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River Learning Trust

(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended 31 August 2019

**Company Registration Number:
7966500 (England and Wales)**

Period of account: 1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019

River Learning Trust

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River Learning Trust

Members

Sally Addis, resigned 31 August 2019
Deborah Gill
Kirsten Robinson
Oxford Diocesan Board
of Education

Trustees

Kirsten Robinson, Chair
Ruth Bennie, Diocesan appointment*
Moirá Dorey, Diocesan appointment, resigned
31 August 2019
Deborah Eyre, Vice Chair*
Julie McCulloch*
Giles Orr**
Adam Parr
Deborah Stanbury**
Jeremy Price, co-optee**
Paul James, CEO, co-optee

*Member of Impact Committee

** Member of Resources Committee

Company Secretary

Blake Morgan LLP

Central Management Team

• Chief Executive Officer, Accounting Officer	Paul James
• Chief Operating Officer and CFO	Lisa Hughes
• Director of Secondary Education	Tom Boulter
• Director of Primary Education	Fiona Henderson
• HR Director	Claire Handyside
• Operations Director	Malv Bhomra
• Head of Governance & Compliance	Louise Askew

Heads of Primary Schools

Head of Beckley CofE Primary School	Mark Szortowski
Head of Cutteslowe Primary School	Jon Gray
Head of Edith Moorhouse Primary School	Marianne Ray
Head of Horspath CofE Primary School	Rachel Medley
Head of Garsington CofE Primary School	Zara D'Archambaud
Acting Head of Larkrise Primary School	Charlotte Stewart
Head of Madley Brook Primary School	Katherine Spencer
Head of Middle Barton Primary School	Charlie Barwell
Head of New Marston Primary School	Tracey Smith
Head of Rosehill Primary School	Sue Vermes
Head of Sandhills Primary School	Emma Coleman
Head of Tower Hill School	Paul Thomas
Head of Witney Community Primary School	Jill Meyer
Head of Wolvercote Primary School	Lucy Young

Heads of Secondary Schools

Head of Cherwell School	Chris Price
Head of Chipping Norton School	Barry Doherty
Head of Kingsdown School	Emma Leigh-Bennett
Head of Marlborough CofE School	Andrew Hanlon
Head of Wheatley Park School	Tim Martin
Head of The Swan School	Kay Wood

Director of the Cherwell OTSA SCITT	Patrick Garton
Director of OTSA	Adam Arnell

River Learning Trust

Company Name	River Learning Trust
Principal and Registered Office	% Gosford Hill School Oxford Road Kidlington OX5 2NT
Company Registration Number	07966500 (England and Wales)
Independent Auditor	Critchleys Audit LLP Beaver House 23-38 Hythe Bridge Street Oxford OX1 2EP
Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc 1-5 High Street Carfax Oxford OX1 4AA
Solicitors	Knights plc Seacourt Tower Retail Park Midland House West Way Oxford OX2 0PH Stone King LLP Boundary House 91 Charterhouse Street London EC1M 6HR

The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of the charitable company for the year 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report and a directors' report under company law.

The academy trust operates 14 primary and 5 secondary academies (and a further secondary Academy opening on 1st September 2019, The Swan School) plus a School Centred Initial Teacher Training Provider and Oxfordshire Teaching School Alliance. The Trust operates in Oxfordshire and Swindon. Its academies have a combined pupil capacity of 10,682 and had a roll of 9,371 in the school census as at October 2019.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The academy trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The charitable company's memorandum and articles of association are the primary governing documents of the academy trust. The trustees of River Learning Trust are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company operates as River Learning Trust.

Details of the trustees who served during the year, and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference and Administrative Details on page 11.

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.

Trustees' Indemnities

There were no provisions required for third party indemnity. In accordance with normal commercial practice, the academy trust purchased insurance to protect trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on trust business.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

When there is a vacancy or need to replace Trustees, the position is advertised widely across the Trust's schools, communities, and local areas. If there is a particular skills gap on the Board of Trustees this will be made clear in the advertisement and subsequent materials. Interested candidates are sent information about the work of the Trust, and the role and duties of Trustees. They will be asked to apply with a CV and covering letter setting out how their experience, knowledge and skills meet these requirements. Applications will be reviewed by a panel comprised of the Chair of the Trust Board, three Members, and the Chief Executive. Candidates may be shortlisted, and then will be invited to interview. The interview will be held by the same panel as that for shortlisting. This may be supplemented by an informal discussion between the candidates and a group of LGB Chairs and Headteachers selected by the Governor and Education Boards. The Oxford Diocesan Board of Education is entitled to nominate no fewer than 2 Trustees.

The current Board of Trustees have been appointed to fulfil the following experience, knowledge and skill requirements:

- Education – experience with performance and monitoring/tracking data, staff development;

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- Finance – experience of budget setting, management, and financial reporting in a complex multi-organisational setting;
- Governance – experience of governance in a school or as a director in a charity or commercial organisation;
- Strategic management – experience of organisational strategic management and development;
- Legal – experience of legal issues facing schools and/or charities;
- Premises – experience of premises management and short/long term maintenance management;
- Recruitment/HR – experience in staff recruitment, development and management;
- Marketing – marketing and/or media/communications experience across diverse stakeholder groups.

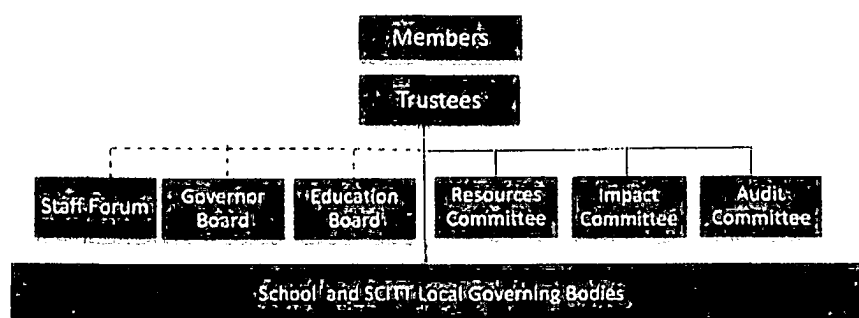
Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

The training and induction provided for new Trustees will depend upon their existing experience and is tailored specifically. All Trustees are provided with all documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. Trustees are able to access these documents via the Members area of the website. New Trustees will also be given information and training on their role with regard to their duties under company law and as charitable trustees. In addition they will receive training on the process of support and challenge and how their role relates to others. New Trustees meet with the Chief Executive and the Chair of Trustees to discuss the strategic direction of the organisation and to go through roles and responsibilities as detailed in the RLT constitution. The trust board includes training of Trustees as part of the meeting schedule. The Trust recognises that potential growth in the Trust may impose additional demands on the Trustees, and this will be monitored to ensure that Trustees are fully supported and trained.

Organisational Structure

The Trust, as a Multi-Academy Trust, has 4 tiers of Governance and Management, namely Members, Trustees, Governors and Senior Leaders of each school. Members and Trustees have responsibilities across the Trust whereas the Governors of each school have responsibility for their own school within the Trust including line management of the Headteacher. Each Headteacher and senior leadership team has a responsibility for their own school. Paul James is the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer for the Trust. The Trustees are responsible for setting general Trust policies, reviewing each school's annual development and improvement plan, adopting the Trust's combined annual and long term budget plans, regularly monitoring the Trust's use of budgets and making major decisions about the direction of the Academy, its capital expenditure and senior staff appointments. Full details are published in the Trust's scheme of delegation available on the Trust website.

Local Governing Bodies set the vision for each school, within the context of the vision for the Trust and have delegated responsibility for the support and challenge of the school senior leadership teams in the areas of pupil outcomes and wellbeing, and finance and resource management. Senior leadership in the schools control each school at an executive level implementing the policies laid down by the Trustees and Governors and report back to them via their Local Governing Bodies and committees. As a group the senior leaders are responsible for organising the teaching staff, facilities and students as well as the authorisation of spending within agreed budgets and for the appointment of other staff. Local spending control is devolved to the Headteacher of each school. The governance structure for the Trust is shown below, which incorporates current guidance from the DfE/ESFA and best practice identified in reports on multi-academy structures.



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The membership and responsibilities of each of the boards and committees is summarised in the paragraphs that follow. Members monitor the work of the Trust Board to ensure that it is upholding the vision and values of the Trust. The specific duties of Members are to:

- Appoint Trustees;
- Provide effective challenge and support to the Trust Board in relation to the Board's effectiveness;
- Remove Trustees if such intervention is required;
- Amend the Articles of Association if required;
- Change the Trust name if required.

Trustees are responsible for the strategic oversight, administration and management of the Trust and all its schools and entities to develop and achieve the Trust's vision, and to ensure compliance with government and ESFA requirements, company law and charity law. The specific duties of Trustees are to:

- Establish and regularly review the vision of the Trust in consultation with all constituent schools and entities;
- Ensure the quality of education provision and oversee standards and outcomes across the Trust;
- Manage the Trust's finance and property;
- Establish pay, appraisal and HR policies for the staff employed by the Trust;
- Exercise reasonable skill and care in carrying out their duties;
- Ensure that the Trust complies with charity and company law;
- Operate the academy in accordance with the Funding Agreement that has been signed with the Secretary of State.

Delegation of powers and Local Governing Bodies

The Trust Board establishes the governance structures for the Trust and individual academies, and may delegate its powers and functions to committees and Local Governing Bodies (LGBs). This is done through a defined Scheme of Delegation.

The Chief Executive Officer is the 'system leader' who is accountable for the outcomes of the group of schools whilst having an overview of: the national system of education, the internal organisation, management and control of the schools (including the implementation of all policies approved by Trustees), quality of governance, and the direction of the teaching and curriculum in every school. The Chief Executive enables each school leadership team to focus on teaching, learning and pupil progress in their school, while working collaboratively with an experienced system leader. The specific responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer are to:

- Lead strategic school improvement of schools in the Trust, working with LGBs and Headteachers, and chairing the Education Board;
- Put in place with Headteachers and oversee processes for school improvement and a drive for excellence in every school;
- Support and challenge the work of LGBs ensuring highly quality and impactful governance;

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- Advise on the performance management of the Headteachers to the Performance Management Governors on each LGB;
- Put in place and oversee processes for the professional development of all staff and the retention of excellent teachers and school leaders;
- Grow 'future leaders' through modelling, coaching, and involving them in higher level strategic planning and shared leadership;
- Fulfil the role of Accounting Officer for the Trust.

The Chief Executive Officer leads the Trust executive team, who are responsible for core Trust functions of school improvement, performance monitoring and managing centrally-provided support services.

Resources Committee

This committee provides scrutiny of the way in which all resources are used across the Trust and services are provided to it. It also monitors the progress of capital projects and holds under review policies concerning Health and Safety and Human Resources. It ensures that the Trust's and schools' finances are deployed responsibly and in such a way as to provide value for money for the Trust and its schools. This committee also advises the Trust Board on financial strategy.

Membership

- Three Trustees with finance and business experience
- Chief Executive (in attendance)
- Chief Operating Officer/Finance Director (in attendance)

Quoracy

A meeting of the committee shall be quorate when two of its members are in attendance.

