

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

**TRUSTEES' REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

<b>Members</b>	Paul Morrall Andrew Nicholas Tom Sheldon Anthony Wilde (resigned 18 October 2023) Margaret McAlpine Keith Carrano (resigned 4 October 2024)
<b>Trustees</b>	John West Delon Laurent (resigned 9 November 2023) Karen Mautner Alex Monk, Chair of Trustees Stephen Way, Vice Chair of Trustees Julie Rayson Bronwen Tumani (appointed 6 June 2024) Vincent McInerney Jonathan Simms
<b>Company registered number</b>	10309116
<b>Company name</b>	Connect Education Trust
<b>Principal and registered office</b>	Chesterfield Primary School Chesterfield Road Enfield London EN3 6BG
<b>Accounting Officer</b>	Androulla Nicou
<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>	Androulla Nicou, Accounting Officer/CEO Alison Cannur, CFO (resigned 31 August 2024) Estelle Tierney, COO/CFO Allan McLean, Chief Education Officer
<b>Independent Auditors</b>	Price Bailey LLP Chartered Accountants Statutory Auditors Causeway House 1 Dane Street Bishop's Stortford Hertfordshire CM23 3BT
<b>Bankers</b>	Lloyds Bank plc PO Box 1000 BX1 1LT

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**TRUSTEES' REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

The Trustees present their Annual Report together with the financial statements and Auditor's Report of the Connect Education Trust (the Trust or the Charitable Company) for the year ended 31 August 2024.

The Annual Report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' Report, and a Directors' Report under company law.

During 2023/24 the Trust operated six Primary Academies and one all through Special Academy. At the October 2023 census the Schools had a combined pupil roll of 3460 pupils of which 254 were nursery pupils. This figure was 3,432 in the October 2022 census. The Trust employed a total of 476 staff.

### **Introduction**

We are Connect, a leading Multi-Academy Trust creating remarkable futures for thousands of pupils through educational excellence. With seven schools, 476 people, and over 3000 pupils under our care, we are proud to be making a difference to the communities we serve.

Since 2016, we've welcomed Bowes, Carterhatch Junior, Chesterfield, Delta, Grange Park and Hazelbury Primary Schools to our Multi Academy Trust, as well as Fern House – a Special School for 5-16 year olds.

We firmly believe that we are better together, and the collective experience of our people and our individual school communities allows us to achieve far more than we ever could alone.

Connect schools offer exceptional education to our pupils. A place where pupils and our people enjoy coming to school and where their full potential is realised.

Our mission is to connect with our pupils and offer them an exceptional education. Recruiting inspirational and committed teachers, school leaders and people to empower each and every one of the children in our care.

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The Trust is a company (number 10309116) limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are its primary governing documents. The Trustees of The Charitable Company are also the Directors for the purposes of company law. The terms Trustee and Director are interchangeable. The Charitable Company includes the following Schools:

- Bowes Primary School converted on 1st September 2016
- Chesterfield Primary School converted on 1st September 2016
- Hazelbury Primary School converted on 1st September 2016
- Grange Park Primary School converted on 1st November 2017
- Fern House School sponsored on 1st November 2017
- Carterhatch Junior School converted on 1st January 2018
- Delta Primary School opened 1st September 2018

The operation of the Schools and employment of staff are the responsibility of the Trustees. The Trust retains control of School budgets and finances, and monitors these through its Board of Trustees (the Board).

Details of the Trustees who served throughout the period are included in the Reference and Administrative Details section. Within this Report the term Trustee or Director refers to a member of the Board of Trustees and the term Governor to a member of a Local Governing Body (LGB).

### **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.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

**Trustees and Officers' Indemnities**

In accordance with normal commercial practice the Trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees, Governors 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 12 to the accounts.

**Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees**

Trustees are appointed for a fixed term, normally four years. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is an ex official member of the Board of Trustees. Other Trustees are appointed by the Members or by the Board of Trustees. The Articles of Association make provision for ten Trustees plus the CEO.

Towards the end of the last financial year, one Trustee resigned, and one Trustee vacancy was filled. The Trust Board consisted of eight Trustees.

**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.

In 2023-24 the Trustees met 11 times a year in total; 4 full Trust Board meetings, 3 Education and Safeguarding Committee meetings and 4 Finance and Resources meetings. The Board has a lead Trustee for specific areas of responsibility meeting senior leaders between meetings and reporting back to the Board. The Pay and Performance committee also meets 3 times per year.

The Trustees are responsible for setting strategic policy and monitoring the Trust budget. Through monitoring the budget, they make major decisions about the direction of the Trust, capital expenditure and senior appointments. The Trustees monitor standards, performance and pupil outcomes, ensuring each School retains or improves their Ofsted judgement and is working to achieve best possible outcomes for all pupils.

The CEO of Connect Education Trust is the Accounting Officer.

The Executive Leadership Team comprises three Chief Officers who work together to provide strategic leadership across the Trust. They work with Headteachers to ensure each School is compliant with the strategic aims of the Trust.

The Headteachers along with their Senior Leadership Team (SLT) are responsible for the day-to-day operation of their School, in particular organising staff, resources, and pupils. The Headteachers are responsible for the authorisation of spending within agreed budgets and for the appointment of staff following vetting and safeguarding recruitment processes.

**Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel**

Key Management Personnel include Trustees and those staff to whom the Trustees have delegated significant authority and responsibility in the day-to-day running of the Trust. The Trust has adopted the national pay and conditions for teaching and local agreements for support staff.

Pay and remuneration of senior leaders are decided by a variety of contributory factors, such as the school group size, performance management and the level of experience of each staff member. In addition, pay levels may be affected by nationally agreed pay awards, the ability to recruit and retain in post, all of which are in accordance with the Connect Education Trust's appointment and pay policies.

The remuneration for the Chief Executive Officer is considered and approved by the Pay and Performance Committee which is a panel of the Board of Trustees.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

**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 is inevitable that from time to time transactions will take place with organisations in which Trustees may have an interest. All transactions involving such organisations are conducted at arm's length and in accordance with the Trust's financial regulations and normal 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. All Trustees, Local Governing Body Members and staff complete a register of business interest to declare their interests annually. The Trust does not have a formal sponsor.

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

The Trustees have implemented clear policies and procedures for dealing fairly with suppliers. Formal orders are placed and agreed payment terms always adhered to.

The Trustees consider pupils and parents to be their "customers". Whilst pupils encounter engagement on a daily basis, engagement with parents is carried out through regular newsletters and face to face meetings.

**Objects and Aims**

The principal object and aim of the Charitable Company is the operation of a number of Academy Schools to provide free education and care for pupils of different abilities within its local community between the ages of 2 and 16.

**Objectives, Strategies and Activities**

During the year the Trust has worked towards these aims by:

- All Schools have maintained the highest quality of provision for all pupils.
- Continuing to develop outstanding governance and leadership.
- Continuing to achieve financial stability and maximising the best use of staff and resources.
- Ensuring that each School retains or improves their existing Ofsted judgement and that they are working to achieve best possible outcomes for all pupils.

