

Company Registration Number: 08179242 (England & Wales)

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Annual report and financial statements

For the year ended 31 August 2024

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Members	The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Company Limited Mrs A Barry Mrs G A Glover Mrs F L Trigwell Mrs V Fox (appointed 13 April 2024) Mr N Tyler (resigned 13 April 2024)
Trustees	Miss R L Howell, Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer ¹ Dr D J Moore (Resigned 16 July 2024) Mr T P Singh Miss V E Standing, Vice Chair Mrs F L Trigwell, Chair Mrs N L Ralph Mr J Anthony Mrs R M Eseku (resigned 18 October 2024) Mrs V L Richmond Mr J Sarjeant (resigned 7 February 2024) Mrs S Hill (appointed 1 July 2024) Mrs S Risley (appointed 16 September 2024) Mrs L Wilson (appointed 29 November 2024) ¹ Staff
Company registered number	08179242
Company name	The Stour Academy Trust
Principal and registered office	Park View Sturry Canterbury Kent CT2 0NR
Company secretary	PHP Law LLP
Chief executive officer	Miss R Howell
Senior management team	Miss R Howell, Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer Mr T Cullen, Chief Operating Officer (whom acts as CFO) Mr R Butterworth, Digital Operations Lead Mrs V Acors, School Improvement Partner Mrs A Bevan, School Improvement Partner (to 31/8/24) Mrs S Scharinger, School Improvement Partner (from 1/9/23)
Independent auditors	Kreston Reeves LLP Statutory Auditor 37 St Margaret's Street Canterbury Kent CT1 2TU

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REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2024

Bankers	National Westminster Bank Plc 11 The Parade Canterbury Kent CT1 2SQ
Solicitors	PHP Law LLP 6 Delamore Park Cornwood Ivybridge Devon PL21 9QP
Member	Sturry Church of England Primary School Water Meadows Primary School Adisham Church of England Primary School Lansdowne Primary School Finberry Primary School Thistle Hill Academy Richmond Primary School Chilmington Green Primary School

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Trustees' report
For the year ended 31 August 2024

The Trustees present their annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the period 1st September 2023 to 31 August 2024. The annual report serves the purposes of both a Trustees' report, and a directors' report under company law.

The Stour Academy Trust continued to operate 8 Primary Academies within the period for pupils aged 2-11. 3 in the Canterbury area, 3 in the Swale area and 2 in the Ashford area. As part of these Primary Academies, we operate 3 nursery provisions and 3 special needs resource provisions specialising in autism.

Sturry C of E Primary School and Adisham C of E Primary School are both Church of England schools within the Trust. Therefore, the Trust operates Minority Church of England Articles of Association adopted 17th September 2019.

On 31st August 2024 there were 2422 pupils on roll across the Trust a significant increase of 122 pupils from 31st August 2023 and 382 employees. 3 of the 8 schools are going through a period of rapid pupil number expansion due to need within the local area through local building developments.

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

The Stour Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Charitable Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents of the Academy Trust.

The Trustees of The Stour Academy Trust are also the Directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law. The charitable company is known as The Stour Academy Trust.

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

Members' Liability

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

Trustees' Indemnities

A full insurance indemnity is taken out with the Academy Trust's insurance company; this is reviewed annually to protect against potential risk and to comply with current ESFA guidance. The Trust currently opts into the government RPA scheme.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2024

Method of Recruitment and Appointment or Election of Trustees

Under the revised Articles of Association adopted on 17th September 2019, the number of Trustees shall not be less than 5 and shall not be subject to any maximum. The company should have:

- No fewer than five Trustees, appointed under Articles 50 and 50A combined
- A minimum of 2 Parent Trustees elected or appointed under Articles 53-56 in the event that no Local Governing Bodies are established under Article 100(a)
- The Members shall appoint by ordinary resolution a minimum of three Trustees.
- The Diocesan Corporate Member shall appoint at least two (and in its absolute discretion may appoint more than two) Trustees provided where the Academies comprise only schools that had been Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled schools as defined by the Education Acts the total number of Trustees appointed under this Article shall not exceed 25% of the total number of Trustees.
- The total number of Trustees including the Chief Executive Officer if they so choose to act as Trustees under Article 57 who are employees of the Company shall not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees.

As of 31st August 2024, the Board comprised of 9 Trustees, including the CEO. Board meetings were attended by the COO and SIP's, where appropriate. The Boards skills cover a wide range of areas including financial, educational management, business management, legal and technology.

Policies and Procedures Adopted for the Induction and Training of Trustees

All new Trustees are subject to a stringent interview process. This process is overseen by the Members who have the responsibility for appointing to The Board. The interview panel is made up of Members.

The Trust has developed a training induction plan for all new Trustees and a CPD package for all new and existing Trustees. This is further personalised by identifying Trustees weaknesses identified through skills audits e.g. some new Trustees required additional training in exclusion panels and finances on top of the standard CPD package we offer Trustees.

Once a Trustee has been appointed and completed all safeguarding checks, they are registered with a Trust email address and have access to all Governance related documentation. The Trust underwent a governance review within the period and these procedures were reviewed and praised.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Trustees has delegated the day-to-day management of the academies to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The role of the CEO is setting the strategy and vision of the Trust, building its culture and the creation and development of teams that work both centrally as well as those providing services across the Trust. The CEO is responsible for capital allocation.

The Board holds the CEO to account. The CEO holds the central team to account.

The relationship between the Board and the CEO is underpinned by a shared vision and values.

The monitoring of the Trust development plan and key priorities is the responsibility of the Board, supported by CEO and School Improvement Partner.

Within each academy there is a Headteacher.

The CEO is the Accounting Officer.

The Key Management Personnel (which forms the central team) within the year 2023-24 is shown below:

- CEO
- Chief Operating Officer (whom acts as CFO)
- School Improvement Partner x 3
- Digital Operations Lead

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2024

Arrangements for setting pay and remuneration of key management personnel

The Board oversees the pay and remuneration of the CEO and COO through its dedicated People and Pay Committee. The performance management of the CEO is undertaken by the Board with external support and the remaining Key Management Personnel by the CEO/COO.

Within the year 2021-22 the Board commissioned a thorough independent pay and rewards scheme review for the CEO/COO. This scheme came into effect 1st September 2022 which expires in 2024-25.

This plan enables budget planning to take place for a period of 3 years along with ensuring a transparent and fair process has been adopted in line with ESFA best practice.

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	N/A

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) ×100	

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) ×100	0%
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Related Parties and other Connected Charities and Organisations

The Stour Academy Trust acts as an educational sponsor supporting several converter academies and free schools through collaborative working across Kent.

Engagement with employees (including disabled persons)

The Trust and Trustees actively engage with employees on a range of areas through staff voice, surveys and operating a culture in which employees really do have a voice. We worked further to develop smart, time saving systems to cut our unnecessary tasks using technology.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2024

During the year the Trust undertook a detailed review into employee workload and reforming these. Staff were engaged with in detail and found the process supportive and meaningful. When the Trust looks to review its policies, the Trust will undertake research, form a staff review body and present to the wider Trust following a period of trialling.

The Stour Academy Trust regularly reviews its Trust Accessibility Policies to ensure fair access to all employees including those registered as a disabled person. Occupational Health checks take place for all new employees to inform the Trust to any provisions that should be put in place to support employees, in addition current employees may also be referred to Occupational Health after periods of absences to allow the Trust to continue to support the employee. All staff have access to a telephone counselling service.

