embedded throughout the Trust ensuring that the schools are all appropriating value for money strategies.
- Maintaining correct staffing levels throughout the Trust to ensure staffing is appropriate to each school and not as a result of legacy, monitoring natural wastage and ensuring the Head Teachers are replacing staff appropriately.
- Ensuring appropriate levels of centrally agreed staffing establishments via the finance team, with oversight of recruitment processes in conjunction with the HR team capacity.
- Providing continued support to the Head Teachers and Local Academy Councils and building on Trust development plans to achieve the benefits of sharing and pooling resources.
- Maintenance and review of agency supplier framework agreements to manage pressures on day rates and avoid temp to perm costs. The schools and the Trust Central Team work together effectively to ensure regular, accurate reporting of agency spend.
- Effective management of large contracts, including utilising dynamic procurement tender mechanisms and frameworks approved by DfE and other recognised bodies.
- Engagement with external advisory organisations and memberships, to research and implement strategic efficiencies, which may present an opportunity to benchmark decisions against other MATs and SEND schools. The Trust has particularly valued the access to

Governance statement

For the year ended 31 August 2024

resources from Forum Strategy and the Confederation of School Trust. The Trust CEO has participated in MAT CEO meetings for Birmingham schools as part of the Birmingham Education Partnership, as well as being mindful to develop relationships in Sandwell and Solihull. The CEO has also networked with other CEOs via both Forum Strategy and Confederation of School Trusts and, specifically on SEND, through the National AP/Send Network. These all positively contribute to an awareness of the issues facing Trusts, which can directly and indirectly impact on ensuring value for money.

- Executive and other school/Trust leaders have effectively networked professionally across areas such as governance, business management and human resources.
- The Trust has continued with a membership of the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce (Birmingham, Solihull and Sutton Coldfield) to widen its stakeholder and community engagement in areas that it operates.

The Trust has supported operations and the HR function by developing standardised systems, policies and processes across the Trust.

In respect of the Trust's estate and ICT facility infrastructure, we have continued to update condition survey information with works undertaken, to maintain a clear picture of works still to be done. Trustees responded proactively to requests from schools and have supported reactive maintenance works, conscious of requirements to ensure that estates & facilities are safe, well maintained and compliant with legal requirements. Trustees are fully aware of the additional needs of our pupils and regularly risk assess schools, as well as considering how we can offer the best educational resources, so that our curriculum is accessible to all pupils.

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. A system of effective internal control has been in place in Forward Education Trust for the year ended 31 August 2024.

During the year, the Trustees remained mindful of the broad scope of Internal Control and during Board meetings actively reviewed guidance from DfE.

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 ended 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

The Risk and Control Framework

The Academy Trust's system of internal 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:

Forward Education Trust

Governance statement

For the year ended 31 August 2024

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

The Board of Trustees utilised the services of S4S as the Trust's internal auditor. The internal auditor's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Academy Trust's financial, governance, compliance and risk management systems. In particular the checks carried out in the current period included:

- Bank and petty cash.
- Budgets and financial monitoring.
- Expenditure (supplier payments), credit cards and procurement.
- Fixed Assets and depreciation.
- Income.
- Payroll, including employee contracts and DBS checks.
- Regularity & compliance, including payment authorisation.
- Prior year recommendations.

The internal auditor reported to the Board of Trustees, through the Audit, Risk & Finance committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities. On an annual basis the internal auditor prepares a summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviews, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to the help the committee consider actions and assess year-on-year progress.

The Trust Board will consider on an annual basis what their internal audit requirements will be and who is best placed to provide external scrutiny.

Review of Effectiveness

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

- the work of the 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.

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

Governance statement
For the year ended 31 August 2024

Conclusion

Based on the advice of the Audit, Risk and Finance Committee and the Accounting Officer of the Trust, the Board of Trustees is of the opinion that the academy trust has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control.