Our success in fulfilling our aims can be measured by:

- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2).
- The retention and recruitment of high-quality staff.
- External School Improvement Reports.
- The provision of high-quality training (CPD) for all staff, Trustees and LGB members.
- Monitoring pupil numbers to ensure that School budgets are healthy and resources are used effectively.
- Effective succession planning in key roles.

**Public Benefit**

The Trustees believe that by working towards the objects and aims of the Trust as detailed above, they have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the Charity Commission.

**Achievements and Performance**

The children completed SATS assessments in 2024. DfE performance tables will be released in December 2024. However, the data will be available from October /November through the ASP (Analyse School Performance) and IDSR (Inspection Data Summary Report). All of our schools have outcomes in line or well above the national average with the exception of Chesterfield.

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The national average combined score was 60 %. Bowes, Grange Park, Hazelbury and Carterhatch are all well above the national average for attainment at KS2. Hazelbury and Carterhatch have far higher numbers of disadvantaged pupils than the national average. All of these schools have set accurate targets and performed extremely well.

Chesterfield and Delta both have extremely high numbers of disadvantaged pupils. Attainment at Chesterfield in 2024 remained in line with results in 2023 which are well below the national average outcomes. Delta in 2023 maintained improvements of the previous year and remains in line with the national average but is based on a very small cohort of pupils.

Progress data will not be available this year. The Trust has a clear annual Education Action Plan and a three year Education Strategy in place to tackle any underachievement, whilst also being mindful of the national context in 2024 and the impact on outcomes for disadvantaged pupils following the pandemic.

### **Ofsted Visits**

There were no Ofsted inspections in 23-24.

### **Performance Indicators**

The Trusts main key performance indicators are as follows:

### **Pupil Outcomes**

- End of year statutory tests for Key 2, Phonics check in Year 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes. Key Stage 1 statutory assessment has been removed from 23/24
- Reports from Ofsted
- Reports from the Chief Education Officer and external consultants where appropriate

### **Financial Performance**

- As funding is based on pupil numbers this is a key performance indicator. Total pupil numbers at the October 2023 census were 3,206 (excluding nursery) This number was 3432 in the previous Autumn census. Pupil numbers are closely monitored as falling pupil numbers present a financial risk to the schools.
- Another key financial performance indicator is staffing costs as a percentage of total income. For 2023/24 this was 82%. The Trustees are confident that staffing levels are closely monitored to agreed Full Time Equivalents and staffing structures all approved by the Trust Board.
- The Trust Board also monitors premises costs against the General Annual Grant (GAG) income, capitation spend for curriculum departments to GAG income, total income less grants and cash flow on a regular basis to ensure that the budget is set and managed appropriately. All of the above KPI's were within the parameters set by the Trust Board.
- The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee examines the financial performance of the Trust on a monthly Going Concern basis with a detailed review of the accounts.

### **Going Concern**

After making appropriate enquiries, the Trustees have a reasonable expectation that the Trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it has adopted 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.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

**Promoting the Success of the Charitable Company**

The Trustees have an obligation to act in a way most likely to promote the success of the Charitable Company. Details regarding engagement with employees, suppliers, parents, pupils and other connected parties have been covered in separate notes within the Trustees' Report. The obligation to assess the likely consequences of decisions in the longer term is noted within the reserves policy below as Trustees balance the needs of current and future cohorts.

The Trustees have identified reputational and ethical areas as key risks and their actions in these areas are covered within Principal risks and uncertainties later within this Strategic Report.

**Financial Review**

The principal source of funding for the Trust is the General Annual Grant (GAG) and other grants that it receives from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). For the year ended 31 August 2024 the Trust received £25,700,399 GAG and other Government funding (excluding capital). Total income for the year was £27,333,769. A high percentage of income is spent on wages and salaries and support costs to deliver the Trust's primary objective of the provision of education. During the year the Trust spent £26,412,765 on general running expenses. The carry forward for 2023/24 is £131,407,203 of restricted fixed asset funds, £2,373,048 unrestricted funding and £604,844 of restricted general funds. The surplus for the year was £510,576 excluding charges relating to the LGPS and movements in fixed asset funds.

Due to the accounting rules for the Local Government Pension Scheme under FRS102, the Trust is recognising a £Nil balance on the pension deficit. The actuarial valuation obtained calculated a net asset position for the trust. As there is insufficient certainty as to whether the Trust would ever be able access the future economic benefit associated with this calculation, the asset has not been recognised on the Balance Sheet at 31 August 2024.

**Reserves Policy**

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. The Trustees monitor estimated year-end carry forward figures via the regular reports from the Chief Financial Officer and Finance Director. The budget plan identifies how any carry forward 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 funds) is £2,373,048. This has been built up from a mixture of locally raised income and balances transferred from the predecessor schools.

The Trust Board agreed that all schools within the Trust should have a 3-year financial plan to set aside a school reserve, equal to 6% of GAG and associated income. The school reserve will be the funds that the school draws on initially in the event of a requirement of additional funding. The Trust has placed surplus funds in the 32-day notice account and a 95-day notice account.

The policy of the Trust is to carry forward a prudent level of resources designed to meet the long-term cyclical needs of renewal and any other unforeseen contingencies, subject to the constraint that the level of resources does not exceed the level permitted by the DfE.

The Trust's balance on restricted general funds (excluding pension reserve) plus the balance on unrestricted funds at 31 August 2024 was £2,977,892.

The cash balance of the Trust has been very healthy all year, ending the year with a balance of £4,209,329. A significant proportion of this cash is held against specific projects and is not available to meet normal recurring expenditure. The Trustees monitor cash flow as part of the Committee financial reports and attempt to hold a minimum of £60,000 to cover short term cash flow variances.

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**Investment Policy**

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.

**Principal Risks and Uncertainties**

The Board of Trustees works to maintain a central risk register identifying the major risks, to which each School is exposed, and identifying actions and procedures to mitigate those risks. This register is approved and monitored by the Board of Trustees. The internal control systems and the exposure to identified risks are monitored on behalf of the Trustees at Committee meetings.

The principal risks facing the Trust are outlined below; those facing the Schools at an operational level are addressed by its systems and by internal financial and other controls.

The Trustees report that the Trust's financial and internal controls conform to guidelines issued by the ESFA, and that improvements to the wider framework of systems dealing with business risk and risk management strategy continue to be made and formally documented. It is recognised that systems can only provide reasonable but not absolute assurance that major risks have been adequately managed.

As a group of schools, the level of financial risk is low. Cash flows can be reliably forecast, monitored and reported. Staff costs make up the majority of expenditure and are relatively stable with contingencies in place to cover such items as staff sickness and maternity leave.