Responsibilities

- Scrutiny of budget plans for recommendation to the Trust Board;
- Regular monitoring of income and expenditure against budget plans, with analysis of variances;
- Monitoring of progress of capital projects;
- Recommendation and review of H&S policies and effectiveness of operation in each school;
- Recommendation and review of HR policies;
- Develop a financial strategy for the Academy Trust and consider policies, procedures or plans required to realise such strategy;
- Consider the Academy Trust's indicative funding, once notified by the ESFA, and to assess its implications for the Academy Trust, in consultation with the CEO and the Finance Director, in advance of the financial year, drawing any matters of significance or concern to the attention of the Trustees;

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- Examine and review new initiatives for financial development, including fundraising;
- Approve and keep under review the Academy Trust's investment policy;
- Approve and keep under review the Academy Trust's reserves policy;
- Promptly notify the Trust Board of all financial matters of which the Committee has knowledge and which may materially affect the current or future position of the Academy Trust;
- Advise generally on the provision of resources and services to the Academy Trust.

Frequency of meetings: 3 times per year.

Impact Committee

The focus of this committee is on educational outcomes across the Trust. It ensures that high educational standards are set and maintained and performance is regularly scrutinised. In carrying out their duties its members question and challenge the CEO and receive his advice.

Membership

- Three Trustees with expertise and knowledge of school improvement
- The CEO, Directors of Primary and Secondary Education and Support and Challenge Partners in attendance

Quoracy

A meeting of the committee shall be quorate when two of its members are in attendance.

Responsibilities:

- To ensure that the highest possible educational standards are set and maintained across the Academy Trust;
- To receive a termly report from the Chief Executive regarding standards and performance of the Academy Trust against key performance indicators;
- To identify any areas of concern in respect of standards and performance and to ensure with the Chief Executive and Support and Challenge Partners that an action plan is implemented;
- To scrutinise and review Academy Trust policies for recommendation to the Trust Board;
- To ensure that effective processes are in place for the quality assurance of teaching and learning, the curriculum, inclusion and the sharing of good practice across the Academy Trust;
- To support the Chief Executive Officer in the creation, implementation and monitoring of the Academy Trust's self-evaluation development plan and any post-Ofsted action plan;
- To ensure that effective arrangements are in place across the Academy Trust for pupil support and representation and for monitoring pupil attendance.

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Audit Committee

This committee provides assurances to the Trust Board that risks are being adequately identified and managed by reviewing the risks to internal financial control at the Trust, and agreeing a programme of work to address, and provide assurance on, those risks. The outcome of the work informs the governance statement that accompanies the Trust's annual accounts and, so far as is possible, provides assurance to the external auditors.

Membership

- Three external members with audit/finance expertise;
- Chair of Trust
- Chief Executive (in attendance)
- Chief Operating Officer (in attendance)

Responsibilities

- To review the Trust's internal and external financial statements and reports to ensure that they reflect best practice, the ESFA Financial Handbook and other relevant regulations;
- To monitor the integrity of the financial statements of the Trust and any formal announcements relating to the Trust's financial performance;
- To discuss with the external auditor the findings of the annual audit once completed;
- To consider all quarterly reports received through internal audit, and review the effectiveness of the Trust's internal control system;
- To monitor the implementation of action to address adverse control findings by internal audit, or the appointed external auditor;
- To make recommendations to the Trust Board in relation to the appointment, reappointment and removal of the external auditor and internal audit mechanisms;
- To consider any other matters where requested to do so by the Trust Board; and
- To report at least once a year to the Board on the discharge of the above duties.

Frequency of meetings: 2-4 times per year.

Remuneration Committee

The committee is responsible for making decisions regarding the pay of the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Operating Officer and the Finance Director.

Membership

- Three Trustees (including one member of the CEO Appraisal Committee)
- CEO when their pay is not being discussed

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Responsibilities

The committee is expected, and has full delegated powers, to carry out the following specific tasks:

- having received and considered pay recommendations from the Trust Board's Appraisal Committee (for the CEO) and the CEO (for the COO) take decisions regarding the pay of the relevant staff;
- set the salary of the CEO and set the salary bands for the salaries of the COO and Finance Director;
- inform the relevant staff members of their decisions and of the right of appeal;
- establish an Appeals Committee to take decisions on appeals against the decisions of the Remuneration Committee in accordance with the terms of the Pay policy;
- consider, determine and keep under review a policy for the remuneration, benefits and incentives of the Chief Executive Officer and such other members of the Senior Executive Team as the Trust Board shall from time to time direct. Within this the committee shall receive submissions from the CEO explaining the relevant salary levels.

Frequency of meetings

One meeting a year in the spring term before 1st April.

Governor Board

This board provides a forum at which governors can identify and share best governance practice and receive training support. Governors also give feedback to the Trust Board regarding any concerns and issues they may have and provide challenge to the Executive Team.

Membership (all ex officio)

- Chair of the Trust (Chair)
- Members of the Local Governing Body for each individual academy.

Responsibilities:

- To discuss the governance issues and problems that they face as governors with the focus of each meeting being decided in advance;
- To feed back to the Trust Board any causes of concern they have related to the governance of their schools and of the Trust;
- Once a year Governors will have an opportunity to discuss issues specifically related to the remit of their and the Trust's Resources Committees;
- Governors will be consulted on key issues for the Trust;
- Governors will receive training on specific aspects of governance;
- Governors will identify and share excellent governance practice;
- Governors will have an opportunity to network with each other.

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Frequency of meetings: 4 times per year (including one meeting devoted to Resources issues).

Staff Board

Membership

- Chair of the Trust (Chair)
- Chief Executive
- HR Director
- A Staff Governor of the Local Governing Body for each individual school.

Responsibilities

- To identify and share excellent practice in staff engagement and involvement in school improvement;
- To provide support and challenge on effective Trust governance of staffing matters to the Chair of the Trust Board;
- To provide support and challenge on the engagement of staff in effective strategic school improvement to the Chief Executive.
- To provide support and challenge on the engagement of staff in effective approaches to staff wellbeing to the Chief Executive and HR Director.

Frequency of meetings: Up to 1-2 times per year, meeting as required.

Education Board

Membership (all ex-officio)

- Chief Executive (Chair)
- The Headteacher of each individual school

Responsibilities

- To drive improvement in achievement, attainment and performance of every academy;
- To identify and share excellent pedagogy and teaching practice;
- To identify and share curriculum developments that will enhance educational opportunities and performance for children in the Trust;
- To create opportunities for staff development to improve performance, achieve CPD and maximise the retention of excellent teachers;
- To conduct the educational aspects of due diligence for schools applying to join the Trust and for schools that the Trust may sponsor.

Frequency of meetings: At least 6 times per year

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Local Governing Bodies

Membership

The membership of each Local Governing Body is set out in a Scheme of Delegation from the Trust Board.

The power for LGBs to select and appoint their Chair and members depends on the performance and level of risk as assessed by the Trust. The aim is for the number of governors to be limited, to between 9 and 15, and drawn from:

- the local community (approx. 1/3),
- parents (approx. 1/3),
- and staff (including the Headteacher) (no more than 1/3).

Responsibilities

The powers and duties of each LGB are set out in the Scheme of Delegation as approved by the Trust Board. The extent of freedom to act is determined by the performance and perceived risk for each school.

The core functions of each LGB are as follows:

- Setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction within the values of the Trust;
- Maintaining the effective operation and membership of the LGB;
- Overseeing the educational performance of the school: - Regularly reviewing performance and progress and monitoring data; - Understanding the quality of teaching and learning across the school with detailed knowledge of its strengths and weakness; - Ensuring the school has appropriate support and intervention strategies in place to deliver high quality teaching and learning plans, and to address underperformance and areas of weakness;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school: - Seeking value for money and ensuring resources are applied appropriately at academy level; - Monitoring and reviewing expenditure regularly; - Maintaining proper accounting records and preparing expenditure and balance sheets; - Notifying the Trust of any changes to fixed assets used by the school; - Supporting the Trust board in relation to the annual budgetary process - Observing proper levels of delegation;
- Ensuring pupil wellbeing including safeguarding, school safety and security;
- Appointment of the Headteacher and carrying out their annual performance appraisal.

Frequency of meetings: At least 4 times each year, plus committees, as set out in, or delegated by, the Scheme of Delegation.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The Trust follows the School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document for Teachers, the National Green Book for support / non-teaching staff, and model Oxfordshire County Council pay policies. Salary ranges are benchmarked to other schools, by job evaluation linked to Oxfordshire County Council pay scales and market conditions. Each school governing body has a pay committee as set out by the Trust pay policy which sets the pay and remuneration of key management personnel. The Remuneration Committee is a sub-committee of the Trust Board, Membership of which is set out above.

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Trade Union Facility Time

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
12	1,088

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	6
1%-50%	6
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Provide the total cost of facility time	£39,462
Provide the total pay bill	£28,946,774
Provide the percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time	0.136%

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours	100%
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Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Trust works with Oxford Diocesan Board of Education (ODBE) in the delivery of educational support and materials to its four Church of England Schools. ODBE is also a body corporate Member of River Learning Trust. Any commercial arrangements are minimal and are at arms length, at cost and on an open-book basis.

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Objectives and Activities

Objects and Aims

The objects of the trust are: a. to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools ("the Academies") offering a broad and balanced curriculum; and b. to promote for the benefit of the inhabitants of Oxford City and the surrounding areas the provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances or for the public at large in the interests of social welfare and with the object of improving the condition of life of the said inhabitants; and c. to promote in the area in which the Academies are situated the physical, intellectual and social development of primarily but not exclusively children under five especially those who are socially and economically disadvantaged.

The trust also operates as a provider of School Centred Initial Teacher Training in Oxfordshire.

The principles of the River Learning Trust are:

- Commitment to Excellence; striving for the best educational experience through continuous improvement
- Everyone Learning; creating and taking opportunities that enhance lives through evidenced based practice supporting adult and pupil learning
- Respectful Relationships; acting with care, integrity, and fairness in all we do

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

In accordance with the articles of association the Trust has adopted a "Scheme of Governance" approved by the Secretary of State for Education. The Scheme of Governance specifies, amongst other things, the basis for admitting students to each school, the catchment area from which the students are drawn, and that the curriculum should comply with the substance of the national curriculum. The Trust's main strategies are clarified within each school's development plans and the Trust's business and development plan and education development plan. The trust has continued to invest in development, both internal and external. The focus on internal development has been to strengthen and improve the support provided to member academies, not only in administrative and financial terms, but also in the development of bespoke school improvement support, data sharing, developing governor training and assurance framework, developing future leaders and other cross trust initiatives. This process has helped spread good practice across the whole trust to the benefit of all member schools. The trust has also further developed structures that provide strong support for a growing organisation that operates within a reasonably contained geographic area. The trust has also engaged in a number of discussions with schools interested in joining and there are a number planning to join in the coming year. The trust is anticipating being approximately 24 schools and 11,800 pupils in the next 12 months. We continue to engage with schools that share common educational values and aspirations to maximise educational benefit to the pupils who may wish to join the trust.

Public Benefit

The trustees of River Learning Trust confirm that they have complied with their duty in Section 17(5) of the 2011 Charities Act to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission in exercising their powers or duties. Charity law gives a wider meaning to education and does not limit it to education by a teacher in a classroom, playground or sports field. Broadly, the Trust defines education as "to give knowledge to, or develop the abilities of somebody by teaching, training or instruction or bring up children or young people in particular manners, habits or ways of life".

The trust is very mindful of its public benefit obligations and is firmly grounded in the communities which it serves. Each school seeks to share facilities with the local stakeholders such as sharing sports pitches with a local rugby club. The Trustees, through a framework of governance scrutiny and senior school leadership discuss the curriculum, local community and school environment and have taken due regard to the Charity Commission guidance. They can demonstrate that the trust's aims and activities are purely for the advancement of education, the development of the students and professional development of staff and the satisfaction of the parent bodies of each school. The excellence of results achieved by pupils clearly demonstrates this unwavering commitment.