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



Catherine Canty
Chair of Trustees



Simon Dilkes
Accounting Officer

Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance For the year ended 31 August 2024

Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance

As Accounting Officer of Forward Education Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the Board of Trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with ESFA terms and conditions of all funding received by the Academy Trust, under the funding agreements in place between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration, I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the Board of Trustees are able to identify any material, irregularity and 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 agreements and the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

I confirm that the following instance of material irregularity, impropriety or compliance, previously identified remains unresolved. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the Board of Trustees and ESFA:

The Trust has previously identified that Hallmoor School is in technical breach of their Funding Agreement clause 2F. This breach was notified to ESFA. While not denying the actual breach, The Trust believes that circumstances are different for special schools, such that places are commissioned by Local Authorities and there has been demand for places from the period when the breach occurred to date. The Trust believes it can work effectively with the ESFA in order to seek agreement from the Secretary of State for place numbers to be formally adjusted to accommodate the future demand for places, with a suitable modification to Pupil Numbers in the Funding Agreement. Discussions have progressed with the Local Authority and a pathway has been agreed to carry out consultation to increase Pupil Numbers at Hallmoor School, which will enable a successful amendment to the Funding Agreement. As a Tier 1 application, this is expected to be regularised by the end of the Summer Term 2025 and this approach has been confirmed as satisfactory by ESFA/Regional Director.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Dilkes", written in a cursive style.

Simon Dilkes
Accounting Officer

Date: 17th December 2024

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities For the year ended 31 August 2024

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 Academies Accounts Direction published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

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

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

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

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

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

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


Catherine Canty

Chair of Trustees

Date: 17th December 2024

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Forward Education Trust (the 'academy') for the year ended 31 August 2024 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Academy's affairs as at 31 August 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of Trustees

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

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

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We 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:

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud.

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

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks within which the charitable company, focusing on those laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The laws and regulations we considered in this context were the Charities Act 2011 together with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), Companies Act 2006, Academies Accounts Direction, the Academy Trust Handbook and Tax legislation. 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, Ofsted and employee legislation.

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

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

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

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

Helen Blundell

Helen Blundell (Senior statutory auditor)

for and on behalf of

Crowe U.K. LLP

Statutory Auditor

Black Country House

Rounds Green Road

Oldbury

West Midlands

B69 2DG

Date: 19 December 2024

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 17 October 2023 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Forward Education Trust during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Respective responsibilities of Forward Education Trust's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Forward Education Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 20 March 2017 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2023, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw our conclusion includes a review of the design and implementation of the Academy 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.

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Conclusion

In the course of our work, except for the matters listed below nothing has come to our attention which suggest in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Breach of funding agreement re Hallmoor School

The current pupil roll at Hallmoor School exceeds the pupil capacity stated in the funding agreement and the Trust has not sought prior approval from the Secretary of State. This is in breach of clause 2F of the school's funding agreement which requires that they notify the ESFA and seek approval from the Secretary of State where they consider there is a need to increase the planned number of places stated in the funding agreement.

Crowe U.K. LLP

Reporting Accountant
Crowe U.K. LLP

Date: 19 December 2024

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	8,841	-	467,586	476,427	852,583
Other trading activities		2,245	-	-	2,245	2,101
Investments	6	81,100	-	-	81,100	20,438
Charitable activities		88,103	23,242,562	-	23,330,665	19,556,735
Total income		180,289	23,242,562	467,586	23,890,437	20,431,857
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds		577	-	-	577	4,731
Charitable activities	7	77,335	22,638,568	994,013	23,709,916	22,679,915
Total expenditure		77,912	22,638,568	994,013	23,710,493	22,684,646
Net income/(expenditure)		102,377	603,994	(526,427)	179,944	(2,252,789)
Transfers between funds	17	-	(240,107)	240,107	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		102,377	363,887	(286,320)	179,944	(2,252,789)
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	19	-	394,000	-	394,000	3,289,000
Net movement in funds		102,377	757,887	(286,320)	573,944	1,036,211

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
(CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward as previously stated	1,667,458	(1,437,461)	38,543,705	38,773,702	39,106,012
Prior year adjustment	-	-	-	-	(1,368,521)
Total funds brought forward as restated	1,667,458	(1,437,461)	38,543,705	38,773,702	37,737,491
Net movement in funds	102,377	757,887	(286,320)	573,944	1,036,211
Total funds carried forward	1,769,835	(679,574)	38,257,385	39,347,646	38,773,702

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

The notes on pages 51 to 78 form part of these financial statements.