The Trustees assess the other principal risks and uncertainties facing the Connect Education Trust as follows:

- Each School within the Trust has considerable reliance on continued Government funding through the ESFA 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;
- Failures in governance and/or management - the risk in this area arises from potential failure to manage effectively the Trust's finances, internal controls, compliance with regulations and legislation, statutory returns, etc. The Trustees continue to review and ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate these risks;
- Reputational - the continuing success of the individual Schools is dependent on continuing to attract pupils in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk Trustees, ensure that student progress and outcomes are closely monitored and reviewed;
- Safeguarding and child protection - the Trustees continue to ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the areas of selection and monitoring of staff, the operation of child protection policies and procedures, health & safety and discipline;
- Staffing - the success of the Schools is reliant on the quality of its staff and the Trustees monitor and review policies and procedures and recruitment to ensure continued development and training of staff as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning;
- Fraud and mismanagement of funds - The Trustees have appointed Azets to carry out independent and external checks 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;
- Financial instruments – the Trust only deals with bank balances, cash and trade creditors, with limited trade (and other) debtors. The risk in this area is considered to be low;
- Defined benefit pension liability – as the Government has agreed to meet the defined benefit pension liability of any school ceasing to exist the main risk to the Trust is an annual cash flow funding of part of the deficit. Trustees take these payments into account when setting the annual budget plan; and
- Data protection/cyber security risks are increasing.

The Trust and each School have continued to strengthen its risk management process throughout the year by improving the process and ensuring staff awareness, including the consideration of those risks impacting on trustees' responsibilities to ensure the trust's estate is safe, well maintained and complies with relevant regulations.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

**Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting**

Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 - UK:		
<b>Total energy consumption (kWh)</b>		1,802,679
Energy consumption break down (kWh)		
• Gas		309,115
• Electricity		1,491,294
• Transport fuel - owned transport (e.g. mini bus)	1,373	2,128
• Transport fuel - employee vehicles	126	142
Taking the kWh above, now convert into CO <sub>2</sub> e using conversion tables		<b>IN TONNES</b>
<b>Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e</b>		
Gas consumption		57.00
Owned transport - mini-buses		5.00
<b>Total scope 1</b>		62.00
<b>Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e</b>		
Electricity		317.00
<b>Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e</b>		
Business travel in employee owned vehicles		1.00
<b>Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e</b>		380.00
<b>Intensity ratio</b>		
Number of pupils		3460
Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e per pupil		0.1098265896

**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 2020 UK Government’s Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

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**TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)**  
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**Intensity measurement**

The chosen intensity measurement ratio is total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e per pupil, the recommended ratio for the sector.

**Measures taken to improve energy efficiency**

The use of video conferencing which was crucial during the lockdown period has continued to be encouraged as an effective way to hold meetings. Central team staff have embraced a working from home model, which has saved on car journeys to and from the place of work.

**Plans for Future Periods**

**Strategic Intentions**

The Trust Board have agreed six key strategic intentions for the Trust that will steer our growth and development over the next three years:

1. People and Partners
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3. Curriculum and Opportunity
4. Standards and Outcomes
5. Governance and Leadership
6. Sustainability

It is essential that our strategic planning is realised through effective operational delivery. There are a collection of strategies and associated delivery plans which guide the work of the Trust and that of our Schools. Our approach to managing change is founded on a systematic approach, where each area of work has its own plan. As the Trust develops and with the changing educational landscape, as a provider, it is critical that we remain flexible and are able to quickly adapt and change to deliver the most effective services for our children and young people.

**Fundraising**

The Trust only held small fundraising events during the year including Summer Fayres, Christmas fetes and non-uniform days. The Trust does not work with professional fundraisers or companies who carry out fundraising on its behalf. During the year no complaints or issues have arisen as a result of the fundraising events.

**Trade Unions**

During the year the Trust spent £11,092 on the Trade Union facilities' time SLA.

**Employee Involvement**

Where appropriate the Trust consults on matters such as policy, pay, health, safety and welfare with the relevant support staff and teaching trade unions. The Trust provides information to employees generally by way of email, memoranda and staff meetings. Central conferences and workshops are provided to Trustees, Headteachers, School Leaders and all our people. The People Engagement Committee steers our way as an established Multi Academy Trust and ascertains our people-based priorities to ensure that we will achieve our mission. The strategy outlines what our staff can expect from the Trust and what the Trust expects from its staff.

The People Engagement Committee establishes a two-way working relationship to ensure the Trust hears the views from a wide range of staff. It is the key to delivering our Multi Academy Trust Development Plan. The People Engagement Committee will make our vision a reality. We will continue to consult with our people as we further develop the strategy. The Strategy is based on a continuous development process and its content will continue to change as we move forward as an inclusive Trust.

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At each of the Schools, information is channelled via the Leadership meetings. Employees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with Ofsted reports, available from the Trust website and pupil progress and attainment statistics when they are made available.

**Equal Opportunities Policy**

It is the Trust's policy to ensure equality of opportunities is afforded to staff, students and other stakeholders. Training, career development and promotion opportunities are available to all employees. Applications for employment by disabled persons are given full and fair consideration for all vacancies in accordance with their particular aptitude and abilities. In the event of employees becoming disabled then every effort is made to retrain them in order that their employment within the Trust may continue.

Funds Held as Custodian Trustee on Behalf of Others

No funds were held as Custodian Trustee on behalf of others.

**Auditor**

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

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

The Trustees' Report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by the Board of Trustees on and signed on its behalf by:

**Alex Monk**  
Chair of Trustees

Date:

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**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**

**Scope of responsibility**

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

As Trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance. These are shared annually with the Trust Board and Trustees are encouraged to review and take account of these documents as part of their roles.

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer, as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between Connect 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 4 times during the year. Plus, each committee of the Trust Board met at least 3 times during the year.

Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
John West	4	4
Delon Laurent (resigned 9 November 2023)	0	4
Karen Mautner	4	4
Alex Monk, Chair of Trustees	4	4
Stephen Way, Vice Chair of Trustees	4	4
Julie Rayson	4	4
Bronwen Tumani	1	1
Vincent McInerney	3	4
Jonathan Simms	4	4

**Review of year**

In the 2023-2024 academic year, the Trust Board comprised seven members, with one vacancy filled in June 2024, ending the year with a total of eight Trustees.

The Chair of Trustees stepped down on 02.08.2024, and the Chair Designate, who had been training throughout the academic year, assumed the role on 03.08.2024. To ensure continuity for Connect, the Ex-Chair of Trustees has remained on the Trust Board as a Trustee.

The full Trust Board convened four times over the year, with lead Trustees in specific areas meeting with senior leaders between sessions and reporting their insights back to the Board.

The Trust also maintains three key committees: the Finance and Resources Committee, the Education and Safeguarding Committee, and the Pay and Performance Committee.

The Finance and Resources Committee met four times, the Education and Safeguarding Committee convened on three occasions, and the Pay and Performance Committee met three times to review the Trust's performance management.