Employee and Disabled Employee Considerations

The trust takes pride in representing and reflecting the aspirations of the local community and employment applications are encouraged from disabled persons. The trust is pleased to receive applications for employment from disabled people and ensures that such applications receive a positive consideration. The trust takes steps to ensure that all staff receive the same opportunities for training, development and promotion with no regard to any irrelevant status distinctions. The trust is sensitive to the considerable investment of time and energy that staff make into the education of the pupils, and the resultant strain on work life balance for them and their families. The trust continues to take steps to support staff and to redress this strain. The Trust has adopted a 'RLT Staff Charter' and introduced this year, all schools have a wellbeing champion supported by a wellbeing network coordinator responsible for working with school leadership to promote staff wellbeing.

Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

During the year we were pleased to welcome the following schools to the Trust:

- Middle Barton Primary School (1.9.18)
- Rose Hill Primary School (1.9.18)
- Sandhills Primary School (1.9.18)
- Larkrise Primary School (1.2.19)
- Beckley Church of England Primary School (1.4.19)

We also became the host organisation for Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance (OTSA) from 1st April 2019.

During the year our educational focus has been on two key areas:

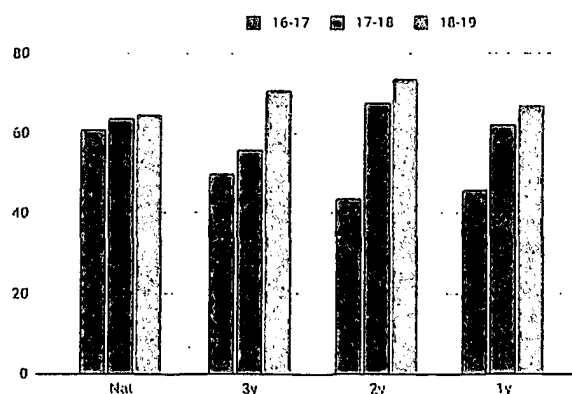
- 1) the rapid improvement of sponsored schools and any less than 'Good' and
- 2) the development and implementation of the 3 year strategic implementation plan for the Trust.

To support this work we have added vital and significant additional Leadership capacity to the Education Team – a Director of Secondary Education and Director of Primary Education, an Early Years Support and Challenge Partner and a growing number of curriculum/subject support posts. We have been able to implement more training and collaborative activities to address Trust educational priorities (such as outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, quality of writing, peer reviews for quality assurance and staff development etc). We have also received expert external input as part of our CPD strategy.

1) The rapid improvement of sponsored schools / any school less than 'Good': Our Support and Challenge Partners and Directors of Education have implemented the Trust's School Improvement Strategy which addresses areas such as behaviour, leadership and the quality of curriculum and teaching and learning. The Trust has a strong track record of supporting school improvement where standards are low. The graph below illustrates the improvements we have made to our sponsored primary schools over the last 3 years.

3 Year Trends for combined Reading/Writing/Maths % at Expected level for sponsored primary schools:

Sponsored Schools

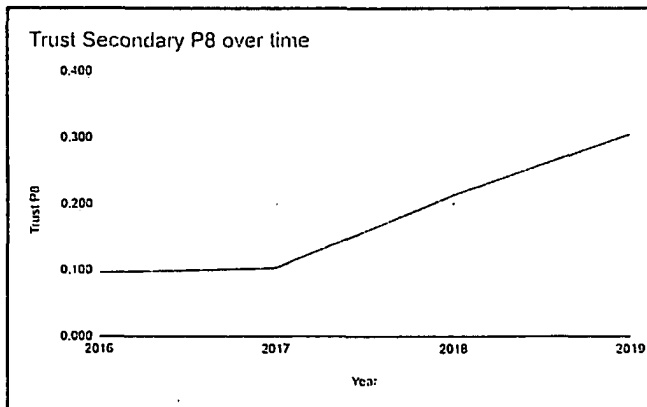


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Key: Nat: National averages 3y: Schools that have been with the Trust for 3 years or more, 2y: Schools that have been with the Trust for 2 years or more 1y: Schools that have been with the Trust for 1 year or more

At secondary school level 2 of our schools have Progress 8 scores below the national average last year and were areas of focus for the Secondary team. Both schools have improved their P8 scores by approximately +0.5 (representing half a GCSE grade for every subject for every pupil) representing significant improvement

The graph below maps the P8 for all secondary school currently in the trust over the last 3 years:



2) The development and implementation of the 3 year strategic implementation plan for the Trust.

The most important improvement priorities are identified below. We believe that they articulate the most relevant and achievable means to raise outcomes amongst all groups of pupils and in doing so will enable all teachers and leaders to be more effective and successful over the next three years. We will ensure that:

- All children are taught a curriculum of the highest quality: rich, coherent, effective
- All teachers and support staff benefit from high quality CPD and professional development: relevant, evidence-informed, meaningful
- All leaders or prospective leaders are empowered to become highly effective: self-aware, engaged, impactful
- Governance and school improvement approaches in schools are highly effective: organised, aligned, consistent

These areas have all moved forward during the year with the work of our support and challenge partners now supplemented by subject specific support in a number of areas, and specific leadership and coaching programmes to develop leadership.

Other matters

During the year, Wolvercote, Cutteslowe and Tower Hill Schools were inspected by Ofsted with outcomes in line with the Governing Body's assessment. Wolvercote and Cutteslowe schools remained as Good Schools and Tower Hill was judged to be requiring improvement. These were the expected outcomes for each school and Tower Hill is now showing a 3 year trend of improving outcomes following 2019 KS1 and KS2 results in 2019.

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Each of our academies also continues to offer pastoral care, support for wellbeing and a breadth of education to support our commitment to well-rounded provision to support the best possible educational outcomes and experiences for pupils. As well as academic achievement, the trust central team continues to work with schools to improve all aspects of performance.

We are also rolling out a common IT platform across the Trust to further aid communication and collaboration, with a Trust IT Technical Director appointed during the year.

We have also spent a great deal of time on implementing integrated curriculum and financial planning and have trained Trustees, Governors, Headteachers, School Business Managers and Finance staff. All budget submissions for 2019/20 were accompanied with completed ICFP returns together with the DfE's Resource Management Self Assessments. This has helped to ensure that schools are operating to best value in a challenging resourcing environment.

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Key Performance Indicators

The Trustees operate the following Key Performance Indicators which are internally monitored throughout the year and measured on an annual basis.

KPI	Performance	
Description	2018-19	2017-18
To ensure over time as inspections occur that each school in the Trust has an Ofsted rating of Good or Outstanding, and each Good school has a clear strategy for achieving an Outstanding rating. * = Ofsted grading at the time of joining the Trust and not yet inspected as part of the trust O=Outstanding, G – Good, RI = Requires Improvement, SM = Special Measures	Cherwell - O Cutteslowe - G Tower Hill – RI Wolvercote – G Wheatley Park – G* Chipping Norton – G New Marston – G Edith Moorhouse - G Garsington - G* Horspath – G* Kingsdown – RI* Marlborough – G* Madley Brook – G* Witney Com Primary – G* Middle Barton Primary - G* Sandhills - SM* Rose Hill - RI* Larkrise - SM* Beckley CofE Primary - G*	Cherwell - O Cutteslowe - G Tower Hill – G* Wolvercote – G* Wheatley Park – G* Chipping Norton – G New Marston – SM* Edith Moorhouse - RI* Garsington - G* Horspath – G* Kingsdown – RI* Marlborough – G* Madley Brook – G* Witney Community Primary – G*
To ensure over time that The Trust outcomes for young people in terms of attainment and progress they are making from KS1 to 2 or KS2 to 4 and KS4 to KS5 are significantly above national averages in all of the academies in the Trust.	The Trust outcomes for young people in terms of the attainment and progress they are making from KS1 to 2 or KS2 to 4 are above national for most measures for most academies in the Trust. At KS5 progress is above national averages in all relevant academies. As a whole Trust the attainment and progress at both KS2 and KS4 are above national.	The Trust outcomes for young people in terms of the attainment and progress they are making from KS1 to 2 or KS2 to 4 are above national for most measures for most academies in the Trust. At KS5 progress is above national averages in all relevant academies.
The Trust meets it's financial targets	Yes	Yes
To ensure successful growth of the Trust with managed increase in schools and pupil numbers	19 schools (at 31.8.19) c10,000 pupils	14 schools (at 31.8.18) c9,000 pupils

River Learning Trust

Going Concern

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

Financial Review

The Trust revenue reserves have decreased by £18K after adding £292K of reserves transferred from new schools and deducting £310K deficit for the year. Revenue reserves (restricted and unrestricted) amount to £4.8m at 31.8.19, £1.3m above the target reserve required by the Trust Reserve policy.

Despite a challenging financial landscape, the Trust managed to contain its deficit to £310K representing a £213K favourable variance to budget. The funding per pupil did not keep pace with inflation, particularly with the increases in Teacher Pay (+3.5% for those on the main pay scale), although these are temporarily covered by the government, and high needs budgets have been under significant pressure. The Trust has also taken on board a number of schools with difficulties with, in some cases, significant cost pressures due to falling pupil numbers, high special needs ratios or because they need to improve their OFSTED grading. 89% of the Trust income is still dependent on central & local government funding. Staff costs have increased slightly representing 75% of income compared to 74% in 17/18.

However, the Trust has taken steps to address those challenges and is closely monitoring schools' budgets and trying to find savings without impacting the quality of education. Some schools are looking at ways to increase their income via lettings or through the provision of Nursery and wrap around care. On the cost side, the introduction of Integrated curriculum financial planning has allowed substantial savings through class and staff restructuring, and the Trust is continuing his efforts to rationalize procurement to reduce its overheads.

Reserves Policy

On 31 August 2019 the Academy held the following Reserves (excluding Fixed Asset Fund, which represents the Net Book Value of tangible fixed assets, and the Pension Deficit):

	2019	2018
	£'000	£'000
Unrestricted General Funds	4,149	4,260
Restricted Capital Funds	4,452	3,182
Restricted General Funds	628	535
Reserves at 31 August 2019	9,229	7,977

In line with the Companies Act guidance the Academy has established a Reserves Policy which aims to set aside an appropriate level of funds as trust contingent reserves. The trustees have delegated responsibility for the management of individual school reserves to Local Governing Bodies, subject to the retention of a necessary level of central reserves. The trustees review the reserve levels of the Academy annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments annually and the Trustee's plans for the future of the Trust. The trustees have determined that the appropriate overall level of contingent reserves should ideally be one month of non-payroll expenditure and 3% of total trust annual income excluding transfers on conversion.

Trustees place no limit on the amount of reserves the Trust may hold at any one time, to ensure that annually

River Learning Trust

the Trust is building funds that can be used to secure long term capital projects and protect the schools from potential funding cuts in the coming years and ensure the continuing success of the Trust and its pupils.

As at 31 August 2019 general unrestricted and restricted revenue reserve amounted to £4,777K, (2017-18 £4,795K).

These funds can be split into 2 categories.

- A £2.9m contingent reserve for the trust (as a target)
- Other surpluses held for investment in new facilities and educational improvements at the constituent schools of the trust.

The LGPS deficit is likely to be met in the longer term from any combination of increased employer or employee contributions, increased government funding or change to scheme benefits. The restricted funds will be spent in accordance with the terms of the particular funds. Investment Policy In line with the Companies Act 2006 guidance the Trust has an investment policy that outlines the investment strategy and cash balances held and clarifies the reasons behind the choices made.