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

The Trust ensures that business relationships with suppliers, customers and other key stakeholders are developed and maintained in a positive way that supports a mutually beneficial partnership. All suppliers are treated with fairness and equality; strict procurement procedures are followed to avoid undue bias or favouritism; payments are made to suppliers within agreed terms and relationships developed with suppliers to enhance the service received. During the period the Trust further expanded these engagement levels with suppliers by hosting a number of video call meetings with suppliers to discuss projects and services.

Building on our commitment to dynamic parent engagement, this year has seen a focused effort in soliciting parental feedback on our communication methods. We have actively sought out and valued parent opinions through various channels, including online surveys and forums. This collaborative approach has been instrumental in shaping our future communication strategies. By analysing and responding to this feedback, we're ensuring that our communication is not only effective but also resonates with the needs and preferences of our parent community, fostering a more connected and responsive educational environment.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the Trust are to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing academies which shall offer a broad, balanced curriculum and which shall include:

- (i) Academies other than those designated Church of England, whether with or without designated character; and
- (ii) Church of England academies designated as such which shall be conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Church of England both generally and in particular in relation to arranging for religious education and daily acts of worship and in having regard to any advice and following any directives issued by the Diocesan Board of Education

But in relation to each of the academies to recognise and support their individual ethos, whether designated Church of England

Providing recreational and leisure facilities in the interests of social welfare for the inhabitants of the area of benefit especially those who have need of such facilities by reason of youth, age, infirmity or disablement, poverty or social and economic circumstances, provided that, such recreational and leisure time facilities shall not be provided by the company at an academy designated with a Church of England religious character, except by way of the operating of a trading company.

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Trustees' report (continued)
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Objects and Aims

The Stour Academy Trust recognises that our education system needs to quickly and more radically shift to close equity gaps and to better prepare our young people for the 21st century. We are transforming our schools from passive forms of learning focused on direct instruction and memorisation, by moving towards interactive methods that promote the critical and individual thinking needed in today's innovation-driven economy.

Our pedagogical model combined with the intentional deployment of technology will help us deliver personalised learning in an enabling environment. Technology will accelerate our progress but will not be the driver of our vision.

We aim to nurture a community of learners that challenge thinking, where our staff are empowered to take risks and develop their practice to meet the needs of an evolving school system, which is not held back by traditional restrictions and ideologies.

By limiting routine or unnecessary tasks we allow professionals to focus on learning behaviours and interactions which will promote emotional intelligence and the development of children as life-long, curious learners.

There will be no barriers to achievement within our learning community and our teachers will build strong relationships that facilitate the learning of others. Collaboration will open doors, minds and possibilities and enable individuals to meet their personal goals.

We are now the first in the UK to achieve the status of a Showcase System, with all eight of our schools officially recognised as Microsoft Showcase Schools. This remarkable achievement represents a commitment across the Trust, involving dedicated CPD, collaborative effort, and an unwavering focus on integrating technology into every classroom.

From our initial three Showcase Schools to the addition of the remaining five on the Incubator Pathway in September 2024, this journey has been a Trust-wide initiative, driven by the engagement and support of all stakeholders. Joining a global community that spans 48 countries and includes fewer than 400 schools, we are proud to be one of only a select few Trusts worldwide to hold this distinction at an organisation-wide level. This milestone underscores our dedication to providing an innovative, inclusive, and forward-thinking education for all our students, preparing them for the future in a digital world.

Objectives, Strategies and Activities

As detailed above The Stour Academy Trust aims to be a Multi Academy Trust at the forefront of providing a 21st century education for children.

To achieve this all academies develop a detailed academy development plan with aims and objectives to effectively plan how these aims and objectives will be met. The Stour Academy Trust develops a central development plan which provides the cornerstones to the direction of these personalised school plans. These Trust development priorities will help us achieve our overall aims and objectives.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2024

Our Trust objectives in 2023-24 were to:

- Improve outcomes in reading and writing
- To ensure all staff have access to high quality CPDL and career pathways
- Fully implement the Trust vision for Communication and Language
- Foster an environment of learning and growth through the innovative use of technologies using Microsoft solutions, and other software where appropriate
- Ensure that Operational structures and processes are efficient, ambitious and innovative
- To Develop a Trauma School Approach which offers sustainable change for behaviour
- Assessing the Trusts capacity for growth in readiness for future expansion
- Embedding equity in all HR processes

Public Benefit

The Trustees can confirm the objectives and activities of the Trust provide identifiable benefits, namely educational, which are in pursuance of the aims of the Trust. The Trustees confirm that they have complied with their duty to have regard to the guidance on public benefit as published by the Charity Commission.

Strategic Report

Achievements and Performance

Ofsted

During the period 2023-24 3 Trust academies underwent a Section 8 Ofsted inspection. As a section 8 inspection no individual judgements awarded. The following outcomes however were made:

Finberry Primary School– January 2024
Current grading - Good

“Finberry Primary School continues to be a good school.”

Adisham Church of England Primary School – November 2023
Current grading - Outstanding

“There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.”

Thistle Hill Academy – June 2024
Current grading – Requires Improvement

“Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but more work is necessary for the school to become good.”

SIAMS

During the period 2023-24 – No SIAMs Inspections took place

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Trustees' report (continued)
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The Stour Academy Trust Data 2023-24

The Trust continues to build upon last year's outcomes and celebrates some key successes. 7/8 schools achieved outcomes at Key Stage 2 above national average and Richmond achieved its highest percentage since joining the Trust, a 26% increase from 2023 and only 8% different from national average. Richmond has one of the highest proportions of SEND children in the country as a mainstream school with 60% of children on the SEND register. Early Years remains a strength of the Trust, with 7/8 schools achieving outcomes above national average. The below average outcomes at Richmond were anticipated due to the proportion of SEND children, many of which have complex needs.

	National 2024	Adisham	Chilmington Green	Finberry	Lansdowne	Sturry	Thistle Hill	Richmond	Water Meadows	Trust average
EYFS (GLD)	66%	79%	70%	80%	80%	81%	70%	54%	71%	73%
Year 1 phonics	80.50%	73%	61%	78%	85%	86%	82%	70%	81%	77%
KS2 Reading	74%	85%	75%	80%	83%	73%	81%	60%	82%	77.30%
KS2 Writing	72%	69%	75%	83%	82%	80%	71%	65%	64%	73.60%
KS2 Maths	73%	77%	75%	80%	85%	68%	72%	55%	76%	72.50%
KS2 Combined	61%	62%	75%	80%	82%	62%	69%	53%	65%	67.10%

Key Financial Performance Indicators

The Trustees identified the following performance indicators for the Trust in 2023-24:

- Ensuring funds were targeted at supporting lost learning through previous years COVID-19 lockdowns through catch up and recovery funds
- Percentage of income received from ESFA spent on teaching staff
- Percentage of income received from ESFA spent on total staffing costs
- Ensuring financial stability for the future of the Trust
- Ensuring targeted financial expenditures for improved gradings of statutory inspections

Going Concern

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

Promoting success of the company

All Trustees of The Stour Academy Trust carefully consider all decisions made to promote the short- and long-term success of the Trust and for the benefit of its employees and pupils (members) by:
The Trust has good delegation of duties and responsibilities to ensure that long term risks and concerns are planned for and addressed. This is achieved by ensuring plans and policies are in place, reviewed regularly and shared with the appropriate bodies in line with regulations and best practice. The Trust has a strategic growth plan which was developed in 2021-22 and is reviewed annually, which plans for Trust growth and strengthening our current stakeholders. Within the year significant internal growth has taken place in line with this growth plan.