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**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)**

**Governance (continued)**

**Conflicts of interest**

The Trust manages conflicts of interest through a robust procurement policy and by maintaining an up-to-date and complete register of interests. Relevant details from this register are shared across the organisation as appropriate. The Trust continues to collect enhanced data in relation to close family members of Members, Trustees and Key Management Personnel.

**Governance reviews**

The Trust Board carried out a skills audit in July 2023 to address any gaps in skills through a training programme for the next academic year. The skills audit is also used to inform the Trust Board of skills required to fill vacancies as they arise.

In March 2024 the Trust engaged a National Governance Association external review of governance to ensure that the current governance structure was fit for purpose for growth. The Trust Board wanted to understand the effectiveness of governance within the Trust and how this may need to develop alongside growth plans.

The outcome was that Connect has a strong and cohesive Trust Board with a clear sense of direction and strategic purpose. The Trust's mission to empower every individual to lead a 'remarkable future' is supported by six core responsibilities which serve as a clear framework for accountability and strategic discussions.

The Trust Board has a detailed working knowledge of its schools and their respective strengths and challenges and use this knowledge well to challenge the executive and to drive educational improvements. There are particular strengths in financial oversight and accountability demonstrated by the Trust finances and reserve policy. Central costs are kept to a minimum in order to channel as much resources as possible into school budgets.

**Committees**

**Finance and Resources Committee**

The Finance and Resources committee is a sub-committee of the main Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to cover finance, resources, risk management audit and asset management. 4 Trustees are on the Finance and Resources Committee, the CEO, CFO and COO also attend. The committee met 4 times during 2023-2024, including one meeting to review the end of year accounts for the Trust. The terms of reference for the Finance Committee include Audit responsibilities.

During the year the following issues were dealt with by the committee:

Setting and overseeing the annual budget, internal and external audit functions, capital projects, and leading initiatives to support the wellbeing of our people. Additionally, the committee plays a crucial role in updating financial regulations and conducting due diligence when a new school joins the Trust. Oversight of significant capital expenditure projects also falls within the committee's remit, ensuring that financial and operational goals are achieved effectively.

In between Committee meetings there is a monthly finance meeting attended by Chair of Finance and Resources, the CFO, COO and DF. The monthly management accounts including cash flow are discussed. This ensures that the Chair has a regular financial overview, and that the programme of audit and scrutiny is carried out effectively. The Chair alongside the Trust Board decides the scope of the internal audit that was commissioned during the year.

During the year the following changes to the committee took place:

There were no changes to the committee during the year.

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**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)**

**Governance (continued)**

Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Jon Simms	4	4
John West	4	4
Julie Rayson	4	4
Stephen Way	4	4

**Review of value for money**

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

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

Efficiently managing the School Condition Allocation funding, focusing on ensuring buildings are fit for purpose and kept in good condition, as well as prioritising projects that will address energy efficient issues within the school.

A Trust wide approach and overview of the staffing structures across all schools so that the recruitment of staff is undertaken only when a full evaluation of the post and the structure and the budget has been considered.

**The purpose of the system of internal control**

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in Connect for the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 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 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 Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)**

**Capacity to handle risk (continued)**

**The risk and control framework**

The 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. It includes:

- comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Trust Board.
- regular reviews by the Finance committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes.
- setting targets to measure financial and other performance.
- clearly defined purchasing (asset purchase or capital investment) guidelines
- identification and management of risks
- regular reviews by the Finance and General Purposes 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 has decided to buy-in an internal audit service from Azets

This option has been chosen because:

They have the expertise, breadth of service, offer value for money and have knowledge of Connect.

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

- Fixed Asset Register
- Non-General Annual Grant Income
- Risk Management

On an annual basis, the internal auditor reports to the Board of Trustees, through the Finance and Resources Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities. On an annual basis the internal auditor prepares a summary report to the committee outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendations and conclusions to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress.

The internal auditor has delivered their schedule of work as planned and there were no material control issues arising as a result of the internal auditor's work.

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)**

**Review of effectiveness**

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

- the work of the internal auditor
- the work of the external auditor
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process or 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
- A visit from the SRMA officer
- correspondence from ESFA.

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

**Conclusion**

Based on the advice of the audit and risk committee and the Accounting Officer, the Board of Trustees is of the opinion that the Academy Trust has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control.

Approved by the Board of Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

**Alex Monk**  
Chair of Trustees

**Androulla Nicou**  
Accounting Officer

Date:

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE**

As Accounting Officer of Connect Education Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the 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 Trust, under the funding agreement in place between the Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

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

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

**Androulla Nicou**  
Accounting Officer

Date:

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Alex Monk**  
Chair of Trustees

Date:

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

**Opinion**

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

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

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the 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 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.

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

**Other information**

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

**Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006**

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

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

**Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

In the light of our knowledge and understanding of the 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 Charitable Company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the 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 Trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

**Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

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

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

We gained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Trust and the sector in which it operates and considered the risk of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations. This included those regulations directly related to the financial statements, including financial reporting and tax legislation and Trust sector regulations including GDPR, employment law, health and safety and safeguarding.

The risks were discussed with the audit team and we remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. We carried out specific procedures to address the risks identified. These included the following:

- We reviewed systems and procedures to identify potential areas of management overrides. In particular, we carried out testing of journal entries and other adjustments for appropriateness, and evaluating the business rationale of any large or unusual transactions to determine whether they were significant to our assessment.
- We reviewed key controls, authorisation procedures and decision making processes for any unusual or one-off transactions.
- We reviewed minutes of Trustee meetings and other relevant sub-committees of the Board and agreed the financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation.
- We have made enquiries of the Accounting Officer and senior management team to identify laws and regulations applicable to the Academy. We assessed details of any breaches where applicable in order to assess the impact upon the Trust.

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

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

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

**Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the 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 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 Trust and its Members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

**Tom Meeks FCCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)**

for and on behalf of

**Price Bailey LLP**

Chartered Accountants

Statutory Auditors

Causeway House

1 Dane Street

Bishop's Stortford

Hertfordshire

CM23 3BT

Date:

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 7 August 2023 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Connect Education Trust during the Year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

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

The Accounting Officer is responsible, under the requirements of Connect Education Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 31 August 2016 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2023, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

**Approach**

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

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

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

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

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- An assessment of the risk of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance
- Consideration and corroboration of the evidence supporting the Accounting Officer's statement on regularity, propriety and compliance and how the Trust complies with the framework of authorities.
- Evaluation of the general control environment of the Trust, extending the procedures required for financial statements to include regularity, propriety and compliance
- Discussions with and representations from the Accounting Officer and other key management personnel.
- An extension of substantive testing from our audit of the financial statements to cover matters pertaining to regularity, in order to support the regularity conclusion, including governance, internal controls, procurement and the application of income.

