
HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY

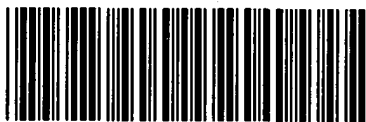
(A company limited by guarantee)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023



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HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	A Bridge R Morris M Andrews C Haynes J Brindle
Trustees	M Andrews, Chair of Trustees ¹ A Goggin ¹ G Smith, Accounting Officer ¹ K Linden (appointed 18 May 2023) M Lucking ¹ J Kinnell (resigned 9 May 2023) ¹ S Frost D Shaikly R Sheldon ¹ Finance, Premises, Audit and Risk committee
Company registered number	10391530
Company name	Hope Learning Community
Principal and registered office	School Road Colchester CO7 7ET
Chief executive officer	G Smith
Senior management team	Gary Smith, CEO Ruth Whitehead, Head of School - Market Field School Julian Cochrane, Headteacher - Southview School Adam Dean, Head of School - Chatten Free School Duncan Thomas, Head of College - Market Field College Kim McWilliam, Academy Improvement Lead
Independent auditors	Griffin Chapman Chartered Accountants Registered Auditors 4&5 The Cedars, Apex 12 Old Ipswich Road Colchester Essex CO7 7QR
Bankers	Lloyds Bank PLC PO Box 1000 BX1 1LT

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2023

The trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditor's report of Hope Learning Community for the period 1st September 2022 to 31 August 2023. The annual report serves the purposes of both a trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

The trust operates three special academies in Essex with a combined pupil capacity of 580 for 2022-23.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

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

Details of the trustees who served during the year, and to the date these accounts are approved are included in the Reference and Administration Details on page 1.

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

In accordance with normal commercial practice the trust has purchased insurance to protect trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on trust business. The insurance provides unlimited cover on any one claim and details of the costs are disclosed in Note 14 to the accounts.

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

The Members may appoint by ordinary resolution up to 8 trustees. The trustees may appoint Co-opted trustees. A Co-opted trustee is a person who is appointed to be a trustee by being co-opted by trustees who have not themselves been so appointed. The skills required for the trust board to adequately carry out their duties are regularly reviewed, and trustees are recruited when they match the skill requirements.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees and Governors

The trust is committed to providing adequate opportunities for trustees and local governors to undertake and receive suitable training to enable them to perform their role effectively. To this end the trust purchases a governance support and training service from an external provider. The trust has an induction policy which sets out the induction programme for new trustees. The induction programme includes a tour of the academy, meetings with students and staff, and provision of policy and procedures documents that are appropriate to the role they undertake

Organisational Structure

The governance of the trust is defined in the Memorandum and Articles of Association together with the Funding Agreement with the Department of Education. The structure consists of the full board of trustees and one subcommittee which is Finance, Audit, Risk and Premises.

The full board of trustees, and its subcommittee met a minimum of six times in the year. The full board of trustees is responsible for the strategic direction of the trust. The trustees are responsible for setting strategic policy, adopting an annual plan and budget, monitoring the trust by the use of those budgets, and making major decisions about the direction of The Trust, capital expenditure and senior staff appointments.

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Market Field School, Chatten School and Southview School each have a local governing body who monitor the performance of the school and ensure the implementation of policies as agreed by the trustees.

The Senior Leadership Team in each school control individual academies at an executive level and ensure policies are implemented. The SLT is responsible for the day to day operation of their school, in organising staff, resources and pupils. They are responsible for the authorisation of spending within agreed budgets, and for the appointment of staff following vetting and safeguarding recruitment processes.

The trust's CEO is the Accounting Officer.

Arrangements for Setting Pay and Remuneration of Key Management Personnel

The board of trustees is responsible for establishing the overall guidelines for pay and has specific responsibility for setting the remuneration of the CEO and Senior Management Team. In doing so the board takes advice from a specialist HR advisory company who ensure that remuneration is in line with the nationally agreed Teachers Pay and Conditions, and the trust's own pay policy. Executive leaders pay is regularly benchmarked against similar roles in the public sector to ensure value for money.

Trade union facility time

The trust has no trade union officials that require trade union facility time.

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

Owing to the nature of the trust's operations and the composition of the board of trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, it may be that from time to time transactions will take place with organisations in which members of the board of trustees may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations would be conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the trust's financial regulations and normal procurement procedures. Any transaction where the trustee may have a pecuniary interest is only undertaken in accordance with the 'at cost' principle described in the Academy Trust Handbook. There were no such transactions for the accounting period.

The trust cooperated with the following organisations during the academic year in pursuit of its charitable activities:

- Essex Special Schools Education Trust (ESSET). ESSET is a private limited company by guarantee that provides educational support services to improve specialist education provision
- Essex County Council who are responsible for the coordination of special needs provision in the county
- Phoenix Housing supporting students to develop key life skills and live independently.

The trust has continued in partnership with three teaching school alliances, North East Essex Teaching School Alliance, Essex Teaching Training and Essex Schools ITT Partnership. The alliances provide training advice on the delivery of special needs education and supporting with teacher and student work placements.

Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

Since its inception, Hope Learning Community has recognised the importance of engaging with its workforce. Employee engagement and well-being is essential in ensuring the success of the trust. The trust therefore strives to maintain open communication channels between management, teachers and support staff. The management teams regularly engage with the workforce both formally and informally, examples of this include;

- Team meetings
- Business meetings
- Emails
- Performance management reviews
- Non-pupil days where the trust's vision, values and development plans can be shared
- Training sessions

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- Workshops
- Wellbeing committee
- Staff representation on the local governing bodies

Where there is a proposal for significant change to policy or practice all staff are formally consulted.

Hope Learning Community, as a responsible employer, ensures that pay and benefits are fair and in line with government policy. The trust also ensures the health and safety and well-being of all its employees.

The trust is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. All employees and job applicants receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. No job applicant is asked to disclose their disability until a formal offer has been made.

Any employee that is disabled or becomes disabled, is encouraged to tell us about their condition so that we can support them as appropriate and make any reasonable adjustments to support them in overcoming or minimising the difficulty. We monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where we are able to we take all reasonable steps to improve access.

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

Hope Learning Community invests in review and communication with all key suppliers, partners and community stakeholders. The trust's adopted vision and values ensure that integrity, accountability and respect is fostered in all our objectives and activities. The trust selects suppliers predominantly from known education and public sector suppliers or via recommendations from other like-minded trusts or public sector organisations. To ensure the trust maintains its integrity, robust procurement procedures have been adopted and reviews are completed by internal and external auditors.

The trust maintains strong business relationships with the local councils, the local authority, other special schools and academy trusts as well as other local and regional education providers and multi academy trusts.

The trust ensures, via the leadership team, that the individual schools provide appropriate mediums for communication with staff, parents and students, via letters, websites, face to face communication and other literature such as progress reports and parent communication evenings.

Objectives and Activities

Objects and Aims

The principal object and aim of the charitable company is to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing a trust specifically organised to make special educational provision for children with special educational needs.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

In order to meet these objectives and aims and to provide exceptional learning opportunities for the pupils of the Trust, management have concentrated on the following key priorities:

- Revised the leadership structure to create fairness and transparency across the trust.
- Working strategically with the Local Authority and the DfE, particularly as Free School applications were unsuccessful.
- Chatten Free school is now fully open and almost at full capacity.
- Opened a new build for Southview with a residential provision, supported also by the Local Authority
- Created new roles to further enable our central team to support work across the trust.

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Public Benefit

The public benefits that flow from our core purpose and aims are:

- our pupils are provided with an inclusive and stimulating learning environment, developing their skills and confidence for their transition to adulthood
- pupils, parents and families benefit from support provided by both teaching staff and employed therapists that assist with additional needs. Families are also supported by the wrap around care facilities such as breakfast clubs and holiday clubs
- vocational and life skills are taught to support our pupils in securing employment upon leaving school

In setting our objectives and planning our activities the trustees have carefully considered the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

The trust continued its mission to ensure that pupils achieved their full potential, to recruit, develop and retain suitable staff, and to guide pupils in suitable progression when they leave the trust.