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Trustees' report (continued)
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The Trust continues to aim to be an 'employer of choice' and has several strategies in place which take in to account the interests of all employees. Our new vision for education cuts out a number of unnecessary tasks and simplifies others to ensure all tasks have a purpose thus improving employee/ employer relations and wellbeing. During the year the Trust undertook a detailed piece of work regarding teacher workload which has led to some radical reforms to support our staffing community.

The Trust promotes strong relationships with all stakeholders, including business relationships with its suppliers. We undertake regular reviews with current and potential businesses to ensure value for money and positive working relationships.

The Trusts key objective is to provide a good quality of education to children within the local community and modernise education. We aim for our schools to be actively engaged with the local communities and ensure they learn about the local diverse environments they live within. It is essential the Trust recognises the communities we serve and consider these communities in any decisions we make.

The need to act fairly is evident in policies and practice and endorsed by the Trustees

Financial Review

In this financial period (1st September 2023 to 31st August 2024), the Academy Trust received most of its funding from the ESFA, however significant investment was also received from Kent County Council in which some schools are growing in pupil PAN size or additional SEND funding is received.

Additional ring-fenced grants such as PE, Pupil Premium, UIFSM and Tuition Grants were also received during the year from the ESFA. The Trust prides itself on ensuring that these grants are spent to ensure impact and reducing the gap for our undeserved pupils where possible.

Trust reserves allow for our unique educational vision to be fully embraced and implemented. The targeted use of these funds enables us to create 21st Century environments for learning and allows us to make significant investments in technology. All staff and KS2 pupils across the Trust now have a 1:1 device and investments in modern technology to further enhance learning e.g. VR headsets.

The Trust continued to operate a policy of "top slicing" each academy to provide a range of services. These funds are held within the central account. The Board of Trustees feel this top slicing achieves best value for money for all Trust schools. A comprehensive breakdown of this "top slicing" is detailed later in these accounts.

Within the period the COO continued to support several MATs and SATs with financial sustainability and governance support, alongside joining the Kent County Council Schools Funding Forum as an elected member.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have given consideration to a reserves policy which is reviewed annually to ensure accuracy, with the aim of creating reserves for future growth and financial stability of the Trust. The level of reserves should never be in deficit.

Each year the Trustees review the resource requirements and income that is forecast for the next 3 years through a detailed budget plan which is formulated, challenged and approved before submitting to the ESFA.

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Trustees' report (continued)
For the year ended 31 August 2024

Investment Policy

There are no investments held beyond cash deposits retained in Academy Trust bank accounts. The Trust Investment Policy was reviewed in September 2023.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

During the period there were 3 significant areas of risk identified:

- The rising costs of energy provisions for Trust facilities
- Increases to the "cost of living" for everyday items e.g. school meals
- The uncertainty of teacher and support staff pay and whether funding would support any increases

Fundraising

The Academy engages in fundraising activities and recognises the provisions of the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016. There is a rigorous process for the collection of funds raised, which ensures the process for collection conforms to the necessary standards.

The Academy welcomes feedback on its fundraising approach and seeks to make improvements wherever it can. Any complaints received in respect of our fundraising activities are taken very seriously and are acted upon immediately. We are pleased to report that during the year no complaints were received in respect of our fundraising activity.

Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting

See below current emissions from 2023-24, which does show a slight rise in carbon emissions. As a Trust however we are opening more classrooms, have introduced an additional pool car and a longer winter than normal commenced during the period. Therefore, this increase is unavoidable – As a Trust we have put a significant number of strategies in place to improve our carbon footprint including a rolling programme for new boilers and electrical upgrades. Our footprint will further reduce by the CIF works undertaken in the period at Richmond Primary School and the successful win of a schools rebuild programme application for Water Meadows Primary School resulting of the removal of the existing oil heating system.

	Oil	Gas	Electricity	Cars	Total
kg CO ₂ e	42070.93094	28,931	92,918	10,278	174197.6199
kg CO ₂	41907.87762	28,872	91,969	10,211	172960.7511

As a Trust we have opted to measure these emissions on a per pupil basis (on roll 2422):

	Total Emissions	Per Pupil	Previous Year
kg CO ₂ e	174197.6199	71.92	67.15
kg CO ₂	172960.7511	71.41	66.68

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Trustees' report (continued)
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Plans for Future Periods

As an organisation our aims for 2024-25 are as follows:

- Ensure Thistle Hill Academy improves its Ofsted grading through inspection
- Introduce a new Trust wide curriculum scheme
- Embedding ambitious workload reduction for teachers
- To deepen the integration of inclusive practices, driving sustained growth in SEND progress
- To improve the effectiveness of maths assessment across the Trust to ensure gaps are filled
- Begin conversations with local authority schools to join the Trust
- Undertake all actions identified within the July 2024 governance review
- To ensure attendance across the Trust improves to 95% and deal with absence management in a timely manner
- Undertake a review of PPA provisions across the Trust for effectiveness and affordability
- Integrating AI and personalise learning technologies within the classroom
- Develop ways to share our 21st Century vision for education across the sector
- Increase the capacity of school improvement services by the introduction of a School Improvement Partner focused on inclusion and inclusive classrooms

Funds held as Custodian Trustee on behalf of others

The Trust does not hold any funds on behalf of others.

Political donations

No political donations have taken place.

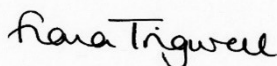
Auditor

Insofar as the Trustees are aware:

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

The auditor, Kreston Reeves LLP, has indicated its willingness to continue in office. The Trustees will propose a motion re-appointing the auditor at a meeting of the Members.

The Trustees' report, incorporating a strategic report, was approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on *16th December 2024* and signed on its behalf by:



Mrs F Trigwell
Chair of Trustees

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Governance Statement

Scope of responsibility

As Trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that The Stour 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 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 Stour Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. They are also responsible for reporting to the governing body any material weaknesses or breakdowns in internal control.

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Governance Statement (continued)

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that which is described in the Trustees' Report and in the Statement of Trustee's responsibilities. The Board of Trustees has formally met 6 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings of the Board of Trustees was as follows:

Forename	Surname	Governing Role	No of Meetings	No attended
Fiona	Trigwell	Director/Chair of the Board	6	6
Tejinder	Singh	Director	6	0
Daniel	Moore	Director – Resigned 16 th July 2024	6	4
Rachael	Howell	CEO/Director	6	6
Vicki	Standing	Director/Vice Chair	6	4
Natalie	Ralph	Director	6	5
Victoria	Richmond	Director	6	1
Jovy	Sargeant	Director – Resigned 7 th February 2024	3	1
Sharn	Hill	Director – Appointed 1 st July 2024	1	1
Joseph	Anthony	Parent Director	6	3
Rakel	Eskeu	Parent Director	6	3

Meeting dates have been changed for the upcoming year to encourage improved Director attendance.

In addition to full board meetings the Trust has the following active sub-committees and encourages all Directors to undertake academy visits.

- Curriculum and Standards Committee – Meets 3 times a year
- Church Schools Committee – Meets 6 times a year
- Audit and Finance Committee – Meets 6 times a year
- Pay Committee – Meets annually. From September 2024 this committee is expanding to becoming the People and Pay Committee, meeting 3 times a year

Members of the Trust meet 3 times per year, plus 1 AGM to effectively hold the board to account and have a good understanding of trust activities.

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Governance Statement (continued)

Governance (continued)

The Chair of the Board Mrs F Trigwell, was re-elected Chair in September 2023. Mrs Trigwell's career in education, mainly in areas of significant social deprivation has enabled The Board to consistently and thoroughly drive forward standards.

