

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

**LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

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LINK ACADEMY TRUST
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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	Gill Golder YMCA, Exeter (Appointed 15 July 2021) Peter Bethel Isabel Cherrett (Resigned 31 December 2020) Exeter Diocesan Education Network (EDEN)
Trustees	Nicola Dunford, CEO ^{1,2,3,4} Isabel Cherrett, Chair (Resigned 31 December 2020) ^{2,4} Fiona Walters, Trustee ³ Dominic Course, Trustee ^{1,3} Michael Andrew Fisher, Trustee (Resigned 28 July 2021) ¹ Jason Hayward-Jones, Trustee ¹ Paul Baillie Waterworth, Trustee (Appointed 1 January 2021) ^{2,4} Cheryl Mathieson, Trustee ^{2,4} Jane Collings, Trustee ³ Sarah Cox, Trustee (Appointed 1 January 2021) ¹ Roy Gillard, Trustee ^{2,4} ¹ Audit Committee ² Finance and General Purposes Committee ³ Standards and Curriculum Committee ⁴ Remuneration Committee
Company registered number	10049068
Company name	Link Academy Trust
Principal and registered office	Landscope C of E Primary School Landscope Ashburton Newton Abbot TQ13 7LY
Corporate secretary	Matt Matthew
Chief executive officer	Nicola Dunford
Senior management team	Nicola Dunford, CEO & Accounting Officer Matt Matthew, Business Manager
Independent auditors	Bishop Fleming LLP Chartered Accountants Statutory Auditors Salt Quay House 4 North East Quay Sutton Harbour Plymouth PL4 0BN

**LINK ACADEMY TRUST
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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

Bankers	Lloyds Bank plc Chapel Hill 11 Treyew Road Truro Cornwall TR1 3AN
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Solicitors	Wolferstans 60-66 North Hill Plymouth Devon PL4 8EP
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TRUSTEES' REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

TRUSTEES' REPORT

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the Charitable Company for the year ended 31 August 2021. The annual report serves the purpose of both a Trustees' report and a Directors' report under company law.

The Trust now operates fifteen primary academies in the Totnes, Newton Abbot & Teign Valley region, Woodleigh, near Crediton, Budleigh Salterton and Otterton in East Devon and most recently three former South Dartmoor Trust academies, Ilsington, Widecombe in the Moor and Moretonhampstead. Over the last year Morchard Bishop Primary has continued to work in a Management Partnership with the Trust whilst property issues have been properly processed and consultation undertaken prior to full conversion in 2021-22. Throughout the year staff have been fully engaged with the Trust's training and CPD provision in order to transition successfully into the Trust upon conversion.

Broadhempston, Drakes and Otterton who joined the Trust at the end of 2019 have settled in well, adopting Trust procedures and processes as staffing structures have been consolidated.

Broadhempston primary, a village school with a current outstanding Ofsted judgement, is now a partnered academy with Landscope primary, as the two are less than three miles apart. The sharing of leadership costs has aided both academies, with the highly experienced Academy Head, who has been Landscope's Head for over 10 years having established an excellent stable staffing structure there, being able to share expertise across both settings and continue to deliver improvement in both academies.

Drake's and Otterton continue to embed good practice and provide excellent teaching and learning experiences as staffing has remained under close scrutiny. CPD for all staff has been a focus.

Following the re-brokerage of the South Dartmoor primaries in February 2020, over the last year the Trust has had a significant impact on all three academies, particularly on their learning environments, despite the periods of lockdown. Highly effective financial management procedures have been introduced, alongside staffing improvements. All three academies required a high level of support to improve the delivery of quality first teaching and learning as well as to improve outcomes and provision for all students. Leadership had been a clear issue and staff had received little or no professional training. This has been fully addressed.

In addition, each academy has undergone a complete overhaul and update, particularly in the provision of Smartboards and pupil's IT equipment. The Trust worked with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) and the Department for Education (DfE) to secure funding for a complete refurbishment and extension of Ilsington primary to accommodate its Foundation Stage Unit (FSU). Achieving this during the school year (January-July 2021) has been difficult with some classes having to work out of the Village Hall and furniture having to be put in storage. However, despite this a purpose-built FSU is now in place providing an additional excellent, well equipped learning environment.

Moretonhampstead school staffing was identified from the outset as a major issue requiring improvement but the restrictions of the pandemic and resultant complications reduced the rapidity of normal change that we would expect. However, by the end of the year leadership had seen a complete overhaul with the addition of an interim experienced Trust Academy Head and further staffing changes as well as an intense support programme of extensive CPD training alongside coaching and mentoring to improve staff morale.

The Trust continues to focus on increasing capacity in all its academies and considers that the provision of Early Years facilities has helped ensure our academies are operating 'at capacity'. We have therefore continued to develop Early Years facilities in as many as possible of our academies. Over the last year, four of the academies have either completed an age-range extension or have applied to do so, with just two academies now reliant on provision by an external local provider.

Within the Newton and Teign academies, the Trust recognised the need for additional classroom space at Beames primary in order to remove a temporary ineffective classroom structure within the School Hall. A new classroom was completed for the start of the academic year which has given the academy an excellent

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

facility and has made a significant difference to the teaching and learning conditions for a cohort that had additional needs. At the same time, the School Hall was refurbished to provide once again separate sporting facilities for the academy.

Following suspension of Ofsted inspections during the early part of last year, routine inspections continued to be temporarily suspended and instead school visits were scheduled to gather information on how schools were managing the return to full education for pupils following the extended break due to Covid-19. The only Trust school visited (remotely) was Hennock. No formal judgement was provided by Ofsted but it was noted that no significant concerns had been found during the visit and it was considered that the academy had been extremely well prepared to deliver Blended Learning and manage the effects of the pupils' return to school.

Whilst opportunities for growth during 2020-21 were limited due to the Covid 19 pandemic, in the final weeks of the Summer 2021 term the Trust was asked to present to a number of establishments, both Federations and single Grant Maintained primaries, who were looking to join a multi-academy trust. Talks are ongoing with a large CofE primary in Newton Abbot and a Federation of the schools in and around Ivybridge.

The Trust agreed to be part of a pilot MAT to MAT review project and as a result during the Summer Term undertook a review of the Bridge Academy Trust, a similar Trust in Cornwall with 14 primary schools. The Bridge Academy Trust will complete its review of the Trust in 2021-22. Both Trusts hope to continue the partnership as the process thus far has been very informative and of benefit to both parties.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Constitution

The Trust was incorporated on 8 March 2016 and opened as a Trust on 1 April 2016, a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the Trust. The Trustees of the Trust are also directors of the Charitable Company for the purposes of company law. The Charitable Company is known as Link Academy Trust. Details of the Trustees who served throughout the period, are included in the Reference and Administration Details on the accompanying document.

Trustees' Liability

Each Trustee 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 Trustee, or within one year after he/she ceases to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10, for the debts and liabilities contracted before they cease to be a Trustee.

Trustees' Indemnities

Trustees benefit from indemnity insurance purchased at the Trust's expense to cover the liability of the Trustees which by virtue of any rule of law would otherwise attach to them in respect of any negligence, default or breach of trust or breach of duty of which they may be guilty in relation to the Trust, provided that any such insurance shall not extend to any claim arising from any act or omission which the Trustees knew to be a breach of trust or breach of duty or which was committed by the Trustees in reckless disregard to whether it was a breach of trust or breach of duty or not and provided also that any such insurance shall not extend to the costs of any unsuccessful defence to a criminal prosecution brought against the Trustees in their capacity as Directors of the Trust. The limit of this indemnity is £10,000,000.

Method of recruitment and appointment or election of Trustees

On 1st April 2016 the Trustees appointed those Trustees that had been recruited and selected to be Trustees of the newly formed Trust. In accordance with the Articles of Association, the Trust's Board of Trustees shall not be less than three and no more than 15. For the period of this report, the Board comprised the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and a minimum of eight appointed trustees, although there have been some resignations and appointments during the year to maintain this minimum. It is anticipated that further skilled professional Trustees will join the Trust in future and there will be at least two more positions filled.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Trustees are appointed for a four year period, except that this time limit does not apply to the CEO. Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Trustee, any Trustee can be re-appointed or re-elected.

The Diocese of Exeter is empowered under Articles 48-49 to appoint Trustees.

When appointing new Trustees, the Board will give consideration to the skills and experience mix of existing Trustees in order to ensure that the Board has the necessary skills to contribute fully to the Trust's development.

Policies and Procedures adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

The training and induction provided for new Trustees will depend upon their existing experience but would always include a tour of the Trust and a chance to meet staff and pupils. All Trustees are provided with access to copies of policies, procedures, minutes, accounts, budgets, plans and other documents that they will need to undertake their role as Trustees. As there are normally only two or three new Trustees a year, induction tends to be done informally and is tailored specifically to the individual. Advantage is taken of specific courses offered by the Local Authority and other quality external bodies. The Trust has in place robust appointment procedures which take account of ongoing skills auditing. It is anticipated that at least two new Trustees will be joining the Board during the next financial year 2021-22. As the Trust extends additional skills have been identified to enhance the highly effective operation of the Trust and positions continue to be advertised in Local communities as well as with specialist recruitment agencies.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees normally meets once each half term. The Board establishes an overall framework for the governance of the Trust and determines membership, terms of reference and procedures of Committees and other groups. It receives reports including policies from its Committees for approval. It monitors the activities of the Committees through the minutes of their meetings. The Board may from time to time establish Working Groups to perform specific tasks over a limited timescale.

During the period under report, the Board met five times and the committees working within the Board are as follows:

- Finance and General Purposes Committee - this meets at least six times a year and is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing policy and performance in relation to financial management, drafting the annual budget for the Board's approval and, once agreed, monitoring performance against the budget; setting the Trust's staffing establishment based on a staffing needs analysis; the Trust's estate development and maintenance as well as compliance with reporting and regulatory requirements. In 2020-21 all six meetings were held online due to Covid 19 restrictions.
- Standards and Curriculum Committee - this meets five times a year to monitor, evaluate and review Trust policy, practice and performance in relation to curriculum planning, communications, target setting and assessment, teaching and learning data and all pastoral issues. Its duties include responsibility for all policies related to Standards and Curriculum. It monitors pupil performance data and the Trust Improvement Plan. It also links with Local Boards (LBs) regarding the day to day operation of the academies as Local Boards report to the Standards and Curriculum Board and are tasked with areas to learn, challenge and support their academies to inform this Board. The Committee also monitors the Trust website to ensure it complies with statutory requirements. Checking school attendance and all aspects of safeguarding also fall within its duties. In 2020-21 all five meetings were conducted online due to Covid 19.
- Remuneration Committee – this meets at least three times a year to deal with all matters relating to pay. The Committee is authorised to approve expenditure within the levels agreed by the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the Trust's Financial Regulations, funding bodies and other legal requirements. These duties include the detailed employment arrangements of the Senior Management Team; the Committee conducts the appraisal of the CEO; pay awards for the Senior

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Management Team are subject to the approval of the full Board. The Committee is responsible for all HR Policies. In 2020-21 it met four times, all meetings being held online due to Covid 19.

- **Audit Committee** – this meets at least three times a year and is authorised to approve expenditure within the levels agreed by the Board of Trustees, in accordance with the Trust's Financial Regulations, funding bodies and other legal requirements. Its duties include the appointment of the Internal Audit Service, setting the annual programme of reviews and receiving reports thereon and ensuring the timely completion of any recommendations. The Committee meets with the External Audit Service at the conclusion of the annual audit to discuss its findings prior to presentation to the Board and monitors the timely completion of recommendations. The Committee also oversees compliance testing for legionella, health & safety and environmental protection. The Committee scrutinises all audit reviews by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and monitors the completion of recommendations. Overall it also takes responsibility for the Audit and Annual Risk Management Plan and all aspects of Business Recovery. It met three times in 2020-21 and all meetings were held online due to Covid 19 restrictions.