Specific notable achievements and events for each academy were as follows:

Market Field School

Market Field School remains significantly oversubscribed. For the 2023-24 academic year, the school site has 346 students on roll (as of September) but this is projected to rise to 351 by October half term. Tribunal numbers appear to have settled down but this is in part due to a bottleneck nationally within the tribunal system, rather than a reduction in overall numbers. The college site presently has 122 students on roll. This number includes 4 students that follow an alternative education pathway, which is predominantly school-supported. Our offer this year changed from a 5 day to a 4 day provision to accommodate the growth in applicants, both internal and external.

On school site, we have welcomed the addition of 'The Bungalow', providing a life skills base and class hub for our post-16 learners with complex Autism. In time, this will be used as Respite housing. It is also providing welcome space for small group work and training when the post-16 learners are off site.

Infrastructure development on college site includes:

- Development of the Hub area to accommodate greater numbers of students; creating and soundproofing additional 1:1 and small group working areas.
- Partnering with Essex Libraries and Paddy and Scotts to build a Café and training facility within the on-site library.
- Development of our Horticulture area to enable the running of a Level 1 qualification. This includes a green house, plant beds and a living willow dome.

On school site, for 2022-23, continued investment was made in training all 130 Learning Support Assistants in Scaffolded Learning Approaches, ensuring the level of support given to a child matched their needs. Teaching staff benefited from training in Careers profiling and all staff received additional training in Playground play, supporting our OPAL playground development. We supported two LSAs to become HLTAs and trained an additional 7 staff as minibus drivers. We continued to invest in our wellbeing team, with all members of the team completing additional courses and qualifications to enhance their roles. At college site, we have sponsored both teaching and support staff to undertake training in nutrition, therapies and teaching and learning. As part of this, we have developed new roles and/or responsibilities to support their career development ambitions.

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The Apprenticeship Levy was used effectively on school site, supporting 4 LSAs to achieve Level 3 qualifications in 'Supporting Teaching in the Workforce', with one, a former Market Field College student, completing this to Distinction Standard. A teacher is retraining as a Speech and Language Therapist using the Apprenticeship Levy. Additionally, a member of staff completed their SENDCO qualification, the Head of School completed her Level 7 Apprenticeship in Leadership and Management and two additional members of staff are working towards their NPQSL and NPQLL qualifications, again, supported by the Apprenticeship Levy.

At college, we are continuing to advance our offer to meet identified organisational areas for development, all of which will serve to improve our offer and student experience. Our therapeutic offer in particular has benefited from this focus; our staff team now comprises a part-time Speech and Language Therapist and a full-time Sound Therapist and ELSA practitioner. We have also created a Student Services role to provide PFA support to students, parents and carers. Three of these four roles have been filled internally following a period of college funded training. As is regular practice, staff continue to benefit from regular training opportunities via National College and other CPD.

Training is assigned in response to identified areas for college or personal development yet the PMR process also serves to support staff members to choose training in areas of professional interest to them.

Following COVID and the re-structuring of the NCS partnership, we were keen to reinstate a residential offer for each year group. This year, in addition to our first prom, we supported both a sailing residential and activities camp at minimal/no cost to parents.

Following the appointment of Interventions Coordinator this year, we are offering increasing amounts of interventions across the board. It is working well and continues to develop both in terms of reach and intervention type. This has also served to support in class learning and general behaviour. As sessions can be specifically tailored to meet the need, certainly for those more ADHD, their engagement levels have greatly improved and peers in class have benefited from less in-class disruption.

Streaming within core areas this year has proven to be an effective means of delivery. Less differentiation is required in each class (supporting teacher delivery and, hopefully, student progress) and as a result, students appear increasingly engaged/confident when surrounded by those working at a similar level. The introduction of GCSE qualifications and skills demand (for students) has required an adjustment of approach however. Whilst more challenging for the students, the advantages of undertaking GCSE over Functional Skills with those working towards a Level 1/2 are pronounced – they are likely to achieve a grade of sorts rather than pass/fail and these qualifications are more widely recognised by employers and FE colleges. Our Century Tech platform affords students an additional opportunity to develop their skills alongside class instruction. Some students (certainly not all!) are increasingly accessing online provision independently as a 'top-up'. We will increasingly offer this as an opportunity for students.

School site have continued to invest in improvements to our outside areas this academic year, with the development of OPAL playgrounds for the main part of the school. This has been a massive investment and has transformed the playground spaces. Although waiting to be analysed, I am confident that data will show a reduction in playground incidents of behaviour as the children are entertained and engaged in a variety of play activities. The EYFS complex Autism playground base (Willow class) will be redeveloped in September 23, led by the Assistant Head for Autism and a new class team.

At the college site, our partnership with Phoenix Housing has been operating for almost 1 year. This affords a number of our students an opportunity to live independently, albeit with transitional and ongoing structured support in place to aid their life skills development. Our future aim is to provide for short-term semi-independent housing that enables more of our young people to practice their independent living skills.

Our focus remains fully outcome based. With 32% of our leavers this year in paid part-time or full-time employment, our employability emphasis continues to bear fruit. Our next-step development in this area is to develop a Supported Internship offer to complement our existing work placement programme; providing more so for lower ability learners to access a wider array of industries together with individual or small-group placements.

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In this regard, we will seek to re-structure our existing Year 14 offer as a means to maximise our support and delivery in this area.

On School site, we were fortunate to benefit from trust finances to redevelop part of our Food Tech kitchen, making an accessible kitchen for a student in a wheelchair. Although this student has now left the school, the food tech area has been future proofed, it is also used by our youngest children as it is a height that they can reach.

At college site, we have extended our panel of vocational qualifications this year following growing student interest in the area of horticulture and the success of the MF Grows initiative. Furthermore, whilst horticulture and specifically agriculture information is excluded from Tendring's labour market profile, this industry is an important provider of jobs in rural areas locally. We are now seeking to develop our links with local employers to support student training and employment in these areas.

Our comprehensive Preparing for Adulthood curriculum encompasses all aspects of life skills and independence and serves to underpin structured input in four key areas; community, employability, health and wellbeing and independence. Its organic design enables us to continually add to/revise content in order to best meet developing needs and cultural trends.

From September, we started delivering BTEC Sport. For those able to undertake this qualification, they will be entered in years 12 and 13. For those less able/willing, their focus will be health and leisure activities as part of our 'Preparing for Adulthood' curriculum.

From September, we have rolled-out intended changes to the curriculum/choice of accreditation in a number of subject areas. This includes portfolio-based qualifications for maths, digital skills (in place of ICT) and GCSE (in addition to functional skills).

Following concerns about capacity within the Leadership Team with the continued growth of the school, the school leadership team was restructured to include 4 Assistant Heads, 3 of whom have taken the lead for an Ofsted Framework area – Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes and Curriculum, the fourth has become Assistant Head for the Autism bases. The Deputy Headteacher has taken responsibility for day to day running of the school and from September, will also be the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Exam results, school site:

Following a difficult year nationally for results, we were pleased with the results on school site.

GCSE results for Art were lower than in previous years but all students who were entered achieved a GCSE in the subject.

One student passed GCSE Science with a Level 5 qualification, the only student entered. He was highlighted by the exam board as receiving the highest possible marks for the Foundation Tier and his results would have equated to a Level 6 qualification had he sat the higher Tier.

Functional Skills Maths Level 1 – 11/12 students passed.

Functional Skills Maths Level 2 – 5/6 students passed.

Functional Skills English Level 1 – 11/11 students passed

Functional Skills English Level 2 – 6/6 students passed.

19 students working at a level lower than Functional Skills passed Entry Level Qualifications in Maths, 25 passed Entry Level Qualifications in English (the discrepancy between Maths and English being where some year 10 learners passed Entry Maths last academic year so sat Functional Skills Maths this year) and 24 learners gained Entry Level Qualifications in Science.