Investment Policy

The Trust investment policy is based upon holding surplus funds as cash at bank for risk management and operational reasons. The Trust held no managed investments during the period to 31 August 2019.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

Financial Risk - the risk of financial deficits in RLT schools as a result of funding and inflationary pressures is a continuing area of high risk. The lack of clarity in future funding exacerbates the difficulties in planning much further ahead than the current financial year and whilst the latest funding announcements are welcome there is still a significant deficit in funding following many years of under-investment. We are fully engaged in Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning and the use of the Strategic Resource Management Assessment Tool which has enabled schools to focus on specific areas in most cases.

School Performance - to a degree this is linked to the points made above - whilst we welcome the new Ofsted framework schools generally continue to work within an environment of increasing standards, demands and complexity against a backdrop of increased funding pressures. We see this particularly in our schools where we have high numbers of children with Special Educational Needs.

Recruitment and retention of staff - we operate in an extremely expensive area for housing which means that the recruitment and retention of high quality staff will always be a challenge for us - and additionally, the competition from other local employers adds another complexity for the recruitment and retention of great support staff. We have worked hard to create a distinctive employment brand and have focussed this year on wellbeing and also leadership development. We are proud to note that we are beginning to see internal moves and promotions within Trust Schools and also between Trust Schools and the Central Team and consider this to be a sign of a positive employment culture.

Capacity of Central Team in respect of Trust growth - we aim to keep the costs of our Central Team as low as we possibly can in order that Schools are able to maximise the amount of money they can spend on delivering great outcomes for the students in their schools - however the consequence of this is that we have to very carefully manage the resource we have available at the Centre to meet the demands of the Central team. This is a delicate balance and one that we discuss openly with our Schools - the costs of the Team are kept on an open book basis and we periodically discuss the demands on the team and the costs of delivering them with Schools.

River Learning Trust

Fundraising

River Learning Trust does not use any external fundraisers. All fundraising undertaken during the year was monitored by the Trustees.

Plans for Future Periods

Our first new school, the Swan, opens on 1st September 2019. In temporary accommodation for a year, this is the first new secondary school to open in Oxford for many years. During the course of the year we will be making preparations for the move to its permanent site in September 2020.

We will also be working together with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Diocesan Schools Trust as plans move ahead for Windrush Church of England Primary School, a new Primary School for West Witney which is due to open in September 2021.

We will welcome Charlbury Primary School to the Trust on 1st December 2019, a Primary School in West Oxfordshire and feeder school to Chipping Norton and Marlborough.

We will also welcome Seven Fields Primary School to the Trust in the next academic year. Seven Fields is in Swindon and marks the beginnings of a hub in Swindon, as a feeder school to Kingsdown.

We are also pleased to continue to support The Oxford Academy and Gosford Hill School with school improvement, and continue to work with the Department for Education in finding a solution that will enable both schools to join the Trust.

Funds Held as Custodian Trustee on Behalf of Others

The trust holds no Assets and Funds as Custodian Trustee on behalf of others.

Auditor

Insofar as the trustees are aware:

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

Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the board of trustees, as the company directors, on 17 December 2019 and signed on the board's behalf by:



Kirsten Robinson
Trustee

River Learning Trust

Scope of Responsibility

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

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

Governance

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

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Kirsten Robinson (Chair)	6	6
Ruth Bennie	5	6
Moirá Dorey	5	6
Deborah Eyre	4	6
Paul James (CEO)	6	6
Julie McCulloch	6	6
Giles Orr	4	6
Adam Parr	5	6
Jeremy Price	5	6
Deborah Stanbury	6	6

Strategic discussions at the Trust Board during the year have focussed on the following:

- The future development and growth of the Trust
- Improving governance at Local Governing Body level
- Preparing for an Ofsted Summary Evaluation Trust's schools.

Governance Reviews

This year the trustees carried out a self-evaluation exercise through a series of individual reviews with the Chair focussing on personal impact and their future intentions. They have also been preparing for a possible Ofsted Summary MAT Evaluation which has entailed on-going evaluation of the way the board operates and how well trustees know the schools in the Trust. There are plans to carry out a reciprocal MAT peer review during 2019-20.

River Learning Trust

Committees

The resources committee is a sub-committee of the main board of trustees. Key issues for the resources committee were:

- Scrutiny of the Trust's financial position
- Review of the Trust's financial forecasts, budgets, and future cash position
- Oversight of the Trust's system of Health and Safety and performance of each School against indicators
- Oversight of the Trust's HR issues and indicators
- Review of significant procurement initiatives
- Scrutiny of the spend against the Schools Condition Allocation fund

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Paul James	4	4
Giles Orr (Chair)	4	4
Jeremy Price	4	4
Deborah Stanbury	3	4

The impact committee is a sub-committee of the main board of trustees. Key issues for the impact committee were:

- the ongoing scrutiny of School improvement priorities
- strategic development of the Trust's approach to school improvement
- scrutiny of dashboard data
- review of Local Governing Body Impact Committee minutes for scrutiny of outcomes and performance

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Ruth Bennie	3	3
Deborah Eyre	3	3
Paul James	3	3
Julie McCulloch	3	3

The audit committee is an Independent committee reporting directly to the main board of trustees. Key issues for the audit committee were:

- Consider the performance of Internal Auditors and appoint an in-house Internal Auditor
- Consider the performance of External Audit and recommend their re-appointment to the Board
- Consider progress made against internal and external audit action points
- Consider the work of Internal and External Audit and issues raised
- Agree the Internal Audit Plan for the year

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Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Tim Jones (Chair)	2	2
Mary Collerton	1	1
Paul James	2	2
Kirsten Robinson	2	2
Tessa Shaw	1	2

The remuneration committee is a committee of the the main board. Key issues for the remuneration committee were:

This year the Remuneration Committee:

- determined the salary of the CEO in line with ESFA guidance,
- determined the salary bands for the COO and FD,
- proposed an Executive Pay Policy to the Trust Board which was subsequently adopted,
- considered the Trust's Gender Pay Gap report.

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Giles Orr	1	1
Kirsten Robinson	1	1
Deborah Stanbury	1	1

Review of Value for Money

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

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

- Implementing Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning across the Trust, and also the use of the Strategic Resource Management Assessment tool. During the Autumn Term of 2018/19, all Headteachers, Finance Governors, School Business Managers, Finance Managers and the majority of Secondary curriculum leads attended training led by one of the Dfes SRMA Advisors (at our instigation). The budgets for 2019/20 and beyond were formulated with regard to the dashboards from this exercise and revised dashboards were required alongside Budget submissions. This focussed attention on key areas of staffing and in some cases, curriculum where Governing Bodies

then agreed changes ahead of the current financial year. We have just run refresher training with a requirement to update dashboards for forecasts and census data as at October 2019 so that Governing Bodies start to focus on any action they need to take in advance of 2020/21.

- Significant procurement exercises in key areas of Payroll and HR admin systems, which have been subject to EJEU compliant tender exercises, and catering for some Trust Secondary Schools (the bulk of which were picked up the previous year but due to incumbent contract end dates these were dealt with this year). We also used two OJEU tender frameworks for energy supply across Trust schools and appointed on the basis of overall value for money on the basis of pricing and support.
- Following a competitive selection process, our School Condition Allocation (SCA) works are project managed on our behalf by Six PC who we have appointed as our property consultants. They oversee the entire SCA process once the programme of work has been agreed via the Central Team. Their work involves full scoping out of projects, tendering, evaluating the tender responses, including carrying out value assessments through their QS, and inspecting and signing off works upon completion and issuing the appropriate 'Certificate for Payment' so that invoices can be paid. They also ensure that any works are completed within agreed budgets. Their process follows RICS procedures and guidelines.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of academy trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in River Learning Trust for the period 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The board of trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The board of trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the board of trustees.

The Risk and Control Framework

The academy trust's system of internal financial control is based on a framework of regular management information and administrative procedures including the segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it includes:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the board of trustees
- regular reviews by the resources 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
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties
- identification and management of risks

The board of trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and decided during the year to bring the service back in-house. Following a competitive process an appointment was made and a thorough assessment of financial and controls risks was carried out by school prior to a programme being proposed to the Audit Committee.

The internal auditor's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the academy trust's financial systems. A report was prepared during the period which covered every RLT School, the Trust Central Team and the SCITT, the objectives of which were to:

- Identify how well risks are managed, whether the procedures in place meet the ESFA requirements and whether these are being followed
- Assess the Trust and its schools' financial position
- Assess whether there are effective processes in place and whether resources are spent efficiently
- Identify areas of improvement
- Prepare the 19/20 audit programme
- Comply with new requirement to prepare an annual internal scrutiny report

This report was shared with External Audit at the earliest opportunity.

On a regular basis, the auditor reports to the board of trustees, through the audit committee on the operation of systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees' financial responsibilities.

The academy trust can confirm that the internal auditor has delivered their schedule of work as planned and that there have been no material control issues arising requiring remedial action.


Review of Effectiveness

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

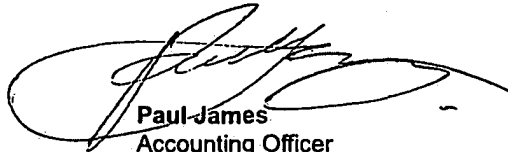
- the work of the internal auditor
- the work of the external auditor
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process
- the work of the executive managers within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework

The accounting officer has been advised of the implications of the result of their review of the system of internal control by the audit committee and a plan to strengthen controls (and remove/ relax controls) where appropriate and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 17 December 2019 and signed on its behalf by:



Kirsten Robinson
Trustee



Paul James
Accounting Officer

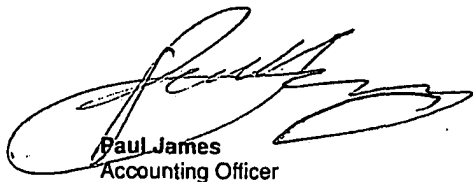
River Learning Trust

Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance

As accounting officer of River Learning Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust's board of trustees and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding received by the academy trust, under the funding agreement 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 Academies Financial Handbook 2018.

I confirm that I and the academy trust board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of all funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding agreement and the Academies Financial Handbook 2018.

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



Paul James
Accounting Officer

17 December 2019

River Learning Trust

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 & Skills Funding Agency, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

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

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019
- 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 on 17 December 2019 and signed on its behalf by:



Kirsten Robinson
Trustee

River Learning Trust

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of River Learning Trust

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of River Learning Trust ('the academy trust') for the year ended 31 August 2019 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and the Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019 issued by the ESFA.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the academy trust's affairs as at 31 August 2019 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2015 and Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019.

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 trust in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the academy trust's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. It includes the Reference and Administrative Details, the Report of the Directors and Strategic Report, and the Governance Statement. 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.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, 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 audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. 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.

River Learning Trust

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of River Learning Trust (continued)

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 for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- The Trustees' Report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where 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 (set out on page 32), the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors 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.

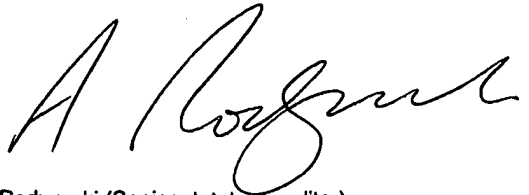
A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

River Learning Trust

Independent Auditor's Report to the members of River Learning Trust (continued)

Use of our report

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



Andrew Rodzynski (Senior statutory auditor)
For and on behalf of Critchleys Audit LLP
Statutory Auditor
Oxford

Date: 19/12/19

Critchleys Audit LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of sections 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

River Learning Trust

Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity to River Learning Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 18 October 2017 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether, the expenditure disbursed and income received by River Learning Trust during the period 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of River Learning Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 1 April 2013 and the Academies Financial Handbook, extant from 1 September 2018, 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 2018 to 2019. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019 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 Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019 issued by the ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in our engagement letter.