Communication and Reporting Procedures

The Minutes of the Committees' meetings will be circulated to the next meeting of the Board of Trustees. Subject to any items deemed confidential, the Minutes will be made available to the academies within the Trust once agreed by the Chair and then posted on the website once formally approved at the next meeting.

Clerking Arrangements

The Clerk to the Board of Trustees will be the Clerk of the Committee.

The following decisions are reserved to the Board of Trustees: to consider any proposals for changes to the status or constitution of the Trust and its committee structure, to appoint or remove the Chairperson and/or Vice Chairperson, to appoint the CEO and Clerk to the Trustees, to approve the Annual Trust Improvement Plan, Trust Strategic Business Plan and budget.

The Trustees are responsible for setting general policy, adopting an annual plan and budget, approving the statutory accounts, monitoring the academies and Trust by the use of budgets and other data, and making major decisions about the direction of the academies and Trust, capital expenditure and staff appointments.

The Trustees and Board of Trustees have devolved responsibility for day to day management of the Trust to the CEO, Trust Business Manager, and School Improvement Leads (School Improvement, Safeguarding and SEND, Data and Assessment and School Standards and Educational Outcomes) known as the Trust Executive Improvement Team, in collaboration with Executive/Academy Heads.

The Trust has a leadership structure which consists of the Members, Trustees, Governors and SMT. The aim of the leadership structure is to devolve responsibility and encourage involvement in decision making at all levels. The CEO, as Accounting Officer, Trust Business Manager and Finance & General Purposes Committee are responsible for the authorisation of spending within agreed budgets; a summary of which is included in the Scheme of Delegation. Some spending control is devolved to budget holders which must be authorised in line with the Scheme of Delegation. The CEO is responsible for the appointment of staff, through appointment panels for teaching posts that always include a person trained in Safer Recruitment and, whenever appropriate, a Local Governor or Trustee.

The Trust comprises fifteen primary schools, Bearnes, Broadhempston, Cheriton Bishop, Diptford, Drakes-East Budleigh, Harbertonford, Hennock, Ilsington, Landscope, Moretonhampstead, Otterton, Stoke Gabriel, Tedburn St Mary, Widecombe in the Moor and Yeoford which are grouped in Hubs based on previous Federations, with a Local Board (LB) of governors. These Hubs are: Newton and Teign (Bearnes and Hennock), Totnes (Broadhempston, Diptford, Harbertonford, Landscope and Stoke Gabriel), Woodleigh (Cheriton Bishop, Tedburn St Mary and Yeoford), Raleigh (Drakes, East Budleigh and Otterton) and the Moorland Hub (Ilsington, Moretonhampstead and Widecombe in the Moor). The LBs oversee day to day school operation in terms of safeguarding, teaching and learning and some statutory reporting link with Sports Funding and Pupil Premium grant, reporting to Trustees.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

The Trust Board comprises Trustees that are separate from the LBs.

Any academies in Management Partnership continue to operate their Local Governing Bodies as they always have done and the CEO attends these as part of the Joint committee. On conversion any changes that need to be addressed, such as the formation of one Board for the three Dartmoor schools, will take place during the course of the first year of the academies joining the Trust. This enables individuals already serving on a single school board the opportunity to consider whether the wider scope of a Hub Board is acceptable to them.

A representative of each LB attends the Standards and Curriculum Committee meetings as a conduit for information to flow from individual academies to Trustees and back effectively.

The Chief Executive Officer is the Accounting Officer.

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The Trustees consider the Board of Trustees and the SMT comprise the key management personnel of the Trust in charge of directing and controlling, running and operating the Trust on a day to day basis. All Trustees give their time freely and no Trustee received remuneration in the year.

Details of Trustees' expenses and related party transactions are disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

The Trustees benchmark against pay levels in other Trusts of a similar size.

Trade union facility time

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
0	0

Percentage of time spent on facility time

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

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Provide the total cost of facility time	£Nil
Provide the total pay bill	
Provide the percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time, calculated as: (total cost of facility time / total pay bill) x 100	

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours calculated as:	
(total hours spent on paid trade union activities by relevant union officials during the relevant period / total paid facility time hours) x 100	

Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Trust has strong collaborative links across the fifteen primary academies as well as with any academies in Management Partnership with the Trust, at this time Morchard Bishop.

There are no transactions with related parties which either control or significantly influence the decisions and operations of the Trust. There are no sponsors or formal Parent Teacher Associations associated with the Trust.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objects and Aims

The principal object and activity of the Trust is to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing fifteen primary academies, offering a broad range of curriculum for pupils of different abilities, with a strong emphasis on inclusion, a supporting network of teaching and learning expertise to deliver high level experiential learning.

The aims of the Trust during the 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 financial year are summarised below:

- ensure online and blended learning continues to develop to deliver effective teaching and learning for all pupils even when they are unable to attend school, for example as a result of the Covid pandemic,
- continue to raise the standard of educational attainment and achievement of all pupils further, even as online learning is necessitated by National lockdown,
- provide an inspirational broad and balanced curriculum, enhanced through regular experiential opportunities, to develop students as more effective, independent and aspirational learners,
- enhance the preschool provision and outcomes for all academies, extending this facility where possible to all academies within the Trust,
- develop the individual academy sites to provide more effective learning environments and enable students to achieve their full potential,
- ensure that every child enjoys the same high quality education in terms of resourcing, tuition and care which is tailored to fully meet their individual needs,
- improve the effectiveness of the academies by keeping the curriculum and organisational structure under continual review in order to effect improvement,
- maximise the number of students who achieve age related expectations or above at KS1 and KS2,
- provide value for money for the funds expended,
- develop the Improvement & Inclusion Hub located at Bearnes Primary school to ensure specialist provision for SEND children across the Trust in the form of bespoke staff training, pupil interventions and access to professional third party organisations,
- close the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils,
- work closely with families and the community in order to enhance further the outcomes for children,
- develop greater coherence, clarity and effectiveness in academy systems,
- comply with all appropriate statutory and curriculum requirements,
- maintain close links with industry and commerce,
- develop the Trust's capacity to manage change,
- conduct the Trust's business in accordance with the highest standards of integrity, probity and openness,
- grow the Trust through the capacity of the current academies and encouraging appropriate schools to convert to academy status and join the Trust, including the lowering of age-range to accommodate younger children,
- ensure the skills of Governors and Trustees are fully developed and employed through training and responsibility allocations,
- improve the provision of healthy meals to be produced on site and organising shared provision within the Trust by taking catering 'in-house',
- ensure the highest level of health and safety provision during the period of the Covid pandemic, being aware of children and adult mental health provision and support,
- develop an improving hybrid learning provision which balances traditional learning with the use of technology to give pupils the best chance to continue to receive quality first teaching even during periods of lockdown,
- ensure Safeguarding procedures are tailored to reach families and pupils in their homes even when pupils are not in school to keep them safe,

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

- ensure online learning Safeguarding is addressed and parents are given information to help them support children to make good choices.

At the Trust we aim to achieve the best for, and from, each child. We intend to enable each child to realise his or her full academic, creative and physical potential and to develop positive social and moral values. Our Trust is a community in which children, staff and parents should be part of a happy and caring environment. Our visions and values are reviewed annually and form the foundations of how we operate.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

Key priorities for the period 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 are contained in our MAT Improvement Plan which is available from the Trust Head Office. Improvement foci identified for the year included:

Key Priority 1 Data and Educational Outcomes

Data and Educational Outcomes will continue to identify priority areas of the curriculum, particularly mathematics which is a Trust-wide focus, as is English teaching, particularly the development of vocabulary. Quality First Teaching will be a significant focus to ensure the gap is closing for disadvantaged pupils while also impacting on the highest quality teaching and learning for all pupils. Further development of the Inclusion and Improvement Hub will support and facilitate the highest quality support required by some pupils and their families in order to achieve well.

Key Priority 2 CPD

Online learning with associated CPD will be a priority to deliver enhanced remote learning and consider a new approach to teaching and learning across the Trust. Curriculum Groups will not only maintain the great work started last year but will focus on MFL (Spanish), History, Geography, Art & Design as well as the new RSE to deliver enhanced curriculum coverage. Curriculum Groups will continue to be a vehicle for the development of Middle Leadership

Key Priority 3 Governance

The composition and structure of each level of Governance (Trustees, Local Boards and their roles and responsibilities) to be scrutinised, developed and consolidated to ensure each Board/Committee supports the highly effective operation of the Trust. Documentation and training form a solid bedrock from which real improvement can advance.

Key Priority 4 IT and Computing

The rapid development of a highly effective and cutting-edge approach to online learning to ensure all children are able to learn effectively in all circumstances. Priority will be required to develop the IT infrastructure in every academy to enable remote learning to be more effective and to support the 'closing the gap' agenda, as well as engaging, motivating and challenging all learners.

Key Priority 5 Central Business Provision Development

Considered expansion of Central Business provision including Catering projects bringing more 'in house', Health and Safety support, School building maintenance provision, alongside all property developments, including the classroom provision at Beames and the reconfiguration of Ilington school to improve nursery provision. Delivery of any successful CIF bids.

The Executive Improvement Team will scrutinise all academies to provide a professional development programme which supports learning at all levels, encourages, challenges and supports all staff, embracing opportunities for collaboration within and beyond individual academies and the Trust and to have strategic sharing of practice, protocols and resources across the MAT to benefit all pupils. We expect all Ofsted Inspections will have a good or better outcome and Church schools will receive a good or better judgement in any SIAMS Inspections.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Outcomes

Key Priority 1:

Our aim going into the year was that all academies would be able to identify where pupils were not operating at or above the National Average for progress in Reading, Writing and Maths following the initial lockdown in 2020 and deliver a Recovery Curriculum to address this. We would consider the gap between pupil premium and not pupil premium children and ensure this too was being addressed through precision teaching and to improve the percentage of pupils achieving Greater Depth. Every academy was expected to focus on core subjects to show improved outcomes over the year. It was noted that following the national lockdowns as a result of the Covid pandemic it was unlikely that these original targets would be met, however improved online teaching and learning ensured there was less regression and most children were able to 'hold' their attainment levels even as a result of the January to March shut down. Power BI, software linked to SIMS gave a much better overall data base on which to judge overall Trust outcomes against individual academies.

Quality teaching online was a focus and monitored regularly with coaching to achieve better outcomes for all children as we were able to access better resources more confidently. Oracy training was undertaken, albeit online, and gave impetus to our focus on vocabulary, although not as effectively as it would have been had children been consistently in school. The Inclusion and Improvement Hub continued to deliver the highest quality provision for SEND and Disadvantaged pupils throughout the year, including during periods of lockdown. Family welfare was a priority and the Trust provided food hampers for our most vulnerable on a fortnightly basis which helped to ensure close contact with families and support where it was clearly required.

Key Priority 2 & 4

IT infrastructure, connectivity and hardware have seen significant improvement, as a result of a complete Trust-wide audit and three year Digital Strategy plan. Diptford, Cheriton Bishop, Stoke Gabriel and Moretonhampstead had a complete overhaul of school infrastructure, including wiring, switches etc. Yeoford was in receipt of the Rural Gigabit Connectivity funding which significantly improved connectivity and internal infrastructure, resulting in their now being able to deliver the curriculum effectively. The majority of teachers' laptops were renewed and 200x Microsoft Surface Go's were provided for all Y6 pupils, although they were not exclusively provided for this cohort, our intention is to build on numbers of these devices in following years to ensure it is extended to an additional year group every year.