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 10680422

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	14	37,569,036	38,213,729
Current assets			
Debtors	15	637,419	381,052
Cash at bank and in hand		5,339,298	4,591,426
		<u>5,976,717</u>	<u>4,972,478</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	<u>(2,292,772)</u>	<u>(1,633,171)</u>
Net current assets		3,683,945	3,339,307
Total assets less current liabilities		41,252,981	41,553,036
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	19	<u>(1,905,335)</u>	<u>(2,779,334)</u>
Total net assets		39,347,646	38,773,702
Funds of the Academy			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	17	38,257,385	38,543,705
Restricted income funds	17	1,225,760	1,341,873
		<u>39,483,145</u>	<u>39,885,578</u>
Restricted funds excluding pension asset	17	39,483,145	39,885,578
Pension reserve	17	<u>(1,905,334)</u>	<u>(2,779,334)</u>
Total restricted funds	17	37,577,811	37,106,244
Unrestricted income funds	17	1,769,835	1,667,458
Total funds		39,347,646	38,773,702

The financial statements on pages 47 to 78 were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and are signed on their behalf, by:

Catherine Canty
 (Chair of Trustees)

Date: 17 December 2024



The notes on pages 51 to 78 form part of these financial statements.

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		570,918	<i>(784,223)</i>
Cash flows from investing activities		176,954	<i>(140,351)</i>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		747,872	<i>(924,574)</i>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		4,591,426	<i>5,516,000</i>
		<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		5,339,298	<i>4,591,426</i>
		<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

The notes on pages 51 to 78 form part of these financial statements

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. 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.

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements of the Academy, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historic cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

1.2 Going concern

The Trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the Trust to continue as a going concern. The Trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the financial statements.

The Trustees and management are satisfied from their review of budgets and forecasts that reserves and cash flows are sufficient for a period of at least one year from the date of the authorisation for issue of the financial statements such that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

1.3 Income

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

• **Grants**

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

General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the Statement of financial activities in the year for which it is receivable and any abatement in respect of the year is deducted from income and recognised as a liability.

Capital grants are recognised in full when there is an unconditional entitlement to the grant. Unspent amounts of capital grants are reflected in the Balance sheet in the restricted fixed asset fund. Capital grants are recognised when there is entitlement and are not deferred over the life of the asset on which they are expended.

• **Donations**

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

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.4 Expenditure

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

- **Expenditure on raising funds**

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

- **Charitable activities**

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

1.5 Tangible fixed assets

Assets costing £5,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

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

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

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.5 Tangible fixed assets (continued)

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Freehold land	- Not depreciated
Long-term leasehold property	- 50-125 years
Freehold property	- 50 years
Furniture and equipment	- 3-10 years
Computer equipment	- 3-10 years

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.

A change was made in 2023 to the accounting policy for fixed assets and depreciation of property in order to align the policy with best practice in the academy sector. The change was to revert to a policy of recognition at cost less depreciation and impairment for all fixed assets and to revise the depreciation rate for long leasehold assets. These changes have been effected by way of a prior year adjustment in the 2023 financial statements and details are provided in note 17 to the accounts

1.6 Debtors

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

1.7 Cash at bank and in hand

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

1.8 Liabilities

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

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.9 Financial instruments

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

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 15. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 16. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

1.10 Pensions

Retirement benefits to employees of the Academy are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS") and the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). These are defined benefit schemes.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the Academy in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary based on quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. TPS is an unfunded multi-employer scheme with no underlying assets to assign between employers. Consequently, the TPS is treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions recognised in the period to which they relate.

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

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other recognised gains and losses.

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.11 Fund accounting

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

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

Restricted general funds comprise all other restricted funds received with restrictions imposed by the funder/donor and include grants from the Department for Education Group.