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For the first year, we entered learners for the BTEC Home Cooking Skills qualification, with 26 learners gaining this qualification.

Learners who were not yet ready for formal qualifications completed ASDAN Transition Challenge portfolios. 11 learners completed these qualifications.

Exam Results, college site:

- 15 students passed iGCSE Maths - levels ranging from 2 to 5 (quite a lot of 4 and 5s).
- 3 students passed GCSE English. We only entered those looking to leave us that needed grades to get onto higher level courses at the Institute. All passed with levels ranging from 2 to 4 and got what they required for admissions purposes. We only rolled this out this year and it is a two year course so, as with Maths, we are very pleased with the results.
- 7 passed Level 1 Creative iMedia passed with mix of pass and distinction.
- 4 passed EL3 Construction.
- 5 passed Level 1 Construction.
- 4 passed Health and Social Care Level 1.
- 6 passed Employability Level 1.
- 8 passed FS English Entry 2 and 3.
- 4 passed FS English Level 1
- 1 passed ICT EL3 (we don't run this qualification generally but one student had missed significant amounts of their education and we wanted him to leave with a qualification in an area of strength and interest)
- 13 passed ASDAN Life Skills Challenge (various units/certs within these).
- 5 passed Hospitality Catering EL3 and Level 1.

Next year will be our first full entries for Digital Skills and GCSE English (both 2 year courses) and we have obtained approval to run Horticulture this year too so we are continuing to build the offer. Aside iMedia where 1 student failed the exam component (equates to 87.5% pass rate), we have 100% pass rate across all subject areas.

Southview School

Southview School is a unique setting in Essex for students aged 3 -19 years old with Physical and Neurological Impairments. On entry student attainment is variable with many students being significantly below expectations for their chronological age, and others who are working closer to age related expectations. Often the provision students have experienced prior to attending Southview has not fully met their needs. It is not unusual for students to join us whose experience of mainstream education has not been positive. Students enter the school at all ages, but usually join the school in our Nursery. However, the school usually experiences 'spikes' at Year 7 and at the start of Key Stage 4 where students may move in from a mainstream provision. The vast majority of students attend the school continuously and a small percentage use English as a second language. Most students are from a white British background and approximately 20% are eligible for free school meals. Attendance is excellent and is consistently around the 85% mark. Attendance is monitored as part of the schools' safeguarding procedures. Challenging behaviours are managed skilfully with a multi-team approach. There have been no fixed or permanent exclusions for a number of years. Southview School remains a popular oversubscribed school and as such, demand for places is high and capacity issues are a significant challenge.

Our new build has now opened (January 2023) and includes a hydrotherapy pool as well as a residential provision which we plan to open in early 2024.

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The school has robust development planning and evaluation plans, these ensure the school remains a dynamic and forward thinking environment. Full details can be accessed via the school's website and our outstanding Ofsted grading (September 2023) confirms our commitment and achievements in giving our children and students a high quality bespoke education package.

Chatten School

Chatten Free School opened in September 2021 as a brand new school designed to meet the needs of children with severe autism, learning difficulties and significant challenging behaviour. The school opened with 25 pupils on role and an almost entirely new team of staff. The majority of the pupils had been excluded from a previous placement or were on a part-time timetable. A small minority had not yet been to school, but it was agreed by the LA that their needs were so profound that they would require an SLD+ provision.

Year 2 of Chatten Free School has shown that we are able to extend the success of our first year. In year 2 we had up to 50 pupils and all pupils were accessing education and have progress against their individual targets. A large number of pupils who joined with no functional communication system now communicate with a range of AAC devices and tools. A number of children who displayed dangerous levels of challenging behaviour at the start of the year now show a much reduced level of challenging behaviour.

Staff old and new have continue to rise to the challenges endemic in working in such a specific provision. They continue to take on and learn from both the formal and informal training and feedback provided by SLT and the expert therapeutic and teaching staff. As the school grows the amount of expertise and support to newer members of staff is growing even more.

As we move into year 3 of opening, we have taken on 30 new tutors (1:1's) to work with our 21 new complex pupils. Some of these pupils will present with extremely challenging behaviour and will thus be staffed at a 2:1 level. Our focus this year must be to imbed our current procedures and to ensure excellent practice is happening in phases across the school.

The school has a robust school innovation plan which the Head and Deputy have updated for the next year with the support of the school improvement lead. There is a strong focus in this document in a refining of systems developed in year two to ensure effective provision and support across the school.

Key Performance Indicators

The trustees receive regular information to enable them to monitor the performance of the trust compared to aims, strategies and financial budgets.

The Finance, Audit, Risk and Premises Committee regularly monitor the key financial performance indicators. The final KPIs for the period were as follows;

Total Revenue Income per Pupil Place - £21,177 (2022 - £18,192)

Staff Costs to Revenue Income – 84% (2022 – 94%)

Government Funding to Total Income – 97% (2022 – 98%)

Cash balances to Income – 14% (2022 - 22%)

Assets vs Liabilities – 45 : 1 (2022 - 41 : 1)

All the above KPI's were within the parameters set by the board.

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The trust board continually monitor academic performance, pupil behaviour and attendance.

Market Field School Attendance final figure 2022-3 91.82%

Exclusions: 2.3%

Market Field College Attendance final figure 2022-3 91.5%

Exclusions: 3 (1 repeat).

Market Field School Exam performance analysis August 2023

Learning to Know Pathway (11H, 11E and D)

GCSE's

GCSE Art performed poorly compared to previous years. Whilst all of the 25 students achieved a GCSE in the subject, no student passed at GCSE Grade 4 or above. It is anticipated that students will achieve better results in 2024 with a new art teacher in place.

2 students were entered for GCSE Maths, both passing at Grade 3.

GCSE Science – 2 entered, 1 passed at Level 4 and one at Level 5 (top scoring the Foundation Paper)

Functional Skills

Functional Skills Level 2 English (6 entered) – 100%

Functional Skills Level 1 English (10 entered) – 100%

Functional Skills Level 2 Maths (6 entered) – 83%

Functional Skills Level 1 Maths (12 entered) – 92%

Functional Skills Level 1 ICT (2 entered) 100%

Entry Level

Entry Level English Level 1 (10 entered) – 100%

Entry Level English Level 2 (11 entered) – 100%

Entry Level English Level 3 (12 entered) – 100%

Entry Level Maths Level 2 6 entered) – 100%

Entry Level Maths Level 3 (13 entered) – 100%

Entry Level ICT Level 1 (13 entered) – 100%

Entry Level ICT Level 2 (5 entered) – 100%

Entry Level Science Level 2 (8 entered) – 100%

Entry Level Science Level 3 (4 entered) – 100%

BTEC Home Cooking Skills (26 entered) - 100%

Learning to Be/Do Pathways (Class A, B and S)

ASDAN Transition Challenge (10 entered) – 100

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College site exam performance listed:

- Vocational Qualifications: 31
- Percentage passed of those entered: 96.9%
- Functional Skills Qualifications: 13
- Percentage passed of those entered: 100%
- GCSE Qualifications: 18
- Percentage passed of those entered: 100%
- ASDAN Qualifications: 13
- Percentage passed of those entered: 100%

Going Concern

After making appropriate enquiries, the 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.

Promoting the Success of the Company

The trust has adopted a Mission statement along with our Vision and Values that are transparent and in line with the company's objectives. The trust's values of Respect, Excellence and Friendship are shared across the entire organisation and embedded within all activities and decisions made by trustees, officers and employees. The trust is committed to going the extra mile and making a difference in the special educational needs community it operates within the framework of openness and transparency and utilises data available from open sources such as the trust's own Websites, Companies House, Ofsted and financial and attainment data from the various .gov websites.

Financial Review

The trust has a healthy level of reserves with a significant cash balance.

The key financial risk the trust is exposed to is the reliance of Essex Local Authority to provide adequate funding that support's each pupils individual needs. The trust works closely with the local authority to ensure that adequate funding is provided and a full review of special needs funding and the need to increase this is currently being carried out.