Online learning was monitored in every academy as best practice was an ongoing expectation. The period between September and December when pupils were in school focussed heavily on setting up MS Teams for all pupils and training teachers to use it effectively, this ensured highly improved delivery of teaching and learning during the second lockdown and pupils were more confident to learning in this way. A trust-wide support mechanism between all teaching staff ensured a rapid development and sharing of skills in online delivery, best practice was shared on a weekly basis. Curriculum groups continued to meet on line and enhance the understanding within subject specialisms and it has been agreed that this strategy has a strong basis which will be fully explored as we come out of the lockdown and subject specialisms within all academies will continue to be an ongoing focus, based on pedagogy and research.

Key Priority 3

Governance at Local Board level has seen significant change. The Moorland Board (3 academies) and Newton and Teign Board (2 academies) were not as effective as expected because the number of schools in both was low and local expertise to draw on restricted so the two Boards merged and an effective and experienced Board has emerged. The Academy School Improvement Lead continued to work throughout the year with Local Boards to establish a refined annual programme of focussed visits with coaching to support governors to work with Academy Heads to Learn, Support and Challenge appropriately and robustly. Local governors are the 'eyes and ears' of the Trust and report directly to the Standards and Curriculum Board at every meeting. Significant improvement was seen over the year.

Internal training was given throughout the year through the twice termly 'workshop' sessions.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Trustees and Members continue to access external training but it has been agreed that moving forward a project to improve the Members understanding of the Trust and the training needs of Trustees will be required. Recruitment of Trustees is ongoing, and it is anticipated a full contingent of Members will be established just after the new academic year starts in September 2021.

Key Priority 4- linked with Key Priority 2

Key Priority 5

The Trust instigated the move of Harbertonford, Diptford and Stoke Gabriel to an in house catering provision by the end of the year. A Kitchen Manager was appointed to oversee in house catering across all Trust academies, which is now ten of the current fifteen primaries. We anticipate that when Morchard Bishop join the Trust they will require a kitchen upgrade which will enable them to provide catering for the three schools in the Woodleigh area.

A Premises Manager was appointed to provide for the maintenance needs of all Trust schools - tools and a van were purchased in order to make this efficient. Evidence has shown that this appointment has led to a considerable saving across the Trust. The redecoration programme has continued and academies are now looking much better. An ongoing programme will ensure that maintenance of the academies will be kept up to date.

The new classroom build at Beames was completed and opened at the start of the new year- it meant the temporary unsafe classroom made up of two unsafe partition walls within the main hall was demolished and the hall refurbished to provide excellent sporting facilities for the academy once again.

The Ilstington primary school reconfiguration and extension to provide an FSU ran from January- July 2021. It was managed with the use of the Village Hall for the duration of the build and many parents supporting the school with storage of furniture etc. The final building was signed off at the end of the year and Ilstington starts the 2021-22 academic year with significantly improved facilities for younger children who previously had not had adequate or appropriate toilets or learning space.

We had no successful CIF bids during the year and with no feedback or success criteria being available, it makes it increasingly difficult to gauge the likely success of projects which are all considered to be priorities for the Trust.

Additional focus has been directed on Teaching and Learning.

All academies deliver an engaging curriculum that challenges pupils' thinking and provides exciting and memorable learning experiences. The curriculum is designed to ensure children capable of achieving Greater Depth will have the opportunity to do so. Online learning was significantly refined this year with the second lockdown and data showed that the good progress achieved between September and December, was maintained, particularly in reading and maths in the vast majority of academies.

We expect all academies to have strong links with feeder pre-schools if they are not already part of the academy, to have effective transition arrangements and to improve school readiness for children, although this has been much more difficult this year with the pandemic restrictions in place. Early years provision has seen considerable improvement over the year, with additional provision at Stoke Gabriel and planned extension of the age-range at Drakes and Otterton.

As always, our recruitment and retention process in every academy had a strategic focus on ensuring every academy achieved the Pupil Admission Number (PAN) for entry into Reception and as far as possible every cohort maintains PAN to achieve overall high capacity in the academies. All schools are above the National Average (related to the Covid period, including lockdown adjustments) for attendance and below the National Average for fixed term and permanent exclusions. The Improvement and Inclusion Hub positively impacts on pupils that require support to be ready to learn. A focus on Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE), Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and Mental Health in pupils continues to ensure pupils Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) is provided for.

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Alongside the above, all individual academies continued during the 2020-21 academic year to complete their own Improvement Plans which are specific to the individual needs of the setting. Each of the MAT Improvement Plan foci was interpreted for the individual academy and the improvement plan captured the actions each setting needed to focus on to ensure the MAT plan achieved the overall outcomes.

This is the fifth complete year of a Trust Strategic Improvement Plan, established through collaboration and consultation with the CEO, Trust Business Manager, Executive/ Academy Heads and the lately established Executive Improvement Team. The Trust Strategic Improvement Plan operates alongside the individual academy plans which address specific areas required for the individual settings; these are then monitored and evaluated for impact throughout the year.

The Covid 19 Lockdown from January to March 2021 continued to have a negative impact on the level of success of these initiatives and highlighted the need for the continued and updated Trust approach to remote/ blended learning. All academies were able to provide online learning opportunities, which addressed the issues that parents voiced in a detailed online survey undertaken after the initial lockdown in 2020.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commissioner's general guidance on public benefit in exercising their powers or duties. They have referred to this guidance when reviewing the Trust's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities.

The Trust aims to advance for the public benefit, education in Totnes, Newton Abbot & Teign Valley, Crediton, East Devon, South Dartmoor and the surrounding area. In particular, but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, by estimating, maintaining, managing and developing schools, offering a broad primary curriculum.

The Trust provides facilities for recreational and other leisure time occupation for the community at large in the interests of social welfare and with the interest of improving the life of the said community wherever possible.

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievements and Performance

As a result of the Covid 19 Lockdown SATs and all other National Tests were suspended for a further year. There was no expectation to test pupils in primary settings.

We had anticipated considerably improved results in all academies that have had the stability of being in the Trust for a substantial period of time. The previous year a focus on quality first teaching in the newly joined academies saw outcomes improve rapidly. However teacher assessment was difficult and reduced as pupils were not available from January until March to scrutinise.

The Trust continued to implement a full plan of growth in the academies to ensure all academies are operating as near capacity as possible, including a proactive PR and marketing campaign, open events and exploring transport opportunities for those parents located in the more rural areas to enhance the already inclusive nature of our academies.

The Improvement & Inclusion Hub, established from the inauguration of the MAT has continued to extend its remit, particularly in these difficult times and now supports all academies within the MAT and some schools across Devon, with its growing links to Early Help provision and close links with Plymouth Excellence Centre. It provides training and support for SENCOs, teachers and teaching assistants across all fifteen academies, thereby developing their effectiveness to support vulnerable and challenging pupils. It is now offering

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

therapeutic courses to challenging pupils which have been highly successful in supporting effective integration of these children into the classroom environment. This is the second year it has also supported academies with Disadvantaged Pupils, identifying their barriers to learning and ensuring their progress is a foremost consideration in every academy.

Currently all academies within the Trust are judged to be Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. Landscope was the last to be inspected by an HMI in January 2020 under the New Framework and achieved a very sound judgement of Good. The Inspection Reports over the past years have been extremely positive for all academies.

The Trust was not successful with any of its eight Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids last year which was a real set back and as a result we have reviewed the external support we get for this process. Last year we received £248,000 funding for the reconfiguration and extension of Ilstington primary to accommodate Early Years which was completed in August 2021.

To ensure standards are continually assessed, the academies operate a mutual termly learning walk programme of lesson observations, book scrutiny and data analysis reviews that are undertaken (online this year) by the Executive/Academy Heads, Local Governors and the CEO. From this, teachers and support staff receive feedback and internal programmes of continuous professional development are run for identified staff.

The Trust has continued to work with a number of individual schools and small federations to promote the ethos and vision that drives the Trust and expects to develop further links with schools in the geographical area and focus on collaborating with federations of small schools.

Key Performance Indicators

The Trust is working with its appointed accountants and has started to develop a full range of KPI's, including percentage carry forward, pupil/teacher ratio, staffing costs versus General Academic Grant (GAG)/income, these have now been extended and form part of the rigorous scrutiny of the financial position at month end and with the F&GP Committee.

	Target	Actual
Total income per pupil	£5,805	£6,993
Total GAG per pupil	£4,195	£5,125
GAG income ratio	74%	73%
Staff costs per pupil	£4,252	£5,283
Staff cost ratio (as % of total costs)	73.7%	74.7%
Education costs ratio (as % of total costs)	4.0%	3.6%
Premises costs ratio (as % of total costs)	1.2%	1.4%
Heat and light costs ratio (as % of total costs)	1.2%	1.2%

Going Concern

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

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Most of the Trust's income is obtained from the DfE via the ESFA in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. The grants received from the DfE during the year ended 31 August 2021 and the associated expenditure are shown as Restricted Funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The Trust also receives grants for fixed assets from the DfE which are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the Fixed Asset Fund. The Restricted Fixed Asset Fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation charges over the useful life of the assets concerned, as defined in the Trust's accounting policies.

During the year ended 31 August 2021, the Trust received total income of £8,489,391 and incurred total expenditure of £8,584,067. The excess of expenditure over income for the year was £94,676.

At 31 August 2021 the net book value of fixed assets was £12,277,831 and movements in tangible fixed assets are shown in note 16 to the financial statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the pupils of the Trust.

Key financial policies adopted or reviewed during the year include the Finance Procedures Manual which lays out the framework for financial management, including financial responsibilities of the Board, CEO, Trust Business Manager, Academy Heads, Administrators, as well as delegated authority for spending. Other policies reviewed and updated included Charges and Lettings, Asset Management and Insurance.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees review the reserve levels of the Trust annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. The Trustees take into consideration the future plans of the Trust, the uncertainty over future income streams and other key risks identified during the risk review. This is reviewed on a continual basis and, where possible, funds will be invested and/or used for capital expenditure to promote and develop the individual academy sites. Currently the Trust sets a reserve level of six weeks operating costs (staffing and other expenditure) at £750,000. The Trust has met and exceeded the reserve level this year in order to maintain a strong financial position into the future to allow for increased capital investment and mitigate against funding uncertainties post Covid19.

The defined benefit pension scheme reserve has a negative balance. The effect of the deficit position of the pension scheme is that the Trust is paying higher employers' pension contributions over a period of years. The higher employers' pension contributions will be met from the Trust's budgeted annual income. Whilst the deficit will not be immediately eliminated, there should be no actual cash flow deficit on the fund, nor any direct impact on the free reserves of the Trust.

Investment Policy

Trustees are committed to ensuring that all funds under their control are managed in such a way as to maximise return whilst minimising risk. Due to the nature and timing of receipt of funding, the Trust may at times hold cash balances surplus to its short term requirements. The Trustees have authorised the opening of additional short term bank investment accounts to take advantage of higher interest rates. No other form of investment is authorised.

PRINCIPAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks.

The principal risks and uncertainties facing the Trust are as follows:

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

Financial - the Trust has considerable reliance on continued Government funding through the ESFA. In the last year 93.3% of the Trust's incoming resources were ultimately Government funded and whilst this level is expected to continue, 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 Trust is dependent on continuing to attract applicants in sufficient numbers by maintaining the highest educational standards. To mitigate this risk Trustees ensure that student success and achievement 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. The Covid 19 Lockdowns increased the possibility of safeguarding issues going undetected, so a robust communication procedure was put in place over the periods of lockdown to provide vulnerable families with extensive food hampers and a regular calling system operated by class teachers. Extensive and detailed Risk Assessments were undertaken for each academy and scrutinised by the CEO, Trustees and Local governors to ensure they were as successful as possible.

Staffing - the success of the Trust is reliant upon the quality of its staff and so the Trustees monitor and review policies and procedures to ensure continued development and training of staff as well as ensuring there is clear succession planning.

Fraud and mismanagement of funds - The Trust has appointed a Responsible Officer/internal audit to carry out checks on financial systems and records as required by the Academy Trust Handbook. All finance staff receive training to keep them up to date with financial practice requirements and develop their skills in this area.