Conflicts of interest:

We ask all Directors, Members and staff employed by the Trust to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role in the Company. A declaration of interests form is provided for this purpose, listing the types of interest you should declare. All interests must be notified to the Governance Professional. To be effective, the declaration of interests is updated at least annually and when any changes occur.

All stakeholders must disclose the nature and extent of that interest, whether you receive any actual benefit as a consequence of the interest. You may have an indirect interest in a matter if a family member or friend has an interest in the matter. Stakeholders should declare any private interest which he or she has in an item to be discussed at the beginning of every meeting, and certainly before any discussion of the item itself.

The person would not be involved in decisions in which it is possible that a conflict will arise. The person declares their interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion.

The Trust adopts a conflict-of-interest policy which is reviewed annually alongside being fully compliant and aware of Academy Trust Handbook legislation regarding conflicts of interest.

Governance reviews:

The Stour Academy Trust embarked on a thorough external governance audit in the summer term which involved the reviewing of paperwork, website review and meetings with Members, Directors and Trust Executives. Following this audit a governance development plan has been formed to ensure all recommendations are to be dealt with and for high quality governance to remain a priority within our organisation. This was the first external audit undertaken by the Trust since its inception and we were pleased with the outcomes detailed below:

	High Assurance		Good Assurance		Reasonable Assurance		Limited Assurance		Very Limited Assurance	
Section 1 – Culture and Engagement	7	88%	1	12%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Section 2 – Governance	5	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Section 3 – Strategy	1	50%	1	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Section 4 – Non- Executive Leadership	13	62%	6	28%	2	10%	-	-	-	-
Section 5 – Executive Leadership	5	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Section 6 – Accountability	11	92%	-	-	1	8%	-	-	-	-
Section 7 – Compliance	12	92%	1	8%	-	-	-	-	-	-

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Governance Statement (continued)

Review of value for money

As Accounting Officer, the Chief Executive Officer has responsibility for ensuring that the Academy Trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The Accounting Officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes 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 supported by the COO for the Academy Trust has delivered improved value for money during the year a few examples being:

- Introducing a trial internal supply agency within the Trust named "Stour Supply," this initiative will be rolled out across the Trust in 2024-25 and significantly reduce agency supply expenditure
- Employing our own Speech and Language therapist which resulted in an increase in provision capacity and a reduction in cost compared to consultants
- Making significant savings in IT resources through large scale purchases
- Successfully completing 1 CIF project within budget despite a rise in costs nationally
- Reducing waste costs by slimming down services making cost savings
- Significantly reducing costs of water coolers within classrooms by awarding the contract to a local supplier

The purpose of the system of internal control

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

Capacity to handle risk

The Board of Trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the Academy Trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The Board of Trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the Academy Trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1st September 2023 to 31 August 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

The risk and control framework

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

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

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Governance Statement (continued)

The risk and control framework (continued)

The Board of Trustees appointed SBM Services as the internal auditor in 2023-24 to undertake a whom undertook a rigorous process of 8 days internal auditing over the period.

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

- testing of payroll systems
- testing of purchase systems including creditors
- testing of income
- testing of accounting systems and processes
- testing of management account reporting and VAT
- testing of control account/bank reconciliations

On a quarterly basis, the auditor reports to the Board of Trustees on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the Board of Trustees' financial responsibilities. The internal auditor carried out all work as per the schedule of planned work and presented to the Audit and Finance Committee.

Review of effectiveness

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

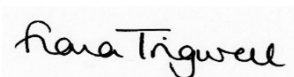
- the work of the internal auditor
- the work of the external auditor;
- the financial management and governance self-assessment process;
- the work of the executive managers within the Academy Trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

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

Conclusion

Based on the advice of the audit and risk committee and the accounting officer, the board of trustees is of the opinion that the academy trust has an adequate and effective framework for governance, risk management and control.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 16th December 2024 and signed on their behalf by:



Mrs F L Trigwell
Chair of Trustees



Miss R L Howell
Accounting Officer

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance

As accounting officer of The Stour Academy Trust, I have considered my responsibility to notify the Academy Trust Board of Trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding, including for estates safety and management, under the funding agreement between the Academy Trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2023, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

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

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



Miss R Howell
Accounting Officer

Date: 16th December 2024

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

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

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

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

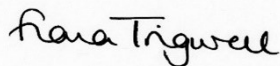
- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting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

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

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

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

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



Mrs F L Trigwell
Chair of Trustees

Date: 16th December 2024.

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Independent auditors' Report on the financial statements to the Members of The Stour Academy Trust

Opinion

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

In our opinion the financial statements:

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

Basis for opinion

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

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.

The Stour Academy Trust
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Independent auditors' Report on the financial statements to the Members of The Stour Academy Trust
(continued)

Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of trustees

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

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

Independent auditors' Report on the financial statements to the Members of The Stour 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:

Capability of the audit in detecting irregularities, including fraud

Based on our understanding of the Academy Trust and the sector as a whole, and through discussion with the Trustees and other management (as required by auditing standards), we identified that the principal risks of non-compliance with laws and regulations related to child protection and safeguarding, health and safety and employment law. We considered the extent to which non-compliance might have a material effect on the financial statements. We also considered those laws and regulations that have a direct impact on the preparation of the financial statements such as the Companies Act 2006, Statement of Recommended Practice, Academies Accounts Direction, Academies Financial Handbook, taxation and pension legislation. We communicated identified laws and regulations throughout our team and remained alert to any indications of non-compliance throughout the audit. We evaluated management's incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements (including the risk of override of controls), and determined that the principal risks were related to: posting inappropriate journal entries to increase revenue or reduce expenditure, management bias in accounting estimates and judgemental areas of the financial statements such as the valuation of land and buildings and revenue and noncompliance with financial management and governance requirements which are consistent with the obligations of public funded bodies. Audit procedures performed by the engagement team included:

- Discussions with management and assessment of known or suspected instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations (including health and safety) and fraud, and review of the reports made by management and internal audit; and
- Assessment of identified fraud risk factors; and
- Consideration of income streams, completeness of income and compliance with the obligations of funders including the ESFA; and
- Testing of internal controls procedures relating to expenditure potentially more susceptible to fraud and other irregularities including the misuse of public funding in areas such as cash, payroll and credit card expenditure; and
- Review of cash and credit card expenditure to confirm no evidence of personal benefit; and
- Checking and reperforming the reconciliation of key control accounts; and
- Performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships, including related party transactions, that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud; and
- Confirmation of related parties with management, and review of transactions throughout the period to identify any previously undisclosed transactions with related parties outside the normal course of business; and
- Reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance, reviewing internal audit reports and reviewing correspondence with relevant tax and regulatory authorities; and
- Review of internal controls and physical inspection of tangible assets susceptible to fraud or irregularity; and
- Review of corporate governance arrangements; and
- Review of significant and unusual transactions and evaluation of the underlying financial rationale supporting the transactions; and
- Identifying and testing journal entries, in particular any manual entries made at the year end for financial statement preparation.

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Independent auditors' Report on the financial statements to the Members of The Stour Academy Trust
(continued)

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

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (UK), we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion of the effectiveness of the Academy Trust's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the Trustees.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Academy Trust's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our Auditors' report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our Auditors' report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Academy Trust to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

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.