**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 2023 to 31 August 2024 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Reporting Accountant  
**Price Bailey LLP**

Date:

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
<b>Income from:</b>						
Donations and capital grants	3	6,695	230,199	603,428	840,322	9,153,060
Other trading activities	5	921,032	78,766	-	999,798	1,055,342
Investments	6	80,543	-	-	80,543	23,083
Charitable activities	4	21,672	25,391,434	-	25,413,106	23,804,599
<b>Total income</b>		<b>1,029,942</b>	<b>25,700,399</b>	<b>603,428</b>	<b>27,333,769</b>	<b>34,036,084</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Charitable activities	7	816,227	25,403,538	2,825,922	29,045,687	32,917,097
<b>Total expenditure</b>	7	<b>816,227</b>	<b>25,403,538</b>	<b>2,825,922</b>	<b>29,045,687</b>	<b>32,917,097</b>
<b>Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)</b>		<b>213,715</b>	<b>296,861</b>	<b>(2,222,494)</b>	<b>(1,711,918)</b>	<b>1,118,987</b>
<b>Other recognised gains/(losses):</b>						
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	24	-	(193,000)	-	(193,000)	263,000
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>213,715</b>	<b>103,861</b>	<b>(2,222,494)</b>	<b>(1,904,918)</b>	<b>1,381,987</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>						
Total funds brought forward		2,159,333	500,983	133,629,697	136,290,013	134,908,026
Net movement in funds		213,715	103,861	(2,222,494)	(1,904,918)	1,381,987
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>2,373,048</b>	<b>604,844</b>	<b>131,407,203</b>	<b>134,385,095</b>	<b>136,290,013</b>

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

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**  
**REGISTERED NUMBER: 10309116**

**BALANCE SHEET**  
**AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024**

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Tangible assets	14	130,884,045	132,526,214
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	15	785,918	1,243,098
Cash at bank and in hand		4,209,329	4,153,969
		4,995,247	5,397,067
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	16	(1,494,197)	(1,633,268)
<b>Net current assets</b>		3,501,050	3,763,799
<b>Total net assets</b>		134,385,095	136,290,013
<b>Funds of the Trust</b>			
<b>Restricted funds:</b>			
Fixed asset funds	17	131,407,203	133,629,697
Restricted income funds	17	604,844	500,983
<b>Total restricted funds</b>	17	132,012,047	134,130,680
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>	17	2,373,048	2,159,333
<b>Total funds</b>		134,385,095	136,290,013

The financial statements on pages 24 to 54 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on and are signed on their behalf, by:

**Alex Monk**  
Chair of Trustees

The notes on pages 27 to 54 form part of these financial statements.

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024**

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Net cash used in operating activities	19	(576,817)	(1,219,501)
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>	21	539,634	879,062
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>	20	92,543	23,084
<b>Change in cash and cash equivalents in the Year</b>		55,360	(317,355)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the Year		4,153,969	4,471,324
<b>Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the Year</b>	22, 23	<u>4,209,329</u>	<u>4,153,969</u>

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

**1. Accounting policies**

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

**1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements**

The financial statements of the 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 2023 to 2024 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

The Trust's functional and presentational currency is Pounds Sterling.

**1.2 Going concern**

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

The Trust derives the majority of its income from local and national government grant funding which is secured for a number of years, under the terms of the Trust Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State for Education. This will ensure that the Trust can continue operating for a period of at least 12 months following the date of this report. The financial statements do not contain any adjustments that would be required if the Trust were not able to continue as a going concern.

**1.3 Income**

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

• **Grants**

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

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

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

**CONNECT EDUCATION TRUST**  
**(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

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

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.3 Income (continued)**

- **Donations**

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

- **Other income**

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

- **Donated fixed assets (excluding transfers on conversion or into the 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 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.

- **Charitable activities**

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

**1.5 Interest receivable**

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

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

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.6 Tangible fixed assets**

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

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

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets other than 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 land	- 125 years straight line
Long term leasehold buildings	- 50 years straight line
Furniture and fixtures	- 5 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 4 years straight line
Motor vehicles	- 4-7 years straight line

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

**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 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.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
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**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.10 Financial instruments**

The Trust only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and financial liabilities of the 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 15. Prepayments are not financial instruments. Cash at bank is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

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

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

**1.11 Operating leases**

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

**1.12 Pensions**

Retirement benefits to employees of the 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 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 net income/(expenditure) 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.

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

**1. Accounting policies (continued)**

**1.12 Pensions (continued)**

If pension scheme assets are more than liabilities a surplus is recognised only to the extent that the academy trust is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the scheme. Any change in the restriction of the surplus is an actuarial gain or loss and is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

**1.13 Fund accounting**

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

Restricted fixed asset funds are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the 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 Trust makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost or income for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in note 24, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

At the balance sheet date the pension scheme assets were more than the liabilities, resulting in a surplus. It was necessary to determine the extent to which this surplus was capable of being recovered either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the scheme. A refund is only available on ceasing to participate in the scheme, which is not practicably possible whilst the academy trust continues in operation due to the requirement to provide access to the scheme to relevant employees and would not be possible if the trust were to cease operations as these operations would be transferred to another academy trust that would take over any asset. With regard to reductions in contributions the Trust is pooled with other trusts in the setting of its contribution rates under the scheme. In addition the Trust considers there to be a minimum funding requirement in respect of its contributions. Consequently the Trust does not consider that it is able to recover the surplus through reduced contributions in the future and has therefore restricted the surplus recognised to £nil.

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

**3. Income from donations and capital grants**

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Donations	6,695	203,150	-	209,845	8,195,431
Capital grants	-	27,049	603,428	630,477	957,630
<b>Total 2024</b>	<u>6,695</u>	<u>230,199</u>	<u>603,428</u>	<u>840,322</u>	<u>9,153,061</u>
Total 2023	<u>1,407</u>	<u>219,084</u>	<u>8,932,570</u>	<u>9,153,061</u>	

In 2023, income from donations was £8,195,431, of which £1,407 was unrestricted, £194,024 restricted and £8,000,000 restricted fixed asset fund.

In 2023, capital grants was £957,630 of which £25,060 was restricted and £932,570 was restricted fixed asset.

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

**4. Funding for the Trust's charitable activities**

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
<b>Provision of education</b>				
<b>DfE/ESFA grants</b>				
General Annual Grant (GAG)	-	17,617,664	17,617,664	16,872,476
Other DfE/ESFA grants				
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,735,482	1,735,482	1,249,746
Pupil Premium	-	1,696,337	1,696,337	1,626,250
UIFSM	-	395,378	395,378	372,275
PE & sports grants	-	140,360	140,360	141,030
Teachers pension & pay grants	-	548,470	548,470	26,561
	-	-	22,133,691	20,288,338
<b>Other Government grants</b>				
Local Authority grants	-	3,257,743	3,257,743	3,192,155
<b>Other funding</b>				
Catering income	21,672	-	21,672	324,105
<b>Total 2024</b>	<b>21,672</b>	<b>25,391,434</b>	<b>25,413,106</b>	<b>23,804,598</b>
Total 2023	324,105	23,480,493	23,804,598	

In 2023, income DfE/ESFA grants was £20,288,338 and was entirely restricted.