The Trust has continued to strengthen its risk management process throughout the year by a complete review resulting in an improved process and staff awareness. A risk register is maintained and reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It was noted in 2018-19 that local risks in academies were difficult to identify by Trustees and therefore Executive/ Academy Heads are now responsible for these risks, reporting them to the Audit Committee and ensuring mitigation, this process continues to be refined further. Two Directors have had an Academy visit programme over the year to monitor the risk register in depth.

The Trust has agreed a Risk Management Strategy, a Risk Register and a Risk Management Plan. These have been discussed by Trustees and include the financial risks to the Trust. The register and plan are regularly reviewed in the light of any new information and formally reviewed annually.

The Trustees have assessed the major risks to which the Trust is exposed, in particular those relating to its finances, teaching, facilities and other operational areas. The Trustees have implemented a number of systems to assess and minimise those risks, including internal controls described elsewhere. Where significant financial risk still remains, they have ensured there is adequate insurance cover.

With new schools looking to join the Trust it is vital to have a detailed Due Diligence procedure and a follow up strategy to mitigate any identified risks. The process used by the Trust is considered rigorous and robust. Subsequent actions have shown that the risks that were identified during recent Due Diligence exercises were well managed and successfully mitigated in a very short period of time.

Whilst the Trust was over-subscribed with substantial growth in capacity during 2020-21, risks to revenue funding from a falling roll are small. However, the freeze on the Government's overall education budget,

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

changes in funding arrangements for High Needs and increasing employment and premises costs mean that budgets will be increasingly tight in coming years.

The impact of Covid 19 going into the future is also an unknown.

The Trustees examine the financial health formally every term. They review performance against budgets and overall expenditure by means of regular update reports at all Board and Finance & General Purposes Committee meetings. The Trustees also regularly review cash flow forecasts and ensure sufficient funds are held to cover all known and anticipated commitments.

At the year end, the Trust had no significant liabilities arising from trade creditors or debtors that would have a significant effect on liquidity.

The Board of Trustees recognises that the defined benefit pension scheme deficit (Local Government Pension Scheme), which is set out in Note 25 to the financial statements, represents a significant potential liability. However as the Trustees consider that the Trust is able to meet its known annual contribution commitments for the foreseeable future, the risk from this liability is minimised.

FUNDRAISING

During 2020-21, the Trust employed a Senior Administrator one day a week to apply for grant funding on behalf of all academies and to work with local Parent Teacher Friends Associations (PTFAs) to support their fundraising activities.

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

The Trust will continue to strive to provide outstanding education and improve the levels of performance of all its stakeholders at all levels. The Trust will continue to aim to attract high quality teachers and support staff in order to deliver its objectives. The 2021-22 priorities for the Academy are now set out in the Trust Improvement Plan, alongside the individual academy Improvement plans which contribute to overall Trust Improvement, these are monitored by Local Boards on an annual cycle and reports are shared with the Standards and Curriculum Committee half termly.

The Trust will continue to work with partner schools to improve the educational opportunities for students in the wider community, an effective example has been through the expansion of the Improvement and Inclusion Hub so that it can in future continue to offer courses at cost to support other schools as well as the academies within the Trust with training for inclusive practice and supporting vulnerable and challenging pupils with specific needs.

The Executive Improvement Team (EIT) will scrutinise all academies to provide a professional development programme which supports learning at all levels, encourages, challenges and supports all staff, embracing opportunities for collaboration within and beyond individual schools. The Trust's EIT which has evolved and strengthened over the last two years scrutinises all academies to provide a professional development programme which supports learning at all levels, affording more scope to the Improvement of all academies. This will also offer expanded career opportunities in future.

Full details of our plans for the future are available in our Trust Strategic Business Development Plan, which is on our website or from the Clerk to the Trustees.

Over the course of 2020-21, despite school closures in November and from January to March, the Trust's MAT structure was hugely beneficial in addressing the challenges faced, with staff across all the academies pulling together to share ideas and experiences and to support one another. The earlier preparations put in

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

place meant that the Trust's academies were all very well placed to deliver a blended learning programme during the second and third lockdowns that was much improved from that of the first lockdown, enabling each academy to provide a high quality education provision for all pupils. The Trust also worked hard over this period to embed the new academies within the Trust structure, providing significant support to them to bring about much needed improvements. The Trust has proven that it has the expertise and capacity to support schools to bring about successful and rapid improvement increasing the schools ability to improve outcomes for all children.

The Link Academy Trust has clearly proven that it has a wealth of expertise and capacity in delivering school improvement rapidly and successfully and is in a position to support schools which may be experiencing difficulties. We look forward in 2021-22 to extend the Trust to welcome more small schools into the Trust and give them the stability and expertise to grow and provide the very best education for pupils.

A Capacity Growth Plan, part of the overall Trust Business Plan, is in place to ensure the Trust continues to expand in order to continue to provide efficient, highly skilled and effective services thereby ensuring high quality education is viable for the small schools we serve.

FUNDS HELD AS CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

The Trust and its Trustees do not act as the Custodian Trustees of any other Charity.

AUDITOR

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

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

The auditors, Bishop Fleming LLP, are willing to continue in office and a resolution to appoint them will be proposed at the annual general meeting.

Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on 9 December 2021 and signed on the board's behalf by:



Cheryl Mathieson
Chair of Trustees

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

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

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), as Accounting Officer, for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the Funding Agreement between the Link Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. The CEO is 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 five times between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021. During the year, Isabel Cherrett and Mike Fisher resigned as Trustees on 31 December 2020 and 28 July 2021 respectively. Two Trustees joined the Board: Sarah Cox and Paul Waterworth on 1 January 2021. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Isabel Cherrett (Chair)	2	2
Jane Collings	5	5
Dominic Course	5	5
Nicola Dunford	5	5
Mike Fisher	2	5
Roy Gillard	5	5
Jason Hayward-Jones	4	5
Cheryl Mathieson	5	5
Fiona Walters	3	5
Sarah Cox	2	3
Paul Waterworth	3	3

The Annual General Meeting held in July 2021 was attended by seven of the Trustees, together with the Members and Chairs of the Local Boards. The Covid-19 virus has meant that all meetings from 1 September 2020 have been on line, using *Microsoft Teams*.

During 2020-21, the Board spent significant time on the following:

- Following a thorough overhaul of the format and content of the Trust-wide risk register, this document continued to be regularly discussed, considered and updated throughout the year, particularly in the light of the ongoing pandemic
- The Scheme of Delegation was reviewed alongside the Constitution and Terms of Reference of the Board's Committees. Significant consultation work continued to be undertaken on the role of the governors within the Local Board. Each Board was refined to ensure effective and knowledgeable support was available to Academy Heads and a conduit of communication was established through to Trustees.
- The "Dashboard" assesses individual academies as well as the Trust as a whole in terms of adherence to the approved Budget continues to be a highly effective means of comparative scrutiny. The clarity offered by this development has improved the scrutiny of budget figures at all levels.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

- The Trust-wide data analysis system, Power Bi, which is linked to SIMS is now bespoke to the Trust's needs, however as a result of the pandemic and the lack of National testing data its full impact has not yet been realised.
- The newly established experienced Executive School Improvement Team (EIT) lead strategic school improvement. The team includes:
 - The Academy Trust Standards and Educational Outcomes Lead (ATSSEOL) 1 FTE
 - The Academy Trust Strategic Improvement Lead (ATSIL) 0.6 FTE with no Academy Head commitment
 - The Academy Trust Safeguarding and SEND Lead (ATSSL) 0.2 FTE, also Executive Academy Head- linked with the Inclusion & Improvement Hub
 - The Academy Trust Data and Standards Lead (ATDSL) 0.2 FTE also Academy HeadThe EIT consider every academy and prioritise the level of support and scrutiny they receive dependent on critical factors which impact on the quality of provision. They complete, Learn, Support & Challenge days, including local governors, Ofsted Preparation sessions, training and specific mentoring and coaching activities, as well as leading INSET days and supporting staff development.
- Development of the Central Business Unit (CBU) to include: an additional finance support worker, a Premises Officer and specific supplementary roles given to School Administrators. Catering- Phase 3 has seen an additional 3 schools providing in-house catering, resulting in 66% of Trust schools providing nutritious, meals using locally grown produce,
- The six primary schools that joined the Trust during the course of 2019-20, three of which were re-brokered and had significant operational issues identified, have been fully inducted into the Trust over the year and significant improvements have been seen. Leadership in two required robust actions and the EIT were heavily involved in School improvement for those academies.
- In response to Covid-19 Lockdown remote learning provision continued to be refined, responding to previous parent survey and providing the 'teachers voice' in the home. This improved effectiveness of online provision, saw pupil progress being much less significantly impacted and levels of attainment recorded just before the second lockdown (Dec 2020) did not generally regress during the 4 months of second lockdown.
- The Trust IIH provision supported many families with mental health and wellbeing issues through increased and additional 'out-reach'
- Trust-level Governance was strengthened with the addition of Sarah Cox and Paul Waterworth, while Isabel Cherrett stayed in post as the Chair to support the transition to Cheryl Mathieson. There continues to be a need to recruit an experienced education specialist and replace Mike Fisher's property skills going forward.

The Finance and General Purposes (F&GP) Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to:

- Oversee preparation of the Budget and financial forecasts for recommendation to the Board
- Periodically monitor actual income and expenditure v budget (quarterly) and consider the implications for future years
- Consider the draft financial statements and recommend these to the Board
- Maintain oversight of financial policies: Treasury Management and the Financial Procedures Manual
- Oversee the Maintenance Plan, Environment/Energy and Health & Safety and the cost-effective implementation of building improvements, including those externally funded

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GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

During the period to 31 August 2021 two Trustees joined the committee and two resigned. Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible	
Roy Gillard (Chair)	7	7	
Isabel Cherrett	2	2	Resigned 31.12.2020
Nicola Dunford	7	7	
Cheryl Mathieson	7	7	
Paul Waterworth	4	5	Joined Trustees 1.1.2021
Mike Fisher	0	5	Joined committee 1.1.2021 - Resigned 28.7.2021

There is a vacancy on the Committee for one more Trustee.

The Audit Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to review the Governance Statements associated with the draft Financial Statements, ensure recommendations made by the External Audit Service are implemented, set the programme of reviews conducted by the Internal Audit Service, ensure that agreed audit recommendations are completed, ensure that risk management is embedded throughout the organisation and monitor compliance testing for Legionella, Health & Safety, Environmental Protection and DBS checks.

During the period to 31 August 2021, two Trustees joined the committee and one resigned. Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible	
Dominic Course	3	3	
Jason Hayward-Jones	2	2	Joined committee 1.1.2021
Sarah Cox	2	2	Joined Trustees 1.1.2021
Nicola Dunford (attending as an officer)	2	3	
Mike Fisher	1	1	Moved to F&GP 1.1.2021 and then resigned 28.7.2021

The Chair of the Board of Trustees attended one meeting during the year as an observer.

The Remuneration Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to monitor:

- Staffing Needs & Budget
- The approval of pay progression for teaching staff, subject to satisfactory completion of their objectives set for the previous year
- Appraisal arrangements of the CEO and making recommendations to the non-Executive Trustees on the CEO's remuneration and conditions of service.
- All HR and Employment Policies are reviewed and updated in accordance with a published timetable and submitted to the Board for formal approval

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

During the period to 31 August 2021 one Trustee resigned and one Trustee joined the committee. Attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible
Isabel Cherrett (Chair)	2	2
Roy Gillard	4	4
Cheryl Mathieson	4	4
Nicola Dunford (attending as an Officer)	4	4
Paul Waterworth	2	2

The CEO attended all the meetings but was not present for any issues relating to their own employment.