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

2. 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.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

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

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 19, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

Where a scheme is in a surplus according to the accounting valuation the associated asset has not been recognised on the basis that it is not likely to be recoverable either through future reductions in contributions rates or future repayments. Further details of pension assets not recognised can be found with the pensions note to the financial statements.

Up until 2021/22, two of the schools operated as a single school with two sites. At the beginning of the 2021/22 accounting period, the school was de-amalgamated to become two separate schools. The reserves brought forward had to be split between the two schools and an estimate was made based on the proportion of pupil numbers, split of income and split of expenditure between the two schools. The brought forward reserves were allocated on a 40:60 basis between The Brays and Leycroft.

FORWARD EDUCATION TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Donations	8,841	-	8,841
Grants	-	467,586	467,586
	<u>8,841</u>	<u>467,586</u>	<u>476,427</u>
	<u><u>8,841</u></u>	<u><u>467,586</u></u>	<u><u>476,427</u></u>
		<i>Restricted</i>	
	<i>Unrestricted</i>	<i>fixed asset</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>funds</i>	<i>funds</i>	<i>funds</i>
	<i>2023</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>2023</i>
	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>	<i>£</i>
Donations	2,754	-	2,754
Grants	-	849,829	849,829
	<u>2,754</u>	<u>849,829</u>	<u>852,583</u>
	<u><u>2,754</u></u>	<u><u>849,829</u></u>	<u><u>852,583</u></u>

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4. Funding for the Academy's charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Educational Operation			
DfE/ESFA grants			
General Annual Grant	-	8,170,000	8,170,000
Other DfE/ESFA grants			
Pupil premium	-	935,164	935,164
16-19 High Needs funding	-	587,549	587,549
Other DfE grants	-	1,248,938	1,248,938
	-	10,941,651	10,941,651
Other Government grants			
Local Authority SEN funding	-	11,557,523	11,557,523
Other government grants	-	743,388	743,388
	-	12,300,911	12,300,911
Other income from the Academy's educational operation	88,103	-	88,103
	88,103	23,242,562	23,330,665
	88,103	23,242,562	23,330,665

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

4. Funding for the Academy's charitable activities (continued)

	<i>Unrestricted funds 2023 £</i>	<i>Restricted funds 2023 £</i>	<i>Total funds 2023 £</i>
Educational Operation			
DfE/ESFA grants			
General Annual Grant	-	7,536,666	7,536,666
Other DfE/ESFA grants			
Pupil premium	-	736,635	736,635
16-19 High Needs funding	-	560,000	560,000
Other DfE grants	-	404,074	404,074
	-	9,237,375	9,237,375
Other Government grants			
Local Authority SEN funding	-	10,251,956	10,251,956
Other government grants	-	239	239
	-	10,252,195	10,252,195
Other income from the Academy's educational operation	67,165	-	67,165
	<u>67,165</u>	<u>19,489,570</u>	<u>19,556,735</u>

5. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Other income	2,245	2,245
	<u>2,245</u>	<u>2,245</u>
	<i>Unrestricted funds 2023 £</i>	<i>Total funds 2023 £</i>
Other income	2,101	2,101
	<u>2,101</u>	<u>2,101</u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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6. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Investment income - bank interest	81,100	81,100

	<i>Unrestricted funds 2023 £</i>	<i>Total funds 2023 £</i>
Investment income - bank interest	20,438	20,438

7. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2024 £	Premises 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Total 2024 £
Expenditure on fundraising trading activities:				
Direct costs	-	-	577	577
Educational Operation:				
Direct costs	14,895,720	-	1,077,244	15,972,964
Allocated support costs	3,451,529	2,513,434	1,771,989	7,736,952
	18,347,249	2,513,434	2,849,810	23,710,493

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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7. Expenditure (continued)

	<i>Staff Costs</i> 2023 £	<i>Premises</i> 2023 £	<i>Other</i> 2023 £	<i>Total</i> 2023 £
Expenditure on fundraising trading activities:				
Direct costs	-	-	4,731	4,731
Educational Operation:				
Direct costs	12,402,003	-	1,076,437	13,478,440
Allocated support costs	4,703,904	2,543,792	1,953,779	9,201,475
	<u>17,105,907</u>	<u>2,543,792</u>	<u>3,034,947</u>	<u>22,684,646</u>

8. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Educational Operation	<u>15,972,964</u>	<u>7,736,952</u>	<u>23,709,916</u>

	<i>Activities undertaken directly 2023 £</i>	<i>Support costs 2023 £</i>	<i>Total funds 2023 £</i>
Educational Operation	<u>13,478,440</u>	<u>9,201,475</u>	<u>22,679,915</u>

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

Analysis of support costs

	Total educational operations 2024 £	<i>Total educational operations 2023 £</i>
Staff costs	3,451,529	4,703,904
Depreciation	994,013	808,409
Technology costs	210,959	306,291
Other costs	1,209,770	1,054,490
Premises expenses	1,519,421	1,735,383
Legal and professional	293,135	553,775
Governance	58,125	39,223
	<u>7,736,952</u>	<u>9,201,475</u>

9. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2024 £	<i>2023 £</i>
Operating lease rentals	17,472	16,272
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	994,013	808,409
Fees paid to auditor for:		
- audit	26,500	25,000
- other services	5,300	5,000
	<u>1,043,285</u>	<u>854,681</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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10. Staff

a. Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	11,502,480	9,786,896
Social security costs	1,091,470	905,917
Pension costs	2,311,116	2,454,220
	<u>14,905,066</u>	<u>13,147,033</u>
Agency staff costs	3,399,266	3,830,331
Staff restructuring costs	42,917	128,543
	<u>18,347,249</u>	<u>17,105,907</u>

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

Severance payments	<u>42,917</u>	<u>128,543</u>
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b. Severance payments

The Academy paid 5 severance payments in the year (2023 - 5), disclosed in the following bands:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
£0 - £25,000	5	4
£50,001 - £100,000	-	1
	<u>-</u>	<u>1</u>

c. Special staff severance payments

Included in staff restructuring costs are special severance payments totalling £1,486 (2023: £59,832). Individually the payment was £1,486 (2023: £26,003, £20,596 and £13,233).

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

10. Staff (continued)

d. Staff numbers

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

	2024	<i>2023</i>
	No.	<i>No.</i>
Teachers	100	<i>91</i>
Administration and support	317	<i>316</i>
Management	10	<i>11</i>
	427	<i>418</i>

e. Higher paid staff

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

	2024	<i>2023</i>
	No.	<i>No.</i>
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	9	<i>6</i>
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	5	<i>-</i>
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	3	<i>1</i>
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	1	<i>1</i>
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	1	<i>2</i>
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	1	<i>-</i>

f. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Academy comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of key management personnel benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy was £457,980 (2023 - £579,470).

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

11. Central services

The Academy has provided the following central services to its academies during the year:

- human resources
- financial services
- legal services
- educational support services; or
- others as arising

The Academy charges for these services on the following basis:

The Trust recharged budgeted central costs across schools, allocated via a range of percentages based on affordability. Account was taken of GAG (General Annual Grant), Top-up income from local authorities as well as other core funding. The contribution from schools has moved in line with the level of additional costs in 2 central services represented by staff costs and non-staff contractual costs, relating to operation of the trust or bought-in services procured centrally on behalf of the schools.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Brays School	175,804	151,195
Hallmoor School	517,545	500,182
The Bridge School	168,200	143,809
Leycroft Academy	418,459	370,336
High Point Academy	134,462	101,072
Lea Hall Academy	185,523	170,137
The Heights Academy	74,517	-
Total	1,674,510	1,436,731

12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

During the year ended 31 August 2024, no expenses were reimbursed or paid directly to Trustees (2023 - £946 to 5 Trustees). Prior year expenses related to the reimbursement of travel costs.

13. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

In accordance with normal commercial practice, the Academy has purchased insurance to protect Trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business. The insurance provides cover up to £10,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the year ended 31 August 2024.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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14. Tangible fixed assets

	Freehold property £	Long-term leasehold property £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 September 2023	9,568,847	30,658,014	348,294	472,748	41,047,903
Additions	-	130,350	147,603	71,367	349,320
At 31 August 2024	<u>9,568,847</u>	<u>30,788,364</u>	<u>495,897</u>	<u>544,115</u>	<u>41,397,223</u>
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2023	329,354	2,296,626	18,522	189,672	2,834,174
Charge for the year	164,677	654,610	46,775	127,951	994,013
At 31 August 2024	<u>494,031</u>	<u>2,951,236</u>	<u>65,297</u>	<u>317,623</u>	<u>3,828,187</u>
Net book value					
At 31 August 2024	<u><u>9,074,816</u></u>	<u><u>27,837,128</u></u>	<u><u>430,600</u></u>	<u><u>226,492</u></u>	<u><u>37,569,036</u></u>
At 31 August 2023	<u><u>9,239,493</u></u>	<u><u>28,361,388</u></u>	<u><u>329,772</u></u>	<u><u>283,076</u></u>	<u><u>38,213,729</u></u>

The trust leases the land it occupies from Birmingham City Council on long leases of 125 years. The land associated with this lease has been accounted for on the same basis as the other long term leases in order to properly reflect the substance of the arrangement.

15. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	213,103	87,980
Other debtors	93,972	96,778
Prepayments and accrued income	330,344	196,294
	<u><u>637,419</u></u>	<u><u>381,052</u></u>

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	477,377	317,466
Other taxation and social security	221,461	-
Other creditors	372,806	596,853
Accruals and deferred income	1,221,128	718,852
	2,292,772	1,633,171
	2,292,772	1,633,171
	2024	2023
	£	£
Deferred Income Breakdown		
Deferred income at 1 September 2023	(15,000)	-
Resources deferred during the year	(751,236)	-
Amounts released from previous periods	15,000	(15,000)
	(751,236)	(15,000)
	(751,236)	(15,000)

At the balance sheet date, the Trust was holding funds received in advance for the teachers' pay additional grant and pension employer contribution grant with an aggregate total of £503,000 (2023: £Nil).

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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17. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/(out) £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds - all funds	1,667,458	180,289	(77,912)	-	-	1,769,835
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,341,873	8,170,000	(8,046,006)	(240,107)	-	1,225,760
Other DfE/EFA grants	-	1,248,938	(1,248,938)	-	-	-
LA: SEN funding	-	11,557,523	(11,557,523)	-	-	-
Other government grants	-	743,388	(743,388)	-	-	-
Pupil premium 16-19 funding	-	935,164	(935,164)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(2,779,334)	-	480,000	-	394,000	(1,905,334)
	(1,437,461)	23,242,562	(22,638,568)	(240,107)	394,000	(679,574)
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Fixed assets	38,213,729	-	(994,013)	349,320	-	37,569,036
DfE/EFA capital grants	329,976	467,586	-	(109,213)	-	688,349
	38,543,705	467,586	(994,013)	240,107	-	38,257,385
Total Restricted funds	37,106,244	23,710,148	(23,632,581)	-	394,000	37,577,811
Total funds	38,773,702	23,890,437	(23,710,493)	-	394,000	39,347,646

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

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

Restricted General funds

These comprise all restricted funds other than restricted fixed asset funds and include grants from The Education and Skills Funding Agency and local authorities.

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

Unrestricted funds

These comprise resources that may be used towards meeting any of the charitable objectives of the academy trust at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted Fixed Asset Funds

These comprise resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by The Education and Skills Funding Agency and local authorities, where the asset acquired or created is held for a specific purpose. These funds also include unspent amounts of capital grants also subject to restrictions imposed by The Education and Skills Funding Agency and local authorities.