The forward financial plans for the trust are regularly reviewed and updated and demonstrate that the trust will remain financially sustainable in the medium term.

The principal source of funding for the trust is the General Annual Grant (GAG) and other grants that it receives from the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA). For the year ended 31 August 2023 the trust received £12,025k of GAG and other government funding. A high percentage of this income is spent on wages and salaries and support costs to deliver the trust's primary objective of the provision of special education. During the year the trust spent £12,352k on the trust activities. The trust free reserves to take forward into 2023-24 are £1,305,049 of restricted funding and £1,296,321 of unrestricted funding.

During the year fixed assets have increased in value from £23.1k to £28.6k this is predominantly due to the transfer in of the £5.5 million Southview College and pool buildings on a long lease from the local authority and a £325k respite house donated on a long lease from a local builder.

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In accordance with FRS102, the Academy received an actuarial assessment of the Local Government Pension Scheme surplus. The surplus balance of £754,000 (2022: deficit £234,000) is detailed within the supporting notes to the accounts. There has been a substantial reduction in the liability and there is an improvement in the balance sheet position, which is primarily a result of the significant change in the discount rate linked to high quality corporate bond yields, and the future rate of inflation, which is the key financial assumption required for determining the defined benefit obligation. The actuarial gain arising on the scheme is £920,000 which is shown in the Statement of Financial Activities. Further details of the scheme are shown in note 26. The £754,000 asset has been derecognised in these accounts and instead represents an additional movement in other comprehensive income (see note for further details).

Reserves Policy

The trust's reserves policy was reviewed and approved by the board of trustees on 29th September 2022. The trustees are aware of the requirement to balance current and future needs and always aim to set a balanced budget with annual income balancing annual expenditure unless a specific planned use of brought forward reserves is being made for investment in trust development. The trustees monitor estimated year-end reserves figures via the receipt of monthly management accounts. The budget plan identifies how any reserves will be allocated in the plan for the following academic year, including the identification of any funds earmarked for a specific project or purpose.

The trust's current level of free reserves (total funds less the amount held in fixed assets and restricted fixed asset funds) is £2,601,370. This has been built up from a mixture of balances transferred from the predecessor school, an increase in high needs funding received from the LA, an increase in the pupil numbers on roll and donations made to the school. Trustees are planning on supporting the following projects in the next few months. Minibus replacements at Southview and Market Field £300,000. Southview building expansion and combined work opportunity with Chatten £200,000. Extension of Barista training at Market Field College £20,000. Other projects may also be considered in line with our reserves policy. The trustees ensure that all reserves are deployed effectively and for maximum impact and have plans to utilise surplus funds to grow and expand the trust while holding a reasonable level of funds as a contingency for unexpected events.

The trust has a healthy cash balance and forecast shows that the trust will have no cash flow issues in the medium term.

Investment Policy

An Investment Policy was reviewed and approved by the Board on 5th May 2023. The aim of the policy is to ensure funds that the trust does not immediately need to cover anticipated expenditure are invested to maximise its income but with minimal risk. The aim is to research where funds may be deposited applying prudence in ensuring there is minimum risk. The trustees do not consider the investment of surplus funds as a primary activity, rather as good stewardship and as and when circumstances allow. As interest rates have been low the trustees have not felt the need to invest surplus funds into higher rate facilities, however with interest rates currently increasing this will be monitored.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The trust works with a risk register identifying the major risks, to which the trust is exposed, and identifying actions and procedures to mitigate those risks. This register is monitored by the trust Board with local governing bodies monitoring and updating risk relevant to their setting. The principal risks facing the trust are outlined below;

- The trust has considerable reliance on continued Government funding through the ESFA and Essex County Council, and there is no assurance that Government policy or practice will remain the same or that public funding will continue at the same levels or on the same terms;

We are moving towards a revised top-up funding system within Essex. This could cause a major impact on income. Current thinking is that this will be a positive impact.

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2023

- The trust has increased its IT provision for both staff and pupils. As such the trust now needs to ensure there is consistent policy and practice regarding the usage of this to reduce the risks the physical damage, malicious attacks, technical faults and human error. The trust has appointed a Director of Operations to devise an overarching ICT strategy.
- The continuing success of the trust is dependent on continuing to maintain the high quality education provision it currently delivers. To mitigate this risk trustees, ensure that pupil progress and outcomes are closely monitored and reviewed.
- The trust is reliant on the quality of its staff. The trustees monitor and review policies, procedures and recruitment to ensure continued development and training of staff, as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning.
- All organisations run the risk of fraud and mismanagement of funds. The trust has appointed an independent professional to carry out auditing work on financial systems and records as required by the academy trust Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area.
- The premises at Southview contains some RAAC. A structural engineer has carried out a thorough investigation and there are no risks. We will keep this situation under review.

Fundraising

On occasions, the trust organises fundraising events. This is always done in conjunction with staff of the trust who ensure fundraising conforms to recognised standards. The trust does not use professional fundraisers or involve commercial participators. In accordance with data protection regulations, permission is sought before marketing directly to individuals and on the rare occasion that marketing is undertaken this is neither intrusive nor persistent. There have been no complaints about fundraising this year.

Streamlined energy and carbon reporting

The academy trust's greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption are as follows:

	2023	2022
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	984,125	981,639
Scope 1 emissions (in tonnes of CO2 equivalent):		
Gas Consumption	103	94
Owned transport	7	5
	110	99
Scope 2 emissions (in tonnes of CO2 equivalent):		
Purchased electricity	110	111
Total gross emissions (in tonnes of CO2 equivalent):	220	210
Intensity ratio:		
Tonnes of CO2 equivalent per pupil	0.38	0.38

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2023

The academy trust has not obtained the comparative data where there were only two schools within the academy trust, but will collate and report these figures for all future years.

The Academy Trust has followed and used the following quantification and reporting methodologies:

- the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines;
- the GHG Reporting Protocol - Corporate Standard; and
- the 2020 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

The chosen intensity ratio is total gross emissions in tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per pupil, the recommended ratio for the sector.

Quantification and Reporting Methodology:-

We have followed the 2019 HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines. We have also used the GHG Reporting Protocol - Corporate Standard and have used the 2022 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity measurement:-

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

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency:-

Heating and lighting are carefully managed by the site manager with regular maintenance and checks of equipment to ensure optimal efficiency. A further addition was made to the trust fleet of electric vehicles during the year and the trust was committed to the purchase of another electric minibus after the year-end.

Plans for Future Periods

The Trust's plans for future periods includes the following;

Supporting Chatten to consolidate and future proof in the face of increasing need.

To continue to expand on work opportunities and coproduce a plan with SEAX Trust and the LA to enable developments and opportunities across the SEN sector.

The development of the respite house and possible Life Skills Centre.

To progress training and work experience opportunities for students working with a local charitable farm proposal to implementation stage.

To drive forward strategic change to develop capacity in our sector.

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.

After due consideration, the members reappointed the company to provide auditing services for 2022-23

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2023

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Andrews', is written over a horizontal dotted line.

M Andrews Chair of Trustees

Date.....**19/12/23**.....

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that Hope Learning Community 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.

As trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer, as accounting officer, for ensuring financial controls conform to 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 Hope Learning Community 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 accounting period. Attendance during the year at meetings of the board of trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings Attended	Out of a Possible
Michael Andrews (<i>Chair</i>)	6	6
Susanna Frost	6	6
Alan Goggin	5	6
Jon Kinnell (<i>resigned May 2023</i>)	3	3
Kerry Linden (<i>appointed May 2023</i>)	1	2
Michael Lucking	5	6
Darren Shaikly	5	6
Russell Sheldon	5	6
Gary Smith (<i>CEO and accounting officer</i>)	6	6

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
(A company limited by guarantee)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2023

Review

The Trust Board oversees the work of the Trust in line with the scheme of delegation and meeting schedule. The Trust Board has one committee in operation which is the Finance, Audit, Risk and Premises Committee. There is also a local governing body in place at each school in the trust with a scheme of delegation in place that allows them to have oversight of local issues.