The Standards & Curriculum Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees. Its purpose is to:

- Review pupil performance data from detailed 'group' reports, including by year, Key Stage, gender, Pupil Premium etc across all academies in the Trust to assess progress, achievement, and attainment and identified areas for improvement. Case studies will be included in the data provided and the Committee will monitor agreed action plans where improvements are required
- Contribute to and monitor the Academy Trust Improvement Plan in collaboration with the CEO, the Academy Trust School Improvement Lead and Executive/Academy Heads for positive impact.
- Monitor schools' preparation for periodic external inspection, such as Ofsted and the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) and ensure any recommendations for improvement are implemented in a timely way.
- Link with the Local Boards (LBs) regarding day to day operation of schools and their detailed interrogation of pupil data
- Ensure delivery of the School Curriculum to meet national standards
- Be responsible for the detailed review of all policies related to Standards and Curriculum e.g. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), School Behaviour, Sex & Relationships, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), Behaviour Principle, Home School Agreement, Child Protection, Teaching & Learning, Assessment, Literacy, Numeracy & Marking
- Monitor the Trust and individual academies' websites to ensure they comply with statutory requirements.
- Assess school attendance across the Trust, ensuring systems and procedures fulfil statutory requirements, especially around children missing from education.
- Monitor safeguarding procedures and practice across the Trust to ensure duty of care.

During the period to 31 August 2021 attendance at meetings in the year was as follows:

Trustee	Meetings attended	Out of a possible	
Jane Collings (Chair)	5	5	
Nicola Dunford	5	5	
Jason Hayward-Jones	1	2	Moved to Audit 1.1.2021
Fiona Walters	4	5	
Sarah Clarke	5	5	
Dominic Course	5	5	
<i>Representatives of the six Local Boards attended as follows:</i>			
Lynda Cooper (Newton & Teign)	5	5	
Cat Radford (Totnes)	4	5	
Jo Carter (Woodleigh)	5	5	
Corinna Tigg (Raleigh)	3	5	
Moorland	3	3	Formed 1.2.2021
Moretonhampstead	5	5	

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

The Academy Trust School Improvement Lead (ATSIL) provides the important link with the Local Boards to understand and promote school improvements. The post holder therefore fulfils a valuable role as an officer of the Committee. Mr Course, newly appointed Trustee, represented the Moretonhampstead Local Governing Board as their Chair whilst the Moorland Schools Board was being formed. The Chair of the Board of Trustees attended one meeting during the year as an observer.

As Accounting Officer, the CEO 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 achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

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

- Continued considering allocation/targeting/use of resources which has enabled improved quality of provision and joint procurement of resources leading to significant savings, particularly the annual stationery order for every school when combined.
- The Trust is committed to continuing as an employer of choice, developing our staff to take on more senior roles through a comprehensive investment in training and continuous professional development. This minimises disruption for our pupils, avoids high staff turnover and associated recruitment costs and enhances our staff retention. This applies to non-teaching as well as teaching staff and middle managers. Our CPD annual provision model is now clearly set out and staff are encouraged to participate through the staff appraisal process. A talent management approach involving Trustees has also supported successful employment.
- The formation of the EIT has ensured that even as we expand we are able to maintain the highest quality strategic school improvement. We continue to expect experienced Academy Heads to step up to manage two academies which results in a reduced senior leadership cost to the small schools and provides career and pay progression for those able to demonstrate an appropriate level of leadership. This in turn released two experienced Academy Head to take on the EIT role leading school improvement across the Trust and in an unexpected situation become interim AH to an academy that needed significant support.
- Upper Pay Scale teachers continue to contribute effectively across the Trust, this not only shares best practice but also provides sound evidence to support their own career progression and is cost effective use of 'experts'.
- Staff recognise that as the Trust expands opportunities to progress are available by moving schools within the Trust for a period or permanently to gain experience with new responsibilities and in new settings which they may need in order to seek promotion. Staff moves are fully considered annually and planned over three years to ensure both professional development and widening experience.
- The CBU continue to develop the understanding of their role and develop their effectiveness to negate the need for external, costly support.
- Catering has been brought 'in house' in a planned, phased manner in order to make significant savings and improve food quality- 66% of Trust academies are now in-house, using locally sourced healthy food to provide quality meals.
- School cleaning has been overhauled and consistent provision by one company has reduced costs and improved outcomes.
- Schools joining the Trust have had induction to support them to follow Trust practice, including shared and supportive working practices, which ensures they explore all the established avenues of cost cutting currently in place across the Trust.
- Staffing structures in new joining schools continue to be scrutinised to ensure staffing levels are appropriate and where they are not measures have been put into place to reduce costs.
- Additional staff wellbeing and mental health support was put in place during the period of the pandemic to support staff to enable them to continue to manage the situation effectively thereby reducing absence.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

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 ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks, 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 the Trust for the period from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 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 ongoing process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Trust's significant risks that have been in place for the period from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

THE RISK AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

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

- Comprehensive budgeting and monitoring systems with an annual budget and periodic financial reports which are reviewed and agreed by the Board of Trustees, having been scrutinised at various levels within the organisation's CBU.
- Regular reviews by the F&GP Committee of reports which indicate financial performance against the forecasts and of major purchase plans, capital works and expenditure programmes, prior to which regular meetings with the Chair of F&GP ensure scrutiny throughout the process.
- Setting targets to measure financial and other performance and using KPIs to make appropriate judgements
- Clearly defined purchasing (assets purchase or capital investment) guidelines and systems, which are regularly monitored and checked
- Delegation of authority and segregation of duties
- Identification and management of risks through robust systems and checks by experienced personnel

The Board of Trustees has considered the need for a specific internal audit function and has appointed Griffin Accountancy as internal auditor.

The internal auditor's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the Trust's financial systems. An agreed programme of checks for the financial year 2020-21 was completed and included:

Autumn term visit

- Governance
- Regularity

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

- Risk management

Spring term visit

- Budgeting & monitoring (particularly ensuring this is being done during and post Covid as per specific risk on register)
- Payroll systems
- Income systems

Summer term visit

- Review of insurance cover
- Purchase systems
- Fixed asset controls (including review of capital funding applications as per specific risk on risk register)

All reports are presented to the next scheduled meeting of the Audit Committee; where appropriate, the report is also passed to F&GP Committee to ensure a recommendation is implemented. Reports include a commentary on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities.

REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

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

- The work of the internal auditor
- The work of the external auditor
- The assurance report provided by the Trust's accountants and its consistently early completion with few recommendations for improvement.
- The work of the Trust Business Manager to the Board who has daily responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework that include full monthly management reports, which are circulated to all Trustees for information
- The CEO's scrutiny of Financial Reports on a regular basis

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

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 9 December 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



C Mathieson
Chair of Trustees



N Dunford
Accounting Officer

**LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

STATEMENT ON REGULARITY, PROPRIETY AND COMPLIANCE

As Accounting Officer of Link Academy Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy Trust Board of Trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with ESFA terms and conditions of funding, under the funding agreement in place between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook 2020.

I confirm that I and the Academy Trust Board of Trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the Academy Trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the Academy Trust's funding agreement and the Academies Financial Handbook 2020.

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.

Nicola Dunford
Accounting Officer

Date: 9 December 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Dunford', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

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 . 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 2020 to 2021;
- make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

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

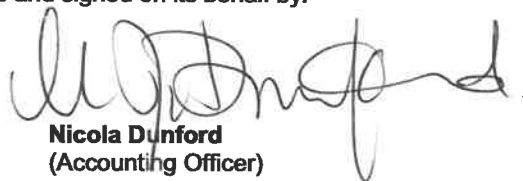
The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that in its conduct and operation the charitable company applies financial and other controls, which conform with the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. They are also responsible for ensuring grants received from ESFA/DfE have been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

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

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



Cheryl Mathieson
(Chair of Trustees)



Nicola Dunford
(Accounting Officer)

Date: 9 December 2021

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LINK ACADEMY TRUST

OPINION

We have audited the financial statements of Link Academy Trust (the 'Academy Trust') for the year ended 31 August 2021 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 2020 to 2021 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Academy Trust's affairs as at 31 August 2021 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 2020 to 2021 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

BASIS FOR OPINION

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

CONCLUSIONS RELATING TO GOING CONCERN

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

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

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

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LINK ACADEMY 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 Academy Trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Report including the Strategic Report.

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

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

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES

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

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

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LINK ACADEMY 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.

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we considered the following:

- the nature of the Academy sector, control environment and the Academy Trust's performance;
- results of our enquiries of management and the Trustee board, including the committees charged with governance over the Academy Trust's finance and control, about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities;
- any matters we identified having obtained and reviewed the Academy Trust's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to: identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance; detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; the internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or noncompliance with laws and regulations;
- how the Academy Trust ensured it met its obligations arising from it being financed by the ESFA and other funders, and as such material compliance with these obligations is required to ensure the Academy Trust will continue to receive its public funding and be authorised to operate, including around ensuring there is no material unauthorised use of funds and expenditure;
- how the Academy Trust ensured it met its obligations to its principal regulator, the Secretary of State for Education; and
- the matters discussed among the audit engagement team and involving relevant internal Academy specialists regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud, which included incorrect recognition of revenue, management override of controls using manual journal entries, procurement and payroll. We identified the greatest potential for fraud as incorrect recognition of revenue and management override using manual journal entries.

In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override. We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the Academy Trust operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context included the Academies Accounts Direction, Academies Financial Handbook, UK Companies Act and tax legislation.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the Academy Trust's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty. These included safeguarding regulations, data protection regulations, occupational health and safety regulations, education and inspections legislation, building legislation and employment legislation.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO THE MEMBERS OF LINK ACADEMY TRUST (CONTINUED)

Our procedures to respond to risks identified included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with provisions of relevant laws and regulations described as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess the recognition of revenue;
- enquiring of Trustees and management and those charged with governance concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- performing procedures to confirm material compliance with the requirements of its regulators;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and reviewing internal control reports; and
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; and assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias.

We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members, and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

Our audit procedures were designed to respond to risks of material misstatement in the financial statements, recognising that the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from an error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery, misrepresentations or through collusion. There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures performed and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.

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

USE OF OUR REPORT

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



Nathan Coughlin FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)

for and on behalf of
Bishop Fleming LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
Salt Quay House
4 North East Quay
Sutton Harbour
Plymouth
PL4 0BN

Date: 16/12/2021

**LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

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

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 6 June 2018 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Link Academy Trust during the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 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 Link Academy Trust and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Link Academy 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 Link Academy Trust and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

**RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LINK ACADEMY TRUST'S ACCOUNTING OFFICER AND
THE REPORTING ACCOUNTANT**

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Link Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 29/3/16 and the Academies Financial Handbook, extant from 1 September 2020, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Academies Accounts Direction 2020 to 2021. 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 2020 to 31 August 2021 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

APPROACH

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

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

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

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

**LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

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

CONCLUSION

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggest in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the year 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.



Nathan Coughlin FCA (Reporting Accountant)
Bishop Fleming LLP
Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors
Salt Quay House
4 North East Quay
Sutton Harbour
Plymouth
PL4 0BN

Date: 16/12/2021

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

		Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
	Note					
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants:	3					
Transfer on conversion		-	-	-	-	4,496,657
Other donations and capital grants		58,100	107,407	308,722	474,229	723,348
Other trading activities		54,708	-	-	54,708	27,599
Investments	7	191	-	-	191	530
Charitable activities	4	600,932	7,359,331	-	7,960,263	6,330,073
Total income		713,931	7,466,738	308,722	8,489,391	11,578,207
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	9	311,640	7,822,485	449,942	8,584,067	7,006,999
Total expenditure		311,640	7,822,485	449,942	8,584,067	7,006,999
Net income/(expenditure)		402,291	(355,747)	(141,220)	(94,676)	4,571,208
Transfers between funds	19	(140,587)	(7,749)	148,336	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses) carried forward		261,704	(363,496)	7,116	(94,676)	4,571,208

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
(CONTINUED)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

		Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses) brought forward		261,704	(363,496)	7,116	(94,676)	4,571,208
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial losses on defined benefit pension schemes	25	(268,000)	-	-	(268,000)	(447,000)
Net movement in funds		(6,296)	(363,496)	7,116	(362,676)	4,124,208
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		376,734	(2,113,095)	12,408,344	10,671,983	6,547,775
Net movement in funds		(6,296)	(363,496)	7,116	(362,676)	4,124,208
Total funds carried forward		370,438	(2,476,591)	12,415,460	10,309,307	10,671,983

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

The notes on pages 38 to 71 form part of these financial statements.