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

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

	<i>As restated Balance at 1 September 2022 £</i>	<i>Income £</i>	<i>Expenditure £</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2023 £</i>
Unrestricted funds						
General Funds	1,575,000	92,458	-	-	-	1,667,458
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	1,467,956	7,123,294	(9,933,170)	2,683,793	-	1,341,873
Other DfE/EFA grants	557,056	336,553	(658,083)	(235,526)	-	-
LA: SEN funding	1,180,457	10,252,195	(9,121,122)	(2,311,530)	-	-
Other government grants	71,000	-	-	(71,000)	-	-
School fund	50,000	-	-	(50,000)	-	-
Start-up grants	-	265,427	(265,427)	-	-	-
Pupil premium	-	736,635	(736,635)	-	-	-
UIFSM	-	44,711	(44,711)	-	-	-
Teachers pay grant	-	170,755	(170,755)	-	-	-
16-19 funding	-	560,000	(560,000)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(5,682,000)	-	(386,334)	-	3,289,000	(2,779,334)
	<u>(2,355,531)</u>	<u>19,489,570</u>	<u>(21,876,237)</u>	<u>15,737</u>	<u>3,289,000</u>	<u>(1,437,461)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Fixed assets	38,335,423	-	(808,409)	686,715	-	38,213,729
DfE/EFA capital grants	182,599	849,829	-	(702,452)	-	329,976
	<u>38,518,022</u>	<u>849,829</u>	<u>(808,409)</u>	<u>(15,737)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>38,543,705</u>

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

	<i>As restated Balance at 1 September 2022 £</i>	<i>Income £</i>	<i>Expenditure £</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2023 £</i>
Total Restricted funds	36,162,491	20,339,399	(22,684,646)	-	3,289,000	37,106,244
Total funds	<u>37,737,491</u>	<u>20,431,857</u>	<u>(22,684,646)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,289,000</u>	<u>38,773,702</u>

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Brays School	124,159	7,687
Leycroft Academy	(242,848)	(240,303)
The Bridge School	309,583	334,670
Hallmoor School	1,544,428	1,707,157
Central Services	(141,421)	(269,110)
High Point Academy	973,407	507,316
Lea Hall Academy	250,684	863,033
The Heights Academy	177,603	98,881
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	<u>2,995,595</u>	<u>3,009,331</u>
Restricted fixed asset fund	38,257,385	38,543,705
Pension reserve	(1,905,334)	(2,779,334)
Total	<u><u>39,347,646</u></u>	<u><u>38,773,702</u></u>

The following academies are carrying a net deficit on their portion of the funds as follows:

	Deficit £
Leycroft Academy	242,848
Central Services	141,421
	<u><u>384,269</u></u>

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

The Academy is taking the following action to return the academies to surplus:

Leycroft Academy continues to carry a deficit at the year-end, which has increased slightly since the previous year. Additional costs incurred related to changes from interim to permanent leadership. Agency staffing arrangements are being more effectively managed in response to the increasingly complex needs of children attending school. The Trust continues to work with the school to return the funds to surplus over the next 2 years. Stable permanent school leadership has been impactful, the positive recruitment drive to reduce temporary staff costs continues along with a streamlining efficiency in school operations, developing the school's ability to work with more complex children, while maintaining control of costs.

Central services are carrying a deficit which has reduced during the year. The Trust continues to look at better ways to procure goods and services, to bring in-year savings and in the coming year, the Trust expects to return the funds to surplus.

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2024 £
Brays School	1,824,631	359,472	24,935	483,230	2,692,268
Leycroft Academy	2,942,267	561,989	62,348	658,011	4,224,615
The Bridge School	1,683,336	482,990	8,433	381,431	2,556,190
Hallmoor School	3,724,587	768,763	70,825	861,197	5,425,372
Central Services	419,748	637,596	5,606	581,089	1,644,039
High Point Academy	1,684,202	145,067	28,555	306,906	2,164,730
Lea Hall Academy	1,803,133	461,905	32,836	503,270	2,801,144
The Heights Academy	813,816	33,747	86,254	274,305	1,208,122
Academy	14,895,720	3,451,529	319,792	4,049,439	22,716,480