In 2023, income from other Government grants was £3,192,155, all of which was restricted.

In 2023, income from other funding was £324,105, all of which was unrestricted.

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

**5. Income from other trading activities**

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Lettings income	48,480	-	48,480	59,759
Other activities	872,552	78,766	951,318	995,583
<b>Total 2024</b>	921,032	78,766	999,798	1,055,342
Total 2023	1,055,342	-	1,055,342	

In 2023, of total income from other trading activities, £1,055,342 was unrestricted. There were no restricted income from other trading activities.

**6. Investment income**

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Investment income	80,543	80,543	23,083

In 2023, all investment income was in relation to unrestricted funds.

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

**7. Expenditure**

	Staff Costs 2024 £	Premises 2024 £	Other 2024 £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Provision of education:					
Direct costs	16,583,638	-	880,916	17,464,554	17,486,375
Allocated support costs	5,111,662	4,205,367	2,264,104	11,581,133	15,430,722
	<u>21,695,300</u>	<u>4,205,367</u>	<u>3,145,020</u>	<u>29,045,687</u>	<u>32,917,097</u>
Total 2023	<u>21,189,854</u>	<u>4,579,279</u>	<u>7,147,964</u>	<u>32,917,097</u>	

In 2023 direct expenditure consisted of £16,512,654 staff costs and £973,721 other costs.

In 2023 support expenditure £4,677,200 staff costs, £4,579,279 premises costs and £6,174,243 other costs.

**8. Charitable activities**

	2024 £	2023 £
Direct costs	17,464,554	17,486,375
Support Costs	11,581,133	15,430,722
	<u>29,045,687</u>	<u>32,917,097</u>

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Analysis of support costs</b>		
Support staff costs and educational support	5,111,662	4,677,202
Depreciation	1,733,012	1,664,495
Technology costs	360,186	277,028
Premises costs	2,472,355	2,928,616
Other support costs	1,820,659	1,552,758
Impairments	-	4,267,298
Governance costs	69,393	36,413
Legal costs	13,866	26,910
	<u>11,581,133</u>	<u>15,430,720</u>

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

**9. Net income/(expenditure)**

Net income/(expenditure) for the Year includes:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Operating lease rentals	25,115	17,821
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	1,733,012	1,664,495
Amortisation of intangible assets	-	4,267,298
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	941,679
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	23,000	16,175
- other services	12,600	11,645
	<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>

Included within expenditure are the following transactions:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Fixed asset losses	-	4,267,296

The impairment in the prior year is in relation to land being transferred into the Trust for Fern House. It's formal valuation on transfer was lower than the carrying amount.

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

**10. Staff**

**a. Staff costs and employee benefits**

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	13,134,550	13,660,691
Social security costs	1,593,022	1,560,939
Pension costs	2,994,807	3,239,752
	<u>17,722,379</u>	<u>18,461,382</u>
Agency staff costs	1,949,402	1,364,236
Staff restructuring costs	74,117	18,241
	<u>19,745,898</u>	<u>19,843,859</u>

**b. Severance payments**

The Trust paid 4 severance payments in the Year (2023 - 4), disclosed in the following bands:

	2024 No.	2023 No.
£0 - £25,000	3	4
£25,001 - £50,000	1	-
	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>

**c. Staff numbers**

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Management	10	11
Teaching	173	190
Educational support	288	297
	<u>471</u>	<u>498</u>

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

**10. Staff (continued)**

**d. Higher paid staff**

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	14	20
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	7	3
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	3	-
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	-	3
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	2	1
In the band £110,001 - £120,000	1	2
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	1	-
In the band £150,001 - £160,000	-	1
In the band £160,001 - £170,000	1	-
	1	-

**e. Key management personnel**

The key management personnel of the Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Trust was £618,820 (2023 - £723,520).

Included in the above are employer National Insurance contributions of £58,786 (2023 - £68,924) employer pension contributions £97,668 (2023 - £116,574).

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

**11. Central services**

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

- Pay costs for the Executive team and the Central team

The Trust charges for these services on the following basis:

To fund these costs, the Trust charges a top slice equivalent to 4.75% (2023 - 4.75%) of each Academy's funding. The funding includes the total GAG and LA funding - Early years and high needs funding.

The actual amounts charged during the Year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Hazelbury Primary School	278,132	257,078
Bowes Primary School	137,800	131,970
Chesterfield Primary School	175,319	172,990
Grange Park Primary School	177,509	171,510
Fern House Primary School	108,184	85,875
Carterhatch Primary School	96,753	87,549
Delta Primary School	44,963	38,480
<b>Total</b>	1,018,660	945,452

**12. Trustees' remuneration and expenses**

During the Year, no Trustees received any remuneration or other benefits (2023 - £370,000).

During the Year ended 31 August 2024, expenses totalling £Nil was reimbursed to trustees. In prior year there was reimbursement of £28.

**13. Trustees' and Officers' insurance**

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 cover up to £10,000,000 on any one claim and the cost for the Year ended 31 August 2024 was included in the total insurance cost.

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

**14. Tangible fixed assets**

	Long-term leasehold property £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
<b>Cost or valuation</b>					
At 1 September 2023	140,969,280	466,630	1,634,943	7,750	143,078,603
Additions	-	4,693	86,150	-	90,843
At 31 August 2024	<u>140,969,280</u>	<u>471,323</u>	<u>1,721,093</u>	<u>7,750</u>	<u>143,169,446</u>
<b>Depreciation</b>					
At 1 September 2023	8,876,138	423,404	1,252,346	501	10,552,389
Charge for the Year	1,434,376	14,110	282,976	1,550	1,733,012
At 31 August 2024	<u>10,310,514</u>	<u>437,514</u>	<u>1,535,322</u>	<u>2,051</u>	<u>12,285,401</u>
<b>Net book value</b>					
At 31 August 2024	<u><u>130,658,766</u></u>	<u><u>33,809</u></u>	<u><u>185,771</u></u>	<u><u>5,699</u></u>	<u><u>130,884,045</u></u>
At 31 August 2023	<u><u>132,093,142</u></u>	<u><u>43,226</u></u>	<u><u>382,597</u></u>	<u><u>7,249</u></u>	<u><u>132,526,214</u></u>

**15. Debtors**

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Due within one year</b>		
Trade debtors	92,790	290,340
Other debtors	31,579	179,151
Prepayments and accrued income	370,690	440,128
VAT recoverable	290,859	333,479
	<u>785,918</u>	<u>1,243,098</u>

**16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	548,631	540,947
Other taxation and social security	348,564	350,726
Other creditors	2,266	149,434

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

**16. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year (continued)**

	2024 £	2023 £
Accruals and deferred income	594,736	592,161
	1,494,197	1,633,268
	1,494,197	1,633,268
	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income brought forward	295,946	242,459
Resources deferred during the Year	308,927	295,946
Amounts released from previous periods	(295,946)	(242,459)
<b>Deferred income carried forward</b>	<b>308,927</b>	<b>295,946</b>
	<b>308,927</b>	<b>295,946</b>

Deferred income relates to income received in advance for school trips, 2023-24 for Universal Infant Free School Meals and Enrichment Clubs.