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)
REGISTERED NUMBER:10049068

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 31 AUGUST 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	16	12,277,831	11,959,432
		<u>12,277,831</u>	<u>11,959,432</u>
Current assets			
Debtors	17	248,814	542,021
Cash at bank and in hand		1,881,489	1,376,422
		<u>2,130,303</u>	<u>1,918,443</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	18	(534,827)	(456,892)
Net current assets		<u>1,595,476</u>	<u>1,461,551</u>
Net assets excluding pension liability		<u>13,873,307</u>	<u>13,420,983</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	25	(3,564,000)	(2,749,000)
Total net assets		<u><u>10,309,307</u></u>	<u><u>10,671,983</u></u>
Funds of the Academy Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	19	12,415,460	12,408,344
Restricted income funds	19	819,409	635,905
		<u>13,234,869</u>	<u>13,044,249</u>
Restricted funds excluding pension liability	19	13,234,869	13,044,249
Pension reserve	19	(3,564,000)	(2,749,000)
Total restricted funds	19	<u>9,670,869</u>	<u>10,295,249</u>
Unrestricted income funds	19	<u>638,438</u>	<u>376,734</u>
Total funds		<u><u>10,309,307</u></u>	<u><u>10,671,983</u></u>

The financial statements on pages 34 to 71 were approved by the Trustees, and authorised for issue on 9 December 2021 and are signed on their behalf, by:



Cheryl Mathieson
 (Chair of Trustees)

The notes on pages 38 to 71 form part of these financial statements.

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash provided by operating activities	21	566,657	283,082
Cash flows from investing activities	22	(61,590)	78,184
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		505,067	361,266
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,376,422	1,015,156
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	23, 24	1,881,489	1,376,422

The notes on pages 38 to 71 form part of these financial statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

1.1 BASIS OF PREPARATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The financial statements of the Academy 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 2020 to 2021 issued by ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006.

1.2 GOING CONCERN

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.3 INCOME

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

- **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.

- **Sponsorship income**

Sponsorship income provided to the Academy Trust which amounts to a donation is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which it is receivable (where there are no performance-related conditions) where receipt is probable and it can be measured reliably.

- **Donations**

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

- **Other income**

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

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 Academy Trust's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the Academy Trust apportioned to charitable activities.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.5 INTEREST RECEIVABLE

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

1.6 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

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

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

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets other than freehold land, at rates calculated to write off the cost of these assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

On conversion the Academy Trust was granted a 125 year lease from the Local Authority for the land and buildings previously occupied by the Local Authority schools. On conversion the long term leasehold property was recognised as a donation from the Local Authority and was valued using the depreciated replacement cost method.

Where the Academy Trust has been granted use of the school buildings from the Diocese under Supplemental Agreements, the Academies Accounts Direction prescribes that under this agreement the risks and rewards of ownership remain with the Diocese. A donation from the Diocese has been recognised equal to the deemed rental expense, based on the rateable value of the buildings.

Depreciation is provided on the following bases:

Long-term leasehold property	- Land: 125 years/Lease term, Buildings: 50 years
Furniture and equipment	- 4 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 3 years straight line
Motor vehicles	- 4 years straight line

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

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

1.7 DEBTORS

Trade and other debtors with no stated interest rate and due within one year are recorded at the amount of the cash or other consideration expected to be received. Prepayments are valued at the amount paid.

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.8 CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND

Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account and cash on deposit that has a notice period of less than 30 days.

1.9 LIABILITIES

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

1.10 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

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

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 17. 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 18. 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.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

1.12 PENSIONS

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

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

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

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

1.13 FUND ACCOUNTING

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

Restricted fixed asset funds are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the 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.

Transfers are made between restricted funds and restricted fixed asset funds where restricted funds are used to purchase fixed assets.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES AND AREAS OF JUDGEMENT

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

The 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 25, 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 2019 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2021. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

Critical areas of judgement:

The Academy Trust obtains use of fixed assets as a lessee. The classification of such leases as operating or finance lease requires the Academy Trust to determine, based on an evaluation of the terms and conditions of the arrangements, whether it retains or acquires the significant risks and rewards of ownership of these assets and accordingly whether the lease requires an asset and liability to be recognised on the balance sheet.

The valuation of assets transferred on conversion is subject to judgement, and is based on managements best estimate with reference to available information such as historic cost, market information, ESFA valuations and benchmarking.

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

3. INCOME FROM DONATIONS AND CAPITAL GRANTS

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £
Donations	58,100	107,407	-	165,507
Capital Grants	-	-	308,722	308,722
	<u>58,100</u>	<u>107,407</u>	<u>308,722</u>	<u>474,229</u>

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2020 £	Total funds 2020 £
Transfer on conversion	84,163	(882,000)	5,294,494	4,496,657
Donations	48,531	147,760	-	196,291
Capital Grants	-	-	527,057	527,057
	<u>132,694</u>	<u>(734,240)</u>	<u>5,821,551</u>	<u>5,220,005</u>

4. INCOME FROM CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £
Education	<u>600,932</u>	<u>7,359,331</u>	<u>7,960,263</u>

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total funds 2020 £
Education	<u>376,277</u>	<u>5,953,796</u>	<u>6,330,073</u>

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

5. FUNDING FOR THE ACADEMY TRUST'S EDUCATION

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £
DFE/ESFA GRANTS			
General Annual Grant	-	6,163,925	6,163,925
OTHER DFE/ESFA GRANTS			
Pupil Premium	-	334,418	334,418
Start up grants	-	8,285	8,285
UIFSM funding	-	174,401	174,401
PE and sports grant	-	250,330	250,330
	-	6,931,359	6,931,359
OTHER GOVERNMENT GRANTS			
High Needs	-	216,109	216,109
Early Years funding	256,772	-	256,772
Other	-	116,215	116,215
	256,772	332,324	589,096
Other income from the Academy Trust's education	344,160	48	344,208
COVID-19 ADDITIONAL FUNDING (DFE/ESFA)			
Catch-up Premium	-	95,600	95,600
	-	95,600	95,600
	600,932	7,359,331	7,960,263

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

5. FUNDING FOR THE ACADEMY TRUST'S EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total funds 2020 £
DFE/ESFA GRANTS			
General Annual Grant	-	5,039,526	5,039,526
OTHER DFE/ESFA GRANTS			
Pupil Premium	-	230,665	230,665
UIFSM funding	-	155,333	155,333
PE and sports grant	-	205,471	205,471
	-	5,630,995	5,630,995
OTHER GOVERNMENT GRANTS			
High Needs	-	118,738	118,738
Early Years funding	170,411	-	170,411
Other	-	204,063	204,063
	170,411	322,801	493,212
Other income from the Academy Trust's education	205,866	-	205,866
	376,277	5,953,796	6,330,073

Following the reclassification in the Academies Accounts Direction 2020/21 of some grants received from the Department of Education and ESFA, the academy trust's funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals and Pupil Premium is no longer reported under the Other DfE Group grants heading, but as separate lines under the Other DfE/ESFA grants heading. The prior year numbers have been reclassified.

6. INCOME FROM OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Lettings	204	204	605
School clubs	54,504	54,504	26,994
TOTAL 2021	54,708	54,708	27,599

All prior year amounts relate to unrestricted income.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

7. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Bank interest	191	191	530

All prior year amounts relate to unrestricted income.

8. EXPENDITURE

	Staff Costs 2021 £	Premises 2021 £	Other 2021 £	Total 2021 £
EDUCATION:				
Direct costs	5,365,423	236,094	310,904	5,912,421
Allocated support costs	1,047,779	773,348	850,519	2,671,646
	<u>6,413,202</u>	<u>1,009,442</u>	<u>1,161,423</u>	<u>8,584,067</u>
	Staff Costs 2020 £	Premises 2020 £	Other 2020 £	Total 2020 £
EDUCATION:				
Direct costs	4,424,166	230,546	369,210	5,023,922
Allocated support costs	688,886	545,721	748,470	1,983,077
	<u>5,113,052</u>	<u>776,267</u>	<u>1,117,680</u>	<u>7,006,999</u>

Following clarification in the AAD, nursery activities which were previously separately identified as their own charitable activity have now been included with the Educational activities reported throughout the accounts. The prior year numbers have been reclassified.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

9. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

Summary by fund type

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £
Education	311,640	8,272,427	8,584,067

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Total funds 2020 £
Education	361,303	6,645,696	7,006,999

10. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITIES

	Activities undertaken directly 2021 £	Support costs 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £
Education	5,912,421	2,671,646	8,584,067

	Activities undertaken directly 2020 £	Support costs 2020 £	Total funds 2020 £
Education	5,023,922	1,983,077	7,006,999

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

10. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE BY ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT COSTS

	Total funds 2021 £	Total funds 2020 £
Pension finance costs	16,000	6,000
Staff costs	1,047,779	688,886
Depreciation	217,208	142,218
Recruitment and support	22,541	9,760
Maintenance of premises and equipment	118,197	80,662
Cleaning	220,387	141,259
Rent and rates	194,493	171,337
Energy costs	106,980	98,643
Insurance	29,576	29,670
Security and transport	24,979	33,400
Catering	272,219	224,054
Technology costs	176,629	139,755
Office overheads	68,628	42,505
Legal and professional	119,047	81,374
Bank interest and charges	2,592	906
Governance costs	34,391	92,648
TOTAL 2021	2,671,646	1,983,077

11. NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2021 £	2020 £
Operating lease rentals	9,378	12,003
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	450,883	368,577
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	15,900	17,410
- other services	6,725	11,250

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

12. STAFF

a. STAFF COSTS

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and salaries	4,540,800	3,732,427
Social security costs	367,276	297,095
Pension costs	1,490,919	1,064,598
	<u>6,398,995</u>	<u>5,094,120</u>
Agency staff costs	14,207	8,955
Other supply teacher costs	-	9,977
	<u>6,413,202</u>	<u>5,113,052</u>

b. STAFF NUMBERS

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

	2021 No.	2020 No.
Teachers	96	85
Educational Support	124	91
Administration and Clerical	29	21
Management	2	2
	<u>251</u>	<u>199</u>

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

12. STAFF (CONTINUED)

c. HIGHER PAID STAFF

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

	2021 No.	2020 No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	1	-
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	-	1
In the band £100,001 - £110,000	1	-

d. KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the Trustees (who do not receive remuneration for their role as Trustees) and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions and employer national insurance contributions) received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £230,400 (2020: £205,366).