Kreston Reeves LLP

Robert Sellers FCCA (Senior statutory auditor)

for and on behalf of

Kreston Reeves LLP

Statutory Auditor

Chartered Accountants

Canterbury

Date: 17 December 2024

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity to The Stour Academy Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency

In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 15 October 2024 and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2023 to 2024, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by The Stour Academy Trust during the year 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

This report is made solely to The Stour Academy Trust and ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to The Stour 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 The Stour Academy Trust and ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of The Stour Academy Trust's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of The Stour Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education dated 31 August 2012 and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2023, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

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

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity to The Stour Academy Trust and the Education & Skills Funding Agency (continued)

Approach

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

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

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

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

Work undertaken

The work undertaken to draw to our conclusion includes:

- Reviewed expenditure against specific terms of grant funding within the funding agreement
- Reviewed that grants have been applied for the purposes intended
- Confirmed that internal control procedures exist relating to expenditure incurred of cash and credit cards
- Confirmed items claimed on cash and credit cards are not for personal benefit
- Reviewed expenditure and considered whether any supplies are from related parties
- Reviewed minutes of Governing Body minutes for declaration of interests
- Considered whether other income activities are permitted within the Academy Trust's charitable objects
- Considered if borrowing agreements, including leases, have been made in accordance with the Academies Trust Handbook
- Confirmed that procurement and tendering procedures exist relating to expenditure and have been complied with.

Conclusion

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

Kreston Reeves LLP

Kreston Reeves LLP
Reporting Accountant

Date: 17 December 2024

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Statement of financial activities (incorporating income and expenditure account)
For the year ended 31 August 2024

	Note	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Income from:						
Donations and capital grants	3	29,475	-	965,666	995,141	8,066,782
Other trading activities	5	547,466	-	-	547,466	423,075
Investments (net pension interest income)		-	51,000	-	51,000	-
Charitable activities	4	-	15,477,931	-	15,477,931	13,548,761
Total income		576,941	15,528,931	965,666	17,071,538	22,038,618
Expenditure on:						
Charitable activities	6	8,246	15,676,408	793,383	16,478,037	14,893,497
Total expenditure		8,246	15,676,408	793,383	16,478,037	14,893,497
Net income/(expenditure)		568,695	(147,477)	172,283	593,501	7,145,121
Transfers between funds	15	(102)	(55,537)	55,639	-	-
Net movement in funds before other recognised gains/(losses)		568,593	(203,014)	227,922	593,501	7,145,121
Other recognised gains/(losses):						
Actuarial (losses)/gains on defined benefit pension schemes	21	-	(312,000)	-	(312,000)	1,032,000
Net movement in funds		568,593	(515,014)	227,922	281,501	8,177,121
Reconciliation of funds:						
Total funds brought forward		1,025,272	543,813	37,131,257	38,700,342	30,523,221
Net movement in funds		568,593	(515,014)	227,922	281,501	8,177,121
Total funds carried forward		1,593,865	28,799	37,359,179	38,981,843	38,700,342

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

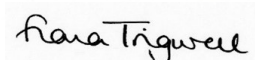
The notes on pages 29 to 57 form part of these financial statements.

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)
Registered number: 08179242

Balance sheet
As at 31 August 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	12	37,083,315	37,131,257
Current assets			
Debtors	13	656,634	360,236
Cash at bank and in hand		1,475,518	1,626,505
		<u>2,132,152</u>	<u>1,986,741</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(233,624)	(417,656)
Net current assets		<u>1,898,528</u>	<u>1,569,085</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>38,981,843</u>	<u>38,700,342</u>
Total net assets		<u><u>38,981,843</u></u>	<u><u>38,700,342</u></u>
Funds of the Academy Trust			
Restricted funds:			
Fixed asset funds	15	37,359,179	37,131,257
Restricted income funds	15	28,799	543,813
Total restricted funds	15	<u>37,387,978</u>	<u>37,675,070</u>
Unrestricted income funds	15	<u>1,593,865</u>	<u>1,025,272</u>
Total funds		<u><u>38,981,843</u></u>	<u><u>38,700,342</u></u>

The financial statements on pages 26 to 57 were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees and are signed on their behalf, by:



Mrs F L Trigwell
Chair of Trustees

Date: 16th December 2024

The notes on pages 29 to 57 form part of these financial statements.

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Statement of cash flows
For the year ended 31 August 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	17	(371,215)	139,819
Cash flows from investing activities	18	220,228	(51,454)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		(150,987)	88,365
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,626,505	1,538,140
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year	19, 20	<u>1,475,518</u>	<u>1,626,505</u>

The notes on pages 29 to 57 form part of these financial statements

The Stour Academy Trust
(A company limited by guarantee)

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

1. Accounting policies

The Stour Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Park View, Sturry, Canterbury, CT2 0NR. The Academy Trust's main objective is to advance for the public benefit of education in the United Kingdom, in particular without prejudice to the generality of the forgoing by establishing, maintaining, managing and developing Academies within the Trust

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

1.1 Basis of preparation of financial statements

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

The Stour Academy Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

The academy trust's functional and presentational currency is Pound Sterling.

The academy trust's financial statements are presented to the nearest pound.

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 2024

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.

• **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.

• **Transfer of existing academies into the Academy Trust**

Where assets and liabilities are received on the transfer of an existing academy into the Academy Trust, the transferred assets are measured at fair value and recognised in the Balance sheet at the point when the risks and rewards of ownership pass to the Academy Trust. An equal amount of income is recognised for the transfer of an existing academy into the Academy Trust within 'Income from Donations and Capital Grants' to the net assets acquired.

• **Donated fixed assets (excluding transfers on conversion or into the Academy Trust)**

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

1.4 Expenditure

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

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.4 Expenditure (continued)

• **Charitable activities**

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

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

1.5 Interest receivable

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

1.6 Taxation

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

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

1.7 Tangible fixed assets

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

Premises occupied under a licence by church academies

The Incumbent and Churchwardens of the Parish of Sturry in the Diocese of Canterbury and the Rector and Churchwardens of the Parish of Adisham own the legal titles of land and freehold property for the church academies the Trust operate. In these circumstances, the Academy Trust's rights over the premises are considered to meet the definition of an asset as the Academy Trust has control over the premises. Accordingly the Academy Trust recognises these premises as a fixed asset on its balance sheet. There are no formal leases in place and The Incumbent and Churchwardens of the Parish of Sturry in the Diocese of Canterbury and the Rector and Churchwardens of the Parish of Adisham do not charge any rent for the use of these properties.

Premises leased from local authorities

Land, buildings and playing fields occupied under 125 year leases from a local authority are recognised as a fixed asset in the academy trust balance sheet at fair value.

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.

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.7 Tangible fixed assets (continued)

Tangible fixed assets are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment. Depreciation is not charged on freehold land and assets under construction. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives on the following bases:

Long-term leasehold property	- over 50 years straight line
Furniture and equipment	- over 5 years straight line
Computer equipment	- over 3 years straight line

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

1.8 Debtors

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

1.9 Cash at bank and in hand

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

1.10 Liabilities

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

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

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

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

1. Accounting policies (continued)

1.11 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 13. Prepayments are not financial instruments.

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

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in note 14 and. 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.

1.12 Operating leases

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

1.13 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. Accounting policies (continued)

1.14 Fund accounting

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

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

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

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

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment

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

Critical accounting estimates and assumptions:

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

Multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme

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 21, will impact the carrying amount of the pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2022 has been used by the actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2024. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

Tangible fixed assets

The Academy Trust has recognised tangible fixed assets with a carrying value of £37,083,315 at the reporting date (see note 12). These assets are stated at their cost less provision for depreciation and impairment. The Academy Trust's accounting policy sets out the approach to calculating depreciation for immaterial assets acquired. For material assets such as land and buildings the Academy Trust determines at acquisition reliable estimates for the useful life of the asset, its residual value and decommissioning costs. These estimates are based upon such factors as the expected use of the acquired asset and market conditions. At subsequent reporting dates the governors consider whether there are any factors such as technological advancements or changes in market conditions that indicate a need to reconsider the estimates used.