Over the year the board successfully recruited 1 trustee to fill the skills gaps identified in education. Trustees undertook a self-evaluation of skills in June 2023 and are aware that the board needs to continue to expand and diversify and recruitment will continue to this end. The board will undertake another self-evaluation in Spring 2024.

The board has a Conflicts of Interest policy which sets out the processes to be followed should a conflict of interest arise. A register of all business interests is maintained and published on the trust and academies' website. There is also an opportunity to declare any interests in any agenda items at the start of every board or committee meeting.

The Finance, Audit, Risk and Premises Committee is a sub-committee of the main board of trustees. Its purpose is to address financial matters, monitor the efficiency of the trust and monitor the trust's internal control framework and compliance with regulations. The committee's significant issues that it had to deal with during the year were assessing the financial impact of the issues the uncertainty of teachers' pay and managing the escalating running costs due to high energy prices.

Trustee	Meetings Attended	Out of a Possible
Alan Goggin (Committee chair)	4	6
Michael Andrews	6	6
Michael Lucking	6	6
Darin Shaikly	4	5

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 educational and wider societal outcomes, as well as estates safety and management, 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 or by using a framework where appropriate.

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
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**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2023**

The accounting officer for the academy trust has delivered improved value for money during the year by scrutinising each school expenditure and pursuing appropriate banding levels. This work is ongoing. The Trust has also invested in the infrastructure on a bid system which is brought to Trustees at each meeting.

The board of trustees have been robust in their challenge of spending and budget allocation to ensure that the school was able to set a balanced budget for 2023-24. The trust's level of reserves has continued to grow. It is now £2,531,324.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal financial 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 then manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Hope Learning Community for the period 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023, and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The board of trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The board of trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1st September 2022 to 31st August 2023, and up to the date of the 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 Finance, Audit and Premises 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;
- identification and management of risks.

The board of trustees decided to buy in an internal audit services SBM Services Ltd for 2022/23. This company was appointed due to their level of expertise in the areas that the board had selected for scrutiny and their understanding of the charities and the education sector. Their role includes performing a range of checks on the academy's financial, IT, governance and other systems and providing expert advice on how systems can be improved to reduce fraud, error or irregularity or to improve efficiency. The internal audit work carried out in the period included:

- Purchasing and Creditors - Procurement
- Data Protection Compliance
- Personnel

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY ACADEMY TRUST
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**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2023**

On completion of the audit work, the auditor's report to the board of trustees, through the finance, audit, risk and premises committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the board of trustees' financial responsibilities and annually prepares an annual summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

The internal auditors completed their schedule of work as planned and action plans were drawn up to address any matters raised as areas for improvement. These are monitored by the trust board.

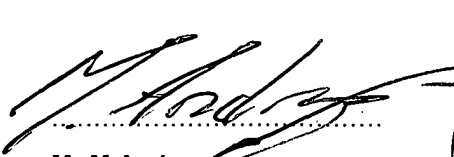
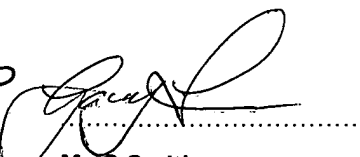
Review of Effectiveness

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

- the specialist advice given by an external company that the trust uses to support the role of the accounting officer
- the work of the internal auditors;
- the work of the external auditors;
- the completion of the school resource management self-assessment tool
- 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 Finance, Audit, Risk and Premises Committee, and a plan to ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

Approved by order of the members of the board of trustees on 19 December 2023 and signed on its behalf, by:

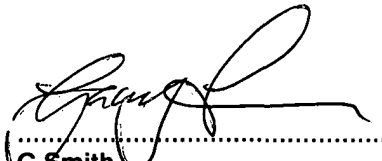
 Mr M Andrews Trustee	 Mr G Smith Accounting Officer
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HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As accounting officer of Hope Learning Community I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy Trust Board of Trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding 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 Academy Trust Handbook 2022 including responsibilities for estates safety and management, as far as funding permits.

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


.....
G. Smith
Accounting Officer

Date: 18/12/23

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

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


- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

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

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

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



M Andrews

Trustee

Date: 19/12/23

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Hope Learning Community (the 'academy trust') for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the Statement of financial activities, the Balance sheet, the Statement of cash flows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Academy Trust's affairs as at 31 August 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Basis for opinion

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

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF HOPE
LEARNING COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)**

Other information

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

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

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the 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

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
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**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF HOPE
LEARNING COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)**

operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the academy trust and for those that are most significant, we enquired into how management ensures compliance is maintained.

We identified that the principle risks of non compliance with laws and regulations related to the DfE/ESFA regulatory industry that the Academy operates in. This effects the ability to continue trading as an Academy Trust. Other relevant laws and regulations of note include health and safety.

Enquiry and review of the entity's transactions was undertaken to highlight any instances of penalties, fines or legal activity which could suggest non-compliance with laws and regulations. There was no contradictory evidence found.

We also considered those laws and regulations that have adirect impact on the preparation of the financial statements including the Companies Act 2006, Accounts Direction and Charities SORP.

We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls) and determined that the principle risks were related to the override of delegated authorities and the misappropriation of grant funding.

In response we incorporated testing of procurement and expenditure and any other entries at risk of falling outside of delegated authorities.

Scrutiny of unusual transactions and analytical procedures were used to help identify risk factors in monies received and expended during the year.

It also stated as a reminder, that the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both management and those charged with governance of the Trust.

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

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

**INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF HOPE
LEARNING COMMUNITY (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 Auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Academy Trust and its members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Daniel Aldworth FCCA FMAAT (Senior statutory auditor)

for and on behalf of

for and on behalf of Griffin Chapman

Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors

4&5 The Cedars, Apex 12

Old Ipswich Road

Colchester

Essex

CO7 7QR

Date:

19 December 2023

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 25/01/2021 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Hope Learning Community during the year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Respective responsibilities of Hope Learning Community's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Hope Learning Community's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 29 November 2016 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2022, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

Approach

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken comprised:

- a) Obtaining a sufficient understanding of the framework of authorities which apply to the academy.
- b) Understanding the system of internal control to secure compliance with the framework of authorities.
- c) Considering the basis upon which the Accounting Officer is able to make statements on regularity, propriety and compliance in the Financial Statements.
- d) Assessing the risk of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance.
- e) Designing and carrying out tests and drawing of conclusions from this work to provide assurance over regularity, propriety and compliance.

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

Conclusion

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



Mr Daniel Aldworth (Reporting Accountant)
for and on behalf of Griffin Chapman
Chartered Accountants and
Registered Auditors
4&5 The Cedars, Apex 12
Old Ipswich Road
Colchester
Essex
CO7 7QR

Date: 19 December 2023

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	58,647	-	5,923,610	5,982,257	256,331
Other trading activities		198,913	-	-	198,913	195,896
Investments	6	274	14,000	-	14,274	242
Charitable activities		-	12,025,042	-	12,025,042	9,900,665
Total income		257,834	12,039,042	5,923,610	18,220,486	10,353,134
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	8	35,222	11,712,607	603,762	12,351,591	11,300,783
Total expenditure		35,222	11,712,607	603,762	12,351,591	11,300,783
Net income/(expenditure)		222,612	326,435	5,319,848	5,868,895	(947,649)
Transfers between funds	19	-	(101,554)	101,554	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		222,612	224,881	5,421,402	5,868,895	(947,649)
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	26	-	920,000	-	920,000	6,940,000
Pension surplus not recognised	26	-	(754,000)	-	(754,000)	-
Net movement in funds		222,612	390,881	5,421,402	6,034,895	5,992,351
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		1,073,709	914,168	23,193,903	25,181,780	19,189,429
Net movement in funds		222,612	390,881	5,421,402	6,034,895	5,992,351
Total funds carried forward		1,296,321	1,305,049	28,615,305	31,216,675	25,181,780

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

The Statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 33 to 59 form part of these financial statements.