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

13. CENTRAL SERVICES

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

- School Improvement
- Safeguarding and SEN support
- Governance support
- Management
- Administration support
- HR & Payroll
- Legal
- Income Generation support
- Risk Management
- Estate Management
- IT Support
- Health & Safety support

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

The cost of provision of central services is recharged to the academies on the basis of pupil numbers.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Bearnes Voluntary Primary School	51,053	48,832
Broadhempston Village Primary School	40,727	35,664
Cheriton Bishop Primary School	55,068	49,930
Diptford C of E Primary School	33,844	34,018
Drake's C of E Primary School	31,549	24,248
Harbertonford Primary School	56,789	48,284
Hennock Community Primary School	36,712	26,885
Illesington C of E Primary School	36,138	30,100
Landscope C of E Primary School	53,347	49,381
Moretonhampstead Primary School	68,261	56,020
Ottertton C of E Primary School	32,123	24,248
Stoke Gabriel Primary School	58,510	57,063
Tedburn St Mary Primary School	57,936	47,735
Widcombe-in-the-Moor Primary	39,007	30,101
Yeoford Primary School	35,565	21,947
TOTAL	686,629	584,456

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

13. CENTRAL SERVICES (CONTINUED)

The Central Services offer was further expanded during 2020-21 with the formation of an experienced Executive School Improvement Team (EIT) who lead on strategic school improvement and consists of:

- The Academy Trust School Standards and Educational Outcomes Lead (ATSSEOL) FTE 1.0
- The Academy Trust Strategic Improvement Lead (ATSIL) FTE 0.6 with no Academy Head commitment
- The Academy Trust Safeguarding and SEND Lead (ATSSL) FTE 0.2, also Executive Academy Head- linked with the Inclusion & Improvement Hub
- The Academy Trust Data and Standards Lead (ATDSL) FTE 0.2 also Academy Head

The EIT consider every academy and prioritise the level of support and scrutiny they receive dependent on critical factors which impact on the quality of provision. They complete, Learn, Support & Challenge days, including local governors, Ofsted Preparation sessions, training and specific mentoring and coaching activities, as well as leading INSET days and supporting staff development.

The Central Business team has continued to provide an effective service to the Trust despite the challenges Covid has brought about firmly inculcating newer schools into the Trust's processes and procedures. These form the bedrock on which the Trust has built a solid administrative and financial foundation with the team being one of the Trust's strengths. To meet growing demand and increase capacity for schools, the team has grown marginally in 2020-21 to include a dedicated Premises Officer and specific supplementary roles given to School Administrators. Catering- Phase 3 has seen an additional 3 schools providing in-house catering, resulting in 66% of Trust schools providing nutritious, meals using locally grown produce.

Following the lessons learnt during lockdowns, a key focus for the Trust has been a continued drive to implement its 3 year ICT strategy. Examples include Ilington CofE and Yeoford Primary schools benefitting from the Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) programme with subsequent funding provided by the DfE to upgrade all the internal ICT infrastructure as part of the Connect the Classroom programme. Each Year 6 pupil will start September 2021 with access to a dedicated Microsoft Surface Go device following a £103,000 investment which is planned to be repeated in 2021-22 to increase dedicated devices to Year 5. The Trust now holds ICT equipment (laptops/iPads) equivalent to 1 per every 4 pupils and interactive screens in 94pc of classrooms. The benefits to this capital investment were that the Trust saw pupil progress being much less significantly impacted and levels of attainment recorded just before the second lockdown (Dec 2020) did not generally regress during the 4 months of second lockdown.

The Central Business team is continually looking at ways in which to provide savings or generate income and whose good practices were featured heavily in a research paper by the Department for Education called 'Running small rural primary schools efficiently – March 2019'. Other successes included the award of £248,000 capital funding for the provision of a Foundation Stage Unit (FSU) at Ilington CofE Primary school following its rebrokerage from South Dartmoor MAT that saw a challenging build programme in the depths of a Dartmoor winter brought to successful conclusion during the summer holidays.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

13. CENTRAL SERVICES (CONTINUED)

Procurement efficiencies are a continual driver for the team, with central contracts register in place and the Trust Business Manager in continuous discussions with other schools, Academies and Multi Academy Trusts over the opportunity for collaborative purchasing whilst continuing his work with the DfE's Network Leaders group and Schools Commercial Team. Other improvements without a specific value include:

- Reputational improvement of the Trust with further growth expected in 2021-22.
- RSC actively engaging with the Trust for future growth.
- Increased public profile – CEO attendance at Diocese CEO meetings, Involvement with SW CEO Pilot - working with four MATs in SW, substitute member of Devon Educational Forum.
- Trust Business Manager chairs the Coast & Moors School Business Leaders network group, part of DfE's School Business Professionals network & part of two DfE User Groups.
- Increased the catering operations of the Trust with greater reliance upon in-house solutions.
- Future aim to engage with more businesses.
- Increased social media profile, including LinkedIn receiving 85,000 cumulative views per month.
- Continued work with Teaching Schools Alliance - including SWTSA, All Saints and Crediton Learning Community.
- The Link Academy Inclusion Hub working with all schools across the Newton Abbot Learning Community and Teignbridge, supporting other schools with a range of issues around Inclusion, including SENDCo annual conferences and offering therapy placement projects for pupils with challenging behaviours.

14. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

The Chief Executive Officer is the only Trustee who receives remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking their role under their contract of employment, and not in respect of their services as a Trustee. Other Trustees did not receive any payments, other than expenses, from the Academy Trust in respect of their role as Trustees. The value of Trustees' remuneration and other benefits were as follows: Mrs N Dunford: Remuneration £105,000 - £110,000 (2020: £95,000 - £100,000), Employer's pension contributions £20,000 - £25,000 (2020: £20,000 - £25,000).

Other related party transactions involving the Trustees are set out in note 28.

During the year, retirement benefits were accruing to 1 Trustees (2020 - 1) in respect of defined benefit pension schemes.

During the year ended 31 August 2021, expenses totalling £499 were reimbursed or paid directly to 1 Trustee (2020 - £2,990 to 2 Trustees). The nature of these expenses were mileage claims.

15. TRUSTEES' AND OFFICERS' INSURANCE

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

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

16. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Long-term leasehold property £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Motor vehicles £	Total £
COST OR VALUATION					
At 1 September 2020	12,355,566	334,441	305,532	31,825	13,027,364
Additions	489,964	51,507	230,363	3,500	775,334
Disposals	-	-	(40,281)	-	(40,281)
At 31 August 2021	12,845,530	385,948	495,614	35,325	13,762,417
DEPRECIATION					
At 1 September 2020	607,990	236,927	207,603	15,412	1,067,932
Charge for the year	226,682	71,635	143,735	8,831	450,883
On disposals	-	-	(34,229)	-	(34,229)
At 31 August 2021	834,672	308,562	317,109	24,243	1,484,586
NET BOOK VALUE					
At 31 August 2021	12,010,858	77,386	178,505	11,082	12,277,831
At 31 August 2020	11,747,576	97,514	97,929	16,413	11,959,432

The Academy Trust's transactions relating to land and buildings included additions totalling £489,964.

17. DEBTORS

	2021 £	2020 £
DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR		
Trade debtors	4,331	41,661
VAT recoverable	85,419	54,110
Prepayments and accrued income	159,064	446,250
	248,814	542,021

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

18. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	167,194	133,501
Other taxation and social security	96,019	73,765
Other creditors	111,381	96,349
Accruals and deferred income	160,233	153,277
	<u>534,827</u>	<u>456,892</u>
	2021 £	2020 £
DEFERRED INCOME		
Deferred income at 1 September 2020	134,776	72,441
Resources deferred during the year	138,834	134,776
Amounts released from previous periods	(134,776)	(72,441)
Deferred income at 31 August 2020	<u>138,834</u>	<u>134,776</u>

Deferred income relates to grant funding received in advance for the 2021-22 accounting year.

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS

	Balance at 1 September 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2021 £
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS						
DESIGNATED FUNDS						
MAT Growth and Development	120,000	-	-	(103,811)	-	16,189
GENERAL FUNDS						
General Funds	247,285	706,013	(304,647)	(36,776)	-	611,875
PTFA	9,449	7,918	(6,993)	-	-	10,374
	256,734	713,931	(311,640)	(36,776)	-	622,249
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	376,734	713,931	(311,640)	(140,587)	-	638,438
RESTRICTED GENERAL FUNDS						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	447,145	6,222,177	(5,941,657)	(7,749)	-	719,916
Pupil Premium	-	276,166	(217,914)	(58,252)	-	-
Academy Conversion Grants	112,555	18,785	(120,840)	-	-	10,500
Higher Needs	3,070	216,109	(219,179)	-	-	-
UIFSM	-	175,565	(175,565)	-	-	-
Inclusion Hub	-	-	(58,252)	58,252	-	-
G&T Programme	13,496	-	(5,000)	-	-	8,496
Donated rent on Diocese buildings	-	107,407	(107,407)	-	-	-
Covid Catchup Premium	-	97,875	(97,875)	-	-	-
PE Sports Grant	58,239	250,330	(229,472)	-	-	79,097
Other	1,400	102,324	(102,324)	-	-	1,400
Pension reserve	(2,749,000)	-	(547,000)	-	(268,000)	(3,564,000)
	(2,113,095)	7,466,738	(7,822,485)	(7,749)	(268,000)	(2,744,591)

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

	Balance at 1 September 2020 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2021 £
RESTRICTED FIXED ASSET FUNDS						
Fixed Assets transferred on conversion	11,144,242	-	(241,064)	-	-	10,903,178
DfE/ESFA Capital grants	268,729	322,594	(61,394)	3,935	-	533,864
Condition Improvement Fund	715,124	(13,872)	(25,700)	-	-	675,552
Awards for All	8,026	-	(7,495)	-	-	531
Other Restricted	272,223	-	(114,289)	144,401	-	302,335
	<u>12,408,344</u>	<u>308,722</u>	<u>(449,942)</u>	<u>148,336</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,415,460</u>
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	<u>10,295,249</u>	<u>7,775,460</u>	<u>(8,272,427)</u>	<u>140,587</u>	<u>(268,000)</u>	<u>9,670,869</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>10,671,983</u>	<u>8,489,391</u>	<u>(8,584,067)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(268,000)</u>	<u>10,309,307</u>

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

MAT Growth and Development - funds put aside by the Trust to enable the Trust to grow and develop. This will be used when there is no ESFA funding available in the year. In 2020-21, the Trust spent £103,811 on upgrading of IT infrastructure.

General Annual Grant - Income from the ESFA which is to be used for the normal running costs of the Academy Trust, including education and support costs.

Pupil Premium - Pupil premium represents funding received from the ESFA for children that qualify for free school meals to enable the Academy Trust to address the current underlying inequalities between those children and their wealthier peers. Transfers reflect contributions from individual schools to the Trust inclusion hub.

Academy Conversion Grants - funding received on schools converting to academy schools to be used towards start up costs.

High Needs - Funding received by the Local Authority to fund further support for students with additional needs.

**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

Inclusion Hub Grants - This represents one off funding received from the local authority and other grant providers for inclusion projects as well as funding from individual schools to support students within the Trust.

G&T Programme - This represents a donation from a charitable foundation for the provision of a five year gifted and talented programme.

PE Sports Grant - This represents funding received from the ESFA and must be used to fund improvements to the provision of PE and sport, for the benefit of primary-aged pupils, so that they develop healthy lifestyles.

Other - This represents all other funding from restricted sources.

Pension reserve – This represents the Academy Trust's share of the assets and liabilities in the Local Government Pension Scheme. As with most pension schemes this is currently in deficit due to an excess of scheme liabilities over scheme assets which was inherited on conversion to an Academy Trust. The Academy Trust is following the recommendations of the actuary to reduce the deficit by making additional contributions over a number of years.

Capital Grants – These funds are received for direct expenditure on fixed asset projects. The fixed asset fund balance at the year end represents the Net Book Value (NBV) of assets and any unspent grant amounts.

Fixed assets transferred on conversion – This represent the buildings and equipment donated to the School from the Local Authority on conversion to an Academy.

DfE/ESFA Capital Grants - This represents funding from the ESFA to cover the maintenance and purchase of the Academy Trust's assets.

Condition Improvement Fund - This represents funding from the ESFA for projects at Broadhempston, Tedburn St Mary and Yeoford.

GAG deficits in individual schools has been covered by a transfer out of unrestricted funds. Additionally non capital expenditure funded by the Condition Improvement Fund has been transferred to GAG.

Awards for All - This represents funding obtained to build outdoor learning space.

OTHER INFORMATION

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the Academy Trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG it could carry forward at 31 August 2021.