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

1. Reviewing the minutes of meetings of the Board of Trustees and obtaining representations concerning access to information, disclosure and provision of information.
2. Evaluation of the general control environment of the academy trust, extending the procedures required for financial statements to include regularity.
3. Assessment and testing of a sample of the specific control activities over regularity of a particular activity.
4. Carrying out substantive testing to cover authorisation of expenditure within internal delegated authorities and externally imposed limits.
5. Consideration of whether activities carried out are within the charitable objects.

River Learning Trust

Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity to River Learning Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (continued)

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Use of our report

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



Critchleys Audit LLP
Reporting Accountant
Oxford

Date: 19/12/19.

River Learning Trust
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 August 2019
(Including Income and Expenditure Account)

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted General Funds £'000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Income and endowments from:						
Donations and capital grants	2	185	-	4,567	4,752	2,503
Transfer from existing academy trusts	3	-	-	-	-	23,131
Transfer from local authority on conversion	4, 35	291	(1,498)	20,058	18,851	10,783
Charitable activities						
Funding for the academy trust's educational operations	5	-	47,287	-	47,287	37,356
Teaching school	6, 36	-	1,371	-	1,371	1,226
Other income for educational operations	7	3,347	-	-	3,347	1,989
Other trading activities	8	1,087	-	-	1,087	641
Investments	9	6	-	-	6	4
Total		4,916	47,160	24,625	76,701	77,633
Expenditure on:						
Raising funds	10	94	-	-	94	14
Charitable activities						
Academy's educational operations	10, 11	4,619	51,011	3,712	59,342	44,134
Teaching school	10, 36	-	1,295	-	1,295	1,236
Total		4,713	52,306	3,712	60,731	45,384
Net income / (expenditure) before transfers		203	(5,146)	20,913	15,970	32,249
Transfers between funds	21	(314)	751	(437)	-	-
Net income / (expenditure) for the period		(111)	(4,395)	20,476	15,970	32,249
Other recognised gains / (losses):						
Actuarial (losses) / gains on defined benefit pension schemes	21, 31	-	(7,093)	-	(7,093)	4,937
Net movement in funds		(111)	(11,488)	20,476	8,877	37,186
Reconciliation of Funds						
Funds brought forward at 1 September 2018		4,260	(12,707)	110,309	101,862	64,676
Funds carried forward at 31 August 2019		4,149	(24,195)	130,785	110,739	101,862

All of the academy trust's activities derive from continuing operations and acquisitions in the current accounting period (see note 35).

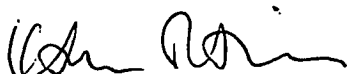
A Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses is not required as all gains and losses are included in the Statement of Financial Activities.

River Learning Trust
Balance sheet
As at 31 August 2019

Company number:
07966500

	Note	2019 £'000	2019 £'000	2018 £'000	2018 £'000
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	16		126,333		107,127
Current assets					
Stock	17	1		15	
Debtors	18	2,536		1,798	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>11,805</u>		<u>10,111</u>	
		14,342		11,924	
Liabilities					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	19	<u>(5,101)</u>		<u>(3,927)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>9,241</u>		<u>7,997</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>135,574</u>		<u>115,124</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	20		(12)		(20)
Net assets excluding pension liability			<u>135,562</u>		<u>115,104</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	31		<u>(24,823)</u>		<u>(13,242)</u>
Total net assets			<u>110,739</u>		<u>101,862</u>
Funds of the academy trust:					
Restricted fixed asset funds	21		130,785		110,309
Restricted funds					
Restricted funds excluding pension liability	21	628		535	
Pension reserve	21	<u>(24,823)</u>		<u>(13,242)</u>	
			(24,195)		(12,707)
Total restricted funds			<u>106,590</u>		<u>97,602</u>
Unrestricted funds	21		4,149		4,260
Total funds			<u>110,739</u>		<u>101,862</u>

The financial statements on pages 38 to 69 were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on 17 December 2019 and are signed on their behalf by



Trustee

River Learning Trust
Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 31 August 2019

	Note	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	25	(41)	1,613
Cash flows from investing activities	27	1,479	826
Cash flows from financing activities	26	(8)	-
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		1,430	2,439
Reconciliation of net cash flow to movement in net funds			
Cash transferred on conversion to an academy trust		264	-
Cash transferred from existing academy trusts		-	2,922
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 September 2018		10,111	4,750
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 August 2019	28	11,805	10,111

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations and acquisitions in the current accounting period (see note 35).

1 Statement of Accounting Policies

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

Basis of Preparation

The financial statements of the academy trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2018 to 2019 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

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

Conversion to an Academy Trust

The conversion from a state maintained school to an academy trust involved the transfer of identifiable assets and liabilities and the operation of the school for £nil consideration. The substance of the transfer is that of a gift and it has been accounted for on that basis as set out below.

The assets and liabilities transferred on conversion to the academy trust have been valued at their fair value. The fair value has been derived based on that of equivalent items. The amounts have been recognised under the appropriate balance sheet categories, with a corresponding amount recognised in Donations - transfer from local authority on conversion in the Statement of Financial Activities and analysed under unrestricted funds, restricted general funds and restricted fixed asset funds. Property has been valued on a depreciated replacement cost basis (see note 16). Further details of the transaction are set out in note 35.

Going Concern

The trustees assess whether the use of going concern is appropriate i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the company to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the financial statements and have concluded that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Income

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

Grants

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

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

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

1 Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

Income (continued)

Donations

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

Other Income

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

Donated goods, facilities and services

Goods donated for resale are included at fair value, being the expected proceeds from sale less the expected costs of sale. If it is practical to assess the fair value at receipt, it is recognised in stock and 'Income from other trading activities'. Upon sale, the value of the stock is charged against 'Income from other trading activities' and the proceeds are recognised as 'Income from other trading activities'. Where it is impractical to fair value the items due to the volume of low value items they are not recognised in the financial statements until they are sold. This income is recognised within 'Income from other trading activities'.

Transfer on conversion

Where assets and liabilities are received by the trust on conversion to an academy, the transferred assets are measured at fair value and recognised in the balance sheet at the point when the risks and rewards of ownership pass to the academy trust. An equal amount of income is recognised as Transfer on conversion within Donations and capital grant income to the net assets received.

Transfer of existing academies into the academy trust

Where assets and liabilities are received on the transfer of an existing academy into the academy trust, the transferred net assets are measured at fair value and recognised in the balance sheet at the point when the risks and rewards of ownership pass to the academy trust. An equal amount of income is recognised for the Transfer of an existing academy into the academy trust within Donations and capital grant income to the net assets acquired.

Donated fixed assets (excluding Transfers on conversion/into trust)

Where the donated good is a fixed asset it is measured at fair value, unless it is impractical to measure this reliably, in which case the cost of the item to the donor should be used. The gain is recognised as income from donations and a corresponding amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with the academy trust's accounting policies.

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

Charitable Activities

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

1 Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

Intangible Fixed Assets

Intangible assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment.

Tangible Fixed Assets

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

The property transferred on conversion has been valued on a depreciated replacement cost basis which is not representative of market value (see note 16 for further details).

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:

Leasehold buildings (transferred on conversion)	35-50 years
Leasehold buildings (new)	50 years
Leasehold buildings (relocatable)	10 years
Leasehold land	125 years
Furniture and equipment: standard assets	10 years
Furniture and equipment: long life assets	10-25 years
Whole interior refurbishments	10 years
ICT equipment	4 years
Motor Vehicles	10 years

Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use and reclassified to freehold or leasehold land and buildings.

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

Liabilities

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

Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the academy trust has an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event which it is probable will result in the transfer of economic benefits and the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

Leased Assets

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

1 Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

Financial Instruments

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

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised costs as detailed in note 18. 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 notes 19 and 20. 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.

Stock

Unsold uniforms and catering stocks are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

Taxation

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

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

1 Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

Pensions Benefits

Retirement benefits to employees of the academy trust are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ('TPS') and the Local Government Pension Scheme ('LGPS'). These are defined benefit schemes and the assets are held separately from those of the academy trust.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated so as to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the academy trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary on the basis of quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. As stated in note 31, the 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 trust in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each 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 gains and losses.

Fund Accounting

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

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

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

Agency Arrangements

The academy trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 Bursary Funds from ESFA. Payments received from ESFA and subsequent disbursements to students are excluded from the statement of financial activities as the trust does not have control over the charitable application of the funds. The trust can use up to 5% of the allocation towards its own administration costs and this is recognised in the statement of financial activities. The funds received and paid and any balances held are disclosed in note 34.

1 Statement of Accounting Policies (continued)

Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgement

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions

The academy trust makes estimate 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 (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 31, 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 2016 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2019. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

Critical areas of judgement

The academy trust participates in the Teacher's Pension Scheme (TPS) for qualifying employees. Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, this is a multi-employer pension scheme. There is insufficient information about the plan assets and liabilities to be able to reliably account for its share of the defined benefit obligation and plan assets in the financial statements and therefore the plan is accounted for as a defined contribution scheme (see note 31).

River Learning Trust
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2019

2 Donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
DfE/ESFA capital grants				
Devolved formula capital grant	-	683	683	183
Other ESFA capital grants	-	3,673	3,673	2,209
Other Government grants				
Other LA capital grants	-	22	22	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>4,378</u>	<u>4,378</u>	<u>2,392</u>
Other capital income	-	172	172	-
Donations - capital	-	17	17	-
Other donations	185	-	185	111
	<u>185</u>	<u>4,567</u>	<u>4,752</u>	<u>2,503</u>

The income from donations and capital grants was £4,752k (2018: £2,503k) of which £185k was unrestricted (2018: £68k), £Nil restricted (2018: £43k) and £4,567k restricted fixed assets (2018: £2,392k).

3 Transfer from Existing Academy Trusts

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Transfer from Existing Academy Trusts	-	-	-	23,131
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>23,131</u>

The transfers from existing academy trusts was £Nil (2018: £23,131 of which £Nil was unrestricted (2018: £1,204k), £Nil restricted (2018: £-3,110k) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £25,037k).

4 Transfer from Local Authority on Conversion

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Transfer from Local Authority on Conversion	291	18,560	18,851	10,783
	<u>291</u>	<u>18,560</u>	<u>18,851</u>	<u>10,783</u>

The transfer from local authority on conversion was £18,851k (2018: £10,783k) of which £291k was unrestricted (2018: £-15k), £-1,498k restricted (2018: £-1,192k) and £20,058k restricted fixed assets (2018: £11,990k).

5 Funding for Academy Trust's educational operations

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
DfE/ESFA revenue grants				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	41,982	41,982	33,181
Start up grants	-	270	270	-
Other DfE Group grants	-	3,447	3,447	2,458
	<u>-</u>	<u>45,699</u>	<u>45,699</u>	<u>35,639</u>
Other Government grants				
Other LA revenue grants	-	1,588	1,588	1,717
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,588</u>	<u>1,588</u>	<u>1,717</u>
	<u>-</u>	<u>47,287</u>	<u>47,287</u>	<u>37,356</u>

The funding for the academy's educational operations was £47,287k (2018: £37,356k) of which £Nil was unrestricted (2018: £Nil), £47,287k restricted (2018: £37,356k) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £Nil).

River Learning Trust
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2019

6 Teaching Schools Income

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
DfE grants and bursaries	-	972	972	934
OTSA SCITT	-	-	-	220
Fundraising and other trading activities	-	399	399	72
	<u>-</u>	<u>1,371</u>	<u>1,371</u>	<u>1,226</u>

The teaching schools income was £1,371k (2018: £1,226k) of which £Nil was unrestricted (2018: £Nil), £1,371k restricted (2018: £1,154k) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £Nil).