The Academy Trust originally recognised long term leasehold property which now have a carrying value of £5,464,886 which are subject to Church supplemental agreements. It is the Trustees opinion that this Church Supplemental Agreement constitutes a long term lease with substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of the land and buildings transferring to The Stour Academy Trust and consequently the value of the land and buildings have been included above in long term leasehold property.

Where there are indicators that the carrying value of tangible assets may be impaired the Academy Trust undertakes tests to determine the recoverable amount of assets. These tests require estimates of the fair value of assets less cost to sell and of their value in use. Wherever possible the estimate of the fair value of assets is based upon observable market prices less incremental cost for disposing of the asset. The value in use calculation is based upon a discounted cash flow model, based upon the Academy Trust's forecasts for the foreseeable future which do not include any restructuring activities that the Academy Trust is not yet committed to or significant future investments that will enhance the asset's performance. The recoverable amount is most sensitive to the discount rate used for the discounted cash flow model as well expected future cash flows and the growth rate used for extrapolation purposes.

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Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

2. Critical accounting estimates and areas of judgment (continued)

Critical areas of judgment:

Land and buildings

It is the opinion of the Trustees that the Trust exercises control over the long leasehold property subject to Church supplemental agreements and therefore the value of land and buildings has been recognised as an asset of the Trust.

Lease commitments

The Academy Trust has entered into a range of lease commitments in respect of property, plant and equipment. The classification of these leases as either financial or operating leases requires the governors to consider whether the terms and conditions of each lease are such that the Academy Trust has acquired the risks and rewards associated with the ownership of the underlying assets.

Multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme

Certain employees participate in a multi-employer defined benefit pension scheme with other Academy Trusts in the region. In the judgement of the governors, the Academy Trust does not have sufficient information on the plan assets and liabilities to be able to reliably account for its share of the defined benefit obligation and plan assets. Therefore the scheme is accounted for as a defined contribution scheme, see note 21 for further details.

The plan surplus as at 31 August 2024 was £803,000 (2023: £548,000). A pension plan asset is recognised to the extent that the company is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan. In the opinion of the trustees, the academy trust will not recover the surplus through reduced contributions and they do not anticipate receiving any refunds from the plan and therefore the net surplus recognised within the financial statements has been restricted to £Nil.

3. Income from donations and capital grants

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Donations	29,475	-	29,475	7,850,595
Capital Grants	-	965,666	965,666	216,187
	<u>29,475</u>	<u>965,666</u>	<u>995,141</u>	<u>8,066,782</u>
Total 2023	<u>44,472</u>	<u>8,022,310</u>	<u>8,066,782</u>	

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For the year ended 31 August 2024

4. Funding for the Academy's educational operations

	Restricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
DfE/ESFA grants			
General Annual Grant (GAG)	10,678,586	10,678,586	9,765,539
Other DfE/ESFA grants			
Other Grants	971,866	971,866	767,852
Universal Infant Free School Meals	289,864	289,864	209,492
Pupil Premium	1,174,981	1,174,981	1,071,270
Teachers Pay and Pension Grant	298,657	298,657	-
	<u>13,413,954</u>	<u>13,413,954</u>	<u>11,814,153</u>
Other Government grants			
Local authority grants	2,063,977	2,063,977	1,734,608
	<u>2,063,977</u>	<u>2,063,977</u>	<u>1,734,608</u>
	<u>15,477,931</u>	<u>15,477,931</u>	<u>13,548,761</u>
Total 2023	<u>13,548,761</u>	<u>13,548,761</u>	

5. Other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Residential trip and visit income	121,736	121,736	123,658
Income from facilities/services	106,429	106,429	48,349
Breakfast/after school club income	234,048	234,048	189,800
Other income	85,253	85,253	61,268
Total 2024	<u>547,466</u>	<u>547,466</u>	<u>423,075</u>
Total 2023	<u>423,075</u>	<u>423,075</u>	

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Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

6. Analysis of expenditure by activities

	Activities undertaken directly 2024 £	Support costs 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Educational operations	11,864,647	4,613,390	16,478,037	14,893,497
	<u>11,864,647</u>	<u>4,613,390</u>	<u>16,478,037</u>	
Total 2023	10,261,164	4,632,333	14,893,497	
	<u>10,261,164</u>	<u>4,632,333</u>	<u>14,893,497</u>	

Analysis of direct costs

	2024 £	Total funds 2024 £	Total funds 2023 £
Staff costs	10,573,977	10,573,977	9,015,357
Books, stationary and materials	553,814	553,814	584,098
Other educational supplies & services	195,085	195,085	193,264
Staff development and other staff costs	97,324	97,324	99,645
Agency staff	444,447	444,447	368,800
	<u>11,864,647</u>	<u>11,864,647</u>	<u>10,261,164</u>
Total 2023	10,261,164	10,261,164	
	<u>10,261,164</u>	<u>10,261,164</u>	

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Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

6. Analysis of expenditure by activities (continued)

Analysis of support costs

	2024	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£
FRS102 pension finance costs	-	-	27,000
Staff costs	1,294,354	1,294,354	1,460,582
Depreciation	793,383	793,383	881,493
Maintenance of premises	310,853	310,853	264,918
Cleaning	290,144	290,144	273,088
Premises insurance	108,329	108,329	88,580
ICT (not capitalised)	248,491	248,491	266,864
Catering costs	571,674	571,674	464,760
Other occupancy costs	224,631	224,631	160,914
Security	3,877	3,877	4,346
Water	51,689	51,689	32,753
Energy	207,840	207,840	152,106
Furniture and equipment (items less than £5,000)	3,030	3,030	3,809
Professional fees	136,838	136,838	138,222
Other services and supplies	368,257	368,257	412,898
	4,613,390	4,613,390	4,632,333
Total 2023	4,632,333	4,632,333	

7. Net income/(expenditure)

Net income/(expenditure) for the year includes:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Operating lease rentals	42,556	31,748
Depreciation of tangible fixed assets	793,383	881,493
Fees paid to auditors for:		
- audit	23,900	23,900
- other services	4,200	4,200

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Notes to the financial statements
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8. Staff

a. Staff costs and employee benefits

Staff costs during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	9,220,382	7,942,008
Social security costs	834,621	730,414
Pension costs	1,813,328	1,803,517
	<u>11,868,331</u>	<u>10,475,939</u>
Agency staff costs	444,447	368,800
	<u>12,312,778</u>	<u>10,844,739</u>

Staff restructuring costs comprise:

	2024 £	2023 £
Severance payments	-	22,509
	<u>-</u>	<u>22,509</u>

b. Special staff severance payments

There were no staff restructuring costs this year (2023: £4,600).

c. Staff numbers

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

	2024 No.	2023 No.
Teachers	134	125
Administration and support	156	226
Management	17	5
	<u>307</u>	<u>356</u>

d. Higher paid staff

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

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Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

8. Staff (continued)

d. Higher paid staff (continued)

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
In the band £60,001 - £70,000	4	1
In the band £70,001 - £80,000	1	3
In the band £80,001 - £90,000	4	-
In the band £90,001 - £100,000	1	1
In the band £120,001 - £130,000	1	1
	=====	=====

e. Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the Academy Trust comprise the Trustees and the senior management team as listed on page 1. The total salaries received by key management personnel for their services to the Academy Trust was £506,797 (2023: £430,056). Employer pension contributions were a total of £74,597 (2023: £46,305) and employer national insurance contributions were a total of £62,407 (2023: £53,106). This team grew by an additional role in the year.