LINK ACADEMY TRUST
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2019 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2020 £
UNRESTRICTED FUNDS						
DESIGNATED FUNDS						
MAT Growth and Development	120,000	-	(50,000)	50,000	-	120,000
GENERAL FUNDS						
General Funds	114,035	526,911	(307,480)	(86,181)	-	247,285
PTFA	8,736	10,189	(9,476)	-	-	9,449
	122,771	537,100	(316,956)	(86,181)	-	256,734
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED FUNDS	242,771	537,100	(366,956)	(36,181)	-	376,734
RESTRICTED GENERAL FUNDS						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	362,126	5,039,527	(4,886,959)	(67,549)	-	447,145
Pupil Premium	461	230,665	(199,132)	(31,994)	-	-
Academy Conversion Grants	99,679	182,656	(233,588)	63,808	-	112,555
Higher Needs	1,438	118,738	(120,070)	2,964	-	3,070
UIFSM	-	155,333	(155,333)	-	-	-
Inclusion Hub	-	-	(32,359)	32,359	-	-
G&T Programme	20,000	-	(6,504)	-	-	13,496
Covid Catchup Premium	-	129,122	(129,122)	-	-	-
PE Sports Grant	30,935	205,471	(178,166)	-	-	58,240
Other	-	40,044	(39,709)	1,064	-	1,399
Pension reserve	(1,120,000)	(882,000)	(300,000)	-	(447,000)	(2,749,000)
	(605,361)	5,219,556	(6,280,942)	652	(447,000)	(2,113,095)

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

**RESTRICTED
FIXED ASSET
FUNDS**

Fixed Assets transferred on conversion	6,107,777	5,280,111	(243,646)	-	-	11,144,242
DfE/ESFA Capital grants	156,730	121,983	(20,932)	10,948	-	268,729
Condition Improvement Fund	415,898	323,595	(19,889)	(4,480)	-	715,124
Awards for All	16,209	-	(8,183)	-	-	8,026
Other Restricted	213,751	95,862	(66,451)	29,061	-	272,223
	<u>6,910,365</u>	<u>5,821,551</u>	<u>(359,101)</u>	<u>35,529</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>12,408,344</u>
TOTAL RESTRICTED FUNDS	<u>6,305,004</u>	<u>11,041,107</u>	<u>(6,640,043)</u>	<u>36,181</u>	<u>(447,000)</u>	<u>10,295,249</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>6,547,775</u></u>	<u><u>11,578,207</u></u>	<u><u>(7,006,999)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>(447,000)</u></u>	<u><u>10,671,983</u></u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2021 were allocated as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
Bearnes Voluntary Primary School	305,406	237,276
Broadhempston Village Primary School	121,154	83,458
Cheriton Bishop Primary School	98,059	73,148
Diptford C of E Primary School	68,138	20,882
Drake's C of E Primary School	59,184	14,035
Harbertonford C of E Primary School	184,418	130,264
Hennock Community Primary School	16,461	14,724
Illesington C of E Primary School	112,590	62,881
Landscope C of E Primary School	68,580	11,086
Moretonhampstead Primary School	9,323	(22,348)
Ottertton C of E Primary School	17,080	13,127
Stoke Gabriel Community Primary School	227,597	159,275
Tedburn St Mary Primary School	6,650	(3,833)
Widecombe-in-the-Moor Primary School	65,523	25,281
Yeoford Primary School	28,661	11,846
Central Function (including start up grants)	69,023	181,537
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	1,457,847	1,012,639
Restricted fixed asset fund	12,415,460	12,408,344
Pension reserve	(3,564,000)	(2,749,000)
TOTAL	10,309,307	10,671,983

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

TOTAL COST ANALYSIS BY ACADEMY

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation and pension adjustments £	Total 2021 £
Beames Voluntary Primary School	444,388	40,514	25,230	98,976	609,108
Broadhempston Village Primary School	260,727	34,019	26,477	80,959	402,182
Cheriton Bishop Primary School	341,018	38,049	22,437	74,368	475,872
Diptford C of E Primary School	254,941	26,044	17,575	81,263	379,823
Drake's C of E Primary School	235,004	25,653	13,975	50,057	324,689
Harbertonford C of E Primary School	373,735	31,545	22,542	99,758	527,580
Hennock Community Primary School	276,640	61,303	14,374	56,722	409,039
Illesington C of E Primary School	296,248	33,334	20,612	113,409	463,603
Landscope C of E Primary School	304,069	65,988	13,689	80,807	464,553
Moretonhampstead Primary School	467,781	105,525	21,078	73,183	667,567
Ottertton C of E Primary School	237,930	35,281	13,486	85,469	372,166
Stoke Gabriel Community Primary School	333,381	27,474	23,640	73,907	458,402
Tedburn St Mary Primary School	315,077	32,451	12,712	76,454	436,694
Widcombe-in-the-Moor Primary School	254,682	27,138	20,348	64,804	366,972
Yeoford Primary School	220,648	32,029	11,807	83,294	347,778
Central services	451,361	260,973	11,200	156,622	880,156
ACADEMY TRUST	5,067,630	877,320	291,182	1,350,052	7,586,184

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

19. STATEMENT OF FUNDS (CONTINUED)

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2020 £
Bearnes Voluntary Primary School	409,018	38,763	34,237	103,124	585,142
Broadhempston Village Primary School	226,868	31,047	12,501	50,511	320,927
Cheriton Bishop Primary School	324,377	32,793	31,737	70,382	459,289
Diptford C of E Primary School	237,200	20,973	23,611	91,119	372,903
Drake's C of E Primary School	197,699	26,800	5,725	59,878	290,102
Harbertonford C of E Primary School	342,970	20,989	28,762	102,641	495,362
Hennock Community Primary School	259,757	49,466	23,871	41,201	374,295
Illington C of E Primary School	170,660	18,049	6,322	36,175	231,206
Landscape C of E Primary School	308,029	59,889	22,400	84,103	474,421
Moretonhampstead Primary School	276,817	27,865	16,570	36,667	357,919
Otterton C of E Primary School	185,484	22,473	6,217	80,227	294,401
Stoke Gabriel Community Primary School	304,110	25,614	37,580	69,004	436,308
Tedburn St Mary Primary School	298,164	24,157	14,709	81,352	418,382
Widecombe-in-the-Moor Primary School	145,817	13,503	5,525	32,377	197,222
Yeoford Primary School	210,037	35,130	15,401	48,981	309,549
Central services	310,159	200,135	58,042	152,658	720,994
ACADEMY TRUST	4,207,166	647,646	343,210	1,140,400	6,338,422

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

20. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS - CURRENT YEAR

	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2021 £	Total funds 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	10,369	-	12,267,462	12,277,831
Current assets	636,059	1,252,011	242,233	2,130,303
Creditors due within one year	(7,990)	(432,602)	(94,235)	(534,827)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(3,564,000)	-	(3,564,000)
TOTAL	638,438	(2,744,591)	12,415,460	10,309,307

ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS - PRIOR YEAR

	Unrestricted funds 2020 £	Restricted funds 2020 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2020 £	Total funds 2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	9,449	-	11,949,983	11,959,432
Current assets	375,613	967,491	575,339	1,918,443
Creditors due within one year	(8,328)	(331,586)	(116,978)	(456,892)
Provisions for liabilities and charges	-	(2,749,000)	-	(2,749,000)
TOTAL	376,734	(2,113,095)	12,408,344	10,671,983

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

21. RECONCILIATION OF NET (EXPENDITURE)/INCOME TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Net (expenditure)/income for the year (as per Statement of Financial Activities)	(94,676)	4,571,208
ADJUSTMENTS FOR:		
Depreciation	450,883	368,577
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(308,722)	(527,057)
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	(191)	(530)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	505,000	268,000
Defined benefit pension scheme finance cost	42,000	32,000
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	(17,967)	(56,794)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(15,722)	124,336
Assets and liabilities from local authority on conversion	-	(5,378,658)
Pension liability transferred in from existing Academies joining the Trust	-	592,000
Pension liability transferred in from conversion to an Academy Trust	-	290,000
(Profit)/loss on disposal	6,052	-
NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	566,657	283,082

22. CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES

	2021 £	2020 £
Dividends, interest and rents from investments	191	530
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(681,677)	(168,493)
Capital grants from DfE Group	619,896	147,600
Cash transferred on conversion from the local authority	-	98,547
NET CASH (USED IN)/PROVIDED BY INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(61,590)	78,184

23. ANALYSIS OF CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

	2021 £	2020 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,881,489	1,376,422

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

24. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET DEBT

	At 1 September 2020 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2021 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,376,422	505,067	1,881,489
	<u>1,376,422</u>	<u>505,067</u>	<u>1,881,489</u>

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS

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

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

Contributions amounting to £111,381 were payable to the schemes at 31 August 2021 (2020 - £96,292) and are included within creditors.

TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME

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

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

VALUATION OF THE TEACHERS' PENSION SCHEME

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

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

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2023.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £680,858 (2020 - £578,729).

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

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2021 was £388,000 (2020 - £285,472), of which employer's contributions totalled £297,000 (2020 - £217,869) and employees' contributions totalled £ 91,000 (2020 - £67,903). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 17.6% per cent for employers and 5.5-12.5% per cent for employees.

As described in note the LGPS obligation relates to the employees of the Academy 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 Academy 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 guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013.

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**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

PRINCIPAL ACTUARIAL ASSUMPTIONS

	2021	2020
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.90	3.25
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.90	2.25
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	1.65	1.60

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

	2021	2020
	Years	Years
Retiring today		
Males	22.7	22.9
Females	24.0	24.1
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	24.0	24.3
Females	25.4	25.5

SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

	2021	2020
	£000	£000
Discount rate +0.1%	160	119
Discount rate -0.1%	165	123
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	244	167
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	235	161
CPI rate +0.1%	158	118
CPI rate -0.1%	154	115

SHARE OF SCHEME ASSETS

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

	2021	2020
	£	£
Equities	1,748,000	1,184,000
Bonds	670,000	163,000
Property	223,000	158,000
Cash and other liquid assets	17,000	23,000
Other	135,000	456,000
TOTAL MARKET VALUE OF ASSETS	2,793,000	1,984,000

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

25. PENSION COMMITMENTS (CONTINUED)

The actual return on scheme assets was £435,000 (2020 - £(6,000)).

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

	2021 £	2020 £
Current service cost	(802,000)	(485,000)
Interest income	34,000	31,000
Interest cost	(76,000)	(62,000)
TOTAL AMOUNT RECOGNISED IN THE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES	(844,000)	(516,000)

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

	2021 £	2020 £
AT 1 SEPTEMBER	4,733,000	2,147,000
Conversion of Academy Trusts	-	550,000
Transferred in on existing Academies joining the Trust	-	1,137,000
Current service cost	802,000	485,000
Interest cost	76,000	62,000
Employee contributions	91,000	68,000
Actuarial losses/(gains)	668,000	369,000
Benefits paid	(13,000)	(85,000)
AT 31 AUGUST	6,357,000	4,733,000

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

	2021 £	2020 £
AT 1 SEPTEMBER	1,984,000	1,027,000
Conversion of Academy Trusts	-	260,000
Transferred in on existing Academies joining the Trust	-	545,000
Interest income	35,000	31,000
Actuarial gains	400,000	(78,000)
Employer contributions	297,000	217,000
Employee contributions	91,000	68,000
Benefits paid	(13,000)	(85,000)
Administration expense	(1,000)	(1,000)
AT 31 AUGUST	2,793,000	1,984,000

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021

26. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

At 31 August 2021 the Academy Trust had commitments to make future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

	2021 £	2020 £
AMOUNTS PAYABLE		
Not later than 1 year	6,271	6,470
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	8,243	11,981
Later than 5 years	-	569
Total	14,514	19,020

27. MEMBERS' LIABILITY

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

28. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

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

No related party transactions took place in the period.