7 Other Income for educational operations

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Other income	1,121	-	1,121	654
Trip and activity income	1,216	-	1,216	912
Catering income	1,010	-	1,010	423
	<u>3,347</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,347</u>	<u>1,989</u>

The other income for educational operations was £3,347k (2018: £1,989k) of which £3,347k was unrestricted (2018: £2,061k), £Nil restricted (2018: £Nil) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £Nil).

8 Other trading activities

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Hire of facilities / other lettings	368	-	368	304
Income from other charitable activities	719	-	719	337
	<u>1,087</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,087</u>	<u>641</u>

The other trading activities income was £1,087k (2018: £641k) of which £1,087k was unrestricted (2018: £604k), £Nil restricted (2018: £37k) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £Nil).

9 Investment Income

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted Funds £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Short term deposits	6	-	6	4
	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>4</u>

The investment income was £6k (2018: £4k) of which £6k was unrestricted (2018: £4k), £Nil restricted (2018: £Nil) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £Nil).

River Learning Trust
Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2019

10 Expenditure

	Staff Costs £'000	Non Pay Premises Costs £'000	Expenditure Other Costs £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Expenditure on raising funds					
Allocated support costs	10	80	4	94	14
	10	80	4	94	14
Academy's educational operations					
Direct costs (note 11)	35,387	-	4,013	39,400	30,105
Allocated support costs (note 11)	8,803	3,266	7,873	19,942	14,029
	44,190	3,266	11,886	59,342	44,134
Teaching School					
Direct costs (note 11)	288	-	890	1,178	1,038
Allocated support costs (note 11)	85	-	32	117	198
	373	-	922	1,295	1,236
	44,573	3,346	12,812	60,731	45,384

The expenditure on raising funds was £94k (2018: £14k) of which £94k was unrestricted (2018: £14k), £Nil restricted (2018: £Nil) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £Nil).

The expenditure on academy's educational operations was £59,342k (2018: £44,134k) of which £4,619k was unrestricted (2018: £2,061k), £51,011k restricted (2018: £40,096k) and £3,712k restricted fixed assets (2018: £1,977k).

The expenditure on the academy's teaching school was £1,295k (2018: £1,236k) of which £Nil was unrestricted (2018: £Nil), £1,295k restricted (2018: £1,236k) and £Nil restricted fixed assets (2018: £Nil).

Net income/(expenditure) for the period includes:

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Operating lease rentals	-	80
Depreciation	3,307	1,977
Fees payable to auditor for:		
Audit	30	12
Audit-related assurance services	5	1
Other assurance	-	1
Other services	20	22

11 Charitable activities

	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Direct costs - educational operations	39,400	30,105
Direct costs - teaching school (SCITT)	1,178	1,038
	<u>40,578</u>	<u>31,143</u>
Support costs - educational operations	19,942	14,029
Support costs - teaching school (SCITT)	117	198
	<u>20,059</u>	<u>14,227</u>
	<u>60,637</u>	<u>45,370</u>

Analysis of support costs

	Teaching School £'000	Educational operations £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Support staff costs	85	5,813	5,898	4,770
Depreciation	-	3,307	3,307	1,977
Impairment	-	405	405	-
Technology costs	-	671	671	568
Premises costs	-	3,266	3,266	2,257
Other support costs	32	3,434	3,466	2,438
Governance costs	-	56	56	123
Other pension costs	-	1,657	1,657	1,709
Other finance costs (FRS102 pension)	-	1,333	1,333	385
	<u>117</u>	<u>19,942</u>	<u>20,059</u>	<u>14,227</u>

River Learning Trust
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12 Staff Costs

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Staff costs during the period were:		
Wages and salaries	32,478	24,935
Social security costs	2,930	2,334
Operating costs of defined benefit pension schemes		
Employer contributions to pension schemes	5,462	4,234
FRS102 Other pension and finance costs	2,990	2,094
Apprenticeship levy	149	108
	44,009	33,705
Agency teaching staff costs	395	398
Agency support staff costs	32	77
Staff restructuring costs	137	42
	44,573	34,222

The trust uses agency staff where appropriate on normal commercial terms.

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Staff restructuring costs comprise:		
Redundancy payments	31	19
Severance payments	106	23
Other restructuring costs	-	-
	137	42

Included in staff restructuring costs are non-statutory/non-contractual severance payments totalling £90k (2018: £23k). Individually, this comprised 15 payments which were: £4k, £3k, £3k, £27k, £1k, £15k, £2k, £1k, £1k, £9k, £3k, £6k, £2k, £10k and £3k (2017: one payment, £23k).

The average number of persons employed by the academy trust during the period was as follows:

	2019 No.	2018 No.
Teachers	606	509
Administration and support	891	643
Management	77	21
	1,574	1,173

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

	2019 No.	2018 No.
£60,001 - £70,000	14	8
£70,001 - £80,000	6	1
£80,001 - £90,000	4	1
£90,001 - £100,000	2	2
£110,001 - £120,000	-	1
£120,001 - £130,000	1	-

The key management personnel of the academy trust comprise the Trustees and Senior Leadership Team as listed on pages 1 and 2. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the academy trust was £2,780k (2018: £1,264k).

River Learning Trust
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13 Central services

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

Finance and administrative staff	Educational support and supplies
Professional services	Insurance
ICT supplies	Premises supplies and services

The Trust provides support to Schools through the Central Services Team. Support includes: Finance, HR; Procurement, Health & Safety, Governance, Legal & Insurance.

The Trust levies a 3% top slice on schools as a contribution to the costs of Central Services.

The actual amounts charged during the period were as follows:

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Beckley Church of England Primary School	10	-
Cherwell School	321	285
Chipping Norton School	151	152
Cotteslowe Primary School	53	51
Edith Moorhouse Primary School	46	38
Garsington Church of England Primary School	33	28
Horspath Church of England Primary School	25	19
Kingsdown School	224	196
Larkrise Primary School	41	-
Madley Brook Community Primary School	48	17
Middle Barton Primary School	26	-
Marlborough Church of England School	179	71
New Marston School	58	48
Oxfordshire Teaching School Alliance (OTSA)	-	-
Rose Hill Primary School	53	-
Sandhills Community School	48	-
Cherwell OTSA SCITT	73	44
Tower Hill Primary School	42	33
Witney Community Primary School	40	12
Wolvercote Primary School	40	34
Wheatley Park School	179	158
	1,690	1,186

14 Related Party Transactions - Trustees' remuneration and expenses

One or more trustees has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from employment with the academy trust. The chief executive officer and other staff trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of chief executive officer and staff members under their contracts of employment.

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
P James, CEO and Trustee		
Remuneration	£120k-£125k	£115k-£120k
Employer's pension contributions	£20k-£25k	£15k-£20k

During the period ended 31 August 2019, no expenses were reimbursed to trustees for travel and subsistence expenditure incurred in their roles as trustees (2018: £Nil).

Other related party transactions involving the trustees are set out in note 32.

15 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 £2m (2018: £2m) on any one claim and the cost for the period ended 31 August 2019 is not separately identifiable from the total insurance premium (2018: is not separately identifiable from the total insurance premium).

The cost of this insurance is included in the total insurance cost.

16 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Land and Buildings £'000	Furniture and Equipment £'000	Computer Equipment £'000	Motor Vehicle £'000	Total £'000
Cost					
As at 1 September 2018	117,015	2,264	2,109	69	121,457
Transfer of existing academy	-	-	-	-	-
Transfer on conversion	20,013	-	-	-	20,013
Additions	881	1,807	204	13	2,905
Impairment	(405)	-	-	-	(405)
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
As at 31 August 2019	137,504	4,071	2,313	82	143,970
Depreciation					
As at 1 September 2018	11,793	706	1,812	19	14,330
Transfer of existing academy	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	-
Charged in year	2,655	394	251	7	3,307
As at 31 August 2019	14,448	1,100	2,063	26	17,637
Net book values					
As at 31 August 2019	123,056	2,971	250	56	126,333
As at 1 September 2018	105,222	1,558	297	50	107,127

Leasehold land and buildings

The freehold of these land and buildings is owned by the respective Local Authorities. These are recognised in the accounts as the academy trust has the right to use the property.

Transfers on conversion during year ended 31 August 2019

The Academy took out 125 year leases over the land and buildings of Larkrise Primary School, Middle Barton Primary School, Rose Hill Primary School and Sandhills Community Primary School. Leasehold property has been valued by the Local Authority and has been adjusted for depreciation based on the estimated useful economic life from construction.

Additions to land and buildings

Additions in the year include capital works to existing buildings

17 Stock

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Clothing	1	15
	<u>1</u>	<u>15</u>

River Learning Trust
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18 Debtors

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Trade debtors	270	128
VAT recoverable	361	306
Prepayments and accrued income	1,891	1,351
Other debtors	14	13
	<u>2,536</u>	<u>1,798</u>

19 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Trade creditors	1,404	980
Other taxation and social security	759	654
Other creditors	1,453	706
Loans	8	8
Accruals and deferred income	1,477	1,579
	<u>5,101</u>	<u>3,927</u>

Deferred Income

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Deferred income at 1 September	993	229
Released from previous years	(993)	(229)
Resources deferred in the period	1,017	993
Deferred income at 31 August	<u>1,017</u>	<u>993</u>

Deferred income represents funding received specifically for next financial year, together with trips and activities income received in advance.

Included within loans less than one year is one loan of £20k from Salix Finance Ltd. This loan is due to be paid back in 3 years and is interest free.

20 Creditors: amounts falling due in greater than one year

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Loans	12	20
	<u>12</u>	<u>20</u>

Included within loans less than one year is one loan of £20k from Salix Finance Ltd. This loan is due to be paid back in 3 years and is interest free.

River Learning Trust
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21 Funds

Group and Academy Trust

	Balance at 1 Sept 2018 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfer £'000	Balance at 31 August 2019 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	41,982	(42,809)	827	-
GAG - SENSS designated	173	-	-	-	173
Swan School development grant	154	-	(133)	-	21
Pupil Premium funding	187	1,791	(1,791)	-	187
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,926	(1,679)	-	247
Teaching School funding	-	1,371	(1,295)	(76)	-
Local authority revenue funds	-	1,588	(1,588)	-	-
Transferred on conversion/acquisition	21	-	(21)	-	-
Pension reserve (note 31)	(13,242)	(1,498)	(2,990)	(7,093)	(24,823)
	<u>(12,707)</u>	<u>47,160</u>	<u>(52,306)</u>	<u>(6,342)</u>	<u>(24,195)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Other DfE/ESFA capital grants	151	1,250	-	(1,112)	289
Condition Improvement funding	125	141	-	(266)	-
Devolved Formula Capital	-	683	-	(206)	477
School Condition Allocation (SCA)	2,048	2,282	-	(1,719)	2,611
LA Capital grants	-	22	-	(22)	-
Sports capital	858	172	-	-	1,030
Capital Donations	-	17	-	(17)	-
Transferred on conversion/acquisition	-	20,058	-	(20,013)	45
Fixed asset fund (note 16)	107,127	-	(3,712)	22,918	126,333
	<u>110,309</u>	<u>24,625</u>	<u>(3,712)</u>	<u>(437)</u>	<u>130,785</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>97,602</u>	<u>71,785</u>	<u>(56,018)</u>	<u>(6,779)</u>	<u>106,590</u>
Unrestricted funds					
Transferred on conversion/acquisition	-	291	-	(291)	-
Unrestricted funds	4,260	4,625	(4,713)	(23)	4,149
Total unrestricted funds	<u>4,260</u>	<u>4,916</u>	<u>(4,713)</u>	<u>(314)</u>	<u>4,149</u>
Total funds	<u>101,862</u>	<u>76,701</u>	<u>(60,731)</u>	<u>(7,093)</u>	<u>110,739</u>

21 Funds (continued)

The General Annual Grant represents funding received from the Education and Skills Funding Agency during the period in order to fund the continuing activities of the school. Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy trust was not subject to limits on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2019.