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

**17. Statement of funds**

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>					
Unrestricted funds	2,159,333	1,029,942	(816,227)	-	2,373,048
<b>Restricted general funds</b>					
General Annual Grant (GAG)	249,067	17,617,664	(17,261,887)	-	604,844
Other DfE / ESFA grants	-	4,516,027	(4,516,027)	-	-
Other Government grants	251,916	3,257,743	(3,509,659)	-	-
Restricted donations	-	308,965	(308,965)	-	-
Pension reserve	-	-	193,000	(193,000)	-
	<u>500,983</u>	<u>25,700,399</u>	<u>(25,403,538)</u>	<u>(193,000)</u>	<u>604,844</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>					
Restricted fixed asset fund	132,526,214	-	(1,642,169)	-	130,884,045
Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)	-	69,277	(69,277)	-	-
SCA Grant	1,103,483	534,151	(1,114,476)	-	523,158
	<u>133,629,697</u>	<u>603,428</u>	<u>(2,825,922)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>131,407,203</u>
<b>Total Restricted funds</b>	<u>134,130,680</u>	<u>26,303,827</u>	<u>(28,229,460)</u>	<u>(193,000)</u>	<u>132,012,047</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u><u>136,290,013</u></u>	<u><u>27,333,769</u></u>	<u><u>(29,045,687)</u></u>	<u><u>(193,000)</u></u>	<u><u>134,385,095</u></u>

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

**17. Statement of funds (continued)**

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

**Unrestricted funds**

This represents income which may be used towards meeting any of the charitable objectives of the Trust at the discretion of Trustees.

**General Annual Grant (GAG)**

This represents funding from the ESFA to cover the costs of recurrent expenditure.

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

**Other DfE and ESFA funding**

This represents funding received from the DfE/ESFA which is restricted in nature.

**Other Government grants**

This represents funding received from other Government bodies, local and national, which are restricted in nature to help for example, raise achievement and improve outcomes for pupils from low income families who are eligible for free school meals or special educational needs pupils.

**Restricted donations**

This represents contributions made by parents towards the running costs of trips for the pupils of the Schools and the associated costs.

**Pension reserve**

This reserve represents the Trust's share of the deficit on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

**Restricted fixed asset fund**

Restricted fixed asset fund represents the value of fixed assets held in line with the charitable objectives of the Trust. The transfer between funds represents additions purchased through GAG funding.

**Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)**

This represents funding received from the ESFA specifically for the maintenance and improvements of the Trust's building facilities.

**School Condition Allocation (SCA)**

This represents a Government grant allocation for Trust-wide capital or repair projects.

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

**17. Statement of funds (continued)**

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>						
Unrestricted funds	2,466,942	1,403,938	(1,644,532)	(67,015)	-	2,159,333
<b>Restricted general funds</b>						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	122,871	16,872,476	(16,766,887)	20,607	-	249,067
Other DfE / ESFA grants	-	3,415,862	(3,415,862)	-	-	-
Other Government grants	-	3,192,155	(2,940,239)	-	-	251,916
Restricted donations	-	219,084	(219,084)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	-	-	(263,000)	-	263,000	-
	<u>122,871</u>	<u>23,699,577</u>	<u>(23,605,072)</u>	<u>20,607</u>	<u>263,000</u>	<u>500,983</u>
<b>Restricted fixed asset funds</b>						
Restricted fixed asset fund	131,321,116	8,000,000	(6,873,472)	78,570	-	132,526,214
Devolved Formula Capital (DFC)	-	215,407	(183,244)	(32,163)	-	-
SCA Grant	997,097	717,163	(610,777)	-	-	1,103,483
	<u>132,318,213</u>	<u>8,932,570</u>	<u>(7,667,493)</u>	<u>46,407</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>133,629,697</u>
<b>Total Restricted funds</b>	<u>132,441,084</u>	<u>32,632,147</u>	<u>(31,272,565)</u>	<u>67,014</u>	<u>263,000</u>	<u>134,130,680</u>
<b>Total funds</b>	<u><u>134,908,026</u></u>	<u><u>34,036,085</u></u>	<u><u>(32,917,097)</u></u>	<u><u>(1)</u></u>	<u><u>263,000</u></u>	<u><u>136,290,013</u></u>

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**17. Statement of funds (continued)**

**Total funds analysis by academy**

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Hazelbury Primary School	333,555	222,046
Bowes Primary School	(24,853)	8,442
Chesterfield Primary School	(110,156)	(55,357)
Grange Park Primary School	315,852	362,060
Fern House Primary School	214,272	114,463
Carterhatch Junior School	246,163	242,736
Delta Primary School	(120,799)	(86,701)
Central Services	2,123,858	1,852,627
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	2,977,892	2,660,316
Restricted fixed asset fund	131,407,203	133,629,697
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b>134,385,095</b>	<b>136,290,013</b>
	<hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

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

	Deficit £
Chesterfield Primary School	(110,156)
Delta Primary School	(120,799)
Bowes Primary School	(24,854)
	<hr/> <hr/>

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**17. Statement of funds (continued)**

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

**Chesterfield Primary School:**

The Chesterfield year end position was a £110,156 deficit. The falling pupil roll at the academy has resulted in capacity in the staffing headcount which will be reduced in the upcoming academic year. The pupil led funding has reduced year on year and staffing costs will need to reflect this to enable the school to remain financially viable.

**Delta Primary School**

The year end position for this academy was a £120,799 deficit. This is primarily due to higher teaching staff costs, which need to be reduced as the funding is relatively low at the school due to its small pupil roll. The Trust and school are working closely on managing the staffing costs within the budget parameters by reducing agency expenditure.