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Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

9. Central services

A significant number of MATs within the sector hold back for central salaries only and then charge all services such as safeguarding, accounting and legal on a case by case basis. This is both costly and unmanageable/ unpredictable for our schools. In 2017 we introduced a Hub and Trust Services holdback to achieve better VFM and to fit in with our Hub growth collaborative ethos and model. This achieved greater savings and was a fairer process. All eventualities are planned for to provide reassurance and peace of mind to the Board.

Currently in 2023-24 we have deducted the following holdbacks as agreed in July 2023:

Central Holdback - 5.38%

- Trust Leadership
- Trust CPD
- Marketing resources
- Trust Finance, HR and Premises departments

Teaching and Learning Holdback - 4.07%

- School improvement personnel

Safeguarding Holdback - 1.07%

- Safeguarding personnel
- Safeguarding software
- Safeguarding CPD

Trust Services - 0.68%

- Software both curriculum and non-curriculum
- Speech and language therapy services
- Audit, banking, legal and insurance fees

Total 11.2% funded by school GAG income - this has decreased to 10.15% in 2024-25.

The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Sturry Church of England Primary School	199,694	192,351
Water Meadows Primary School	88,681	67,726
Lansdowne Primary School	268,411	188,157
Adisham Church of England Primary School	57,711	58,274
Finberry Primary School	154,905	132,465
Thistle Hill Academy	198,927	165,624
Richmond Academy	166,516	158,437
Chilington Green Primary School	116,062	98,883
Total	1,250,907	1,061,917

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Notes to the financial statements
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10. Trustees' remuneration and expenses

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Miss R L Howell , Chief Executive Officer and Accounting Officer	120,000 - 125,000	120,000 - 125,000

During the year ended 31 August 2024, expenses totalling £436 were reimbursed or paid directly to 3 Trustee (2023 - £394 to 1 Trustee).

11. Trustees' and Officers' insurance

in accordance with normal commercial practice, the Academy Trust has purchased insurance to protect Trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business. The insurance provides cover up to £1,000,000. It is not possible to quantify the Trustees and officers indemnity element from the overall cost of the Academy Trust's insurance policy.

12. Tangible fixed assets

	Long-term leasehold property £	Assets under construction £	Plant and machinery £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation					
At 1 September 2023	40,240,293	-	340,003	973,163	41,553,459
Additions	46,402	643,937	-	55,099	745,438
Disposals	-	-	(46,322)	(748,572)	(794,894)
Transfers between classes	347,296	(347,296)	-	-	-
At 31 August 2024	40,633,991	296,641	293,681	279,690	41,504,003
Depreciation					
At 1 September 2023	3,304,169	-	283,264	834,769	4,422,202
Charge for the year	672,552	-	27,595	93,233	793,380
On disposals	-	-	(46,322)	(748,572)	(794,894)
At 31 August 2024	3,976,721	-	264,537	179,430	4,420,688
Net book value					
At 31 August 2024	36,657,270	296,641	29,144	100,260	37,083,315
At 31 August 2023	36,936,124	-	56,739	138,394	37,131,257

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Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

12. Tangible fixed assets (continued)

Included in long term leasehold property is leasehold land at cost of £5,314,000 (2023: £5,314,000) which is not depreciated.

13. Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Due within one year		
Trade debtors	506	9,140
Other debtors	49,735	44,140
Prepayments and accrued income	606,393	306,956
	<u>656,634</u>	<u>360,236</u>

14. Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	(1,093)	7,394
Accruals and deferred income	234,717	410,262
	<u>233,624</u>	<u>417,656</u>

	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income at 1 September 2023	324,631	258,985
Resources deferred during the year	175,799	324,631
Amounts released from previous periods	(324,631)	(258,985)
	<u>175,799</u>	<u>324,631</u>

At the balance sheet date the Academy Trust was holding funds received in advance of the 2023/24 financial year in respect of free school meals and other grants.

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Notes to the financial statements
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15. Statement of funds

	Balance at 1 September 2023 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2024 £
Unrestricted funds						
Unrestricted revenue fund	1,025,272	576,941	(8,246)	(102)	-	1,593,865
Restricted general funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	543,813	10,678,586	(11,138,063)	(55,537)	-	28,799
Pupil Premium	-	1,174,981	(1,174,981)	-	-	-
Other DfE / ESFA grant	-	1,560,387	(1,560,387)	-	-	-
Other government grant	-	2,063,977	(2,063,977)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	-	51,000	261,000	-	(312,000)	-
	543,813	15,528,931	(15,676,408)	(55,537)	(312,000)	28,799
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Restricted Fixed Asset Fund	37,131,257	-	(793,383)	745,441	-	37,083,315
DfE/ESFA capital grants	-	965,666	-	(689,802)	-	275,864
	37,131,257	965,666	(793,383)	55,639	-	37,359,179
Total Restricted funds	37,675,070	16,494,597	(16,469,791)	102	(312,000)	37,387,978
Total funds	38,700,342	17,071,538	(16,478,037)	-	(312,000)	38,981,843

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

15. Statement of funds (continued)

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

Unrestricted funds are applied to the general work of the Academy Trust to support activities inside and outside the curriculum.

GAG represents funds to be used to cover the normal running costs of the Academy Trust.

Other DfE/ESFA grants represents grants provided for specific purposes, such as pupil premium which is used to support disadvantaged pupils and assist them in decreasing the attainment gap between them and their peers.

DfE/ESFA capital grants funds is to provide the Academy Trust with its own capital money to address improvements to buildings and other facilities. The balance on the fund represents unspent capital grant money to be spent in the first school term of 2024/25.

The Restricted fixed asset fund represents the leasehold land and buildings and other assets which were donated upon conversion to academy status, the value of fixed assets purchased since conversion including depreciation to the balance sheet date.

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 2024.

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15. Statement of funds (continued)

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

	Balance at 1 September 2022 £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers in/out £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Balance at 31 August 2023 £
Unrestricted funds						
Unrestricted revenue fund	891,143	467,547	(7,282)	(326,136)	-	1,025,272
Restricted Funds						
General Annual Grant (GAG)	580,826	9,765,539	(10,089,500)	286,948	-	543,813
Pupil Premium	-	1,071,270	(1,071,270)	-	-	-
Other DfE / ESFA grant	-	977,344	(977,344)	-	-	-
Other government grant	-	1,734,608	(1,734,608)	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(900,000)	-	(132,000)	-	1,032,000	-
	(319,174)	13,548,761	(14,004,722)	286,948	1,032,000	543,813
Restricted fixed asset funds						
Restricted Fixed Asset Fund	29,951,252	7,806,123	(881,493)	255,375	-	37,131,257
DfE/ESFA capital grants	-	216,187	-	(216,187)	-	-
	29,951,252	8,022,310	(881,493)	39,188	-	37,131,257
Total Restricted funds	29,632,078	21,571,071	(14,886,215)	326,136	1,032,000	37,675,070
Total funds	30,523,221	22,038,618	(14,893,497)	-	1,032,000	38,700,342

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15. Statement of funds (continued)