Other DfE/ESFA funding represents other forms of funding received from the Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency. This includes but is not limited Pupil Premium funding, Universal Infant Free School Meal funding, Sports grant and Rates Relief Income.

LA Revenue grants represents various grant funding provided by Local Authorities.

Other restricted funds represent amounts given to the academy trust for specific revenue purposes.

The Teaching School shows the income, expenditure and fund balance related to the SCITT run by River Learning Trust.

The pension reserve fund separately identifies the pension deficit on the Local Government Pension Scheme, and through which all the movements on the pension scheme are recognised.

Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) represents funding provided by the Department for Education to be used for capital projects. This funding may be used for specific capital projects which are not considered to be fixed asset additions.

Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) represents funding provided by the Department for Education to be used for specific capital projects. This funding will have been granted to academy trust schools before they transferred to River Learning Trust. As River Learning Trust receives SCA funding, it cannot bid for separate CIF funding.

School Condition Allocation (SCA) represents funding provided by the Department for Education to be used for capital projects. This funding may be used for specific capital projects which are not considered to be fixed asset additions.

Other DfE/ESFA capital funding represents funding provided by the Department for Education to be used for capital projects, excluding Devolved Formula Capital, Condition Improvement and School Condition Allowance funding.

LA Capital Grants represents funding provided by Local Authorities to be used for capital projects.

The sports capital fund relates to funds received on the disposal of freehold land in 2016, prior to Kingsdown School joining the Trust. The proceeds are restricted for capital projects to improve sport facilities as agreed with the ESFA and in discussion with Sport England.

Capital Donations are funds donated to the academy trust to be used for capital purposes.

The Fixed Asset fund recognises the net book value of tangible and fixed assets transferred to the trust on conversion and additions since conversion.

Unrestricted funds represent other income to the academy trust which is not received as funding or with a specific purpose.

Transferred on conversion/acquisition (either Restricted, Restricted Fixed Asset or Unrestricted) represent the funds which were held by existing local authority or academy schools on the date they joined River Learning Trust and the subsequent movement on these funds.

River Learning Trust
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21 Funds (continued)

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2019 were allocated as follows:

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Revenue reserves		
Beckley C of E Primary School	58	-
Cherwell School	735	874
Chipping Norton School	731	817
Cotteslowe Primary School	68	158
Edith Moorhouse Primary School	151	135
Garsington C of E Primary School	112	65
Horspath C of E Primary School	76	86
Kingsdown School	1,212	1,211
Larkrise Primary School	(40)	-
Madley Brook Primary School	14	21
Middle Barton Primary School	67	-
Marlborough C of E School	706	456
New Marston School	(37)	10
Rose Hill Primary School	(55)	-
Sandhills Primary School	241	-
Tower Hill Primary School	(71)	34
The Swan School	21	154
Witney Primary School	4	(13)
Wolvercote Primary School	16	7
Wheatley Park School	198	279
Cherwell OTSA SCITT	95	83
River Learning Trust Central	475	418
Total before fixed assets and pension reserve	4,777	4,795
Capital reserves	4,452	3,182
Fixed asset fund (representing net book value of fixed assets - note 16)	126,333	107,127
Pension reserve	(24,823)	(13,242)
Total funds	110,739	101,862

Larkrise Primary School is carrying a net deficit of £40k of revenue reserves. Larkrise joined the Trust in February 2019. The deficit is largely due to the staffing structure required to support special needs children and the low level of commensurate funding which the Trust is currently addressing with the OCC.

New Marston School is carrying a net deficit of £37k of revenue reserves. The deficit is explained by a fall in pupil numbers following the RI OFSTED rating in 2016 which has recently been restored to Good. The financial situation of the school should improve as pupil numbers start picking up. The School has also rationalised the staffing structure.

Rose Hill Primary School is carrying a net deficit of £55k of revenue reserves. Rose Hill joined in September 2018. The school has 34% of special needs children making support staff costs very high. However, the school is looking at ways to increase its other income through lettings and childcare.

Tower Hill Primary School is carrying a net deficit of £71k of revenue reserves. The deficit is due to additional resources deployed to help the school improve outcomes for children. Spending was agreed in advance with the Trust Central Team. A deficit recovery plan has been set up and some restructuring is planned.

21 Funds (continued)

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £'000	Other support staff costs £'000	Educational supplies (including all non staff direct costs) £'000	Other costs (excluding depreciation) £'000	Total 2019 £'000	Total 2018 £'000
Beckley C of E Primary School	178	21	9	45	253	-
Cherwell School	7,563	649	1,003	1,404	10,619	9,428
Chipping Norton School	3,356	702	380	623	5,061	4,930
Cotteslowe Primary School	1,396	143	81	251	1,871	1,765
Edith Moorhouse Primary School	981	193	62	179	1,415	1,400
Garsington C of E Primary School	667	76	53	141	937	959
Horspath C of E Primary School	452	49	48	95	644	670
Kingsdown School	4,150	709	414	1,155	6,428	6,315
Larkrise Primary School	952	46	37	116	1,151	-
Madley Brook Primary School	1,075	113	87	189	1,464	570
Middle Barton Primary School	434	67	46	97	644	-
Marlborough C of E School	3,803	752	809	617	5,981	2,325
New Marston School	1,204	148	82	255	1,689	1,678
Rose Hill Primary School	1,294	208	32	187	1,721	-
Sandhills Primary School	1,002	114	77	214	1,407	-
Tower Hill Primary School	885	131	97	145	1,258	1,162
The Swan School	63	30	5	36	134	63
Witney Primary School	674	104	31	214	1,023	406
Wolvercote Primary School	912	123	65	179	1,279	1,268
Wheatley Park School	3,850	624	571	631	5,676	5,769
Cherwell OTSA SCITT	288	82	884	31	1,285	1,139
River Learning Trust Central	496	814	109	670	2,089	1,466
	35,675	5,898	4,982	7,474	54,029	41,313
				Depreciation	3,307	1,977
				Impairment	405	-
				Other finance costs and pension costs	2,990	2,094
				Note 10	60,731	45,384

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21 Funds (continued)

Comparative Funds

	Balance at 1 Sept 2017 £'000	Income £'000	Expenditure £'000	Gains, losses and transfer £'000	Balance at 31 August 2018 £'000
Restricted general funds					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	33,181	(33,775)	594	-
GAG - SENSS designated	173	-	-	-	173
Swan School development grant	217	-	(63)	-	154
Pupil Premium funding	168	1,303	(1,284)	-	187
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,156	(1,156)	-	-
Teaching School funding	10	-	-	(10)	-
OTSA SCITT	-	1,154	(1,164)	10	-
Local authority revenue funds	-	1,716	(1,716)	-	-
Other restricted funds	-	80	(80)	-	-
Transferred on conversion/acquisition	333	282	-	(594)	21
Pension reserve (note 31)	(11,501)	(4,584)	(2,094)	4,937	(13,242)
	<u>(10,600)</u>	<u>34,288</u>	<u>(41,332)</u>	<u>4,937</u>	<u>(12,707)</u>
Restricted fixed asset funds					
Other DfE/ESFA capital grants	-	283	-	(132)	151
Condition Improvement funding	-	-	-	125	125
Devolved Formula Capital	-	182	(182)	-	-
School Condition Allocation (SCA)	931	1,926	-	(809)	2,048
Sports capital	-	-	-	858	858
Transferred on conversion/acquisition	-	37,027	-	(37,027)	-
Fixed asset fund (note 16)	72,201	-	(1,794)	36,720	107,127
	<u>73,132</u>	<u>39,418</u>	<u>(1,976)</u>	<u>(265)</u>	<u>110,309</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>62,532</u>	<u>73,706</u>	<u>(43,308)</u>	<u>4,672</u>	<u>97,602</u>
Unrestricted funds					
Transferred on conversion/acquisition	-	1,189	-	(1,189)	-
Unrestricted funds	2,144	2,738	(2,075)	1,453	4,260
Total unrestricted funds	<u>2,144</u>	<u>3,927</u>	<u>(2,075)</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>4,260</u>
Total funds	<u>64,676</u>	<u>77,633</u>	<u>(45,383)</u>	<u>4,936</u>	<u>101,862</u>

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22 Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 August 2019 are represented by:

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted General Funds £'000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	126,333	126,333
Current assets	4,149	5,741	4,452	14,342
Current liabilities	-	(5,101)	-	(5,101)
Non-current liabilities	-	(12)	-	(12)
Total net assets excluding Pension Scheme liability	4,149	628	130,785	135,562
Pension Scheme liability	-	(24,823)	-	(24,823)
Total net assets	4,149	(24,195)	130,785	110,739

22 Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Comparative analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 August 2018 are represented by:

	Unrestricted Funds £'000	Restricted General Funds £'000	Restricted Fixed Asset Funds £'000	Total Funds £'000
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	107,127	107,127
Current assets	4,260	4,482	3,182	11,924
Current liabilities	-	(3,927)	-	(3,927)
Non-current liabilities	-	(20)	-	(20)
Total net assets excluding Pension Scheme liability	4,260	535	110,309	115,104
Pension Scheme liability	-	(13,242)	-	(13,242)
Total net assets	4,260	(12,707)	110,309	101,862

23 Capital commitments

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Contracted for, but not provided in the financial statements	950	-

24 Commitments under operating leases

Operating leases

At 31 August 2019 the total of the academy trust's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases was:

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Amounts due within one year	136	48
Amounts due between one and five years	272	50
Amounts due after five years	-	-
	408	98

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25 Reconciliation of net income/(expenditure) to net cash flow from operating activities

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	15,970	32,249
Adjusted for:		
Cash transferred from existing academies	-	(2,922)
Cash transferred on conversion	(264)	-
Depreciation (note 16)	3,307	1,977
Impairment (note 16)	405	-
Capital income re fixed assets transferred from existing academy trusts	-	(23,344)
Capital income re fixed assets transferred on conversion	(20,013)	(11,990)
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(4,378)	(2,391)
Interest receivable (note 9)	(6)	(4)
Defined benefit pension scheme obligation inherited from existing academies	-	3,392
Defined benefit pension scheme obligation inherited on conversion	1,498	1,192
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable (note 31)	1,657	1,709
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost (note 31)	1,333	385
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	14	12
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(738)	(542)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	1,174	1,890
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	(41)	1,613

26 Cash flows from financing activities

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Repayments of borrowing	(8)	-
Cash inflows from new borrowing	-	-
Net cash used in financing activities	(8)	-

27 Cash flows from investing activities

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	6	4
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(2,905)	(1,569)
Capital grants from DfE Group	4,356	2,391
Capital grants received from Local Authorities	22	-
Net cash provided by investing activities	1,479	826

28 Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	At 1 September 2018 £'000	Transferred from existing academies £'000	Transferred on conversion £'000	Cash flows £'000	At 31 August 2019 £'000
Cash at bank and in hand	10,111	-	264	1,430	11,805
	10,111	-	264	1,430	11,805

29 Contingent liabilities

There are no contingent liabilities that require disclosure.

30 Members' liability

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

31 Pension and similar obligations

The academy trusts' 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 Oxfordshire County Council (all schools except Kingsdown School) and Wiltshire Council (Kingsdown School). Both schemes are multi-employer defined-benefit schemes.