**Bowes Primary School:**

The academy has ended the year with a deficit outturn of £24,854. This has been largely due to higher Teaching Assistant staffing costs which were needed to support the learning needs of the school. For the year ahead the staffing head count has been reduced to avoid a further deficit.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
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**17. 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 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Hazelbury Primary School	4,711,238	1,087,854	229,077	855,685	6,883,854	6,560,174
Bowes Primary School	2,276,598	788,105	90,088	462,445	3,617,236	3,514,334
Chesterfield Primary School	2,871,129	709,464	91,131	504,587	4,176,311	4,160,456
Grange Park Primary School	2,820,603	884,103	156,670	898,780	4,760,156	4,364,416
Fern House Primary School	1,366,668	419,582	29,030	275,940	2,091,220	3,023,366
Carterhatch Junior School	1,689,163	250,319	72,703	434,950	2,447,135	2,264,376
Delta Primary School	705,980	205,766	32,523	180,903	1,125,172	1,057,150
Trust - Central Services	142,259	766,469	-	1,302,863	2,211,591	2,041,032
<b>Trust</b>	<b>16,583,638</b>	<b>5,111,662</b>	<b>701,222</b>	<b>4,916,153</b>	<b>27,312,675</b>	<b>26,985,304</b>

**18. Analysis of net assets between funds**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - current period**

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	130,884,045	130,884,045
Current assets	2,373,048	2,099,041	523,158	4,995,247
Creditors due within one year	-	(1,494,197)	-	(1,494,197)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,373,048</b>	<b>604,844</b>	<b>131,407,203</b>	<b>134,385,095</b>

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**18. Analysis of net assets between funds (continued)**

**Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period**

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	132,526,214	132,526,214
Current assets	2,159,335	2,134,250	1,103,483	5,397,068
Creditors due within one year	-	(1,633,268)	-	(1,633,268)
<b>Total</b>	<u>2,159,335</u>	<u>500,982</u>	<u>133,629,697</u>	<u>136,290,014</u>

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the period (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	(1,711,918)	1,118,987
<b>Adjustments for:</b>		
Depreciation	1,733,012	1,664,495
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(630,477)	(957,630)
Interest receivable	(92,543)	(23,083)
Pension liability movements	(193,000)	263,000
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	457,180	(221,371)
Decrease in creditors	(139,071)	(272,875)
Donated fixed assets	-	(8,000,000)
Disposal of tangible fixed assets	-	523,683
Loss on disposal	-	941,679
Impairment of fixed assets	-	4,267,298
Depreciation on disposals	-	(90,603)
Impairment charge	-	(433,081)
<b>Net cash used in operating activities</b>	<u>(576,817)</u>	<u>(1,219,501)</u>

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**20. Cash flows from financing activities**

	2024 £	2023 £
Interest received	92,543	23,084
<b>Net cash provided by financing activities</b>	<b>92,543</b>	<b>23,084</b>

**21. Cash flows from investing activities**

	2024 £	2023 £
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(90,843)	(78,568)
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	630,477	957,630
<b>Net cash provided by investing activities</b>	<b>539,634</b>	<b>879,062</b>

**22. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents**

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand and at bank	4,209,329	4,153,969

**23. Analysis of changes in net debt**

	At 1 September 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	4,153,969	55,360	4,209,329
	4,153,969	55,360	4,209,329

**24. Pension commitments**

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

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

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

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
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**24. Pension commitments (continued)**

**Teachers' Pension Scheme**

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

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

**Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme**

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

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

- employer contribution rates set at 23.6% 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 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 2025

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the Year amounted to £2,039,412 (2023 - £1,865,039).

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 Trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The Trust has set out above the information available on the scheme.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
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**24. Pension commitments (continued)**

**Local Government Pension Scheme**

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the Year ended 31 August 2024 was £1,500,000 (2023 - £1,424,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £1,134,000 (2023 - £1,081,000) and employees' contributions totalled £366,000 (2023 - £343,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 20.1 per cent for employers and 5.5 - 12.5 per cent for employees.

As described in note 1.12 the LGPS obligation relates to the employees of the Trust, who were the employees transferred as part of the conversion from the maintained school and new employees who were eligible to, and did, join the Scheme in the Year. The obligation in respect of employees who transferred on conversion represents their cumulative service at both the predecessor school and the Trust at the balance sheet date.

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of academy closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The Fund is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), a defined benefit statutory scheme administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (the Regulations) as amended.

**Principal actuarial assumptions**

	2024	2023
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	4.15	4.1
Rate of increase for pensions in payment / inflation	2.65	2.6
Rate of increase for pension accounts revaluation rate	2.65	2.6
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.0	5.1

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

	2024	2023
	Years	Years
Retiring today		
Males	20.8	21.2
Females	23.3	23.6
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	21.9	22.5
Females	24.7	25.1

As at the 31 August 2024 the Trust had a pension liability £Nil (2023 - £Nil). The sensitivity analysis detailed below would increase/(decrease) the closing defined benefit obligation in the following way:

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**24. Pension commitments (continued)**

**Sensitivity analysis**

	2024 £000	2023 £000
Discount rate +0.1%	(433)	(352)
Discount rate -0.1%	433	352
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	814	422
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(814)	(422)
CPI rate +0.1%	425	317
CPI rate -0.1%	(425)	(317)
	<u><u>          </u></u>	<u><u>          </u></u>

**Share of scheme assets**

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

	At 31 August 2024 £	At 31 August 2023 £
Equities	11,502,000	8,413,000
Gilts	6,275,000	951,000
Corporate bonds	2,301,000	3,274,000
Property	-	968,000
Cash and other liquid assets	837,000	1,391,000
Other managed funds	-	2,605,000
	<u><u>20,915,000</u></u>	<u><u>17,602,000</u></u>

The actual return on scheme assets was £1,979,000 (2023 - £350,000).

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Current service cost	(953,000)	(1,344,000)
Interest income	935,000	690,000
Interest cost	(923,000)	(646,000)
	<u><u>(941,000)</u></u>	<u><u>(1,300,000)</u></u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**  
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**24. Pension commitments (continued)**

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

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>At 1 September</b>	17,602,000	15,698,000
Current service cost	953,000	1,344,000
Interest cost	923,000	646,000
Employee contributions	366,000	343,000
Actuarial losses/(gains)	813,000	(177,000)
Benefits paid	(312,000)	(252,000)
<b>At 31 August</b>	<u>20,345,000</u>	<u>17,602,000</u>

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

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>At 1 September</b>	17,602,000	16,226,000
Interest income	935,000	690,000
Actuarial gains	620,000	86,000
Employer contributions	1,134,000	1,081,000
Employee contributions	366,000	343,000
Benefits paid	(312,000)	(252,000)
Impact of asset ceiling	-	(572,000)
<b>At 31 August</b>	<u>20,345,000</u>	<u>17,602,000</u>

The actuarial valuation obtained calculated a net asset position for the Trust. As there is insufficient certainty as to whether the Trust would ever be able access the future economic benefit associated with this calculation, the asset has not been recognised on the Balance Sheet at 31 August 2024

**25. Operating lease commitments**

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than 1 year	4,772	17,821
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	965	15,168
	<u>5,737</u>	<u>32,989</u>

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**26. 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 they cease to be a Member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10 for the debts and liabilities contracted they ceased to be a Member.

**27. Related party transactions**

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

During the year the Trust made no contributions to Trees for Cities, a connected charity (2023: £5,000). The charity is a connected party by virtue of the spouse of Tom Sheldon being a Chief Executive of the charity. There were no contributions outstanding at year end (2023: £5,000).

The child of Androulla Nicou, the CEO of the Trust, is employed by the Trust as an education support staff member on a contract approved by Trustees. This remuneration package is in line with the standard payscales for the roles undertaken and her contract of employment is subject to the normal terms and conditions.

No other related party transactions took place in the period of account, other than those detailed in note 11.