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 10391530

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	28,601,187	23,104,553
		<u>28,601,187</u>	<u>23,104,553</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	16	771,151	649,519
Cash at bank and in hand		2,543,773	2,301,406
		<u>3,314,924</u>	<u>2,950,925</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	17	(699,436)	(639,698)
Net current assets		<u>2,615,488</u>	<u>2,311,227</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>31,216,675</u>	<u>25,415,780</u>
Net assets excluding pension asset / liability		<u>31,216,675</u>	<u>25,415,780</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme asset / liability	26	-	(234,000)
Total net assets		<u><u>31,216,675</u></u>	<u><u>25,181,780</u></u>

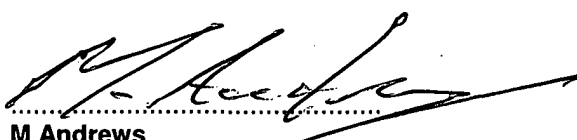
HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)
REGISTERED NUMBER: 10391530

BALANCE SHEET (CONTINUED)
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Funds of the Academy Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	19	28,615,305	23,193,903
Restricted income funds	19	1,305,049	1,148,168
Restricted funds excluding pension asset	19	29,920,354	24,342,071
Pension reserve	19	-	(234,000)
Total restricted funds	19	29,920,354	24,108,071
Unrestricted income funds			
Designated funds	19	450,000	450,000
General funds	19	846,321	623,709
Total unrestricted income funds	19	1,296,321	1,073,709
Total funds		31,216,675	25,181,780

The financial statements on pages 28 to 59 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on and are signed on their behalf, by:

19 December 2023


M Andrews
Trustee

The notes on pages 33 to 59 form part of these financial statements.

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	21	418,879	747,270
Cash flows from investing activities	22	(176,512)	(182,801)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		242,367	564,469
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		2,301,406	1,736,937
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	23, 24	<u>2,543,773</u>	<u>2,301,406</u>

The notes on pages 33 to 59 form part of these financial statements

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies

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

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements of the Academy Trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared under the historic cost convention in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard Applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102), the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

Hope Learning Community meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

1.2 Going concern

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

1.3 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.

- **Legacies**

The recognition of income from legacies is dependent on establishing entitlement, the probability of receipt and the ability to estimate with sufficient accuracy the amount receivable. Evidence of entitlement to a legacy exists when the Academy Trust has sufficient evidence that a gift has been left to them (through knowledge of the existence of a valid will and the death of the benefactor) and the executor is satisfied that the property in question will not be required to satisfy claims in the estate. Receipt of a legacy must be recognised when it is probable that it will be received and the fair value of the amount receivable, which will generally be the expected cash amount to be distributed to the Academy Trust, can be reliably measured.

- **Grants**

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

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

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.3 Income (continued)

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.

The Academy Trust is benefiting from the ESFA's Free School Building Programme. The funding for the programme is not recognised as a capital grant until there is unconditional entitlement from costs being incurred, and the development occurring on a site where the Academy Trust controls through lease the site where a development is occurring. The expenditure is capitalised in assets under construction until the project is complete.

- **Donations**

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

- **Other income**

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

- **Transfer on conversion**

Where assets and liabilities are received by the Academy 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 a transfer on conversion within 'Income from Donations and Capital Grants' to the net assets received.

- **Donated fixed assets (excluding transfers on conversion or into the Academy 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 Capital Grants' 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.

1.4 Expenditure

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

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.4 Expenditure (continued)

- **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.

1.5 Interest receivable

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

1.6 Tangible fixed assets

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

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

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

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Long-term leasehold property	- 50 years, 100 years and 125 years straight line
Furniture and equipment	- 5 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 3 years straight line
Motor vehicles	- 5 years straight line

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.

1.7 Debtors

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

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.8 Cash at bank and in hand

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

1.9 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.

1.10 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 bases are as follows:

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 16. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 17. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument.

1.11 Operating leases

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

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.12 Pensions

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.

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. 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 recognised gains and losses.

1.13 Agency arrangements

The academy trust acts as an agent in distributing 16-19 bursary funds from the ESFA. Payments received from the 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 31.

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.14 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.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by the Trustees for particular purposes. The aim and use of each designated fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

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

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

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

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

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

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit asset/liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 26, will impact the carrying amount of the pension asset/liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2019 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2023. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension asset/liability. This year the present value reflects a short-term allowance for inflation to the impact of the current high inflation rates.

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Donations	58,647	325,000	383,647	45,103
Capital donations and grants	-	5,598,610	5,598,610	211,228
	<u>58,647</u>	<u>5,923,610</u>	<u>5,982,257</u>	<u>256,331</u>
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u>45,103</u>	<u>211,228</u>	<u>256,331</u>	

4. Funding for the Academy's activities

	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Educational operations			
DfE/ESFA grants			
Other DfE/ESFA grants			
General Annual Grant (GAG)	5,370,000	5,370,000	4,820,000
Other DfE/ESFA Grants	323,453	323,453	179,992
Pupil premium	214,665	214,665	190,012
SEN and other Local Authority Grants	6,116,924	6,116,924	4,672,662
Covid 19 and other exceptional funding	-	-	37,999
	<u>12,025,042</u>	<u>12,025,042</u>	<u>9,900,665</u>
	<u>12,025,042</u>	<u>12,025,042</u>	<u>9,900,665</u>
	<u>12,025,042</u>	<u>12,025,042</u>	<u>9,900,665</u>

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

5. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Hire of facilities	3,190	3,190	3,683
Catering income	46,162	46,162	38,483
Services provided	120,983	120,983	112,209
School Sales	27,240	27,240	40,333
School uniform sales	1,338	1,338	1,188
	<u>198,913</u>	<u>198,913</u>	<u>195,896</u>

6. Investment income

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Interest receivable	274	-	274	242
Pension income	-	14,000	14,000	-
	<u>274</u>	<u>14,000</u>	<u>14,274</u>	<u>242</u>
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u>242</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>242</u>	

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

7. Expenditure

	Staff Costs 2023 £	Premises 2023 £	Other 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Educational operations:					
Direct costs	8,286,123	603,762	343,489	9,233,374	7,434,346
Allocated support costs	1,998,976	262,971	856,270	3,118,217	3,866,437
	<u>10,285,099</u>	<u>866,733</u>	<u>1,199,759</u>	<u>12,351,591</u>	<u>11,300,783</u>
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u>9,484,145</u>	<u>830,882</u>	<u>985,756</u>	<u>11,300,783</u>	

8. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

Summary by fund

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Educational Operations	35,222	12,316,369	12,351,591	11,300,783
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u>39,437</u>	<u>11,261,346</u>	<u>11,300,783</u>	

9. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2023 £	Support costs 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	Total funds 2022 £
Educational operations	9,233,374	3,118,217	12,351,591	11,300,783
<i>Total 2022</i>	<u>7,434,346</u>	<u>3,866,437</u>	<u>11,300,783</u>	

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

9. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of direct costs

	Educational operations 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Staff costs	8,286,123	8,286,123	6,574,371
Depreciation	603,762	603,762	538,852
Educational supplies	206,333	206,333	176,640
Examination fees	19,941	19,941	13,608
Educational consultancy	117,215	117,215	130,875
	<u>9,233,374</u>	<u>9,233,374</u>	<u>7,434,346</u>

Analysis of support costs

	Educational operations 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Pension finance costs	-	-	91,000
Staff costs	1,998,976	1,998,976	2,909,774
Technology	24,258	24,258	41,543
Staff development	42,407	42,407	60,401
Recruitment and support	20,581	20,581	15,797
Maintenance of premises	140,948	140,948	88,689
Cleaning	67,397	67,397	59,228
Rent and rates	82,185	82,185	16,971
Energy costs	205,790	205,790	109,635
Insurance	17,120	17,120	17,507
Security and transport	54,246	54,246	58,324
Catering	129,524	129,524	79,089
Bank charges	919	919	833
Legal and professional fees	186,590	186,590	163,868
Other support costs	147,276	147,276	153,778
	<u>3,118,217</u>	<u>3,118,217</u>	<u>3,866,437</u>