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

Contributions amounting to £673k were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2019 (2018: £660k) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Introduction

The Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2010 (as amended), and the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014 (as amended). These regulations apply to teachers in schools and other educational establishments, including academies, in England and Wales that are maintained by local authorities. In addition, teachers in many independent and voluntary-aided schools and teachers and lecturers in some establishments of further and higher education may be eligible for membership. Membership is automatic for full-time teachers and lecturers and, from 1 January 2007, automatic too for teachers and lecturers in part-time employment following appointment or a change of contract. Teachers and lecturers are able to opt out of the TPS.

The Teachers' Pension Budgeting and Valuation Account

Although members may be employed by various bodies, their retirement and other pension benefits are set out in the regulations made under the Superannuation Act (1972) and Public Service Pensions Act (2013) and are paid by public funds provided by Parliament. The TPS is an unfunded scheme and members contribute on a 'pay as you go' basis - contributions from members, along with those made by employers, are credited to the Exchequer under arrangements governed by the above Acts.

The Teachers' Pensions Regulations 2010 require an annual account, the Teachers' Pension Budgeting and Valuation Account, to be kept of receipts and expenditure (including the cost of pension increases). From 1 April 2001, the Account has been credited with a real rate of return, which is equivalent to assuming that the balance in the Account is invested in notional investments that produce that real rate of return.

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

The latest actuarial valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme has now taken place, in line with directions issued by HM Treasury and using membership data as at 31 March 2016. As a result of this valuation TPS employers will pay an increased contribution rate of 23.68% from September 2019 (this includes the administration levy of 0.8%). The timing of the implementation is to align its introduction with employers' budget planning cycles. Until then, employers will pay the current rate of 16.48%.

The pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £3,497k (2018: £2,716k).

A copy of the latest valuation report is on the Teachers' Pension Scheme website at the following location:
<https://www.teacherspensions.co.uk/news/employers/2019/04/teachers-pensions-valuation-report.aspx>

31 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

Teachers' Pension Scheme (continued)

Scheme Changes

The arrangements for a reformed Teachers' Pension Scheme, in line with the recommendations made by Lord Hutton, in particular the introduction of a Career Average Revalued Earnings (CARE) scheme, were implemented from 1 April 2015.

In December 2016, the Court of Appeal held that transitional protection provisions contained in the reformed judicial and firefighter pension schemes, introduced as part of public service pension reforms in 2015, gave rise to direct age discrimination and were therefore unlawful. The Supreme Court, in a decision made in June 2019, have rejected the Government's application for permission to appeal the Court of Appeal's ruling. The case will now be referred to an Employment Tribunal for a decision regarding the remedy which will need to be offered to those members of the two schemes who were subject of the age discrimination.

HM Treasury are clear that the ruling has implications for the other public service schemes, including the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Those implications are currently being considered and any impact on scheme costs is expected to be looked at within the next scheme valuation, which is currently scheduled to be based on April 2020 data and implemented in April 2023.

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

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined-benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2019 was £2,562k (2018: £1,933k), of which employer's contributions totalled £1,971k (2018: £1,486k) and employees' contributions totalled £591k (2018: £447k). The next full triennial valuation will be carried out as at 31 March 2019 with new contribution rates set from 1 April 2020.

For Kingsdown School, the agreed contribution rates for future years are 23.6% for the year to 31 March 2020 for employers and between 5.5% and 12.5% for employees.

For the rest of the trust, the agreed contribution rates for future years are 16.5% for employers and between 5.5% and 12.5% for employees. In addition, employer top-up contributions of £146,000 are due for the period beginning 1 April 2019.

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

Principal actuarial assumptions

	At 31 August 2019		At 31 August 2018	
	Top of Range	Bottom of Range	Top of Range	Bottom of Range
Rate of increase in salaries	3.80%	2.60%	3.40%	2.70%
Rate of increase for pensions in payment / inflation	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	1.80%	1.80%	2.80%	2.80%
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.30%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%
Commutation of pensions to lump sums *	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* An allowance is included for future retirements to elect to take 50% of the maximum additional tax-free cash up to HMRC limits for pre-April 2008 service and 75% of the maximum tax-free cash for post-April 2008 service.

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31 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

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

	At 31 August 2019		At 31 August 2018	
	Top of Range	Bottom of Range	Top of Range	Bottom of Range
<i>Retiring today</i>				
Males	22.7	21.4	23.4	22.5
Females	24.3	23.7	25.5	24.9
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>				
Males	24.0	22.3	25.7	24.1
Females	25.7	25.1	27.9	26.7

The academy trust's share of the assets and liabilities in the scheme and the expected rates of return were:

	Fair value at 31 August 2019 £'000	Fair value at 31 August 2018 £'000
Equities	19,582	15,826
Gilt	5,543	3,643
Property	2,077	2,028
Cash	1,020	968
Total market value of assets	28,222	22,465
Present value of scheme liabilities		
- Funded	(53,045)	(35,707)
Surplus/(deficit) in the scheme	(24,823)	(13,242)

The actual return on scheme assets was £1,078k (2018: £1,058k).

Amounts recognised in the statement of financial activities

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
Current service cost (net of employee contributions)	3,628	3,189
Net interest cost	427	385
Benefit changes, gain/(loss) on curtailment and gain/(loss) on settlement	906	6
Administration expenses	-	-
Total operating charge	4,961	3,580

River Learning Trust
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31 Pension and similar obligations (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme (continued)

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

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
At 1 September	35,531	23,120
Upon conversion	3,657	1,878
Transferred in on existing academies joining the trust	-	10,174
Current service cost	3,628	3,189
Interest cost	1,131	848
Employee contributions	591	447
Actuarial (gain)/loss	7,949	(3,898)
Estimated benefits paid net of transfers in	(524)	(233)
Past service cost	906	6
At 31 August	<u>53,045</u>	<u>35,531</u>

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

	2019 £'000	2018 £'000
At 1 September	22,289	11,619
Upon conversion	2,159	686
Transferred in on existing academies joining the trust	-	6,782
Interest income	704	463
Return on plan assets (excluding net interest on the net defined pension liability)	856	1,039
Employer contributions	1,971	1,486
Employee contributions	591	447
Estimated benefits paid plus unfunded net of transfers in	(348)	(233)
At 31 August	<u>28,222</u>	<u>22,289</u>

Reconciliation of opening and closing deficit				
	2019 £'000		2018 £'000	
Pension deficit at 1 September		£'000	£'000	£'000
Current service cost	(3,628)	(13,242)	(3,189)	(11,501)
Employer contributions	1,971		1,486	
Additional pension cost		(1,657)		(1,703)
Other finance costs		(1,333)		(391)
Deficits transferred from existing academy trusts		-		(3,392)
Deficits transferred on conversion of new schools		(1,498)		(1,192)
Actuarial gains/(losses)		(7,093)		4,937
Pension deficit at 31 August		<u>(24,823)</u>		<u>(13,242)</u>

32 Related party transactions

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

No related party transactions took place in the period of account, other than certain trustee's remuneration and expenses already disclosed in note 14.

33 Events after the balance sheet date

Subsequent to the year end two schools have been added to the academy trust. Charlbury Primary School will be converting to academy status and joining River Learning Trust on 1 December 2019. Seven Fields Primary School already has academy status and will be joining River Learning Trust on 1 December 2019.

34 Agency arrangements

The academy trust administers the disbursement of the discretionary support for learners, 16-19 Bursary Funds, on behalf of the ESFA. In the year ended 31 August 2019 the trust received £51k (2018: £47k) and disbursed £36k (2018: £61k) from the fund. An amount of £51k (2018: £36k) (including brought forward from prior years) is included in creditors relating to undistributed funds that are repayable to ESFA at 31 August 2019.

The academy trust administers the OTSA SCITT on behalf of a group of schools based in Oxfordshire. This arrangement started from 1 April 2019 when the administration of the OTSA SCITT was passed to River Learning Trust from another academy trust. At 1 April 2019, a balance of £667k was transferred to River Learning Trust. In the year ended 31 August 2019, the trust received £237k and incurred expenditure of £287k. An amount of £617k is included in creditors relating to undistributed funds at 31 August 2019.

During the year ended 31 August 2019, River Learning Trust incurred administration expenditure for the OTSA SCITT of £11k and was paid £11k by OTSA SCITT for these services.

35 Additions to the Academy Trust

On 1 September 2018 Middle Barton Primary School, Sandhills Community Primary School and Rose Hill Primary School (all Local Authority maintained schools) converted to academy status under the Academies Act 2010 and all the operations and assets and liabilities were transferred to River Learning Trust from Oxfordshire County Council for £nil consideration.

On 1 February 2019 Larkrise Primary School (Local Authority maintained school) converted to academy status under the Academies Act 2010 and all the operations and assets and liabilities were transferred to River Learning Trust from Oxfordshire County Council for £nil consideration.

On 1 April 2019 Beckley Church of England Primary School (Local Authority maintained school) converted to academy status under the Academies Act 2010 and all the operations and assets and liabilities were transferred to River Learning Trust from Oxfordshire County Council for £nil consideration.

The transfers have been accounted for as a combination that is in substance a gift. The assets and liabilities transferred were valued at their fair value and recognised in the balance sheet under the appropriate headings with a corresponding net amount recognised as net gain in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) as Donations - transfer from local authority on conversion.

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

	Unrestricted funds £'000	Restricted general fund £'000	Restricted fixed asset funds £'000	Total £'000
Beckley Church of England Primary School				
Tangible fixed assets:				
Leasehold buildings	-	-	-	-
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Current assets				
Budget surplus on LA funds	50	-	12	62
Budget surplus on other school funds	-	-	-	-
	50	-	12	62
Larkrise Primary School				
Tangible fixed assets:				
Leasehold buildings	-	-	5,493	5,493
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Current assets				
Budget surplus on LA funds	-	-	-	-
Budget surplus on other school funds	-	-	-	-
	-	-	5,493	5,493
Middle Barton Primary School				
Tangible fixed assets:				
Leasehold buildings	-	-	2,172	2,172
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-
Current assets				
Budget surplus on LA funds	49	-	13	62
Budget surplus on other school funds	-	-	-	-
	49	-	2,185	2,234

River Learning Trust
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35 Additions to the Academy Trust

Rose Hill Primary School

Tangible fixed assets:

Leasehold buildings	-	-	6,367	6,367
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-

Current assets

Budget surplus on LA funds	-	-	10	10
Budget surplus on other school funds	-	-	-	-

	-	-	6,377	6,377
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Sandhills Community Primary School

Tangible fixed assets:

Leasehold buildings	-	-	5,981	5,981
Other tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-

Current assets

Budget surplus on LA funds	192	-	10	202
Budget surplus on other school funds	-	-	-	-

	192	-	5,991	6,183
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LGPS pension deficit	-	(1,498)	-	(1,498)
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Net assets	291	(1,498)	20,058	18,851
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The above net assets include £264k that was transferred as cash at bank.

River Learning Trust
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36 Teaching School Trading Account

		2019		2018	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income					
	Direct Income				
	DfE grants and bursaries	972		1,154	
	Other Income				
	Fundraising and other trading activities	399		72	
Total Income			1,371		1,226
Expenditure					
	Direct costs				
	Direct staff costs	288		264	
	Staff development	6		-	
	Educational Consultancy	284		-	
	Other direct costs	600		773	
	Total direct costs		1,178		1,037
	Other costs				
	Support staff costs	85		73	
	Other support costs	32		126	
	Total Indirect costs		117		199
Total Expenditure			1,295		1,236
Transfers between funds excluding depreciation			(76)		10
Surplus/(Deficit) from all sources			-		-
Teaching school balances at 1 September			-		-
Teaching school balances at 31 August			-		-