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2024 were allocated as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Sturry Church of England Primary School	138,634	132,958
Water Meadows Primary School	27,654	4,880
Lansdowne Primary School	491,257	438,111
Adisham Church of England Primary School	116,902	145,598
Finberry Primary School	118,315	126,981
Thistle Hill Academy	281,099	123,311
Richmond Academy	166,087	229,415
Chilmington Academy	264,553	347,760
The Stour Academy Trust	18,163	20,071
Total before fixed asset funds and pension reserve	1,622,664	1,569,085
Restricted fixed asset fund	37,359,179	37,131,257
Total	38,981,843	38,700,342

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15. Statement of funds (continued)

Total cost analysis by academy

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

	Teaching and educational support staff costs £	Other support staff costs £	Educational supplies £	Other costs excluding depreciation £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Sturry Church of England Primary School	1,523,049	216,475	159,328	380,443	2,279,295	2,073,630
Water Meadows Primary School	754,857	73,217	85,636	189,383	1,103,093	951,601
Lansdowne Primary School	1,585,558	167,430	158,854	311,656	2,223,498	1,969,687
Adisham Church of England Primary School	470,391	53,152	60,101	124,039	707,683	595,455
Finberry Primary School	1,364,295	173,169	227,194	373,980	2,138,638	1,744,571
Thistle Hill Academy	1,554,372	145,837	182,176	330,592	2,212,977	2,048,589
Richmond Academy	1,581,448	199,905	183,314	374,443	2,339,110	2,153,742
Chilmington Primary School	1,079,438	145,263	200,253	259,375	1,684,329	1,239,719
The Stour Academy Trust	399,569	380,906	33,814	181,742	996,031	1,235,010
Academy Trust	10,312,977	1,555,354	1,290,670	2,525,653	15,684,654	14,012,004

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16. Analysis of net assets between funds

Analysis of net assets between funds - current period

	Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Restricted funds 2024 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2024 £	Total funds 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	37,083,315	37,083,315
Current assets	1,593,865	262,423	275,864	2,132,152
Creditors due within one year	-	(233,624)	-	(233,624)
Total	1,593,865	28,799	37,359,179	38,981,843

Analysis of net assets between funds - prior period

	Unrestricted funds 2023 £	Restricted funds 2023 £	Restricted fixed asset funds 2023 £	Total funds 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	37,131,257	37,131,257
Current assets	1,025,272	961,469	-	1,986,741
Creditors due within one year	-	(417,656)	-	(417,656)
Total	1,025,272	543,813	37,131,257	38,700,342

17. Reconciliation of net income to net cash flow from operating activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Net income for the period (as per Statement of financial activities)	593,501	7,145,121
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation	793,380	881,492
Capital grants from DfE and other capital income	(965,666)	(203,920)
Defined benefit pension scheme cost less contributions payable	(312,000)	132,000
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	(296,398)	(106,722)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(184,032)	97,971
Donated assets	-	(7,806,123)
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities	(371,215)	139,819

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18. Cash flows from investing activities

	2024 £	2023 £
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	(745,438)	(255,374)
Capital grants from DfE Group	965,666	203,920
Net cash provided by/(used in) investing activities	220,228	(51,454)

19. Analysis of cash and cash equivalents

	2024 £	2023 £
Cash in hand	1,475,518	1,626,505
Total cash and cash equivalents	1,475,518	1,626,505

20. Analysis of changes in net debt

	At 1 September 2023 £	Cash flows £	At 31 August 2024 £
Cash at bank and in hand	1,626,505	(150,987)	1,475,518
	1,626,505	(150,987)	1,475,518

21. 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 Kent County Council. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

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

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

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

21. Pension commitments (continued)

Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

Valuation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme

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

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

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

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

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the year amounted to £1,232,617 (2023 - £1,008,824).

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

Notes to the financial statements
For the year ended 31 August 2024

21. Pension commitments (continued)

Local Government Pension Scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2024 was £1,044,000 (2023 - £847,000), of which employer's contributions totalled £838,000 (2023 - £680,000) and employees' contributions totalled £ 206,000 (2023 - £167,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 22.5% 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.

Principal actuarial assumptions

	2024	2023
	%	%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.80	3.85
Rate of increase for pensions in payment/inflation	2.80	2.85
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.10	5.30

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

	2024	2023
	Years	Years
Retiring today		
Males	20.7	20.7
Females	23.3	23.2
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	22.0	22.0
Females	24.7	24.6

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21. Pension commitments (continued)

Sensitivity analysis

	2024	2023
	£000	£000
Discount rate +0.1%	(173,000)	(143,000)
Discount rate -0.1%	178,000	148,000
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	193,000	158,000
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(187,000)	(154,000)
Salary rate +0.1%	8,000	7,000
Salary rate -0.1%	(8,000)	(7,000)
	=====	=====

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Notes to the financial statements
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21. Pension commitments (continued)

Share of scheme assets

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

	At 31 August 2024 £	At 31 August 2023 £
Equities	4,580,000	4,185,000
Gilts	560,000	39,000
Corporate bonds	1,165,000	911,000
Property	741,000	665,000
Cash and other liquid assets	195,000	69,000
Absolute return fund	407,000	473,000
Infrastructure	374,000	250,000
Total market value of assets	8,022,000	6,592,000

The actual return on scheme assets was £209,000 (2023 - £-37,000).

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Current service cost	(571,000)	(734,000)
Interest income	(322,000)	(290,000)
Interest cost	373,000	263,000
Administrative expenses	(6,000)	(3,000)
Total amount recognised in the Statement of financial activities	(526,000)	(764,000)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	6,044,000	6,624,000
Current service cost	571,000	734,000
Interest cost	322,000	290,000
Employee contributions	206,000	167,000
Actuarial losses/(gains)	221,000	(1,905,000)
Benefits paid	(145,000)	(77,000)
Liabilities assumed on settlements	-	211,000
At 31 August	7,219,000	6,044,000

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21. Pension commitments (continued)

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

	2024 £	2023 £
At 1 September	6,044,000	5,724,000
Actuarial losses	164,000	(325,000)
Interest income	373,000	263,000
Employer contributions	838,000	680,000
Employee contributions	206,000	167,000
Benefits paid	(145,000)	(77,000)
Settlement prices received	-	163,000
Administration expenses	(6,000)	(3,000)
Asset ceiling restriction	(255,000)	(548,000)
At 31 August	7,219,000	6,044,000

As set out in note 3, the plan surplus as at 31 August 2024 was £803,000 (2023: £548,000). The Trustees are not expecting to recover the surplus through reduced contributions and they do not anticipate receiving any refunds from the plan and therefore the net surplus recognised within the financial statements has been restricted to £Nil.

22. Operating lease commitments

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

	2024 £	2023 £
Not later than 1 year	34,062	22,158
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	43,270	3,127
	77,332	25,285

23. 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.

24. Related party transactions

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

During the year, Miss J Howell and Miss V Shrivell, close family of Miss R Howell and Mr T Cullen, members of Key Management Personnel, were employed by the Academy Trust and remunerated £13,295 (2023 £11,894) and £53,075 (2023 £50,136) respectively including pension contributions. Miss R Howell and Mr T Cullen were not involved in the selection process and did not influence the decision. The relationships were declared to the Academy Trust and included in their register of business interests.

During the year, there were transactions of £1,668 (2023: £1,310) to Ethos School Improvement Limited, of which Mr Q Roper (individual acting on behalf of member The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Company Ltd) is a director.

25. Controlling party

The Academy Trust is run by the management team on a day to day basis. Strategic decisions are made by the Board of Trustees. There is no ultimate controlling party.