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

17. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	<i>Teaching and educational support staff costs £</i>	<i>Other support staff costs £</i>	<i>Educational supplies £</i>	<i>Other costs excluding depreciation £</i>	<i>Total 2023 £</i>
Brays School	1,666,788	569,001	39,832	494,240	2,769,861
Leycroft Academy	2,542,206	1,118,223	117,964	949,576	4,727,969
The Bridge School	1,703,404	433,510	34,471	437,117	2,608,502
Hallmoor School	3,148,115	952,568	148,464	701,398	4,950,545
Central Services	591,499	959,084	60,997	762,301	2,373,881
High Point Academy	1,135,921	264,965	43,923	290,674	1,735,483
Lea Hall Academy	1,446,527	406,553	41,739	559,302	2,454,121
The Heights Academy	167,543	-	5,635	82,697	255,875
Academy	12,402,003	4,703,904	493,025	4,277,305	21,876,237

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

18. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	37,569,036	37,569,036
Current assets	1,769,835	3,518,533	688,349	5,976,717
Creditors due within one year	-	(2,292,772)	-	(2,292,772)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(1,905,335)	-	(1,905,335)
Total	<u>1,769,835</u>	<u>(679,574)</u>	<u>38,257,385</u>	<u>39,347,646</u>

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	38,213,729	38,213,729
Current assets	1,667,458	2,975,044	329,976	4,972,478
Creditors due within one year	-	(1,633,171)	-	(1,633,171)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,779,334)	-	(2,779,334)
Total	<u>1,667,458</u>	<u>(1,437,461)</u>	<u>38,543,705</u>	<u>38,773,702</u>

19. Pension commitments

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

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

There were no outstanding or prepaid contributions at either the beginning or the end of the financial year.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. Pension commitments (continued)

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to ensure scheme costs are recognised and managed appropriately and the review specifies the level of future contributions.

Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2020. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 27 October 2023, with the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, applying a notional investment return based on 1.7% above the rate of CPI. The key elements of the valuation outcome are:

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £1,193,908 (2023 - £969,474).

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

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

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19. Pension commitments (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £1,914,000 (2023 - £1,352,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £1,562,000 (2023 - £1,048,000) and employees' contributions totalled £352,000 (2023 - £304,000).

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of academy closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013 and on 21 July 2022, the Department for Education reaffirmed its commitment to the guarantee, with a parliamentary minute published on GOV.UK.

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2024	<i>2023</i>
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.65	3.96
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.65	2.96
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.00	5.20

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

	2024	<i>2023</i>
	Years	Years
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.5	20.6
Females	23.3	23.3
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	20.5	20.5
Females	24.4	24.3

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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19. Pension commitments (continued)

Sensitivity analysis

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Discount rate +0.1%	13,360	11,671
Discount rate -0.1%	14,072	12,311
CPI rate +0.1%	14,264	12,247
CPI rate -0.1%	13,168	11,735
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	14,061	12,471
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	13,371	11,511

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31	At 31 August
	August 2024	2023
	£	£
Equities	6,141,000	6,264,000
Gilts	4,133,000	1,935,000
Property	711,000	645,000
Other	826,000	368,000
Total market value of assets	11,811,000	9,212,000

The actual return on scheme assets was £342,000 (2023 - £527,000).

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

	2024	2023
	£	£
Current service cost	953,000	1,189,000
Net Interest cost	129,000	245,000
Total amount recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities	1,082,000	1,434,000

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19. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	11,991,000	14,848,000
Current service cost	953,000	1,189,000
Interest cost	652,000	660,000
Employee contributions	352,000	304,000
Actuarial gains	(52,000)	(4,876,000)
Benefits paid	(180,000)	(134,000)
At 31 August	13,716,000	11,991,000

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	9,212,000	9,166,000
Interest income	523,000	415,000
Actuarial gains/(losses)	342,000	(1,587,000)
Employer contributions	1,562,000	1,048,000
Employee contributions	352,000	304,000
Benefits paid	(180,000)	(134,000)
At 31 August	11,811,000	9,212,000

20. Operating lease commitments

At 31 August 2024 the Academy had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than 1 year	17,477	17,476
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	47,259	60,167
Later than 5 years	-	4,568
	64,736	82,211

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21. 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 £NIL for the debts and liabilities contracted before he/she ceases to be a member.

22. Related party transactions

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

There were no related party transactions in the year (2023 - £Nil).