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

10. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2023 £	2022 £
Operating lease rentals	62,162	57,113
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	603,762	538,852
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	6,300	6,300
- accounts preparation and other services	5,200	4,850
	<u>615,324</u>	<u>606,915</u>

11. Staff

a. Staff costs

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Wages and salaries	7,969,911	6,311,275
Social security costs	583,296	489,346
Pension costs	1,731,892	2,683,524
	<u>10,285,099</u>	<u>9,484,145</u>

b. Severance payments

The Academy Trust paid 1 severance payments in the year (2022 - -), disclosed in the following bands:

	2023 No.	2022 No.
£0 - £25,000	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

11. Staff (continued)

c. Staff numbers

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

	2023 No.	<i>2022</i> <i>No.</i>
Leadership	12	<i>10</i>
Teachers	64	<i>57</i>
Administration and support	310	<i>265</i>
	<hr/> 386 <hr/>	<hr/> <i>332</i> <hr/>

d. Higher paid staff

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

	2023 No.	<i>2022</i> <i>No.</i>
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	2	<i>2</i>
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	1	<i>2</i>
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	1	<i>-</i>
In the band £110,000 - £120,000	-	<i>1</i>
In the band £120,000 - £130,000	1	<i>-</i>
	<hr/> 1 <hr/>	<hr/> <i>-</i> <hr/>

e. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £589,514 (*2022 £555,519*).

HOPE LEARNING COMMUNITY
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

12. Central services

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

- Leadership and management
- Education support
- Business management and operational support services
- Facilities management support
- Financial management support
- Governance support

The Academy Trust charges for these services on the following basis:

4% of ESFA and LA income for established trusts within the MAT.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Market Field School	318,602	-
Southview School	90,480	-
Total	409,082	-

13. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

One or more Trustees has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the Academy Trust. The principal and other staff Trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of principal and staff members under their contracts of employment. The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

		2023 £	2022 £
Mr G Smith CEO	Remuneration	120,000 - 125,000	115,000 - 120,000
	Pension contributions paid	25,000 - 30,000	25,000 - 30,000

During the year ended 31 August 2023, no Trustee expenses have been incurred (2022 - £NIL).

14. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

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

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023**

15. Tangible fixed assets

	Long-term leasehold property £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 September 2022	23,935,366	357,154	436,282	239,582	24,968,384
Additions	5,825,000	165,865	79,214	30,317	6,100,396
At 31 August 2023	29,760,366	523,019	515,496	269,899	31,068,780
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2022	1,375,576	155,488	214,795	117,972	1,863,831
Charge for the year	391,480	73,780	97,957	40,545	603,762
At 31 August 2023	1,767,056	229,268	312,752	158,517	2,467,593
Net book value					
At 31 August 2023	27,993,310	293,751	202,744	111,382	28,601,187
At 31 August 2022	22,559,790	201,666	221,487	121,610	23,104,553

16. Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	82,674	110,081
Prepayments and accrued income	217,150	117,348
Tax recoverable	471,327	422,090
	771,151	649,519

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17. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	18,162	106,358
Other taxation and social security	211,676	174,216
Other creditors	154,817	47,468
Accruals and deferred income	314,781	311,656
	<u>699,436</u>	<u>639,698</u>
	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	7,081	12,003
Resources deferred during the year	14,181	7,081
Amounts released from previous periods	(7,081)	(12,003)
	<u>14,181</u>	<u>7,081</u>

Grants income funding recieved in advance £14,181 (2022 : £7,081), income deferred for trips not held during the year.

18. Financial instruments

	2023 £	2022 £
Financial assets		
Financial assets measured at fair value through income and expenditure	<u>2,543,773</u>	<u>2,301,406</u>

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

19. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
Trust Development Project Fund	450,000	-	-	-	-	450,000
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	623,709	257,834	(35,222)	-	-	846,321
Total Unrestricted funds	1,073,709	257,834	(35,222)	-	-	1,296,321
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant	1,148,168	5,370,000	(3,985,565)	(1,227,554)	-	1,305,049
Other DfE/EFSA Grants	-	323,453	(323,453)	-	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	214,665	(214,665)	-	-	-
Local Authority Grants	-	5,973,429	(5,973,429)	-	-	-
Autism Hub	-	75,000	(75,000)	-	-	-
ESSET	-	68,495	(68,495)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(234,000)	14,000	(1,072,000)	1,126,000	166,000	-
	914,168	12,039,042	(11,712,607)	(101,554)	166,000	1,305,049
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Inherited assets	12,712,366	-	(224,624)	-	-	12,487,742
Assets purchased from GAG	609,471	-	(189,600)	137,712	-	557,583

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19. Statement of funds (continued)

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
ESFA capital grants	1,186,066	98,610	(44,622)	-	-	1,240,054
Chatten Free School land and buildings	8,585,000	-	(115,000)	-	-	8,470,000
LA funds for furnishing new Southview building and pool	89,347	-	-	(75,228)	-	14,119
Southview new building furnishings	11,653	-	(2,097)	39,070	-	48,626
Market Field Respite House	-	325,000	(1,083)	-	-	323,917
LA Southview College and Pool new Buildings	-	5,500,000	(26,736)	-	-	5,473,264
	<u>23,193,903</u>	<u>5,923,610</u>	<u>(603,762)</u>	<u>101,554</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>28,615,305</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>24,108,071</u>	<u>17,962,652</u>	<u>(12,316,369)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>166,000</u>	<u>29,920,354</u>
Total funds	<u>25,181,780</u>	<u>18,220,486</u>	<u>(12,351,591)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>166,000</u>	<u>31,216,675</u>

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

Restricted general funds - these relate to the academy's development and operational activities.

The designated fund purpose has been updated to reflect plans to utilise these funds on projects where there is a more immediate pupil benefit.

Restricted fixed asset fund - these funds relate to fixed assets held and funds to be carried forward and used for capital projects in future years.

During the year £101,554 has been transferred from the restricted general annual grant fund to the restricted fixed asset fund (2022 : £272,393).

The pension reserve relates to the Academy's share of the balance of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the Academy Trust was not subject to a limit on

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19. Statement of funds (continued)

the amount of GAG it could carry forward at 31 August 2023.

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

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2021 £</i>	<i>Income £</i>	<i>Expenditure £</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2022 £</i>
Unrestricted funds						
Designated funds						
Trust Development Project Fund	-	-	-	450,000	-	450,000
General funds						
General Funds - all funds	962,905	241,241	(130,437)	(450,000)	-	623,709
Total Unrestricted funds	962,905	241,241	(130,437)	-	-	1,073,709
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant	769,013	4,820,000	(3,352,452)	(1,088,393)	-	1,148,168
Other DfE/EFSA Grants	9,377	217,991	(227,368)	-	-	-
Pupil Premium	-	190,012	(190,012)	-	-	-
Local Authority Grants	-	4,532,065	(4,532,065)	-	-	-
Autism Hub	-	75,000	(75,000)	-	-	-
ESSET	-	65,597	(65,597)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(5,801,000)	-	(2,189,000)	816,000	6,940,000	(234,000)
	(5,022,610)	9,900,665	(10,631,494)	(272,393)	6,940,000	914,168
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Inherited assets	12,939,578	-	(227,212)	-	-	12,712,366

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19. Statement of funds (continued)

	<i>Balance at 1 September 2021 £</i>	<i>Income £</i>	<i>Expenditure £</i>	<i>Transfers in/out £</i>	<i>Gains/ (Losses) £</i>	<i>Balance at 31 August 2022 £</i>
Assets purchased from GAG	512,555	-	(175,477)	272,393	-	609,471
ESFA capital grants	1,097,001	110,228	(21,163)	-	-	1,186,066
Chatten Free School land and buildings	8,700,000	-	(115,000)	-	-	8,585,000
LA funds for furnishing new Southview building and pool	-	101,000	-	(11,653)	-	89,347
Southview new building furnishings	-	-	-	11,653	-	11,653
	<u>23,249,134</u>	<u>211,228</u>	<u>(538,852)</u>	<u>272,393</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>23,193,903</u>
Total Restricted funds	<u>18,226,524</u>	<u>10,111,893</u>	<u>(11,170,346)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,940,000</u>	<u>24,108,071</u>
Total funds	<u><u>19,189,429</u></u>	<u><u>10,353,134</u></u>	<u><u>(11,300,783)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>6,940,000</u></u>	<u><u>25,181,780</u></u>

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 were allocated as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Market Field School	2,065,538	1,945,840
Southview School	342,542	208,638
Chatten Free School	193,290	67,399
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	2,601,370	2,221,877
Restricted fixed asset fund	28,615,305	23,193,903
Pension reserve	-	(234,000)
Total	<u><u>31,216,675</u></u>	<u><u>25,181,780</u></u>

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

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
Market Field School	5,157,659	1,156,203	320,855	568,538	7,203,255	7,079,295
Southview School	1,491,890	399,073	107,575	186,346	2,184,884	2,098,599
Chatten Free School	1,643,108	437,166	53,023	226,393	2,359,690	1,584,037
Academy Trust	8,292,657	1,992,442	481,453	981,277	11,747,829	10,761,931

20. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current year

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	28,601,187	28,601,187
Current assets	1,296,321	2,004,485	14,118	3,314,924
Creditors due within one year	-	(699,436)	-	(699,436)
Total	1,296,321	1,305,049	28,615,305	31,216,675

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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20. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior year

	<i>Unrestricted funds 2022 £</i>	<i>Restricted funds 2022 £</i>	<i>Restricted fixed asset funds 2022 £</i>	<i>Total funds 2022 £</i>
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	23,104,553	23,104,553
Current assets	1,111,093	1,750,482	89,350	2,950,925
Creditors due within one year	(37,384)	(602,314)	-	(639,698)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(234,000)	-	(234,000)
Total	1,073,709	914,168	23,193,903	25,181,780

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Net income/(expenditure) for the year (as per Statement of financial activities)	5,868,895	(947,649)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	603,762	538,852
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(5,923,610)	(211,228)
Interest receivable	(274)	(242)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	(54,000)	1,282,000
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	(14,000)	91,000
Decrease in stocks	-	840
Increase in debtors	(121,632)	(314,674)
Increase in creditors	59,738	308,371
Net cash provided by operating activities	418,879	747,270

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22. Cash flows from investing activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	274	242
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(6,100,396)	(394,271)
Capital grants from DfE Group	98,610	211,228
Capital funding received from sponsors and others	5,825,000	-
Net cash used in investing activities	(176,512)	(182,801)

23. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2023 £	2022 £
Cash in hand and at bank	2,543,773	2,301,406
Total cash and cash equivalents	2,543,773	2,301,406

24. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2022 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2023 £
Cash at bank and in hand	2,301,406	242,367	2,543,773
	2,301,406	242,367	2,543,773

25. Capital commitments

	2023 £	2022 £
Contracted for but not provided in these financial statements		
Purchase of additional minibus	30,316	-

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
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26. Pension commitments

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

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

Contributions amounting to £77,487 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2023 (2022 - £68,266) and are included within creditors.

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

The latest actuarial TPS valuation results as at 31 March 2020, were released in October 2023. The revised employer contribution rate arising from this valuation is due to be implemented from 1 April 2024.

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26. Pension commitments (continued)

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £674,834 (2022 - £587,524).

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

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The Academy Trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Academy 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 2023 was £1,381,000 (2022 - £1,002,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £1,126,000 (2022 - £816,000) and employees' contributions totalled £ 255,000 (2022 - £186,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are between 24.4% and 25% for employers and 5.5% and 12% for employees.

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

The Academy has a surplus of £754,000 arising on the FRS102 valuation of the LGPS. The Academy considers that an accounting surplus should only be recognised to the extent that it is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future, or through refunds. The present value of such economic benefits is commonly referred to as the "asset ceiling". Therefore the £754,000 asset has been derecognised in these accounts and instead represents an additional movement in other comprehensive income.

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2023	<i>2022</i>
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.88	<i>3.9</i>
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	3.15	<i>3.15</i>
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.28	<i>4.2</i>
Inflation assumption (CPI)	2.85	<i>2.9</i>
Commutation of pensions to lump sums	50	<i>50</i>

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

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26. Pension commitments (continued)

	2023 Years	<i>2022 Years</i>
<i>Retiring today</i>		
Males	20.70	<i>21.0</i>
Females	23.20	<i>23.5</i>
<i>Retiring in 20 years</i>		
Males	22.0	<i>22.3</i>
Females	24.6	<i>24.9</i>

Sensitivity analysis

	2023 £000	<i>2022 £000</i>
Discount rate +0.1%	545	<i>59</i>
Discount rate -0.1%	(657)	<i>(62)</i>
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	58	<i>54</i>
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(57)	<i>(53)</i>
CPI rate +0.1%	3	<i>3</i>
CPI rate -0.1%	(3)	<i>(3)</i>

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31 August 2023 £	<i>At 31 August 2022 £</i>
Equities	4,319,000	<i>3,206,000</i>
Gilts	95,000	<i>361,000</i>
Property	581,000	<i>539,000</i>
Cash and other liquid assets	218,000	<i>170,000</i>
Asset backed securities	1,174,000	<i>853,000</i>
Other managed funds	1,035,000	<i>567,000</i>
Total market value of assets	7,422,000	<i>5,696,000</i>

The actual return on scheme assets was £297,000 (2022 - £13,000).

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

26. Pension commitments (continued)

The amounts recognised in the Statement of financial activities are as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Current service cost	1,069,000	2,096,000
Interest income	(266,000)	(88,000)
Interest cost	252,000	179,000
Administrative expenses	3,000	2,000
Total amount recognised in the Statement of financial activities	1,058,000	2,189,000

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

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 September	5,930,000	10,503,000
Transferred in on existing academies joining the trust	1,069,000	2,096,000
Interest cost	252,000	179,000
Employee contributions	255,000	186,000
Actuarial gains/(loss)	(759,000)	(7,015,000)
Benefits paid	(79,000)	(19,000)
At 31 August	6,668,000	5,930,000

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

	2023 £	2022 £
At 1 September	5,696,000	4,702,000
Interest income	266,000	88,000
Actuarial gains/(losses)	161,000	(75,000)
Employer contributions	1,126,000	816,000
Employee contributions	255,000	186,000
Benefits paid	(79,000)	(19,000)
Administration expenses	(3,000)	(2,000)
At 31 August	7,422,000	5,696,000

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

27. Operating lease commitments

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

	2023 £	2022 £
Not later than 1 year	2,445	3,076
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	4	2,446
Later than 5 years	94	-
	<u>2,543</u>	<u>5,522</u>

28. 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.

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

During the year S Smith the wife of the CEO Mr G Smith was employed by the trust as head of wellbeing and was remunerated in accordance with her contract of employment at band 9 point 33 of the payscale.

During the year I Coe the step-daughter of the CEO Mr G Smith was employed by the trust as a sports co-ordinator she was remunerated in accordance with her contract of employment at UQT point 3 of the payscale.

30. Agency arrangements

The trust distributes 16-19 and other bursary funds to students as an agent for the ESFA. In the accounting period ending 31st August 2023 the trust received £80,858 (2022 : £69,659) and disbursed £39,207 (2022 : £48,308) from the fund. An amount of £87,496 (2022 : £45,845) is included in other creditors relating to undistributed funds that are re-payable to the ESFA.